

Contextualizing Conflict:
The Persecutions of 1 Peter in Their Anatolian Setting

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature:

To Amy

ועל כול נשין שופר שפרת ועליא שפרהא לעלא מן כולהן ועם
כול שפרא דן אחכמ שגיא עמהא ודלידיהא יאא (1QapGen xx 6-8)

(κύριε) ἐπίταξον ἐλεῆσαι με καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ συνκαταγεῖναι κοινῶς (Tob 8.7, G^{II})

Abstract

From beginning to end, the epistle of 1 Peter is concerned with responding to the conflict in which the Anatolian readers have presently become involved. Nevertheless, throughout the history of Petrine scholarship the nature of this problem has generated significant disagreement. Within the most recent discussion, however, a general consensus has been reached. Virtually all commentators now tend to agree that this conflict is a kind of unofficial, local hostility which arose sporadically out of the disdain from the general populace and which was expressed primarily through discrimination and verbal abuse. Ultimately, though, this position rests on a number of undemonstrated contentions which have never been examined through comprehensive and detailed socio-historical inquiry.

The present study is intended to take up the question afresh and to thereby rectify the significant missteps through which the topic has been previously approached. Our purpose is to determine the nature of suffering in 1 Peter by situating the letter against the backdrop of conflict management in first-century CE Asia Minor. To do so, we seek to understand the different means by which conflict was dealt with in Roman Anatolia and how the persecutions of 1 Peter fit into this larger context. Part of this goal is to examine how conflict affected different social groups within the community as a way of determining the various forms of suffering to which specific members may have been prone. Therefore, our efforts consist of an attempt to *differentiate* the readers' troubling experiences by providing a detailed "social profile" of the letter's recipients and to *contextualize* the conflict situation by locating the problem and its subsequent resolution strategies within the world of first-century CE Asia Minor.

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Acknowledgements

Certainly I realize that the accomplishment of this task [of writing history] has long been demanded of me, Atticus. And I should not refuse to undertake it, if I were granted any unoccupied or leisure time. But so great a task cannot be undertaken when one's time is filled or his attention distracted; one must be free from both work and worry . . . Odds and ends of time, as I may call them, are sometimes available . . . But an historical work cannot be commenced unless a period of leisure is arranged for in advance, nor can it be completed in a short time; and it usually disturbs my train of thought, when I have once begun a task, if I am forced to turn my attention elsewhere; nor do I find it so easy to resume an interrupted task as I do to complete at once whatever I have undertaken. (Cicero, *Leg.* 1.8-9; adapted from Keyes [LCL]).

As one might imagine, a project such as this is not completed without considerable support. During the past three years, there have been numerous individuals and groups who have contributed to the work's success and to whom I would like to extend my gratitude. This study was made possible in part by the generous financial support from the University of Exeter. As a result of the funding provided by the Exeter Research Scholarship, I was given "a period of leisure" (as Cicero put it) within which to pursue the present topic in the depth that it deserves.

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Abbreviations

All references that fall within the sphere of biblical studies are abbreviated according to Patrick H. Alexander, et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 1999). Biblically related materials that are not found in the *SBL Handbook* are listed below. Classical sources will be abbreviated according to Jules Marouzeau, et al., eds., *L'Année philologique* (Paris: Société internationale de bibliographie classique, 1928–). Abbreviations for the epigraphic evidence follow (with some alterations) Pierre Roussel, et al., eds., *Supplementum epigraphicum graecum* (Lugduni Batanorum: Sijthoff, 1923–), and the papyrological evidence is listed according to the standards of John F. Oates, et al., eds., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets* (5th ed.; BASPSup 9; Oakville, CT.: American Society of Papyrologists, 2001). Yet for convenience sake, all classical, epigraphical, and papyrological abbreviations will be listed below.

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
<i>AAEA</i>	Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología
<i>AAG</i>	Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte
<i>AASF</i>	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae
<i>AbhMainz</i>	Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz
<i>ABull</i>	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
<i>ACW</i>	Ancient Christian Writers
<i>AE</i>	Cagnat, René, et al., eds. <i>L'Année épigraphique: revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine</i> . Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1888–.
<i>AFLNW</i>	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Geisteswissenschaften
<i>AfrRom</i>	<i>L'Africa Romana</i>
<i>AggBeh</i>	<i>Aggression Behavior</i>
<i>AJEC</i>	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AMI</i>	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i>
<i>AMS</i>	Asia Minor Studien
<i>AmSocRev</i>	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
<i>AnadoluYil</i>	<i>Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Yıllığı</i>
<i>AnalRom</i>	Analecta Romana Instituti Danici
<i>AnatAnt</i>	<i>Anatolia Antiqua</i>
<i>AncW</i>	<i>Ancient World</i>
<i>Annales (HES)</i>	<i>Annales d'histoire économique et sociale</i>
<i>Annales (HSS)</i>	<i>Annales: histoire, sciences sociales</i>
<i>AnnRevPsy</i>	<i>Annual Review of Psychology</i>
<i>AnnTriest</i>	<i>Annali triestini</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	Temporini, Hildegard, and Wolfgang Haase, eds. <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im</i>

	<i>Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972–.
<i>AntAfr</i>	<i>Antiquités africaines</i>
<i>APF</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>Archaelus</i>	<i>Archaelus: Studies in History of Religions</i>
<i>AREA</i>	Arbeiten zur römischen Epigraphik und Altertumskunde
<i>AS</i>	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
<i>Audollent, Defixionum</i>	Audollent, Augustus, ed. <i>Defixionum tabellae: Quotquot innotuerunt tam in Graecis orientis quam in totius occidentis partibus praeter Atticas in Corpore inscriptionum Atticarum editas</i> . Frankfurt: Minerva, 1967.
<i>BAHIF</i>	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'Institut français d'archéologie d'Istanbul
<i>BARIS</i>	British Archaeological Review International Series
<i>BASoPsy</i>	<i>Basic and Applied Social Psychology</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
<i>BASPSup</i>	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists Supplement
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>BCHSup</i>	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique Supplément
<i>BDAG</i>	Bauer, Walter. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 rd ed. Edited by Frederick W. Danker, based on Walter Bauer, <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur</i> . 6 th ed. Edited by Kurt and Barbara Aland, with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
<i>BDF</i>	Blass, Friedrich and Albert Debrunner. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Translated and revised from the 9 th -10 th German edition, incorporating supplementary notes of A. Debrunner by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
<i>BECNT</i>	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>BEFAR</i>	Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome
<i>BG</i>	Biblische Gestalten
<i>BGU</i>	<i>Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i> . 15 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895-1983.
<i>BIS</i>	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BJSP</i>	<i>British Journal of Social Psychology</i>
<i>BMC (G-C-S)</i>	Wroth, Warwick W., ed. <i>Catalogue of Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia, and Syria</i> . British Museum Catalogue 20. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1899.
<i>Bosch, Ankara</i>	Bosch, Emin. <i>Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Ankara im Altertum</i> . Türk Tarih kurumu yayinlarindan, Series 7, no. 46. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1967.
<i>BSci</i>	<i>Behavioral Science</i>
<i>BSNTS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas</i>
<i>BSS</i>	Black Sea Studies
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
<i>CambJ</i>	<i>The Cambridge Journal</i>
<i>CCG</i>	<i>Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz</i>
<i>CCS</i>	Cincinnati Classical Studies
<i>CEB</i>	Commentaire évangélique de la Bible
<i>CEFR</i>	Collection de l'École française de Rome

ch(s).	chapter(s)
CIAHA	Collection de l'Institut d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'antiquité
CICNRS	Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique
<i>CIG</i>	Boeckh, August, et al., eds. <i>Corpus inscriptionum graecarum</i> . 4 vols. Berlin: Reimer, 1828-1877.
<i>CIL</i>	Mommsen, Theodor, et al., eds. <i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i> . 17 vols. Berlin: Reimer, 1853-.
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
col(s).	column(s)
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CPSSup	Cambridge Philological Society Supplementary Volume
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
CTS	Contributions et travaux de l'Institut d'histoire romaine de l'Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg
<i>DBM</i>	<i>Deltion Bibliikon Meleton</i>
DenkschrWien	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften
<i>DTA</i>	Wünsch, Richard, ed. <i>Inscriptiones Graecae III.3: Defixionum Tabellae Atticae</i> . Berlin: Reimer, 1897.
<i>EA</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
EAC	Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique
EC	Epworth Commentaries
ECCA	Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>ECM</i>	Aland, Barbara, et al., eds. <i>Novum Testamentum Graecum. Editio Critica Maior IV Catholic Letters, Part 1: Text. Installment 2: The Letters of Peter</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2000.
EH	Europäische Hochschulschriften
<i>EJSP</i>	<i>European Journal of Social Psychology</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>ERSP</i>	<i>European Review of Social Psychology</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
ETH	Études de théologie historique
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby, Felix, ed. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . 15 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1923-1958.
<i>FiloNT</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>FIRA I</i>	Riccobono, Salvatore, ed. <i>Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani, I: Leges</i> . 2 nd ed. Florentiae: S. A. G. Barbèra, 1968.
FoSub	Fontes et subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>GIBM</i>	Newton, Charles T., ed. <i>The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum</i> . 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1874-1916.
<i>GPIR</i>	<i>Group Processes and Intergroup Relations</i>
GRBM	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Monographs
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
GRM	Graeco-Roman Memoirs

HAG	Homer Archaeological Guides
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HBK	Herders Bibelkommentar
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
HE	Historia Einzelschriften
HR/RH	<i>Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques</i>
HSNT	Die heilige Schrift neuen Testaments
IAG	Moretti, Luigi, ed. <i>Iscrizioni agonistiche greche</i> . Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto italiano per la storia antica 12. Rome: A. Signorelli, 1953.
<i>I.Ankara</i>	French, David H., ed. <i>Roman, Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions of Ankara: A Selection</i> . Ankara: The Foundation of Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 2003.
<i>I.Apameia</i>	Corsten, Thomas, ed. <i>Die Inschriften von Apameia (Bithynien) und Pylai</i> . Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 32. Bonn: Habelt, 1987.
<i>I.Aph2007</i>	Reynolds, Joyce, Charlotte Roueché, and Gabriel Bodard, eds. <i>Inscriptions of Aphrodisias (2007)</i> , available < http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007 >.
<i>I.Aphrodisias I</i>	Reynolds, Joyce M. <i>Aphrodisias and Rome: Documents from the Excavation of the Theatre at Aphrodisias Conducted by Professor Kenan T. Erim, Together with Some Related Texts</i> . Journal of Roman Studies Monographs 1. London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1982.
<i>I.Asclepius</i>	Habicht, Christian, ed. <i>Altertümer von Pergamon</i> , Band VIII.3: <i>Die Inschriften des Asklepieions</i> . Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969.
<i>I.Bean I</i>	Bean, G. E. "Notes and Inscriptions from Pisidia. Part I." <i>Anatolian Studies</i> 9 (1959) 67-117.
<i>I.Bean II</i>	Bean, G. E. "Notes and Inscriptions from Pisidia. Part II." <i>Anatolian Studies</i> 10 (1960) 43-82.
<i>I.Beichtinschriften</i>	Petzl, Georg, ed. <i>Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens</i> . Bonn: Habelt, 1994. [= <i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i> 22 (1994) v-xxi, 1-178].
<i>I.BithMendel I</i>	Mendel, Gustave. "Inscriptions de Bithynie." <i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i> 24 (1900) 361-426.
<i>I.BithMendel II</i>	Mendel, Gustave. "Inscriptions de Bithynie." <i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i> 25 (1901) 5-92.
<i>I.Byzantion</i>	Łajtar, Adam, ed. <i>Die Inschriften von Byzantion</i> . Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 58. Bonn: Habelt, 2000.
<i>I.Comana I</i>	Harper, Richard P. "Tituli Comanorum Cappadociae." <i>Anatolian Studies</i> 18 (1968) 93-147.
<i>I.Comana II</i>	Harper, Richard P. "Inscriptiones Comanis Cappadociae in A.D. 1967 Effossae: Titulorum Loci Supplementum." <i>Anatolian Studies</i> 19 (1969) 27-40.
<i>I.Comana III</i>	Harper, Richard P. "Tituli Comanorum Cappadociae Iterum Suppleti." <i>Anatolian Studies</i> 22 (1972) 225-39.
<i>I.Cos</i>	Paton, William R. and Edward L. Hicks, eds. <i>The Inscriptions of Cos</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1891. Repr., Hildesheim/New York: G. Olms, 1990.
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
<i>I.Didyma</i>	Wiegand, Theodor and Albert Rehm, eds. <i>Didyma</i> . 2 Teil: <i>Die Inschriften</i> . Berlin: Mann, 1958.
<i>I.Ephesos</i>	Wankel, Hermann, et al., eds. <i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> . Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 11.1-17.4. 8 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1979-1984.
IF	Istanbuler Forschungen

- IG II² Kirchner, Johannes, ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae II et III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*. Parts I-III. 2nd ed. Berlin: Reimer, 1913-1940.
- IG V.1 Kolbe, Walther, ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae, V.1: Inscriptiones Laconiae et Messeniae*. Berlin: Reimer, 1913.
- IG XII,3 von Gaertringen, Friedrich Hiller, ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae, XII. Inscriptiones insularum maris Aegaei praeter Delum, 3: Inscriptiones Symes, Teuthussae, Teli, Nisyri, Astypalaeae, Anaphes, Therae et Therasiae, Pholegandri, Meli, Cimoli*. Berlin: Reimer, 1898.
- IG XII Supp. von Gaertringen, Friedrich Hiller, ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae, XII. Supplementum*. Berlin: Reimer, 1939.
- I GR Cagnat, René, et al., eds. *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes*. 4 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1906-1927. Repr., Chicago: Ares, 1975.
- IGSK
I.Halicarnassus Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
Cousin, Georges and Charles Diehl. "Inscriptions d'Halicarnasse," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 14 (1890) 90-121.
- I.Hierapolis Judeich, Walther, ed. "Inschriften." Pages 67-202 in *Altertümer von Hierapolis*. Edited by Carl Humann, et al. Jahrbuch des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Ergänzungsheft 4. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1898.
- I.Ilion Frisch, Peter, ed. *Die Inschriften von Ilion*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 3. Bonn: Habelt, 1975.
- IJCM *International Journal of Conflict Management*
- IJP *International Journal of Psychology*
- I.Kalchedon Merkelbach, Reinhold, ed. *Die Inschriften von Kalchedon*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 20. Bonn: Habelt, 1980.
- I.Kios Corsten, Thomas, ed. *Die Inschriften von Kios*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 29. Bonn: Habelt, 1985.
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- ILS Dessau, Hermann, ed. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. 3 vols. in 5 parts. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1916.
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- I.Prusias* Ameling, Walter, ed. *Die Inschriften von Prusias ad Hypium*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 27. Bonn: Habelt, 1985.
- I.Ramsay* Ramsay, William M. *The Social Basis of Roman Power in Asia Minor*. Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1967.
- Ir:Jur* *Irish Jurist*
- I.Robinson* Robinson, David M. "Greek and Latin Inscriptions from Sinope and Environs." *American Journal of Archaeology* 9 (1905) 294-333.
- I.Samos* Herrmann, Peter. "Inschriften aus dem Heraion von Samos." *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 75 (1960) 68-183.
- I.Sardis VII* Buckler, William Hepburn and David Moore Robinson, eds. *Sardis, VII, 1. Greek and Latin Inscriptions*. Leiden: Brill 1932.
- I.Side* Nollé, Johannes, ed. *Side im Altertum*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 43-44. 2 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1993-2001.
- I.Smyrna* Petzl, Georg, ed. *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 23-24,1-2. 3 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1982, 1987 & 1990.
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- I.Sterrett II* Sterrett, J. R. S. *Wolfe Expedition to Asia Minor*. Archaeological Institute of America. Papers of the American school of classical studies at Athens 3. Boston: Damrell and Upham, 1888.
- I.Stratonikeia* Şahin, M. Çetin, ed. *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 21-22.2. 3 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1981-1990.
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<i>I.Xanthos</i>	Balland, André, ed. <i>Fouilles de Xanthos, VII: Inscriptions d'époque impériale du Létôon</i> . Paris: Klincksieck, 1981.
<i>JAbPsy</i>	<i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i>
<i>JAppP</i>	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>
<i>JapPsyRes</i>	<i>Japanese Psychological Research</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JASP</i>	<i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>
<i>JCCP</i>	<i>Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology</i>
<i>JCR</i>	<i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i>
<i>JESP</i>	<i>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</i>
<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
<i>JHM</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JLH</i>	<i>Journal of Legal History</i>
<i>JMF</i>	<i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i>
<i>JÖAI</i>	<i>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
Johnson, <i>Epitaphs</i>	Johnson, Gary J. <i>Early-Christian Epitaphs from Anatolia</i> . Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 35. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
<i>JPers</i>	<i>Journal of Personality</i>
<i>JPSP</i>	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRASup</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSI</i>	<i>Journal of Social Issues</i>
KAV	Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern
KEHNT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
KF	Kölner Forschungen
KHA	Kölner historische Abhandlungen
l(l).	line(s)
LB	Lire la Bible
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNS	Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. 9 th ed. With a Revised Supplement, ed. P. G. W. Glare and A. A. Thompson. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
<i>MAMA</i>	Calder, W. M., et al., eds. <i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua</i> . 10 vols. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1928-1962 (vols. 1-8); London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1988-1993 (vols. 9-10).
<i>MCQ</i>	<i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>
MAPS	Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
MARB	Mémoires couronnés et autres mémoires publiés par l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
<i>MBAH</i>	<i>Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte</i>
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und Antiken Rechtsgeschichte
<i>MedAnt</i>	<i>Mediterraneo antico</i>
<i>MEFRA</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité</i>
<i>MIF</i>	<i>Mémoires de l'Institut impérial de France</i>

MnemSup	Mnemosyne Supplements
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
<i>MusB</i>	<i>Musée Belge</i>
NA ²⁷	Aland, Barbara, et al., eds. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 27 th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
NABPRSSS	National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies Series
<i>NAWG</i>	<i>Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse</i>
NC	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>NClio</i>	<i>La nouvelle Clio</i>
NET	New English Translation
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
<i>NGWG</i>	<i>Nachrichten von der königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse</i>
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
no(s).	number(s)
<i>NSRC</i>	Maiuri, Amedeo, ed. <i>Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos</i> . Firenze: Le Monnier, 1925.
NSS	Nuovi studi storici
<i>NuovB</i>	<i>Nuovo bullettino di archeologia cristiana</i>
NZ	<i>Numismatische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>OBHD</i>	<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
<i>OGIS</i>	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. <i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum sylloges inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903-1905. Repr., Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1960.
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OMCA	Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology
p(p).	page(s)
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
PapFlor	Papyrologica Florentina
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PGM</i>	Preisendanz, Karl, et al., eds. <i>Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . 2 nd ed. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-1974.
<i>Ph&Rh</i>	<i>Philosophy and Rhetoric</i>
<i>PIR</i> ²	Groag, Edmund, et al., eds. <i>Prosopographia imperii romani</i> . 2 nd ed. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1933-.
P.Lond.	Kenyon, Frederic G., et al., eds. <i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum</i> . 7 vols. London: British Museum, 1893-1974.
PM	Philological Monographs
P.Oxy.	Greenfell, Bernard P., et al., eds. <i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . 72 vols. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1898-.
PrinTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
P.Schøyen	Pintaudi, Rosario, ed. <i>Papyri Graecae Schøyen (PSchøyen I)</i> . Papyrologica Florentina 35. Firenze: Gonnelli, 2005.
PSI	<i>Papiri greci e latini</i> . Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Firenze: Tipografia E. Ariani, 1912-.
<i>PSPB</i>	<i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>
<i>PSPR</i>	<i>Personality and Social Psychology Review</i>

<i>PsyBull</i>	<i>Psychological Bulletin</i>
<i>PsyRec</i>	<i>Psychological Record</i>
<i>PsyRev</i>	<i>Psychological Review</i>
<i>PsySci</i>	<i>Psychological Science</i>
P.Wilcken	Wilcken, Ulrich, ed. <i>Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde</i> , Band 1, Historischer Teil. Zweite Hälfte: <i>Chrestomathie</i> . Leipzig: Teubner, 1912.
P.Yadin	Lewis, Naphtali, Yigael Yadin, and Jonas C. Greenfield, eds. <i>The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri</i> . Judean Desert Studies 2. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989.
P.Yale	Oates, John F., et al., eds. <i>Yale Papyri in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library</i> . 3 vols. New Haven, CT./Toronto: American Society of Papyrologists, 1967 (vol. 1); Chico, CA.: Scholars Press, 1985 (vol. 2); Oakville, CT.: American Society of Papyrologists, 2001 (vol. 3).
RD	<i>Revue historique de droit français et étranger</i>
RECAM II	Mitchell, Stephen, ed. <i>Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor II: The Ankara District, the Inscriptions of North Galatia</i> . British Archaeological Review International Series 135. Oxford: B.A.R., 1982.
RECAM III	Milner, Nicholas P., ed. <i>Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor III: An Epigraphical Survey in the Kibyra-Olbasa Region Conducted by A. S. Hall</i> . British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monograph 24. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1998.
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RFIC	<i>Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RH	<i>Revue historique</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RIDA	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité</i>
RNSSP	Royal Numismatic Society Special Publications
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RPC I	Burnett, Andrew M., Michel Amandry, and Pere Pau Ripollés Alegre, eds. <i>Roman Provincial Coinage: Vol. 1: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 B.C.-A.D.69)</i> . London/Paris: British Museum Press/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1992.
RPC II	Burnett, Andrew M., Michel Amandry, and Pere Pau Ripollés Alegre, eds. <i>Roman Provincial Coinage: Vol. 2: From Vespasian to Domitian (A.D. 69-96)</i> . London/Paris: British Museum Press/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1999.
RPh	<i>Revue de philologie</i>
RQASup	Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte, Supplementheft
RS	Crawford, Michael H., ed. <i>Roman Statutes</i> . 2 vols. Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 64. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996.
RSCI	<i>Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia</i>
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SAWW	Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SCA	Studies in Christian Antiquity
SciSoc	<i>Science and Society</i>

SCO	<i>Studi classici e orientali</i>
ScrAnt	Scripta Antiqua
SDHI	<i>Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris</i>
SEG	Roussel, Pierre, et al., eds. <i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> . Lugduni Batanorum: Sijthoff, 1923–.
SGD	Jordan, David R. “A Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora.” <i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i> 26 (1985) 151-197.
SGUB	Seminario giuridico della Università di Bologna
SHAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse</i>
SHEL	Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law
SHK	Schriften des Historischen Kollegs
SIG ³	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. <i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> . 3 rd ed. 4 vols. Leipzig: S. Hirzelium, 1915-1924. Repr., Hildesheim/New York: G. Olms, 1982.
SJR	<i>Social Justice Research</i>
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SPAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der königlich preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philologisch-historische Klasse</i>
SSA	Saggi di storia antica
ST	Studi e testi
StudAmst	Studia Amstelodamensia ad epigraphicam, ius antiquum et papyrologicam pertinentia
StudHell	Studia Hellenistica
StudRom	<i>Studi romani</i>
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series
SZ	<i>Studia Zamorensia</i>
TAM II	Kalinka, Ernst, ed. <i>Tituli Lyciae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti</i> . 3 vols. Vienna: Alfredi Hoelder, 1920-1944.
TAM IV	Dörner, Friedrich K., ed. <i>Tituli Asiae Minoris, IV. Tituli Bithyniae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti</i> , Fasc. 1: <i>Paeninsula Bithynica praeter Calchedonem. Nicomedia et ager Nicomedensis cum septemtrionali meridianoque litore sinus Astaceni et cum lacu Sumonensi</i> . Vienna: Academiam Scientiarum Austriacam, 1978.
TAPhA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
TC	Tria corda
TCAAS	<i>Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences</i>
TE	<i>Theological Educator</i>
TechCiv	<i>Techniques et civilisations</i>
TED	Translations of Early Documents
TG	<i>Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis</i>
ThJ	<i>Theologische Jahrbücher</i>
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
TIB	Tabula Imperii Byzantini
TNIV	Today’s New International Version
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UALG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
UBHJ	<i>University of Birmingham Historical Journal</i>
VDI	<i>Vestnik Drevnej Istorii</i>
VHB	Veröffentlichungen aus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek
WS	Wiener Studien
WSB	Wuppertaler Studienbibel

YCS
ZPE
ZRG

ZTG

Yale Classical Studies
Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte
Romanistische Abteilung
Zeitschrift für Theologie und Gemeinde

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Introductory Matters

There is little debate that Christian suffering holds a place of prominence in the epistle of 1 Peter. “Running through the whole letter, sometimes overtly expressed but never far below the surface and giving point to the writer’s reiterated appeal to Christ’s sufferings as a precedent and a ground for confidence, is the assumption that the recipients are being, or at any moment are liable to be, subjected to trials and persecutions.”¹ In fact, few would dispute that the readers found themselves in a difficult situation wherein outside hostility was being expressed against their Christian faith.² “The question is thus not *whether* such persecutions were occurring when the letter was written, but rather what *kind* of persecutions are therein reflected, and what *caused* such rejection of the Christians by their contemporary society.”³ But anyone familiar with Petrine studies knows that this question—possibly more than any other—has served to divide commentators throughout the history of research.

For much of the past two centuries, critical scholarship has engaged in a long and arduous debate over the nature of persecution⁴ in 1 Peter. At issue for most commentators has been question of whether the recipients were suffering from “official” (i.e., originating from the organized efforts of the Roman State) or “unofficial” (i.e., informal popular hostility) persecution. Now, after seemingly endless discussion on the matter, a consensus opinion has clearly emerged. In the judgment of most modern critics, “the

¹ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 5.

² One exception is Jacques Rousseau, “A Multidimensional Approach towards the Communication of an Ancient Canonized Text: Towards Determining the Thrust, Perspective and Strategy of 1 Peter,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pretoria, 1986) 258. Rousseau suggests that the addressees were actually lukewarm Christians who were too closely associated with things of the world; thus, the persecution described in the epistle was the author’s way of persuading them to embrace a more proper Christian existence as “aliens” and “strangers.” The problem with this proposal, however, is that there is no hint anywhere in the epistle of the author’s dissatisfaction with his readers’ attachment to the world. In fact, the exact opposite is suggested by the fact that they had withdrawn from many of the activities in which they had formerly participated (1 Pet 4.3-4). But what undermines the theory of Rousseau even further is that he fails to account for the risks and threats posed for Christians by everyday life in Anatolian society (see Chs. 5-6).

³ Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 28 (emphasis added).

⁴ On the use of the designation “persecution,” see Ch. 2.

persecution of 1 Peter is local, sporadic and unofficial, stemming from the antagonism and discrimination of the general populace.”⁵

The importance of this consensus opinion lies in the influence it exerts on the overall reading of the letter. If it is correct to assume that the author’s literary strategy was largely conditioned by his perception of the historical situation to which he was writing,⁶ then it would not be an exaggeration to say that the nature of persecution is the foundation for practically the entire edifice of Petrine interpretation. For explanations of the aim and strategy of 1 Peter flow, to a large extent, from the situational reconstructions adopted by modern interpreters. Amidst widespread scholarly agreement, this fact would seem immaterial. But lately there has been cause for concern. In some of the more recent treatments of the subject, a number of serious weaknesses in this modern consensus have been glaringly exposed.⁷ In light of these developments, we suggest that a fresh examination of the topic is in order.

A. The Persecutions of 1 Peter in Previous Research⁸

A brief perusal through some of the secondary literature on the subject will reveal that it is not just the “unofficial” *view* of persecution that has become established within scholarship. A comparison of other surveys of research will reveal how uniformly interpreters have understood the *developmental process* by which each position has

⁵ Mark Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature Since 1985,” *CBR* 4 (2006) 199-239 (203). Cf. Robert L. Webb, “The Petrine Epistles: Recent Developments and Trends,” in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*. (eds. S. McKnight and G. R. Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004) 373-90 (382-83); Édouard Cothenet, “La Première de Pierre: Bilan de 35 ans de recherches,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 25.5; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988) 3685-712 (3703); John H. Elliott, “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *JBL* 95 (1976) 243-54 (251-52).

⁶ In one sense, Richard E. Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” *Ph&Rh* 6 (1973) 154-61, is correct when he argues that the situation is created by the discourse. An author is certainly responsible for perceiving, interpreting, and then assigning meaning to a particular event. Yet this is not to say that others would not arrive at these same conclusions. If the author of 1 Peter desired his correspondence to have any degree of validity in the minds of its readers, the meaning he assigned to the situation could not have been completely opposed to the one they had constructed. Certain points about the situation would need to remain constant (e.g., the parties involved; the basic storyline of the events that had occurred; etc.). In this way, an author’s discourse must also arise out of the situation (cf. Steven R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter* [SBLDS 162; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998] 54-57).

⁷ See p. 14 n. 34.

⁸ This section is largely a reproduction of Travis B. Williams, “Suffering from a Critical Oversight: The Persecutions of 1 Peter within Modern Scholarship,” *CBR* (forthcoming).

arrived at its current level of acceptance.⁹ Normally, when the topic is reviewed, a very clear chronological progression is presented: within early critical scholarship, many interpreters tended to adopt the “official” persecution theory, which attempted to situate the persecutions in 1 Peter among one of the empire-wide pogroms carried out during the respective reigns of three notorious Roman emperors: Nero, Domitian, and Trajan. But as further clarity was reached concerning the nature and extent of these Roman pogroms, a noticeable shift took place within scholarship. With modern conceptions of persecution becoming more refined, the majority of interpreters were converted to the “unofficial” position, wherein the modern consensus now lies. This clear progression, which appears to result from the natural enlightenment of critical research, thus makes the “unofficial” persecution theory the most natural solution to the problem. At the same time, it allows the “official” proposal to be easily dismissed as an outdated relic of the past. The problem, as we will show, is that such a portrayal of the interpretive landscape is somewhat misleading. As a result, it has created an unfortunate confusion in the way the topic has been addressed within Petrine scholarship, and it has significantly impeded further development within the discussion.

To fully understand the state of the modern discussion, we must start from the beginning. Ordinarily when such a controversial issue is discussed, it is appropriate to proceed with an investigation into the historical development behind the various interpretive strands and the avenues through which each view arrived at its current level of acceptance. In this particular case, however, the most crucial point to grasp is not the rise or fall of certain theories or even the influence of those scholars who proposed them. Instead, the key to understanding the historical debate surrounding the nature of persecution in 1 Peter is the significant *misunderstanding* which took place within the earliest Petrine scholarship and the critical lacuna it has left in the overall discussion.

Contrary to the developmental theories that are posed in many modern commentaries, the popularity of the “unofficial” view of persecution is not a recent development. As far back as the 1800s, this view was widely represented in Petrine studies.¹⁰ Due in large part

⁹ Note, e.g., John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 98; Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter,” 202-203.

¹⁰ Some of its early proponents include: J. C. W. Augusti, *Die Katholischen Briefe, neu übersetzt und erklärt und mit Excursen und einleitenden Abhandlungen* (Lemgo: Meyer, 1801) 1:184; Christian G.

to the fact that many older interpreters held to genuine Petrine authorship, the epistle was often dated sometime prior to the first State-initiated persecution, which took place under the Roman emperor Nero (64 CE). For this reason, proponents often stressed the localized, inter-personal nature of the conflict, which primarily included discrimination and verbal abuse. These persecutions, as J. E. Huther noted, “consisted more in contumelies (*Schmähungen*) and revilings (*Lästerungen*) than in actual ill-treatment.”¹¹ But despite the fact that this view was the favorite of many early commentators (as it still is today), it was not the only interpretive option.

A second view, which was just as popular in the earlier discussion, was what is commonly referred to as the “official” persecution view.¹² As the name suggests, proponents of this view envisioned a more formal mode of persecution affecting the Anatolian readers, often referred to as “systematic persecution.” According to this

Hensler, *Der erste Brief des Apostels Petrus übersetzt und mit einem Kommentar versehen* (Sulzbach: Seidel, 1813) 15-16; Wilhelm Steiger, *Der erste Brief Petri, mit Berücksichtigung des ganzen biblischen Lehrbegriffs ausgelegt* (Berlin: Ludwig Oehmigke, 1832) 33-36; Samuel T. Bloomfield, “ΠΙΕΤΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ: ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΠΡΩΤΗ,” in *The Greek Testament with English Notes, Critical, Philological, and Exegetical* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1855) 2:700; Christopher Wordsworth, “ΠΙΕΤΡΟΥ Α,” in *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Original Greek, with Introduction and Notes* (London: Rivingtons, 1867) 2:41 n. 7, 65; G. F. C. Fronmüller, *The Epistles General of Peter and the Epistle General of Jude* (trans. J. I. Mombert; A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures 9; New York: Charles Scribner, 1867) 9; Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude* (rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875) cviii, 117; A. R. Fausset, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” in *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton, 1875) 497; Henry Alford, “ΠΙΕΤΡΟΥ Α,” in *The Greek Testament* (rev. ed.; Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1878) 4:126-28; Carl F. Keil, *Commentar über die Briefe des Petrus und Judas* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1883) 33; J. E. Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of Peter and Jude* (trans. D. B. Croom and P. J. Gloag; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1893) 30; Revere F. Weidner, *Annotations on the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude* (New York: Christian Literature, 1897) 99, 162; F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter I.1-II.17: The Greek Text with Introductory Lecture, Commentary, and Additional Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1898) 1-5; Jean Monnier, *La Première Épître de L’Apôtre Pierre* (Macon: Protat Frères, 1900) 1, 112, 214, 220; Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902) 24-33, 80-88; Bernhard Weiss, *Das Neue Testament Handausgabe*, vol. 3: *Apostelgeschichte - Katholische Briefe, Apokalypse* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902) 310; Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; trans. J. M. Trout, et al.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1917) 2:178-94; Charles R. Erdman, *The General Epistles: An Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1918) 52; et al.

¹¹ Huther, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 30. Cf. Keil, *Commentar über die Briefe des Petrus*, 33: “Nicht eigentliche Verfolgungen erwähnt Petrus, sondern nur Schmähungen und Lästerungen der Christen vonseiten der Heiden, wie solche jederzeit vorgekommen sind und noch gegenwärtig vonseiten der Ungläubigen vorkommen.”

¹² Some of the early proponents include: Adolph Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. J. P. Ward; London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1904) 211-13; William M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (9th ed.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907) 279-95; Hermann Gunkel, “Der erste Brief des Petrus,” in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917) 251-52. For more proponents of this view, see below.

position, the animosity which the Christian congregations faced originated not from the local populace but from an organized initiative on the part of the Roman State. Due to the official proscription of the Christian faith, the Roman government was said to have actively pursued its members. Thus, as William M. Ramsay described it, “[t]he Christians are not merely tried when a private accuser comes forward against them, but are *sought out* for trial by the Roman officials.”¹³ Such concentrated efforts on the annihilation of Christians were thought to be limited to the respective reigns of Nero, Domitian, and Trajan. With the history of Christian persecution so clearly demarcated, the conflict described in 1 Peter was thus equated with one of the three worldwide, anti-Christian initiatives carried out under these well-known “persecutors of the Church.”¹⁴

It has not been uncommon—whether in the earlier commentaries on 1 Peter or in some of the more recent treatments—for interpreters to set up the “official” and “unofficial” views of persecution as diametrically opposed and exclusive interpretive options. This dichotomy, unfortunately, overlooks important modifications which had begun to be made to the traditional views during the 19th and early-20th centuries. It was during this time that the foundations were laid for what would later materialize into a third persecution theory—what might be designated the “median” view of persecution. Regrettably, the many qualifications that were being drawn and the significant distinctions that were made were never fully developed into a systematized model by which this perspective could be differentiated from the claims of traditional theories. As

¹³ Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 280-81 (emphasis added).

¹⁴ A curious fact about the early secondary literature on the subject is that, in many cases, the basic tenets often associated with the “official” persecution theory (*viz.*, the official proscription of Christianity and the active, systematic pursuit of Christians by Roman authorities) are rarely spelled out in detail. A much more common indicator that one holds to this view is the mention of this three-ruler approach to persecution. The adoption of this scheme suggests that one is working under the assumption that the universal and systematic persecutions of Christians, which were carried out under the initiative of Roman authorities, were limited to the respective reigns of these three emperors. For if there were three distinct periods in which Christian persecution took place, then there must have been something different about the conflict then experienced which did not take place during the intervening periods. In this case, what seems to demarcate these three great persecutions is the initiative taken by the Roman government. With this in mind, an important clarification is in order: if an interpreter equates the persecutions of 1 Peter with those described in the correspondence of Pliny and Trajan, this does not necessarily imply that he or she holds to the “official” persecution theory. Such an association could be drawn on the basis of parallels between the two and not on the notion that either event was in any way “official” persecution (*i.e.*, initiated by Roman authorities). If, on the other hand, they equate the two situations because they have previously ruled out the two other “periods of persecution” in the Christian church (*i.e.*, during the respective reigns of Nero and Domitian), then they could be placed in the “official” persecution category.

time passed, many of these distinctions were either confused with the tenets of other approaches, or they were simply overlooked altogether. Therefore, it is important that they be given a fresh hearing.

One of the key interpretive trends in the 19th and early-20th centuries was the attempt to equate the persecutions of 1 Peter with the conflict which spilled over into the provinces shortly after the fire in Rome and the ensuing Neronian pogroms.¹⁵ Two pieces of evidence seemed to lead interpreters in this direction. First, many pointed to the fact that “[t]he magnitude (*Größe*) and universality (*Allgemeinheit*) of the evil evince that it must have proceeded from the highest civic authority, which alone could occasion so wide spread (*weit ausgebreiteter*) and simultaneous (*gleichzeitiger*) a result.”¹⁶ The persecution of Nero was thought to be the only event that could account for the far-reaching effects described in the epistle (cf. 1 Pet 5.9). Second, interpreters regularly pointed out the legal culpability which seems to threaten the letter’s readers (cf. 1 Pet 4.16, [πάσχειν] ὡς Χριστιανός). As George Salmon notes, “when the Epistle was written Christians were liable to be punished as such,” a fact which “forbids us to date the letter earlier in Peter’s life than the year of the burning of Rome.”¹⁷

This close association with the Neronian persecution naturally led commentators who held to the “unofficial” persecution theory to group proponents of this view very closely with the “official” persecution approach. While in many cases this may have been an

¹⁵ So, e.g., Ernst T. Mayerhoff, *Historisch-critische Einleitung in die petrinischen Schriften. Nebst einer Abhandlung über den Verfasser der Apostelgeschichte* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1835) 131-35; J. Leonhard Hug, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. D. Fosdick, Jr.; Andover: Gould and Newman, 1836) 632-34; John Brown, *Expository Discourses on the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter* (2nd ed.; New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1851) 29, 643-44; Theodor Schott, *Der erste Brief Petri* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1861) 132-35, 346-60; E. H. Plumptre, *The General Epistles of St. Peter & St. Jude, with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1879) 62; A. J. Mason, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” in *A New Testament Commentary for English Readers by Various Writers* (ed. C. J. Ellicott; vol. 3; London: Cassell, 1884) 386; George Salmon, *A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament, Being an Expansion of Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin* (7th ed.; London: J. Murray, 1894) 436-37; J. Howard B. Masterman, *The First Epistle of S. Peter (Greek Text), with Introduction and Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1900) 20-25; William H. Bennett, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, John, and Jude* (The Century Bible; Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1901) 32-46; J. H. A. Hart, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (vol. 5; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961) 17-33; James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (3rd ed.; International Theological Library; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1918) 323-27; J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (WC; London: Methuen & Co., 1934) 12-17.

¹⁶ Hug, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 632.

¹⁷ Salmon, *Historical Introduction*, 437. Cf. also Brown, *First Epistle of the Apostle Peter*, 643-44; Mason, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” 386.

accurate assessment, there were some within this group who were beginning to depart from the “official” view in significant ways. The distinctions that had begun to be drawn—although not always obvious on a casual reading—marked an important departure from the “official” proposal and a considerable step toward a new and innovative approach.

The first of these important qualifications relates to the subsidiary *cause* of the persecutions. Rather than viewing the conflict described in 1 Peter as the result of *laws* passed down by the Roman government which proscribed the Christian faith, proponents of this new approach stressed the important *influence* of the Neronian pogroms, both on the local populace as well as on governing officials.¹⁸ This event was said to have set a *precedent* for the treatment of Christians. This distinction between the persecutions of Nero and the hostility that spilled over into the provinces is clearly delineated by J. Howard B. Masterman: “Now though the Neronian persecution was confined to Rome, a step of this kind, taken by Imperial authority, would be certain to form a precedent for Provincial Governors, and there was therefore good reason to fear that the persecution would extend to other parts of the Empire.”¹⁹ Therefore, as James Moffatt noted, “[a]fter the Neronian wave had passed over the capital, the wash of it was felt on the far shores of the provinces.” That is, “the provincials would soon hear of it, and, when they desired a similar outburst at the expense of local Christians, all that was needed was a proconsul to gratify their wishes, and some outstanding disciple like Antipas or Polykarp to serve as a victim.”²⁰

A second point of distinction that could be drawn between the emerging approach and the “official” view of persecution was the *inevitability* of the conflict. Proponents of the “official” theory tended to portray the hostility with designations such as “formal” or “systematic” persecution, meaning that it stretched across the Empire and affected all of those with whom it came into contact. With its stress on influence rather than laws, however, this new approach acknowledged the wide-ranging extent of the conflict, but it also recognized that the persecutions were often sporadic and episodic rather than

¹⁸ See, e.g., Plumptre, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 62; Bennett, *The General Epistles*, 45; Wand *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 17.

¹⁹ Masterman, *The First Epistle of S. Peter*, 22.

²⁰ Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, 326-27.

constant and decisive²¹—a point which was further undergirded by the third and final distinction.

Probably the most important difference between proponents of the emerging approach and the traditional “official” position was *role* of Roman authorities in the persecution of Christians. According to the situational reconstruction of the “official” persecution theory, Roman authorities *actively* pursued Christians in an organized effort to achieve total elimination. The Roman government, as Ramsay described it, was “absolutely hostile, raging against them, seeking them out for destruction.”²² Many within this emerging view, however, recognized that Christians could only reach the local and provincial courts through the official accusations of a private *delator* (“accuser”). One attempt to clearly delineate this distinction is found in the commentary of Rudolf Knopf, whose treatment marks an additional step, which implements many of these important qualifications into a timeframe somewhat later than the Neronian persecution. While Knopf clearly admits that “die Hand des Staates gelegentlich an die Christengemeinden greift,” he recognizes that these words could very well be misinterpreted. For this reason, he quickly qualifies this statement, noting,

Diese Annahme schließt die oben gemachte Beobachtung, daß der Staat die Verfolgung nicht organisieren, keineswegs aus. Die Sache liegt vielmehr so, daß aus dem Haß und Argwohn der Bevölkerung selber Anklagen entstehen, die vor die Behörde gebracht werden. Diese ist daraufhin gezwungen, gegen die Christen vorzugehen, und es kam sicher vor, daß auch mit Bestrafungen gegen die Christen eingeschritten wurde.²³

By thus clarifying how he understands the *initiative* behind the hostility, Knopf clearly separates his view from that of the “official” position.

²¹ Ibid., 326.

²² Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 281.

²³ “This assumption in no way rules out the observation made above, that the State did not organize the persecution. The point is much more that from the hatred and suspicion of the populace itself accusations arise, which are brought before the authority. This authority is consequently forced to act against the Christians, and it seems certain too that punitive actions would be taken against the Christians” (Rudolf Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä* [KEK 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912] 23). Similarly, note how Moffatt refuses to separate popular hostility from legal threats: “while the epistle has judicial proceedings in view now and again, it does not exclude the hardships due to exasperated popular feeling; indeed, the two cannot be kept apart, as the action of governors was usually stimulated by private information laid by angry citizens” (*Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, 326).

Unfortunately, these distinctions went relatively unnoticed in the larger debate on the nature of persecution in 1 Peter. Despite the fact that these qualifications were categorically distinct from the “official” view of persecution, the two were commonly equated. In some cases, the responsibility for this confusion lies with proponents of the “unofficial” theory, who made no attempt to differentiate the peculiarities of opposing positions. This was due, in large part, to the fact that “some earlier proponents of [the “unofficial”] position did not always distinguish clearly among actions giving expression to imperial policy and actions of a wholly independent nature by local or regional officials.”²⁴

In all fairness, however, much of the blame for this confusion rests on the shoulders of those who advocated a slightly alternative approach to the question of persecution. Few members of this camp actually sought to clarify their views against false characterizations or to distinguish them from those of the “official” position. Therefore, it is admittedly quite difficult to separate the two views in some cases. One particular area where more clarity would have been greatly beneficial concerns the role of local and provincial officials. Even though many stressed that it was the “example” or “precedent” (rather than “laws”) of Nero that was most influential among provincial officials, very few commentators actually specified whether the pattern which governors followed included *seeking out* Christians or whether this influence was merely limited to the way in which Christians were *perceived*.²⁵

Regardless of who was ultimately responsible for this interpretive misunderstanding, however, the confusion has had an enormous impact on how the topic has been addressed

²⁴ William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter* (WUNT 2/30; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1989) 13 n. 56. A particular example of this type of confusion is evident in the more recent discussion of D. Edmond Hiebert. Drawing attention to one of the critical pieces of evidence adduced by this emerging approach (*viz.*, the reference to suffering *ὡς Χριστιανός* [1 Pet 4.16]), he notes how some interpreters have used this reference to situate the persecutions shortly after (ca. 65-67 CE) the Neronian pogroms. Then, although he correctly acknowledges that the view “assumes that Roman officials in the Asian provinces would readily have followed the action of the emperor in the capital,” for some reason, Hiebert attempts to summarily rule out this proposal because, according to him, “there is no firm evidence that the Neronian edict [*sic*] resulted in *systematic* persecution of Christians outside of Rome” (*First Peter* [2nd ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1992] 27 [emphasis added]). Such a conclusion reveals the failure to consider that there may be a “median” position which allows for the persecution of Christians as Christian following the Neronian pogroms, but which would not be equated with “official,” systematic persecution resulting from a governmental edict.

²⁵ See, e.g., Mayerhoff, *Einleitung in die petrinischen Schriften*, 133-34; Masterman, *The First Epistle of S. Peter*, 20-25; Bennett, *The General Epistles*, 45.

within Petrine scholarship. Due to the lack of systematization and in the absence of strong clarification, the distinctions which were beginning to be made in the 19th and early-20th centuries were never fully integrated into the discussion. Instead, they were regularly subsumed under the traditional “official” persecution proposal without any differentiation. Therefore, when the “official” view of persecution began to lose favor within Petrine scholarship, these important qualifications were also ruled out by association.

This important shift away from the “official” persecution approach was caused by two imposing factors. First, the work of Edward G. Selwyn offered a thorough historical refutation of the “official” position and introduced interpreters to a way of reading the text which concentrated on the informal character of suffering.²⁶ At the same time, great strides were being made to establish the unity of 1 Peter.²⁷ Therefore, interpreters were being forced to reconcile the more somber and far-reaching references to persecution in the second half of the epistle (1 Pet 4.12–5.14) with those in the first half which (seemingly) depict the persecution as a less pressing event (1.1–4.11). It was the combination of these two major influences that marked the great watershed in the persecution debate. With these key factors in place, the popularity of the “official” position began to subside,²⁸ while the already formidable constituency of the “unofficial” approach began to ascend to a place of prominence.²⁹ In fact, by the time the field was

²⁶ Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Essays* (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1947; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952) 52-56; idem, “The Persecutions in I Peter,” *BSNTS* 1 (1950) 39-50.

²⁷ See Appendix 1: Suffering and the Unity of 1 Peter.

²⁸ The “official” persecution view did not vanish immediately, however. Subsequent proponents include: Friedrich Hauck, *Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes* (NTD 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957) 36-37; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude: A Commentary on the First Letter of Peter, a Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 8-10; J. D. McCaughey, “Three ‘Persecution Documents’ of the New Testament,” *ABR* 17 (1969) 27-40 (37-40); Francis W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1970) 29-34; Johannes B. Bauer, “Der erste Petrusbrief und die Verfolgung unter Domitian,” in *Die Kirche des Anfangs: Für Heinz Schürmann* (ed. R. Schnackenburg, et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1978) 513-27; F. Gerald Downing, “Pliny’s Prosecution of Christians: Revelation and 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 34 (1988) 105-23.

²⁹ Note those who followed Selwyn’s lead: R. Leconte, *Les épîtres catholiques* (Sainte Bible de Jérusalem; Paris: Cerf, 1953) 66; C. E. B. Cranfield, *I & II Peter and Jude* (TBC; London: SCM, 1960) 14-15, 17-18; Ceslas Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre* (SB 4; Paris: Gabalda, 1966) 18-21; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 5-11; Ernest Best, *1 Peter* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 36-42; Norbert Brox, “Situation und Sprache der Minderheit im ersten Petrusbrief,” *Kairos* 19 (1977) 1-13; Fritz Neugebauer, “Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des 1. Petrusbriefes,” *NTS* 26

surveyed during the mid-1970s, a growing consensus had already emerged.³⁰ This trend would continue during the latter half of the 20th century and on into the 21st century, as the “unofficial” position was adopted in the overwhelming majority of scholarly literature on 1 Peter.³¹

Regrettably, the uneventful reign of the “unofficial” position has only served to compound a problem that has been hampered by significant confusion. At the heart of the issue, lies the fact that proponents of the “unofficial” view—as well as those of the “official” proposal, for that matter—have read 1 Peter against the backdrop of a number of undemonstrated historical contentions for which they have never been forced to account. Even though the primary matter of contention has been the historical context in which the readers found themselves and out of which the various forms of persecution emanated, few background issues have been adequately addressed within the secondary literature. This stems, in large part, from the fact that the voices of many earlier interpreters have been silenced by the ascension and subsequent reign of the “unofficial” position. Along with this, many of the distinctions which had begun to be raised in the 19th and early-20th centuries have slowly faded into the periphery. It is, nevertheless, these issues that hold out the greatest promise for ascertaining the nature of suffering in 1 Peter.

One key component that has been continually overlooked is the nature of the Anatolian legal system. What is sorely lacking is any type of comprehensive attempt to

(1979) 61-86 (61-66); Claude Lepelley, “Le Contexte historique de la première lettre de Pierre: Essai d’interprétation,” in *Études sur la première lettre de Pierre. Congrès de l’ACFEB, Paris 1979* (ed. C. Perrot; LD 102; Paris: Cerf, 1980) 43-64.

³⁰ See Elliott, “Rehabilitation,” 251-52. Cf. also Cothenet, “La Première de Pierre,” 3701-3704.

³¹ E.g., Uwe Holmer and Werner de Boor, *Die Briefe des Petrus und der Brief des Judas* (5th ed.; WSB 18; Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1986) 17-18; Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter* (TNTC 17; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 31-32; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Waco, TX.: Word, 1988) lxiii-lxvi; Otto Knoch, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief. Der Judasbrief* (RNT; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1990) 20-21; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 9-10; Samuel Bénétreau, *La Première Épître de Pierre* (2nd ed.; CEB 1; Vaux-sur-Seine: Edifac, 1992) 27-30; Norbert Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (4th ed.; EKKNT 21; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1993) 24-34; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28-36; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 83-94; M. Eugene Boring, *1 Peter* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999) 43-44; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 97-103; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 16-18; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003) 28-31; Donald P. Senior, *1 Peter* (SP 15; Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical, 2003) 7-8; Paul Bony, *La Première épître de Pierre: Chrétiens en diaspora* (LB 137; Paris: Cerf, 2004) 12-13; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 8-10; Pierre Prigent, *Suivre le Christ: Commentaire de la première épître de Pierre* (Lyon: Olivétan, 2006) 9, 96, 131-32; Joel B. Green, *1 Peter* (THNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 8-10; *et al.*

understand how conflict—and in particular, Christian conflict—was dealt with in the world of first-century CE Asia Minor.³² Significant debate has surrounded the role of local and provincial officials in the readers' plight and whether the epistle indicates the recipients' involvement in judicial proceedings. But, to date, very little attention has been devoted to understanding how the Anatolian legal system actually functioned. In the same way, another topic that has been overlooked is the legal status of Christians following the Neronian persecution.³³ Commentators have voiced opinions concerning the legal culpability of Christians in the first century CE, but few have attempted a detailed chronological assessment of the Christians' legal status. Both of these questions were raised within the discussion of the 19th and early-20th centuries, but no formal resolutions were reached. Since that point, the topics have been seemingly taken off the

³² This is the major problem with employing an honor-shame model to the situation in 1 Peter given the current state of the question (as does, e.g., John H. Elliott, "Disgraced yet Graced: The Gospel according to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame," *BTB* 25 [1995] 166-78; Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter* [SBLDS 160; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998]; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 94-104; Pierre F. Steenberg, "The Reversal of Roles as the Reasoning for Remaining Christian in the Face of Hardship in the First Epistle of Peter," [Ph.D. diss., University of Pretoria, 2000] 149-60). Such a model is designed to come alongside and interpret historical circumstances, and in that way, it assumes that the interpreter has a reasonably firm grasp on the historical situation. The benefit of this type of approach is that the honor-shame model is extremely elastic in that it can be employed regardless of the specificity of the historical knowledge. This elasticity also comes with certain drawbacks, however. While it works well in situations where a great deal is known about the specific circumstances behind the conflict, the more meager the historical data, the less helpful its application becomes. Because interpreters have yet to properly work out the specifics of the conflict situation in 1 Peter, the application of this type of model is of less value. In fact, it has only served to further compound the problem. By assuming an extremely imprecise conceptual background, it has made the vague more abstract. For a critical assessment of the use of the honor-shame model in NT studies, see Louise J. Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (WUNT 2/165; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

³³ Early commentators on all sides of the issue recognized that following Nero's persecution, Christians were susceptible to legal condemnation simply for being Christians. Those who thought 1 Peter reflected such a situation placed the letter after 64 CE, while those who did not situated it prior to that point. For those modern commentators who date the epistle *prior* to the Neronian persecution (e.g., Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, 17; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 27-30; Holmer and de Boor, *Die Briefe des Petrus*, 17-18; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 35-37; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 27-28; Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude* [NIBC; Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 1992] 3; Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross* [2nd ed.; The Bible Speaks Today; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1994] 23; Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter*, 36-37), this question is immaterial. But for the large portion of Petrine interpreters who hold to pseudonymy and thus who date the epistle *subsequent* to 64 CE, this is a question that must be answered and one whose answer may have a significant bearing on how the nature of suffering is understood. To date, however, modern interpreters have not been forced to provide a serious response to this question.

table. Until this type of historical groundwork has been adequately laid, however, all conclusions remain speculative.³⁴

What is more, when the topic is discussed in Petrine literature, one aspect that is frequently overlooked is the *differentiated experience* of Christian suffering. (This fact is surprising given John H. Elliott's ground-breaking work *Home for the Homeless* in which he attempts to sketch a "social profile" of the Petrine audience.³⁵) Commentators are often content to treat the readers' persecution as an undifferentiated unity. By focusing primarily on the verbal aspect of the conflict, previous interpreters have emerged with a very uniform, albeit inadequate, picture of suffering for the first-century audience. For example, should we assume that upon conversion the slave of a non-Christian master would have experienced the same repercussions as a free craftsman running a small business? Should we not differentiate between the experience of a woman who converted to Christianity against the wishes of her unbelieving husband and the experience of a fisherman who pulled out of his local voluntary association? What few studies have accounted for is that the Anatolian communities to whom the letter is addressed contained an assortment of members from a range of social, political, and economic backgrounds. By implication, any treatment that attempts to adequately address the situation facing the Petrine assemblies must necessarily explore how various social groups would have been affected.

B. Purpose of the Study

The present study is designed to rectify the significant missteps through which the topic of persecution has formerly been approached. Our goal is to determine the nature of

³⁴ There have recently been several interpreters who have begun to raise these issues afresh and to point scholarship in a new direction (so, e.g., Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* [WUNT 64; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1992] 105-32; Joachim Molthagen, "Die Lage der Christen im römischen Reich nach dem 1. Petrusbrief: Zum Problem einer Domitianischen Verfolgung," *Historia* 44 [1995] 422-58; David G. Horrell, "The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Pet 4.16 and the Formation of Christian Identity," *JBL* 126 [2007] 361-81 [esp. 370-76]; idem, *1 Peter* [NTG; London: T&T Clark, 2008] 53-59; Paul A. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective* [WUNT 244; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009] esp. 4-5, 40-73).

³⁵ John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy, with a New Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990 [1981]) esp. 59-100. Although we ultimately reach a number of varying conclusions with regard to the questions addressed in this study, the present work is greatly indebted to the pioneering efforts of Prof. Elliott.

suffering in 1 Peter by situating the letter against the backdrop of conflict management in first-century CE Anatolia. Herein we will explore the various means by which conflict was dealt with in Asia Minor and how the persecutions of 1 Peter fit into this larger context. In an effort to differentiate the various forms of suffering experienced by individual community members, we will examine how the present conflict may have threatened/affected different social groups within the Anatolian congregations. Using Elliott's work on the "social profile" of the readers as our methodological guide, we will seek to provide a comprehensive assessment of the recipients and their situation by locating the audience within the world of first-century CE Asia Minor. It is our hope that through a detailed and well-informed reconstruction of the letter's historical background, we will be able to shed fresh light on a topic that has been misunderstood and miscommunicated for far too long.

The method set out to achieve this aim consists of a three-fold structure. After addressing various introductory issues (Chapter One) and exploring what the social sciences might add to our discussion (Chapter Two), the first major section of the work will explore the location and identity of the Petrine readers. Since the nature and cause of persecution is conditioned in large part by the parties involved, these chapters will seek to lay the groundwork for later inquiry by determining the precise geographical setting in which the addressees were located (Chapter Three) and by providing a detailed "social profile" of the recipients themselves (Chapter Four). Once these foundations have been laid, the second major section will be devoted to contextualizing the conflict in 1 Peter. We will explore the various means—both formal and informal—by which conflict was expressed in first-century CE Anatolia (Chapter Five) as well as the precarious legal status of Christians in the Roman world (Chapter Six). With these historical underpinnings in place, many of the previous debates will find long-awaited resolution, and a greater historical clarity will be restored. In the third and final section, we will examine the nature of persecution in 1 Peter using this much more historically-informed perspective. Our goal will be to first analyze the cause(s) of suffering (Chapter Seven), which will thereby better enable us to finally diagnose the various forms which this conflict may have taken (Chapter Eight).

C. Resolving the Difficulties of Historical Reconstruction

Before such a study can be undertaken, one critical question (or potential objection) must be addressed: can a possibly pseudonymous and encyclical letter be related to the socio-historical conditions in a specific area of the Roman Empire at a particular point in time? One's answer to this question will determine whether or not the pursuit of the present study has any merit.

At the outset, we must admit that 1 Peter does pose significant difficulties for anyone attempting to reconstruct the historical situation out of which the epistle arose. First, the geographical setting over which the letter is addressed spans an area of somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000 square miles, depending on the date of the letter's composition.³⁶ It therefore cannot be assumed *a priori* that the readers were one homogeneous group. The problems of one community might not be shared by Christian congregations elsewhere. Secondly, the historical descriptions found in 1 Peter are extremely vague and thus provide few specific details. For this reason, it is difficult to tell how much the author really knew about the situation and how well his description fits with the actual historical circumstances.

The significance of these two facts in the discussion of historical reconstruction cannot be overstated, for they have led some interpreters to consider all attempts to seek out the situational background as misguided exercises in futility.³⁷ As a result, more than one commentator has purposefully sought out alternate methods of interpretation. It was upon this basis, for example, that Helmut Millauer conducted his investigation into the *Leidenstheologie* in 1 Peter.³⁸ In his analysis, Millauer argues that "die Erklärung der Leidensaussagen des 1. Petr. . . . nicht aus einer historischen Situation ermittelt werden kann."³⁹ Instead, he maintains that the more appropriate method is a *traditionsgeschichtliche* approach. The reason for his reservations with regard to

³⁶ On the correct size of the provinces listed in 1 Pet 1.1, see p. 58 n. 2.

³⁷ Even those who are more optimistic about the possibility of getting back to some semblance of a historical context are nonetheless cautious about such an undertaking: "Formidable problems face one in the attempt to determine the situation and status of the original readers of 1 Peter" (Achtmeier, *1 Peter*, 50); "Any discussion of the audience of 1 Peter should begin with a caution" (Michaels, *1 Peter*, xlv).

³⁸ Helmut Millauer, *Leiden als Gnade: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Leidenstheologie des ersten Petrusbriefes* (EH 23/56; Bern: Lang, 1976).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

historical reconstruction lies in the fact that the letter contains few concrete descriptions about the situation. Although he does admit some insight into the circumstances of the readers (*viz.*, that they are encountering ostracism and discrimination from those who are hostile toward their faith), he feels that this is merely a description of the global epidemic facing Christianity rather than the unique experience of any one particular community.⁴⁰ So rather than shaping its response around the circumstances of the readers, “1. Petr. antwortet auf die Diskriminierung, indem er von der Tradition her das Wesen, die Situation und das daraus abzuleitende Verhalten der Christen neu bestimmt.”⁴¹

Along a similar line, Lauri Thurén has opted to approach the epistle through modern rhetorical analysis rather than socio-historical inquiry.⁴² This choice is grounded both in the lack of evidence provided in the letter as well as in the confusion surrounding recent attempts at situational reconstruction. Concerning the former, Thurén opines, “Since the letter lacks particular information about the addressees’ circumstances, we cannot identify an exact, single historical situation of the letter.” In his opinion, this deficiency in historical data has created a somewhat garbled and confusing picture for the modern interpreter: “The suggestions for what could be the addressees’ problem are many and contradictory, yet all have their foundation in the text. Thus this attempt does not provide sufficient base for analyzing the author’s purposes and rhetorical strategies in the text . . .”⁴³ Therefore, according to Thurén, “we cannot rely solely on conventional historical methods, since we have no sufficient basis for identifying the historical situation of the letter.” A more fitting approach is one “which asks for the goals and purposes of the text, focusing on the interactive dimension thereof,” namely, rhetorical criticism.⁴⁴

While I would not wish to deny the significance of either a tradition-historical or rhetorical approach to interpretation, I am thoroughly convinced that historical inquiry

⁴⁰ These same sentiments were echoed only a year later by Brox, “Situation und Sprache,” 4: “Der Verfasser meint mit seinen eingestreuten Hinweisen auf vergangene, gegenwärtige und künftige Bedrängnis nicht historisch bestimmte, besondere, einmalige Situationen, sondern die Situation schlechthin, in der der Glaube zu leben ist.”

⁴¹ Millauer, *Leiden als Gnade*, 60.

⁴² Lauri Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter, with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy Press, 1990). Cf. also *idem*, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis* (JSNTSup 114; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 15.

⁴³ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

holds out considerable benefits for the interpretation of 1 Peter.⁴⁵ And despite the arguments to the contrary, I judge that the historical situation behind the epistle can be reconstructed with a reasonable degree of confidence. Such a conclusion is born out of two considerations: (1) the evidence related to the author and his audience, and (2) the nature of the problem being addressed.

While the author of 1 Peter may not—and cannot, given the encyclical nature of the letter—provide specific details about the circumstances facing any one particular Anatolian community, he does possess some acquaintance with the readers’ situation.⁴⁶ This is evidenced in the letter itself, and it is further supported by the nature of rhetorical communication.⁴⁷ First, with regard to the letter itself, there is plenty of evidence to show that the author possessed at least a basic acquaintance with the audience and the situation in which they found themselves. The very existence of the epistle is proof that the author knew of Christian communities scattered across Asia Minor (1 Pet 1.1) who were experiencing persecution (1.6-7; 2.18-20; 3.13-17; 4.3-4, 12-19; 5.9). While he may not have been the one who initially proclaimed the gospel to them, he may have possessed some insight into how and when this took place (1.12, 25). In the least, he was aware of general facts related to their ethnic background and possibly even their former manner of life (1.14, 18; 4.3). Moreover, the fact that he diagnoses the problem and offers a plan of response assumes some degree of specificity with regard to his knowledge of their circumstances.

⁴⁵ Standing on the edge of a precipice that many feel cannot be crossed, I am keenly aware of the warning that Frederick W. Danker offered to would-be historians years ago: “The paths and byways of the Greco-Roman world are mined with numerous possibilities for embarrassment to those who venture forth on historical explorations.” Yet it is his further qualification of this warning that demands the risk be taken: “It is no cause for marvel, then, that New Testament interpreters have generally preferred to carry on discussions of texts within more parochially defined boundaries, but at a high cost of boredom to eavesdroppers on the dialogue” (“First Peter in Sociological Perspective,” *Int* 37 [1983] 84-88 [84-85]).

⁴⁶ On the extent to which the author of 1 Peter knew about the particular circumstances of the recipients, see P. Duane Warden, “Alienation and Community in 1 Peter,” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986) 21-50. The one problem with Warden’s treatment is that he (incorrectly) restricts the geographical location to the urban centers of western Asia Minor, the same area to which Revelation is addressed and in which much of Paul’s ministry was performed (cf. Philip L. Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter: An Analysis of the Letter-Opening* [San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1997] 30, who suggests that the designations may be metaphorical).

⁴⁷ Even if one could adequately demonstrate that the author was completely unfamiliar with the situation of his readers, this would still not render his description insignificant. For his diagnosis and prescribed solution would have to be drawn from what he had seen or experienced in his dealings with the conflict between Christianity and Greco-Roman society. Thus, it would still provide us with an early reconstruction of the threats facing Christians in the first century CE.

On a more general level, he was thoroughly acquainted with the world in which his readers lived. As a member of Greco-Roman society, he would have been keenly aware of the social structures that were in place and the strain that Christian conversion placed on these relationships (1 Pet 2.18–3.1-7). Likewise, the political environment would not have been far removed from his periphery. Considerable uniformity would have existed among the roles carried out by local and provincial authorities, each being subservient to the larger will of the emperor (2.13, 17). Furthermore, as a Christian leader, certain aspects of the structure of Christian communities and how they functioned might readily be assumed (4.10-11; 5.1-5).

Moreover, in order to provide his letter with the opportunity of accomplishing the purpose for which it was intended (cf. 1 Pet 5.12), it is natural to assume that the author had some familiarity with the readers' situation; otherwise, his response would have all-too-likely been considered superficial. For, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out, "[i]n real argumentation, care must be taken to form a concept of the anticipated audience as close as possible to reality. An inadequate picture of the audience, resulting from either ignorance or an unforeseen set of circumstances, can have very unfortunate results."⁴⁸ Thus in order for his epistolary goal to become a reality, it first required an intelligible and fairly representative reconstruction of the circumstances facing these Christian communities.⁴⁹

But even if we are to assume that the author has at least a basic level of familiarity with his readers' situation, this still leaves us with one major obstacle to overcome: the difficulty of reconstructing the circumstances from the scanty evidence provided in 1 Peter. Even this problem, however, does not prevent us from discerning the basic situational context of the epistle with a reasonable degree of confidence. The reason for such optimism lies in the nature of the problem that the letter addresses. Regardless of how vague the actual descriptions tend to be, all modern commentators allow for some insight into the historical circumstances surrounding the epistle's composition and reception. In fact, within Petrine scholarship there are two agreed upon assumptions from

⁴⁸ Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (trans. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver; Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame, 1969) 20.

⁴⁹ This fact also helps us to answer the question, how much does the letter's description capture the actual historical circumstances and how much is the author's own rhetorical construct? See p. 3 n. 6 above.

which all interpreters approach the problem of suffering, *viz.*, the cause and scope of persecution. The basic agreement that seems to be shared by all commentators is that the epistle is addressed to Christian communities undergoing some form of conflict which has arisen as a result of their newfound Christian faith, an experience which is shared by believers all across the world (cf. 1 Pet 5.9).

The importance of this agreement cannot be overstated. For the nature of the problem dictates the direction of further investigation. Due to the fact that the readers' troubles (a) were caused by their adoption of the Christian faith and (b) were experienced by other believers around the world, it is safe to assume that the form(s) of hostility and the means by which it was displayed lie(s) not in the circumstances of one specific community but in the friction that Christianity created in the larger fabric of Anatolian society. As a result, it is not necessary for us to possess complete insight into any one particular community during the latter half of the first century CE. Instead, the universality of this problem frees us to ask questions about Anatolian society in general and about Christian conflict in the larger Greco-Roman world. To the extent that we can understand everyday life in Asia Minor and the legal situation in which Christians existed during the first century CE, we will also be able to understand the kind of environment in which the Petrine communities attempted to live out their Christian faith. As our picture of life in Asia Minor and the legal status of Christians becomes clearer, our understanding of the kinds of threats facing these congregations will become better defined as well. In light of this broader historical background, we will be able to explore the specifics behind the cause(s) of conflict in 1 Peter and how these types of problems would have been dealt with in an Anatolian context.

Our approach is therefore much different from what many imagine when they think of a "historical reconstruction" of 1 Peter. While having the kind of detailed descriptions found in the Corinthian or the Thessalonian epistles would certainly shed much light on situational background of the letter, this type of data is not necessarily required in order to perform the kind of reconstruction that will be undertaken in the present study. Because our focus will be on the types of threats facing the Christians in first-century Asia Minor, we already possess enough evidence from which to work. Our goal is to simply take what little information can be gleaned about the situation from 1 Peter and

place it against the larger backdrop of Asia Minor (a world which has yielded much more data) in order to better understand the problem facing the Petrine readers. In other words, it is a case of employing a historically-informed imagination to plausibly sketch how suffering *may* have come about for various kinds of people included in the audience of the epistle. While this may remain speculative/imaginative to some extent, it can nonetheless inform our understanding of the letter and its response to Christian suffering.

D. Authorship and Date

Given the historical nature of our inquiry, the two introductory questions that have the greatest bearing on our study are the letter's authorship and date.⁵⁰ The reason why these issues are so important is because of the subject that we are addressing, *viz.*, Christian persecution. As we will see later in our study, at a particular point during the first century CE the relationship between the Christian Church and the Roman State experienced a decisively negative downturn (see Ch. 6). As a result, it is imperative to locate the timeframe of the conflict as precisely as possible. In doing so, I will begin with the question of authorship, for it dictates the restraints that are brought to the question of the epistle's date.

According to a recent assessment of the state of Petrine research, M. Eugene Boring declares, "First Peter is now generally accepted as pseudonymous."⁵¹ Underlying the

⁵⁰ Another important introductory matter is the question of genre. Only if 1 Peter is a genuine letter—rather than, for example, a baptismal homily—will it provide insight into the historical situation (cf. Warden, "Alienation and Community," 21-22). The question of the epistolary nature of 1 Peter is addressed in Appendix 1: Suffering and the Unity of 1 Peter.

⁵¹ M. Eugene Boring, "First Peter in Recent Study," *WW* 24 (2004) 358-67 (360). Commentaries which have held to the pseudonymous authorship of 1 Peter (post-1950) include: Hans Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe* (3rd ed.; HNT 15; rev. and aug. H. Preskier; Tübingen: Mohr, 1951) 161-62; Hauck, *Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes*, 36; Johannes Schneider, *Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes: Die Katholischen Briefe* (9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961) 39-40; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 43-50; Best, *1 Peter*, 49-63; Horst Balz and Wolfgang Schrage, *Die "Katholischen" Briefe: Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas* (NTD 10; Göttingen/Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985) 64-65; Hubert Frankemölle, *1. Petrusbrief, 2. Petrusbrief, Judasbrief* (NEchtB 18/20; Würzburg: Echter, 1987) 9-11; Knoch, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief*, 22-25; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 55; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (ed. F. Hahn; trans. and aug. J. E. Alsup; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 48-53; Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1995) 10-12; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 1-43; David G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude* (EC; Peterborough: Epworth, 1998) 6-7; Eduard Schweizer, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (4th ed.; ZBK 15; Zurich: Theologischer, 1998) 15-18; Boring, *1 Peter*, 30-37; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 118-130; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 9-11; Senior, *1 Peter*, 4-7; Prigent, *La première épître de Pierre*, 10; Reinhard Feldmeier,

modern espousal of pseudonymy are a number of important objections against the authenticity of 1 Peter. Some of the major⁵² arguments include: (1) The style of Greek in which the letter is written rivals some of the most polished literature in the NT. Such an elevated level, it is thought, is far too great for an “uneducated” Galilean fisherman (Acts 4.13).⁵³ (2) The letter mentions very little about the life, ministry, or teaching of the historical Jesus; instead, the focus is primarily on his suffering and death. This seems somewhat unusual given that Peter was one of Jesus’ most intimate disciples. (3) A large amount of evidence appears to point in the direction of a later date for the epistle’s composition: (a) The use of the cipher “Babylon” (5.13) to refer to Rome is only attested in literature that postdates the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE (e.g., *4 Ezra* 3.1, 3, 28,

The First Epistle of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text (trans. P. H. Davids; Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2008) 32-39; *et al.*

⁵² There are also less significant objections which have been raised: (1) It is unlikely that the apostle would have used the nickname Πέτρος (“Peter”) rather than his given name Σίμων (“Simon”). (2) There is no early evidence that Peter worked in the area of Asia Minor (although, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.1.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 27.7). Moreover, it is strange that he would write to areas (Asia, Galatia) that had been evangelized by Paul. (3) Peter was the apostle to the Jews (Gal 2.7-8); therefore, it is unlikely that he would have been involved with churches that were predominantly Gentile. (4) The church structure indicates a later date when there was a danger of greedy leadership. None of these, however, pose any serious threat to Petrine authorship, for they are either untrue (4) or of questionable value (1-3).

⁵³ There are some who argue that the apostle Peter was capable of the elevated level of Greek found in 1 Peter (e.g., Neugebauer, “Zur Deutung und Bedeutung,” 72; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 25-31; Brian J. Atra, “An Examination of the Speeches of Peter in Acts: Implications for the Authorship and Thought of First Peter,” [Ph.D. diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998] 16, 18-20; Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter*, 32-34). A number of points weigh heavily against this notion, however: (1) The question is one of historical *probability* not *possibility*. By simply pointing to anomalous historic examples like Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)—the Polish sailor who learned English at the age of 21 and went on to write the classic *Lord Jim*—the case is actually weakened rather than strengthened. What must be demonstrated is that Peter was *likely* to have been able to compose such eloquent Greek. To date, this has not been demonstrated. (2) One cannot use the speeches in Acts to show that Peter was capable of rhetorical speech (as does, e.g., James Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter and Judas* [MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928] 87; Atra, “Speeches of Peter,” 16), because Luke—along with the rest of the Hellenistic historiography tradition—did not reproduce speeches *ipsisima verba* but simply provided summary material written *in his own style* (cf. Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994]). (3) The crucial question in this particular case is not, did Peter know Greek? The most pressing issue is not even whether or not the stylistic quality of 1 Peter has been exaggerated by modern interpreters. For, as many have shown (see, e.g., Ludwig Radermacher, “Der erste Petrusbrief und Silvanus. Mit einem Nachwort in eigener Sache,” *ZNW* 25 [1926] 287-99; Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 4: *Style* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976] 124-30; Karen H. Jobes, “The Syntax of 1 Peter: Just How Good is the Greek?,” *BBR* 13 [2003] 159-73), the literary achievement of the author is not as great as some imagine. The greatest weakness of most previous treatments is that focus has been placed exclusively on 1 Peter’s level of stylistic quality without establishing a point of reference. If we were to assume that Peter was responsible for the composition rather than an amanuensis, the most pressing question that would need to be answered is, how can 1 Peter be of a higher stylistic quality (or even an equal stylistic quality) than the epistles of Paul, when we know that the educational training of the latter far surpassed that of the former? (Even if Paul used an amanuensis, the stylistic quality of his work would not be negatively effected.)

31; 2 Bar. 11.1; 67.7; Sib. Or. 5.143, 159).⁵⁴ (b) Many assume that it is unlikely that Christianity could have spread extensively into these areas during Peter's lifetime. (c) It is thought that 1 Peter reveals evidence of literary dependence on Pauline and deutero-Pauline literature (e.g., Romans, Ephesians).⁵⁵ (d) According to some, the persecutions described in the letter are those that took place under either Domitian (81-96 CE) or Trajan (98-117 CE). (e) The sequence of provinces listed in the prescript (1 Pet 1.1) may reflect the realignment of Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia that took place under Vespasian (72 CE).

Viewed as a whole, this evidence would seem to provide a strongly convincing case against the authenticity of 1 Peter. The strength of these objections, however, must first be assessed *individually* before being weighed *collectively*. For the accumulation of suspect or invalid evidence, despite its accumulation, would only leave us with a large collection of unconvincing arguments. As these numerous objections are assessed, one will discover that proponents of the letter's authenticity have devoted careful attention to providing scholarship with an adequate rejoinder,⁵⁶ and in many cases, the answers produced by traditional proponents seem sufficient to deflect much of the criticism.

⁵⁴ Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, "Babylon als Deckname für Rom und die Datierung des 1. Petrusbriefes," in *Gottes Wort und Gottesland. Hans-Wilhelm Hertzberg zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. G. Reventlow; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 67-77.

⁵⁵ W. Seufert, "Das Abhängigkeitsverhältnis des 1. Petrusbriefs vom Römerbrief," *ZWT* 17 (1874) 360-88; idem, "Das Verwandtschaftsverhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefes und Epheserbriefs," *ZWT* 24 (1881) 178-97, 332-80; C. L. Mitton, "The Relationship between 1 Peter and Ephesians," *JTS* 1 (1950) 67-73. More recently, Rainer Metzner, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangelium im 1. Petrusbrief: Studien zum traditionsgeschichtlichen und theologischen Einfluss des 1. Evangeliums auf den 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT 2/74; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), has proposed that 1 Peter shows direct literary dependence upon the Gospel of Matthew (although see the devastating critique by John H. Elliott, "Review of Rainer Metzner, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangelium im 1. Petrusbrief: Studien zum traditionsgeschichtlichen und theologischen Einfluss des 1. Evangeliums auf den 1. Petrusbrief*," *JBL* 116 [1997] 379-82).

⁵⁶ Commentaries that have espoused Petrine authorship (post-1950) include: Peter Ketter, *Hebräerbrief, Jakobusbrief, Petrusbriefe, Judasbrief* (HBK 16/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1950) 191; Alan M. Stibbs and Andrew F. Walls, *The First Epistle General of Peter* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 15-30; Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, 13-16; Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2nd ed.; AB 37; Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1964) 69-71; Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, 17-26; Holmer and de Boor, *Die Briefe des Petrus*, 13-18; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 21-33; Michaels, *1 Peter*, lv-lxviii (with some reservations); Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 3-7; I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (IVP New Testament Commentary Series 17; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1991) 21-24; Bénétreau, *La Première Épître de Pierre*, 33-41; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 11-20; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 1-3; Donald G. Miller, *On This Rock: A Commentary on First Peter* (PrinTMS 34; Allison Park, PA.: Pickwick, 1993) 57-75; Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter*, 18-21; Scot McKnight, *1 Peter* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 26-28; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 21-36; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 5-19; Green, *1 Peter*, 6-8; Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. 2: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity, 2007) 17; *et al.*

The most commonly proposed solution to the dilemma caused by the letter's elevated style has been the postulation of an amanuensis (or secretary). It has been customary for commentators to assign this task to Silvanus, who is mentioned in the epistle's closing.⁵⁷ The principal tenet upon which this position is founded is that in the ancient world an amanuensis possessed enough freedom to alter (or in this case, improve) the style of the actual author.⁵⁸ Opponents have criticized this solution either on the basis that it misconstrues the meaning of *διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα* (1 Pet 5.12)⁵⁹ or because it assumes the presence of an unnamed secretary. But as yet no one has refuted the claims that (a) secretaries were a normal part of the ancient letter-writing process or that (b) they often improved (or sometimes created) an author's literary style. Until these two points are disproven, the amanuensis hypothesis must remain a valid explanation of the letter's elevated style, regardless of whether the identity of the amanuensis can be discerned.⁶⁰

In response to the claim that the life and words of the historical Jesus are rarely mentioned by the author of 1 Peter, we must recognize a couple of important points. First,

⁵⁷ Another secretarial view has been proposed by Giuseppe G. Gamba, "L'Evangelista Marco Segretario—'Interprete' della prima lettera di Pietro?," *Salesianum* 44 (1982) 61-70, and more recently by Jongyoon Moon, *Mark as a Contributive Amanuensis of 1 Peter?* (Theologie 97; Berlin/London: Global, 2010). According to this theory, the actual secretarial duties for the composition of the epistle can be attributed to Mark. Serious problems prevent this from being a feasible possibility, however. Assuming that the Gospel of Mark was written by the Mark of 1 Pet 5.13, a comparison of the Gospel and 1 Peter reveals two completely different styles (see John C. Doudna, *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark* [JBLMS; Philadelphia: SBL, 1961]; J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark: An Edition of C. H. Turner's 'Notes on Marcan Usage' Together with Other Comparable Studies* [NovTSup 71; Leiden: Brill, 1993]). Moon's treatment of the syntactical similarities, for example, is very brief, extremely superficial, and without adequate methodological basis (on a proper method for measuring style in Mark's Gospel, see Travis B. Williams, "Bringing Method to the Madness: Examining the Style of the Longer Ending of Mark," *BBR* 20 [2010] 397-418). Moreover, this position does not move us any closer to a solution than the Silvanus hypothesis because nowhere is Mark specifically designated as the letter's amanuensis.

⁵⁸ For the establishment of this premise, see Otto Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre von antike Briefen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933) esp. 1-33, and E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2/42; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1991) esp. 15-127.

⁵⁹ The meaning of *διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα* is not altogether relevant to the present discussion because it is possible to posit the use of Silvanus as amanuensis regardless of how the phrase is interpreted. On the interpretation of this phrase, see E. Randolph Richards, "Silvanus Was Not Peter's Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting *διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα* in 1 Peter 5:12," *JETS* 43 (2000) 417-32, with a rebuttal by Torrey Seland, *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (BIS 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 22-28.

⁶⁰ What is noteworthy about this objection is that (to my knowledge) no one in the early church rejected 1 Peter on the basis of its elevated literary style. In fact, Jerome postulates the use of an amanuensis to explain the differences between 1 and 2 Peter (*Ep.* 120.11), apparently on the assumption that a secretary could alter a composition's literary style.

there *are* a few—although not many—allusions to the words of Jesus in the epistle.⁶¹ Rather than focusing on the teaching of Jesus, the author is more concerned with his suffering and death because it is comparable to the situation facing his readers. Second, all arguments based on what we suspect an author *should* have done or *would* have been likely to do are extremely slippery. To demonstrate just how arbitrary these types of arguments can be, we might point out that one of the objections that is frequently raised against the authenticity of 2 Peter is the consistent appeal to the author’s historical experience.⁶²

Even the dating issues can be reasonably accounted for: (a) The problem with using the reference to “Babylon” as an indication of a later date is that it does not demonstrate that all such references to Rome *must* have originated after 70 CE. Furthermore, this argument fails to take into account the Diaspora framework which the letter adopts. Given this metaphorical imagery, a reference to Rome as “Babylon” would have been perfectly natural prior to the destruction of the Temple.⁶³ (b) Even though it is often matter-of-factly stated as such, no reasons are given as to why Christianity could not have spread throughout the designated provinces before the death of Peter.⁶⁴ In fact, Leonhard

⁶¹ Some commentators have proposed a very large number of allusions in 1 Peter (e.g., Robert H. Gundry, “‘*Verba Christi*’ in I Peter: Their Implications concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 13 [1966-67] 336-50; idem, “Further *Verba* on *Verba Christi* in First Peter,” *Bib* 55 [1974] 211-32; Gerhard Maier, “Jesu-tradition im 1. Petrusbrief?,” in *Gospel Perspectives*, vol. 5: *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels* [ed. D. Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985] 85-128). These figures, however, must be tapered considerably (cf. Ernest Best, “1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition,” *NTS* 16 [1970] 95-113).

⁶² See Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. H. C. Kee; Nashville: Abingdon, 1975) 433: “the pseudonymity in II Pet[er] is carried through consistently by means of heavy stress on the Petrine authorship.”

⁶³ Cf. Carsten Peter Thiede, “Babylon, der andere Ort: Anmerkungen zu 1 Petr 5,13 und Apg 12,17,” *Bib* 67 (1986) 532-38.

⁶⁴ In an effort to combat this objection, Jobes (*1 Peter*, 28-41) has argued that Christianity first came to the Anatolian provinces through Roman colonization. She proposes that during the late 40s or early 50s “a sizable number of Christians went, either voluntarily or by force, to help populate Claudius’ newly established colonies in Asia Minor.” These believers, she supposes, had previously been in contact with Peter during his visit to Rome sometime in the early 40s (cf. Salmon, *Historical Introduction*, 442, who claims that “Peter’s letter was written to members of the Roman Church whom Nero’s persecution had dispersed to seek safety in the provinces”). Thus, “[b]ecause of Peter’s association with Rome, he writes to them after their emigration to encourage them in the faith and to instruct them how to live as Christians in their new and trying situation” (39). Such a historical reconstruction, nevertheless, falters in a number of areas and therefore must be rejected (for a fuller critique, see David G. Horrell, “Aliens and Strangers? The Socioeconomic Location of the Addressees of 1 Peter,” in *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception* [eds. B. Longenecker and K. Liebengood; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009] 176-202 [187-88]). Most problematic of all is the confusion surrounding the primary tenet upon which the theory is built, *viz.*, that “[c]olonies were typically populated by deportations from Rome and other urban

Goppelt, who held to a somewhat later pseudonymous authorship, admitted that “[t]he dissemination of Christianity throughout Asia Minor, which is presupposed in the opening of the letter, may have occurred as early as 65 [CE].”⁶⁵ Therefore, until evidence is brought forth to demonstrate that Christianity could not have (or better yet, did not) spread to these areas by the time of Peter’s death, the presence of Christian communities throughout Asia Minor should not be used as evidence for a late date.⁶⁶ (c) While 1 Peter admittedly evidences a number of shared traditions with (post-)Pauline literature, one cannot argue for a late date simply on the basis of the epistle’s suggested Pauline character. In recent years, scholarship has made a concentrated effort to break the letter free from “Pauline bondage.” In the process, the evidence for 1 Peter’s direct literary dependence on (deutero-)Pauline materials has been called into question on numerous occasions.⁶⁷ (d) The idea that 1 Peter can be linked to one of three “official” periods of persecution undertaken by certain Roman emperors has rightly been abandoned within modern scholarship. While the nature of persecution described in the epistle does have significant bearing on the date of composition (see below), it does not necessarily require a period outside of the lifetime of Peter. (e) To attempt to establish a *terminus a quo* based on the sequential arrangement of the provinces in 1 Pet 1.1 is misguided. Such an argument fails to consider the fact that Galatia and Cappadocia had been united as an imperial province prior to the time of Vespasian. During the reign of Nero, the provinces were combined under the command of Corbulo (54-62 CE; 63-66 CE) and Caesennius Paetus (62-63 CE) (see below).

centers” (Jobes, *1 Peter*, 39). What Jobes means by “deportations” is expulsions undertaken by Rome to rid the city of unwanted groups (e.g., Claudius’ expulsion of the Jews in 41 CE [Suetonius, *Claud.* 25; Dio Cassius, 60.6.6-7]). Yet expulsion from Rome was categorically different from colonization. The latter involved the placing of settlers who were sensitive to the Roman cause (usually veterans or lower-level elites from Rome) within a given city and granting them certain privileges (e.g., land, citizenship, etc.). The former involved the purging of unwanted riffraff from Rome—who in many cases simply returned again (cf. Acts 18.1-2 with Rom 16.3 [Priscilla and Aquila])—without any consideration being given to their relocation.

⁶⁵ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 46.

⁶⁶ For a defense of the thesis that the gospel *could* have spread into these provinces by the end of Nero’s reign (68 CE), see George W. Blenkin, *The First Epistle General of Peter* (Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914) xxxiv-xxxv.

⁶⁷ See Elliott, “Rehabilitation,” 246-48. Some of the most important contributions to this discussion have been Kazuhito Shimada, “Is 1 Peter Dependent on Ephesians?: A Critique of C. L. Mitton,” *AJBI* 17 (1991) 77-106; idem, “Is 1 Peter Dependent on Romans?,” *AJBI* 19 (1993) 87-137; Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition* (WUNT 103; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).

On the surface, then, it would appear that the evidence against Petrine authorship may not be as strong as some have imagined. This is an especially important consideration when one begins to assess the evidence in favor of Petrine authorship. One of the weightiest arguments is the external testimony from the early church. The earliest usage of 1 Peter can be found in the epistles of 2 Peter (ca. 80-90 CE)⁶⁸ and *1 Clement* (70-140 CE).⁶⁹ Furthermore, throughout the first few centuries, Christian writers provide a uniform testimony to the epistle's authenticity.⁷⁰ This fact is sometimes overlooked by opponents of Petrine authorship, as much of the modern discussion has focused on internal considerations. If one is to deny that Peter was the author of the letter, an adequate explanation must be provided to explain this early and uniform attestation.

A second point that lends distinctive support to Petrine authorship is the nature and purpose of the letter itself.⁷¹ Given the "Pauline flavor" of 1 Peter, one wonders why a forger would have used the pseudonym "Peter" rather than "Paul," for as Adolph Jülicher has stated, "if the first word, Peter, of our Epistle were absent, no one would have imagined that it had been composed by him."⁷² But even beyond the mere overlay of the epistle, questions arise concerning the letter's purpose, if in fact it is pseudonymous. How does attributing the letter to Peter aid in the author's present agenda?⁷³ Various theories have been proposed (from the unification of the messages of Peter and Paul to the

⁶⁸ While many commentators seek to date 2 Peter somewhere in the early-second century CE (with Ernst Käsemann, "Eine Apologie der urchristlichen Eschatologie," *ZTK* 49 [1952] 272-96, dating it as late as the mid-second century), Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX.: Word, 1983) 157-58, has amply demonstrated that an earlier date (ca. 80-90 CE) is much more appropriate. (Further evidence toward the establishment of an earlier date for 2 Peter could be afforded by the recent article of Mark D. Mathews, "The Literary Relationship of 2 Peter and Jude: Does the Synoptic Tradition Resolve this Synoptic Problem?," *Neot* 44 [2010] 47-66, who provides a compelling case for the priority of 2 Peter over against Jude.)

⁶⁹ Most date *1 Clement* around 95/96 CE, but this date is quite problematic (see pp. 203-205 below). On the literary dependence of *1 Clement* on 1 Peter, see Ora D. Foster, "The Literary Relations of 'The First Epistle of Peter' with Their Bearing on Date and Place of Authorship," *TCAAS* 17 (1913) 363-538 (398-411); Donald A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (NovTSup 34; Leiden: Brill, 1973) 239-48.

⁷⁰ For the external testimony of 1 Peter, see Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter*, 7-15; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 138-48.

⁷¹ Further support could be adduced from the letter's primitive eschatology (1 Pet 4.7) and ecclesiology (4.10-11; 5.1-5).

⁷² Jülicher, *Introduction*, 207. Cf. also Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 44: "It is certainly true that if the name 'Peter' did not stand at the head of the Epistle, it would never have occurred to anyone to suggest him as the author."

⁷³ This is a particularly important question, as Achtemeier himself admits: "Lack of compelling reasons for such pseudonymous attribution would make the claim that 1 Peter is pseudonymous seem to be that much less likely" (*1 Peter*, 41). Cf. also Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in 1 Peter," *ScrB* 27 (1997) 8-21.

recovery of a waning Pauline theology),⁷⁴ but each assumes that the letter's primary purpose was theological rather than pastoral. It is true, as Paul J. Achtemeier has pointed out, that the high esteem in which Peter was held in the early church would have made him "a logical candidate for pseudonymous authorship of an expression of apostolic faith."⁷⁵ However, 1 Peter is more than simply "an expression of apostolic faith." Therefore, more than just the credentials of the historical Peter are needed if pseudonymy is to be posited.

What must be recognized is that 1 Peter is not concerned with communicating a theological agenda merely for the sake of propagation. Behind the correspondence is a genuine pastoral concern for persecuted Christians. Since 1 Peter was written to believers who were suffering persecution from outsiders and needing a timely response on how to live out their Christian lives in the midst of pagan opposition, what must be accounted for is the purpose of the attribution *in this particular setting*. To the extent that the historical situation depicted in 1 Peter is a real experience of the letter's recipients, the pseudonymy hypothesis loses credibility.⁷⁶ The further removed the letter is from the life (and death) of the historical Peter, the less validity the attribution carries. Audiences who lived some ten, twenty, or thirty years after the death of Peter would not have been fooled into thinking that the letter was written by the apostle on the occasion of their present circumstances.⁷⁷ In this particular case, the only way for pseudonymy to perform its proposed function of apostolic confirmation is if the historical situation took place close

⁷⁴ For a discussion of the various theories, see Norbert Brox, "Tendenz und Pseudepigraphie im ersten Petrusbrief," *Kairos* 20 (1978) 110-20 (116).

⁷⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 42.

⁷⁶ The same could be true of the letter's naming of various individuals. Contrary to the opinion of Beare (*The First Epistle of Peter*, 50), who argues that "[t]he mention of Mark and Silvanus, and also of Babylon, has no significance except as part of the device of pseudonymity," the description of Silvanus may play an important role in discerning the individuals involved in the epistle's composition and dissemination. For unlike Mark, who is said to be present with the author in "Babylon," and thus whose presence would not likely have been verified, Silvanus was exempted to make personal contact with some of the Anatolian congregations (assuming that *διὰ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα* in 1 Pet 5.12 denotes the letter-carrier rather than the amanuensis, see p. 24 n. 59). Such an explicit mention of Silvanus' role in the dispatch of the letter could have created problems for the pseudonymous author(s). If Silvanus was merely a "device of pseudonymity," questions/doubts may have arisen concerning his absence from the delivery process.

⁷⁷ Arguing against a Trajanic date for the epistle, Huther, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 40, opines, "it is hardly conceivable how a forger should have attempted to palm off on *definitely formed churches*, some *fifty* years after his death, a letter professing to have been written by Peter, in which they are comforted in their *present* affliction; and that he should have been so successful, that the fraud was detected by no one in the churches" (original emphasis). Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 27.

enough to Peter's death that the readers might have been convinced that it was authentic. Yet as the window of composition moves closer to the life of the apostle, one might wonder if it would not simply be easier to posit genuine Petrine authorship.⁷⁸

As we evaluate the merits of both pseudonymy and authenticity in 1 Peter, there are two considerations to which attention must be drawn. First, the case for the letter's authenticity is noticeably stronger than many recent commentators have acknowledged. Nevertheless, a stronger-than-recognized position does not necessarily make it the preferred option. For, on the other side of the issue, a second point that is equally overlooked is the difficulty which certain evidence creates for the traditional position. While it is true that proponents of the letter's authenticity have provided an adequate response for many of the standard critiques, there are some objections which are more damaging than is often recognized. There are two arguments, in particular, that stand out.

First, even if one argues that the cipher "Babylon" *could* be used for Rome prior to the destruction of the Temple, it is important to establish more precisely *why* this connection would have been made at this time, especially given the fact that 1 Peter would then be the first to make such an association. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, Petrine authorship would have to be considered the slightly more difficult interpretive option. Secondly, even if Silvanus could be identified as the secretary of 1 Peter, and even if this role afforded him the freedom to dramatically improve the style of the letter, the amanuensis hypothesis is still hampered by one nagging question: if Silvanus was the amanuensis who contributed so much to the style and content of 1 Peter, why was he not named as the letter's co-author, a capacity in which he functions in the epistles of Paul (1 Thess 1.1; cf. 2 Thess 1.1)? This question is even more puzzling if Silvanus was also the letter-carrier (1 Pet 5.12). For his role as co-sender would have

⁷⁸ One suggestion that can be ruled out is composition by a Petrine group in Rome (espoused, e.g., by John H. Elliott, "Peter, Silvanus and Mark in 1 Peter and Acts: Sociological-Exegetical Perspectives on a Petrine Group in Rome," in *Wort in der Zeit: neutestamentliche Studien. Festgabe für Karl Heinrich Rengstorff zum 75. Geburtstag* [eds. W. Haubeck and M. Bachmann; Leiden: Brill, 1980] 250-67; Marion L. Soards, "1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude as Evidence for a Petrine School," in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 25.5; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988] 3827-49). The tenets upon which this position is built remain unpersuasive, see David G. Horrell, "The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter," *JSNT* 86 (2002) 29-60.

thereby served to establish his authority among the Anatolian congregations even more fully.⁷⁹

So while the question of authorship is somewhat more balanced than many interpreters have recognized, problems like these still seem to tilt the scales slightly in favor of pseudonymy. However, since a definitive solution to this question could significantly affect the direction of subsequent inquiry, for now we will cautiously leave the question open and move to the more critical issue: the question of the letter's date. In particular, what must be determined is, if Petrine authorship were maintained, what is the latest date at which the letter could have been composed (i.e., *terminus ad quem*)?

According to early Christian tradition, the apostle Peter (like the apostle Paul) was put to death in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero (cf. *1 Clem.* 5.4; *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 4.2-3; *Apoc. Pet.* 14.4).⁸⁰ Many scholars have sought to date Peter's martyrdom even more precisely, placing it in connection with the Neronian persecution that followed the fire of 64 CE.⁸¹ This, however, is an unnecessary deduction from the ancient source record. Even though there is a clear agreement within the literary evidence that Peter was put to death sometime during this period, as Richard J. Bauckham points out, in the earliest literature "[t]here is no firm tradition connecting Peter's martyrdom with Nero's persecution or about the date within Nero's reign when it occurred."⁸²

The three texts that most closely associate Peter's martyrdom with Nero can be seen below:

[Beliar will descend from his firmament] in the likeness of a man, a king of lawlessness, one who killed his mother; this very king himself will persecute (διώξει[τ]ῆ) the plant which

⁷⁹ Cf. William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973) 30, who suggests that the mention of co-senders in the letters of Paul may serve a similar purpose.

⁸⁰ Despite recent efforts to explain away this ancient evidence (e.g., Otto Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse* [UALG 96; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009]), it does appear that the tradition accurately records the fact that Peter was put to death in Rome.

⁸¹ E.g., Hans Lietzmann, "Petrus römischer Märtyrer," *SPAW* (1936) 392-410; repr., in *Kleine Schriften I: Studien zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (ed. K. Aland; TUGAL 67; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958) 100-23; Kurt Aland, "Der Tod des Petrus in Rom: Bemerkungen zu seiner Bestreitung durch Karl Heussi," in *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe: alte Kirche, Reformation und Luthertum, Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1960) 35-104; Christfried Böttrich, *Petrus: Fischer, Fels und Funktionär* (BG 2; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001) 211-34; Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (TC 5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 5.

⁸² Richard J. Bauckham, "The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature," in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 26.1; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 539-95 (588).

the twelve apostles of the Beloved have planted, and one of the twelve will be delivered over ([π]αραδοθήσεται) into his hands. (*Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 4.2-3)

And go into the city which rules over the West (δύσεως),⁸³ and drink the cup which I promised you at the hands of the son of the one who is in Hades, so that his destruction might have a beginning. (*Apoc. Pet.* 14.4)

Nero was the first who stained the rising faith with blood at Rome. Then Peter is roped around the waist by another when he is tied to the cross. (Tertullian, *Scorp.* 15.3; trans. Dunn)

An examination of each of these texts reveals that none expressly connects the apostle's death with the great fire of 64 CE and the pogroms that ensued thereafter. While they might demonstrate that Peter was put to death under the administration of Nero, they do not reveal a particular event or date at which his death took place. This fact allows us to widen our temporal parameters considerably.

On June 9, 68 CE, after receiving news that he had been declared a public enemy by the Senate, and after learning that soldiers had been commissioned to capture and return him to Rome for punishment, Nero ended his life by committing suicide with the help of his private secretary (Suetonius, *Nero* 49, 57; although cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2.29). Such a fact might lead us to extend the *terminus ad quem* of the death of Peter and therefore the composition of 1 Peter (assuming Peter to be the author) to somewhere around mid-68 CE. One possible objection that could be leveled against this proposal, as pointed out by Ben Witherington, is the fact that “Nero stayed away from Rome from mid-66 until early 68 A.D.,” content to pursue his artistic tours throughout the provinces.⁸⁴ A much more appropriate timeframe in which to locate the apostle's death, according to Witherington, would thus be somewhere within the period following the great fire but preceding Nero's extensive travels (i.e., between late-64 and mid-66 CE), a time period in which Nero is said to have been in “a very litigious mood.”⁸⁵ But even this fact does not deter us from extending the *terminus ad quem* to the end of Nero's rule. For what we

⁸³ In conformity to the Ethiopic version, the textual reading of the MS, δπύσεως (“fornication”), was amended to read δύσεως (“West”) by M. R. James, “The Rainer Fragment of the Apocalypse of Peter,” *JTS* 32 (1931) 270-79 (273).

⁸⁴ Ben Witherington, *New Testament History: A Narrative Account* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 337-40, 349-55 (quote 340).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 339.

must recognize is that there was sufficient judicial authority in Rome to try such cases, apart from the presence of the emperor.⁸⁶

Therefore, even if Petrine authorship were assumed, there is no solid evidence that would force us to date Peter's death prior to 68 CE. While the source record is clear that the apostle was martyred under the administration of Nero, there is no viable reason why he could not have been killed at any point leading up to emperor's own demise. The *terminus ad quem* for a letter genuinely composed by Peter himself would consequently be established at June 9, 68 CE (the date of Nero's suicide).⁸⁷ On the other hand, if Peter was not the author, the *terminus ad quem* might be extended from anywhere between 80 to 95 CE.⁸⁸

It is within this extended time-frame (ca 60-95 CE) that our examination will proceed. But as our understanding of the situation is further refined, this question will later be revisited.

⁸⁶ There are a number of possibilities with regard to the legal trials of Christians following the Neronian persecution. One possibility is that, in the absence of the emperor, Christians could have been tried by the urban prefect (*praefectus urbi*). It is certainly common within later Christian martyrdom accounts to find the prefect trying and then sentencing Christians to death (e.g., Justin, *2 Apol.* 2; *Acts of Justin and his Companions*). This possibility might, however, need to be approached with some hesitancy, for according to Richard A. Bauman, *Crime and Punishment in Ancient Rome* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 100-14, the prefect did not take on capital jurisdiction until the time of Vitellius (ca. 69 CE). Another viable option during this time would have been the Roman Senate, since during the Principate the Senate began to assume much more significant judicial functions than those which were performed in the Republic (see Olivia F. Robinson, "The Role of the Senate in Roman Criminal Law during the Principate," *JLH* 17 [1996] 130-43; John S. Richardson, "The Senate, the Courts, and the SC de Cn. Pisone patre," *CQ* 47 [1997] 510-18). Apart from these two possibilities, there were also the jury courts (see A. H. M. Jones, *The Criminal Courts of the Roman Republic and Principate* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972] 91-118).

⁸⁷ The uniformity of the ancient source record—which undisputedly points to the fact that Peter was put to death during the reign of Nero—rules out the theory that Peter could have written the letter after 70 CE (*pace* Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 279-88; Michaels, *1 Peter*, lv-lxvii).

⁸⁸ On the earliest external testimony of 1 Peter, see above. This evidence rules out the possibility that the persecutions of 1 Peter could be equated with those of Pliny in early-second century CE.

Chapter 2 – Social Conflict in Social-Psychological Perspective

The epistle of 1 Peter was written within and addressed to a specific social situation. The primary reason why the letter was composed was to address the conflict which had developed between Christians and non-Christians in Roman Anatolia. When the social dimensions of this situation are explored within Petrine literature, very often the bulk of the attention is directed toward the author's strategy for dealing with conflict.¹ In contrast, our purpose in this chapter will be to discuss some of latest discoveries on social conflict theory as a way of facilitating a more accurate understanding of the cause(s) and form(s) of the conflict situation. After addressing the important contributions of social-scientific inquiry, we will attempt to define the topic of our investigation more fully and then offer a further clarification using recent insights gained from modern conflict theory.

A. Contributions of the Social-Psychological Inquiry

The present study is primarily intended to be an exercise in social history. Our goal is to examine the conflict in 1 Peter by situating it within a first-century CE Anatolian setting. However, this aim will be further supported through periodic, though purposeful, engagement with the social sciences. In particular, we will seek to draw upon some of more important insights from modern conflict theory as a way of directing our efforts and thus providing a more precise articulation of the struggle between Christians and non-Christians in first-century CE Asia Minor.

One of the most helpful contributions of the social sciences is directional guidance. By first engaging modern conflict theory, our efforts will be better informed about where to look and what questions to ask. A few of these useful guidelines, in fact, are spelled out in the work of the prominent conflict theorist, Morton Deutsch. He lists seven variables affecting conflict which help to shape the process of inquiry through which the topic is approached:

¹ E.g., Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 101-64 (using Bryan Wilson's theory of sect development and Simmel's and Coser's theory on the functions of conflict); Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 109-78 (using Victor Turner's theory of liminality); Larry Miller, "La protestation sociale dans la première lettre de Pierre," *Social Compass* 46 (1999) 521-43 (using voluntary utopian group and implicit social protest theories); Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 113-36 (using social psychological resources on the targets of prejudice and the nature of various coping mechanisms).

1. The characteristics of the parties in conflict (e.g., their values and motivations; their aspirations and objectives; their physical, intellectual, and social resources for waging or resolving conflict; their beliefs about conflict, including their conceptions of strategy and tactics)
2. Their prior relationship to one another (e.g., their attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about one another, including each one's beliefs about the other's view of him, and particularly the degree of polarization that has occurred on such evaluations as "good-bad", "trustworthy-untrustworthy")
3. The nature of the issue giving rise to the conflict (e.g., its scope, rigidity, motivational significance, formulation, periodicity, etc.)
4. The social environment within which the conflict occurs (e.g., the facilities and restraints, the encouragements and deterrents it provides with regard to the different strategies and tactics of waging or resolving conflict, including the nature of the social norms and institutional forms of regulating conflict)
5. The interested audiences to the conflict (e.g., their relationships to the parties in conflict and to one another, their interests in the conflict and its outcomes, their characteristics)
6. The strategy and tactics employed by the parties in the conflict (e.g., in assessing and/or changing one another's utilities, disutilities, and subjective probabilities; and in influencing the other's conceptions of one's own utilities and disutilities through tactics that vary along such dimensions as legitimacy-illegitimacy, the relative use of positive and negative incentives such as promises and rewards or threats and punishments, freedom of choice-coercion, the openness and veracity of communication and sharing of information, the degree or credibility, the degree of commitment, the types of motives appealed to, etc.)
7. The consequences of the conflict to each of the participants and to other interested parties (e.g., the gains or losses relating to the immediate issue in conflict, the precedents established, the internal changes in the participants resulting from having engaged in conflict, the long-term effects on the relationships between the parties involved, the reputation that each party develops in the eyes of the various interested audiences)²

Each of these variables is important to consider as we approach the topic of conflict in 1 Peter. From them, various questions arise: (a) By whom were the Anatolian Christians opposed? (b) Why did the Anatolian Christians encounter conflict with outsiders? (c) What forms did this conflict take, and what forms could it have taken? These questions might seem intuitive; yet the explicit statement of these concerns is nonetheless a necessary prerequisite for accurately assessing the situation represented in the epistle.

But exploration into the social sciences does more than just suggest questions which could be raised about the situation in 1 Peter. Equally important is the fact that modern

² Adapted from Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1973) 5-7.

conflict theory also provides us with a grid through which to understand and communicate the ancient struggle that was taking place between the two opposing parties.³ The social sciences provide us with a set of tools whereby we might accurately diagnose and critically evaluate the situation as it most likely occurred. To do so, however, we must first begin by understanding the nature of social conflict.

B. Defining Social Conflict

Before we delve into the finer points of modern conflict theory, the first and most important question that we must address is the meaning of social conflict. Social conflict can occur at both the individual and group levels. Conflict which involves two or more individuals is referred to as *interpersonal* conflict. Likewise, conflict between two or more groups is described as *intergroup* conflict.⁴ The question then is, which type of conflict is represented in 1 Peter?

What must be recognized in this particular instance is the interchange and close association between the individual and group dynamic. That is, “[t]he way individuals think about the world, how they feel, and how they behave—indeed, all behavior—is guided and sometimes constrained by the group(s) to which they belong.” This is certainly the case in 1 Peter, where the conflict (ultimately) stems from the fact that certain individuals had adopted the beliefs and practices of the Christian religion. It is this group *effect* that is crucial. For “[e]very time individuals react in a way that is influenced by their own or their partner’s group membership, it falls under the umbrella of research on intergroup relations.”⁵ Consequently, the conflict represented by 1 Peter—despite its frequent recurrence on the individual level—should be understood (principally) within the rubric of intergroup conflict.⁶

³ There is recognizable difficulty in specifying Christians and non-Christians as two opposing “parties.” For the opponents of Christianity may have been diverse and disparate, hardly forming a “party” as such. We will nevertheless employ this terminology out of necessity, recognizing its limitation.

⁴ There is also *intrapersonal* conflict, which occurs within a person, and *intragroup* conflict, which occurs within a group.

⁵ Vincent Yzerbyt and Stéphanie Demoulin, “Intergroup Relations,” in *Handbook of Social Psychology* (eds. S. T. Fiske, et al.; Hoboken, NJ.: John Wiley, 2010) 1024-83 (1025, 1024).

⁶ Of course, this is not to deny that an accurate understanding of *interpersonal* conflict could significantly aid the interpretation of the conflict in 1 Peter. In fact, the following review of social conflict will draw on the latest findings regarding both intergroup and interpersonal conflict theories.

So if the situation in 1 Peter represents intergroup conflict, it is crucial to ascertain how conflict is defined. What we discover, however, is that the modern discussion has failed to reach a standard, agreed-upon definition. As one authority on the subject noted, “There are almost as many definitions of conflict as there are authors writing about this topic.”⁷ Nevertheless, most definitions tend to fall into one of two basic categories. There are some who define conflict in terms of incompatible *behaviors*, with one party engaging in acts which impede or oppose those of another party.⁸ Others tend to focus on antecedent conditions and thus define conflict according to the *source* of conflict behaviors.⁹ Both of these methods are effective in capturing important aspects of social conflict. Yet, instead of maintaining this division, it might be wise to combine both approaches in an effort to construct a more holistic definition.¹⁰

A holistic definition of social conflict must take into account three essential components (or distinguishing characteristics). First, social conflict is grounded in the interdependent¹¹ relationship of individuals or groups who need and expect valuable outcomes from one another. Second, social conflict emerges when one party feels deprived, or feels that they will be deprived, of important outcomes associated with that relationship and attributes the state of deprivation to the actions or inactions of the

⁷ Dean G. Pruitt, “Social Conflict,” in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed.; eds. D. T. Gilbert, et al.; Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998) 470-503 (470).

⁸ E.g., Lewis A. Coser, *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1967) 232, defined social conflict as “a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals”; Deutsch, *Resolution of Conflict*, 10: “A conflict exists whenever *incompatible* activities occur.” That is, whenever one action “prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures, or in some way makes [another action or activity] less likely or less effective” (original emphasis).

⁹ E.g., Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement* (3rd ed.; McGraw-Hill Series in Social Psychology; Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004) 7-8: “conflict mean *perceived divergence of interest*, a belief that the parties’ current aspirations are incompatible. In other words, conflict is a belief that if one party gets what it wants, the other (or others) will not be able to do so” (original emphasis); Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution* (3rd ed.; Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) 2: “a social conflict arises when two or more persons or groups manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives.”

¹⁰ One NT interpreter who moves in this direction is Todd D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours* (JSNTSup 183; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999) 115-16. He defines intergroup conflict as “*disputatious social interaction between groups which results from the fact that the behaviors and beliefs of one or more members of one group are deemed incompatible with the behaviors and beliefs of one or more members of another group*” (original emphasis).

¹¹ Interdependence refers to the influence or control one party (individual or group) has on another party’s achievement of outcomes. The patterns of outcome interdependence within this exchange relationship are described most famously by the *interdependence theory* (see John W. Thibaut and Harold H. Kelley, *The Social Psychology of Groups* [New York: Wiley, 1959], and Harold H. Kelley and John W. Thibaut, *Interpersonal Relations: A Theory of Interdependence* [New York: Wiley, 1978]).

interdependent other(s). Finally, social conflict is manifest (rather than simply remaining latent) when those who feel deprived, or feel that they will be deprived, engage in some form of strategic action. With this mind, we will define social conflict as *the strategic interaction between individuals or groups which results from a (perceived) deprivation by an interdependent other*.

A final point of consideration at this juncture is the appropriateness of the term “persecution.” The obvious problem with using this designation in reference to the conflict described in 1 Peter is that it has become a dangerously loaded term within modern literature on the subject. Its presence is often associated with imperially-driven initiatives of the Roman government to seek out and eradicate members of the Christian religion. Furthermore, the term “persecution” clearly represents only one side of the conflict (*viz.*, an early Christian perspective), rather than viewing the situation from the perspective of an unattached, neutral observer. Despite these recognized drawbacks, however, it is difficult to abandon the word altogether, given its prominence within virtually all of the relevant literature; hence, it will regularly be employed in the present study. When it does appear, though, it is meant to denote a very general representation of conflict between Christians and non-Christians, apart from any notions of “systematic” or “official” persecution. Viewed from the perspective of early Christians, it would include any hostility or ill-treatment which a person or group faced as a result of his/her/their adoption of or adherence to the Christian faith.

With these definitions and points of clarification in mind, we will now move forward to explore some of the basic characteristics of social conflict which may help to shed light on the situation in first-century CE Roman Anatolia. Viewed as a process, we will examine the various stages of conflict from emergence to escalation.

C. Stages of Social Conflict

Since conflict involves certain sequential elements as it moves from a position of latency to manifestation, it is often easier to understand each of its component parts by examining

the different stages involved. In what follows, therefore, we will address each of the important stages of social conflict.¹²

1. Emergence of Social Conflict¹³

Social conflict arises when one party feels that it has been deprived of a valued and expected outcome by an interdependent other.¹⁴ The crucial point of interest then is how this deprivation occurs. When and why might individuals or groups fail to cooperate and thus deliberately (or inadvertently) deprive the interdependent other of desired outcomes? Numerous structural and psychological theories have been proposed to explain the sources or causes of social conflict. We will review a couple of the more influential suggestions, focusing particular attention on those which seem to be most relevant to the ancient conflict between Christians and non-Christians in Roman Anatolia.

One reason why an individual or group might deliberately deprive an interdependent other of valuable outcomes is because of interpersonal/intergroup *threat*. Probably the most well-known theory used to explain this phenomenon is the *realistic group conflict theory*.¹⁵ The theory was developed in the mid-20th century from a series of field experiments led by Muzafer Sherif. After studying the competition which developed between two groups of twelve-year-old boys at summer camp, Sherif and his colleagues proposed that discrimination and stereotyping result from group competition over scarce resources. To the extent that a group perceives an opposing group to be a threat towards

¹² There are a few aspects of social conflict, however, with which we will not be dealing (e.g., the function of social conflict, coping strategies, etc.).

¹³ For an overview of the emergence of social conflict, see Carsten K. W. De Dreu, "Social Conflict: The Emergence and Consequences of Struggle and Negotiation," in *Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th ed.; eds. S. T. Fiske, et al.; Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010) 983-1023 (985-94).

¹⁴ Very often scholars distinguish between *egoistic* deprivation (i.e., the failure of an individual to reach valuable outcomes) and *fraternalistic* deprivation (i.e., the failure of a group to reach valuable outcomes). These designations were first coined by W. G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966) 34-35.

¹⁵ On the realistic conflict theory, see Muzafer Sherif, et al., *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment* (Norman, OK.: University Book Exchange, 1961); Muzafer Sherif, *In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966); Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, "Ingroup and Intergroup Relations: Experimental Analysis," in *Social Psychology* (rev. ed.; eds. M. Sherif and C. W. Sherif; New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 221-66; and Robert A. LeVine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1972) 29-42.

its own valuable resources, conflict will emerge and group relations will deteriorate.¹⁶ This threat, according to the theory's proponents, need not even be perceived on the level of individual self-interest. A perceived threat to one's ingroup is sufficient to produce negative outgroup derogation.¹⁷

While the realistic group conflict theory does contain various empirical and theoretical problems,¹⁸ it is nevertheless a valuable tool for interpreting the situation of early Christians. For, in some cases, the introduction of Christianity within an ancient community did hold out the possibility of outgroup deprivation. The conflict which developed in the city of Ephesus is a case-in-point. As the Christian presence within the community increased, it created a recognizable economic deprivation for local, Ephesian silversmiths (Acts 19.23-27; cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.10). With fewer people purchasing silver shrines of the goddess Artemis, a significant portion of their projected income was taken away.¹⁹

The threat of deprivation need not simply be trepidation over the loss of concrete material resources (e.g., money, goods, land, etc.), however. Research also shows that

¹⁶ A modern example of intergroup hostility and prejudice arising out of a zero-sum competition between groups is the case of immigrants who are discriminated against because of a perceived threat to valuable resources (e.g., jobs). See further Victoria M. Esses, et al., "Intergroup Competition and Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration: An Instrumental Model of Group Conflict," *JSI* 54 (1998) 699-724; and Victoria M. Esses, et al., "The Immigration Dilemma: The Role of Perceived Group Competition, Ethnic Prejudice, and National Identity," *JSI* 57 (2001) 389-412.

¹⁷ Support for this proposition is offered by Lawrence Bobo, "Whites' Opposition to Busing: Symbolic Racism or Realistic Group Conflict?," *JPSP* 45 (1983) 1196-210.

¹⁸ Some of the difficulties include: (a) Even when opposing groups cooperate (rather than compete), ingroup favoritism is never fully eradicated (see the evidence provided by Allen H. Ryen and Arnold Kahn, "Effects of Intergroup Orientation on Group Attitudes and Proxemic Behavior," *JPSP* 31 (1975) 302-10). (b) Intergroup relations do not require explicit competition in order for conflict to develop. The mere existence of opposing groups (or social categorization) can create the same struggle (Rupert Brown, *Group Processes* (2nd ed.; Oxford/Maldern, MA.: Blackwell, 2000) 265-90). (c) Interdependent struggle does not always involve real conflict over concrete resources. In some cases, parties merely *perceive* themselves to be in a state of deprivation when compared to the situation of others (see Iain Walker and Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Relative Deprivation Theory: An Overview and Conceptual Critique," *BJSP* 23 [1984] 301-10, and the evidential support provided by Serge Guimond and Michaël Dambrun, "When Prosperity Breeds Intergroup Hostility: The Effects of Relative Deprivation and Relative Gratification on Prejudice," *PSPB* 28 [2002] 900-12). For a fuller evaluation of the realistic group conflict theory, see Jay W. Jackson, "Realistic Group Conflict Theory: A Review and Evaluation of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature," *PsyRec* 43 (1993) 395-414.

¹⁹ The likelihood of conflict developing out of economic deprivation is consistent with the assessment of Clyde H. Coombs, "A Reparameterization of the Prisoner's Dilemma Game," *BSci* 18 (1973) 424-28, who proposed two basic motives underlying noncooperation: greed and fear. Further research has shown that these two causes are the same in both interpersonal and intergroup relations, see John Schopler and Chester A. Insko, "The Discontinuity Effect in Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations: Generality and Mediation," *ERSP* 3 (1992) 121-51.

symbolic threats can just as easily lead to prejudice and discrimination.²⁰ A symbolic threat, as opposed to a realistic threat, is carried out in the realm of ideas and abstraction. It involves a perceived ingroup-outgroup difference in values, beliefs, morality, ideology, or worldview.²¹ When outgroups maintain a different or an opposing set of values or beliefs, it threatens the ethnocentric worldview of the ingroup, resulting in conflict. In modern society, two minority groups who are regularly affected by this type of threat are immigrants²² and homosexuals.²³ In both cases, prejudice and discrimination is elicited from a perceived threat which these groups pose to behavioral and ideological norms.

For early Christians, symbolic threats would have played an important role in the conflict with outsiders. One of the regular complaints about the Christians was that they were atheists who spurned the gods and brought divine retribution on the entire community (cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 40.2). The difficulty which Christian conversion would produce is recounted by Justin Martyr. While he and his fellow believers previously worshipped the traditional Greek and Roman gods, they had come to embrace Jesus and consequently had begun to despise the sacred deities. As a result, they faced the threat of death (*I Apol.* 25.1). By thus deviating from traditional religious practices and beliefs,

²⁰ Symbolic racism theory, for example, is grounded in the assumption that modern prejudice against Blacks results not from old-fashioned racism embodied in notions of biological inferiority but from the perception that Blacks violate cherished American values (e.g., individualism, diligent work ethic) and make illegitimate demands on the racial status quo (see David O. Sears, "Symbolic Racism," in *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy* [eds. P. A. Katz and D. A. Taylor; New York: Plenum, 1988] 53-84). Empirical support on the theory that Whites discriminate against Blacks on the basis of perceived values violations can be found in Monica Biernat, et al., "Violating American Values: A 'Value Congruence' Approach to Understanding Outgroup Attitudes," *JESP* 32 (1996) 387-410.

²¹ Walter G. Stephan and Cookie White Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice," in *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination* (ed. S. Oskamp; Mahwah, NJ.: Erlbaum, 2000) 23-45 (25-26). The reason why this type of threat is viewed as dangerous is because, "[t]hreats to the symbol system of the group go to the very core of group identity—the way in which the group defines itself and the symbols it chooses to mark that identity" (Walter G. Stephan and C. Lausanne Renfro, "The Role of Threats in Intergroup Relations," in *From Prejudice to Intergroup Emotions: Differentiated Reactions to Social Groups* [eds. D. M. Mackie and E. R. Smith; New York: Psychology Press, 2002] 191-208 [198]).

²² Walter G. Stephan, et al., "Prejudice Toward Immigrants to Spain and Israel: An Integrated Threat Theory Analysis," *JCCP* 29 (1998) 559-76; Walter G. Stephan, et al., "Prejudice Toward Immigrants," *JASP* 29 (1999) 2221-37; Victoria M. Esses, et al., "Public Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration: Determinants and Policy Implications," in *Canadian Immigration Policy for the 21st Century* (eds. C. M. Beach, et al.; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003) 507-35.

²³ Geoffrey Haddock, et al., "Assessing the Structure of Prejudicial Attitudes: The Case of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals," *JPS* 65 (1993) 1105-18; Geoffrey Haddock and Mark P. Zanna, "Assessing the Structure of Anti-Gay Attitudes: The Impact of Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Values on Anti-Gay Prejudice and Discrimination," in *Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice Against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals* (ed. G. M. Herek; Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1998) 82-107.

Christians were constantly subjected to the prejudice and discrimination of Greco-Roman society.

Another equally important factor in interdependent deprivation is *social categorization*. Social categorization is the simplifying and ordering of the social environment into categories in a way that is meaningful to the individual(s) involved. Of particular interest within modern social-scientific research, especially as it pertains to social conflict, has been the effect of social categorization on behavioral discrimination. More specifically, scholars have explored the question of whether the mere fact of being categorized as belonging to a group is sufficient enough to create intergroup bias.²⁴

In 1971, Henri Tajfel and a group of colleagues attempted to answer this question. The scholars assessed the impact of social categorization on intergroup behavior by eliminating self-interest and prior prejudice as influential factors. To accomplish this aim, they separated participants into two groups based on arbitrary and virtually meaningless distinctions. What this study conclusively revealed was that categorization alone was sufficient to produce discriminatory intergroup behavior in the form of ingroup favoritism;²⁵ outgroup derogation, on the other hand, was not demonstrated.²⁶ This discovery was labeled the *minimal group paradigm* (i.e., the minimal conditions required

²⁴ Intergroup bias is defined as “an unfair evaluative, emotional, cognitive, or behavioral response toward another group in ways that devalue or disadvantage the other group and its members either directly or indirectly by valuing or privileging members of one’s own group” (John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, “Intergroup Bias,” in *Handbook of Social Psychology* [5th ed.; eds. S. T. Fiske, et al.; Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010] 1084-121 [1084]).

²⁵ Henri Tajfel, et al., “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour,” *EJSP* 1 (1971) 149-78. The study of Tajfel and his colleagues challenged the previous findings of Jacob M. Rabbie and Murray Horowitz, “Arousal of Ingroup-Outgroup Bias by a Chance Win or Loss,” *JPS* 13 (1969) 269-77, who concluded, “Group classification per se appears to be insufficient to produce discriminatory evaluations” (272).

²⁶ It is necessary to point out that these discoveries must be used with caution when it comes to applying the data to the conflict between Christians and non-Christians in the ancient world. The reason is because most research on ingroup favoritism in outcome allocation has been performed with a view toward group members’ distribution of *positive* outcomes (e.g., money). More recent studies have taken up the question in a different direction, asking whether the same discrimination would occur in the allocation of *negative* outcomes (e.g., unpleasant noise; working on an unpleasant task). What scholars have discovered is that in this type of allocation fairness is the pervasive strategy (Amélie Mummendey, et al., “Categorization is Not Enough: Intergroup Discrimination in Negative Outcome Allocation,” *JESP* 28 [1992] 125-44; Sabine Otten, et al., “Intergroup Discrimination in Positive and Negative Outcome Allocations: Impact of Stimulus Valence, Relative Group Status, and Relative Group Size,” *PSPB* 22 [1996] 568-81. Cf. also Miles Hewstone, et al., “Social Categorization and Similarity in Intergroup Behaviour: A Replication with ‘Penalties’,” *EJSP* 11 [1981] 101-107). Even this, however, seems to find explanation in the social identity theory (see Karen Gardham and Rupert Brown, “Two Forms of Intergroup Discrimination with Positive and Negative Outcomes: Explaining the Positive-Negative Asymmetry Effect,” *BJSP* 40 [2001] 23-24).

for discriminatory intergroup behavior to occur), and since its introduction, it has been repeatedly confirmed.²⁷

How do we explain this persistent tendency of people to display intergroup bias, even in cases where the only distinction is social categorization? A theory that has become very popular in this regard is the *social identity theory* set forth by Tajfel and Turner.²⁸ According to this theory, social identity is developed from group categorization. Part of a person's self-concept is defined by the groups with which he or she is affiliated. As a result of this effort to define and evaluate oneself according to social identity, social comparison naturally arises. Since everyone seeks a positive (rather than negative) self-concept, intragroup distinctions are minimized and ingroups are viewed as superior, while intergroup differences are accentuated and relevant outgroups are derogated.

At first glance, it might appear that the social identity theory could predict a relief to tensions between Christians and non-Christians in the ancient world. With such a strong correlation between self-esteem and intergroup discrimination, one might envision a minority group like the early Christians being discriminated against less by the much more dominant groups (hence those with greater self-esteem) within Anatolian society. But even here the struggle between the two seems difficult to avoid. For what researchers have discovered is that high-status groups show more intergroup bias than low-status groups.²⁹ So the dominated position of Christians would not serve as a reprieve. More likely, it would have served to fuel the conflict: as membership in this minority group began to increase, more dominant groups may have begun to perceive the group as a legitimate social threat.

²⁷ E.g., John C. Turner, "Social Categorization and Social Discrimination in the Minimal Group Paradigm," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; European Monographs in Social Psychology 14; London: Academic Press, 1978) 102-40; Marilynn B. Brewer, "In-Group Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A Cognitive-Motivational Analysis," *PsyBull* 86 (1979) 307-24. See further the reviews by Marilynn B. Brewer and Roderick M. Kramer, "The Psychology of Intergroup Attitudes and Behavior," *AnnRevPsy* 36 (1985) 219-43 (226-27), and David M. Messick and Diane M. Mackie, "Intergroup Relations," *AnnRevPsy* 40 (1989) 45-81 (59).

²⁸ Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Social Conflict," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (2nd ed.; eds. S. Worchel and W. G. Austin; Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986) 7-24; John C. Turner, "Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Intergroup Behaviour," *EJSP* 5 (1975) 5-34.

²⁹ Itesh Sachdev and Richard Y. Bourhis, "Social Categorization and Power Differentials in Group Relations," *EJSP* 15 (1985) 415-34; idem, "Status Differentials and Intergroup Behaviour," *EJSP* 17 (1987) 277-93; Brian Mullen, et al., "Ingroup Bias as a Function of Salience, Relevance, and Status: An Integration," *EJSP* 22 (1992) 103-22.

These conclusions about the effects of categorization and social identity are especially important given the recent discoveries concerning intergroup relations. There are two findings in particular that may help us better understand the conflict in first-century CE Roman Anatolia. The first is the *individual-group discontinuity effect*. As recent studies have shown, there is more cooperation between individuals in mixed-motive interdependence than between groups.³⁰ Or, to put it another way, there is more competition in intergroup interactions than in interpersonal interactions. This increase in competitiveness among groups is thought to derive from patriotism and fear. Individual group members often associate non-cooperative behavior toward outgroups with loyalty to the ingroup. Furthermore, there is a much greater fear of being exploited by another group than by another individual. Whatever the reason, this discontinuity holds out important implications for the situation of early Christians. For one might postulate that the mere categorization of Christians as a distinct group within society would have served to increase the threat of social conflict.

A second consideration is the dynamic relationship between ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation and the significant effects which social identity can have on both processes. What scholars have discovered is that between-group competition results in greater within-group cooperation.³¹ As intragroup cooperation increases, further intergroup competition is generated, and eventually intergroup conflict emerges.³² What is more, when groups have a consequential relationship—especially in terms of competition or threat—relative ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation are stronger.³³ What this means is that when Christianity emerges onto the scene as a distinct group within Greco-Roman society, even something as (seemingly) insignificant as

³⁰ Schopler and Insko, "The Discontinuity Effect in Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations,"; Tim Wildschut, et al., "Beyond the Group Mind: A Quantitative Review of the Interindividual-Intergroup Discontinuity Effect," *PsyBull* 129 (2003) 698-722. Cf. also Christopher Robert and Peter J. Carnevale, "Group Choice in Ultimatum Bargaining," *OBHD* 72 (1997) 256-79.

³¹ Ido Erev, et al., "Constructive Intergroup Competition as a Solution to the Free Rider Problem: A Field Experiment," *JESP* 29 (1993) 463-78.

³² Gary Bornstein, "Intergroup Conflict: Individual, Group, and Collective Interests," *PSPR* 7 (2003) 129-45.

³³ Mullen, et al., "Ingroup Bias as a Function of Salience, Relevance, and Status,". Cf. also Daan Scheepers, et al., "The Social Functions of Ingroup Bias: Creating, Confirming, or Changing Social Reality," *ERSP* 17 (2006) 359-96 (on competition); Blake M. Riek, et al., "Intergroup Threat and Outgroup Attitudes: A Meta-Analytic Review," *PSPR* 10 (2006) 336-53 (on threat)

ingroup promotion and favoritism, even apart from outgroup derogation,³⁴ could have created this similar type of escalatory spiral and, consequently, social conflict.

2. Strategic Choice in Social Conflict

When a party is (or perceives itself as having been) deprived of valuable and expected outcomes by an interdependent other, they are faced with a choice of how to act in response. Individuals and groups possess various strategic choices by which they might respond when conflict emerges. These conflict management strategies may include non-cooperative moves such as struggle and fighting, or they may include cooperative strategies such as negotiation and collaborative problem solving. In some cases, a party may even possess a withdrawal or exit option by which they can remove themselves from the situation altogether.³⁵ In this section, we will look more closely at some of ways in which disputants choose to manage conflict and why certain strategies are preferred over others.

The strategies (or tactics) available for dealing with a conflicting party can be divided into three basic categories: (a) joint decision-making, (b) third-party decision-making, and (c) separate action.³⁶ The first of these strategies, joint decision-making, primarily involves the process of negotiation between two opposing parties that are seeking to resolve divergent interests. This is an important process which can be further subdivided

³⁴ Note the study of Nir Halevy, et al., "'In-Group Love' and 'Out-Group Hate' as Motives for Individual Participation in Intergroup Conflict: A New Game Paradigm," *PsySci* 19 (2008) 405-11, who demonstrates that the emergence of conflict is not primarily the result of outgroup derogation but of ingroup promotion.

³⁵ On this exit strategy, see Dale T. Miller and John G. Holmes, "The Role of Situational Restrictiveness on Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: A Theoretical and Empirical Extension of Kelley and Stahelski's Triangle Hypothesis," *JSPS* 31 (2001) 661-73; Nahoko Hayashi and Toshio Yamagishi, "Selective Play: Choosing Partners in an Uncertain World," *PSPR* 2 (1998) 276-89.

³⁶ The taxonomies of strategic choice are a useful tool for clearly setting forth all of the possible options within a conflict situation. There are, nevertheless, certain limitations on its overall effectiveness. The problem is that conflicting parties are rarely static in their strategic employment. Most tend to employ a variety of tactics and alternate their approaches when a particular strategy proves unsuccessful in achieving an intended aim. Therefore, what some have suggested is that rather than thinking that "any conflicting individual uses only one single and pure mode of behaviour," it is best to assume that "any reaction consists of multiple components of behaviour manifested simultaneously or sequentially" (Evert van de Vliert, *Complex Interpersonal Conflict Behaviour: Theoretical Frontiers* [Essays in Social Psychology; East Sussex: Psychology Press, 1997] 137; cf. Mark L. Knapp, et al., "Measuring Interpersonal Conflict in Organizations: Where Do We Go from Here?," *MCQ* 1 [1988] 414-29). If we recognize these limitations, the basic styles represented above can still be a valuable resource in understanding conflict management.

into five general approaches:³⁷ (1) concession making (i.e., a reduction of one's goals, demands, or offers); (2) contending (i.e., a struggle to force the opposing party to concede or a resistance of similar efforts by the opposing side); (3) problem solving (i.e., seeking a resolution which satisfies both parties' aim); (4) inaction (i.e., a failure to act); and (5) withdrawal (i.e., ending the negotiation).

A second strategy of conflict resolution is third-party decision-making. In this procedure, a third party who is not directly involved in the conflict serves as an intermediary in an attempt to bring resolution. The actual setup of this procedure may vary depending on the specific role adopted by the third party. The mediator might serve in the role of an autocratic decision-maker (i.e., one who makes an authoritative ruling without hearing both sides), an arbitrator (i.e., one who makes an authoritative ruling after hearing both sides), or a mediator (i.e., one who assists both parties in the negotiation of their own settlement).

A final strategy which conflicting parties might employ in order to reach a resolution is separate actions; that is, both disputing parties would make independent decisions. These decision could include one of three strategies: (1) retreat (i.e., one party in the dispute concedes to the demands of the other); (2) struggle (i.e., seeking to persuade the opposing party to concede through verbal or physical contentious measures); or (3) tacit coordination (i.e., the accommodation of both parties without discussion).

An important question for understanding a conflict situation is why a disputant might choose one strategy over another. Numerous studies have suggested that disputants prefer procedures that afford them two types of control: *decision* control and *process* control.³⁸ That is, disputants seek procedures which offer them both power to prescribe and enforce the verdict in an adjudication (i.e., decision control) and power to oversee the presentation of evidence and arguments (i.e., process control). If this is correct, it might be helpful in explaining the frequency with which Christians were taken to court in the ancient world. Given the nature of the Anatolian legal systems (see Ch. 5), one wonders

³⁷ See further Dean G. Pruitt and Peter J. Carnevale, *Negotiation in Social Conflict* (Pacific Grove, CA.: Brooks/Cole, 1993) 3-4, 28-48.

³⁸ John W. Thibaut and Laurens Walker, *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis* (Hillsdale, NJ.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1975); Pauline Houlden, et al., "Preference for Modes of Dispute Resolution as a Function of Process and Decision Control," *JESP* 14 (1978) 13-30; Larry B. Heuer and Steven Penrod, "Procedural preferences as a Function of Conflict Intensity," *JPSP* 51 (1986) 700-10; Edgar A. Lind and Tom R. Tyler, *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice* (New York: Plenum, 1988) 215-16.

whether alternative options, which would have afforded greater decision and process control to the disputants, might have been preferred.

One word of precaution is in order, however. When assessing the value of this evidence, what must be taken into consideration is that “[r]ole-playing studies, like most of those [upon which theories of procedural choice are based], may be misleading in that giving people a choice among procedures reminds them of these procedures and implies that the procedures are available.”³⁹ Procedures such as arbitration and mediation are not options that are commonly employed in everyday life.⁴⁰ The question, therefore, might not be, “What options are available,” but “What options are available and most likely in a given situation?” This question will be crucial as we seek to reconstruct the conflict in 1 Peter.

With this consideration in mind, we might narrow our focus somewhat further by asking, are there reasons why individuals or groups might respond to current or anticipated deprivation with a more contentious tactic⁴¹ like struggle as opposed to a more cooperative response such as joint problem-solving? As one might expect, research on this issue has turned up a few different conditions that affect choice among basic strategies. One reason why disputants might choose competition over cooperation is fairly recognizable: the norm of *reciprocity*.⁴² Disputants tend to match non-cooperative moves of opponents; thus struggle begets more struggle. This phenomenon has been repeatedly demonstrated in the prisoner’s dilemma and the resource dilemma,⁴³ and it has been famously explained by Deutsch’s *theory of cooperation and competition*.⁴⁴ According to this model, strategic choice is dependent upon the perceived goals of the

³⁹ Pruitt, “Social Conflict,” 486.

⁴⁰ In surveying undergraduate college students on how they had previously handled interpersonal conflicts, Mark E. Keating, et al., “Strategic Choice in Everyday Disputes,” *IJCM* 5 (1994) 143-57, discovered that a variety of strategies were employed, with verbal confrontation of the adversary being the most common. They also found that while third parties were frequently sought out for advice or support, the use of such options as mediation and/or arbitration was extremely rare.

⁴¹ For various forms of contentious tactics, see Pruitt and Kim, *Social Conflict*, 63-84.

⁴² Alvin W. Gouldner, “The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement,” *AmSocRev* 25 (1960) 161-78; cf. Robert Axelrod and William D. Hamilton, “The Evolution of Cooperation,” *Science* 211 (1981) 1390-96.

⁴³ Stuart Oskamp, “Effects of Programmed Strategies on Cooperation in the Prisoner’s Dilemma and Other Mixed-Motive Games,” *JCR* 15 (1971) 225-59; Norbert L. Kerr, “Motivation Losses in Small Groups: A Social Dilemma Analysis,” *JPSP* 45 (1983) 819-28; Andreas Knapp, *The Effects of the Behavioral and Verbal Aspects of Self-Presentational Tactics on an Opponent’s Performance in a Resource Dilemma Task* (Mainz: Psychologisches Institut der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, 1989).

⁴⁴ Deutsch, *Resolution of Conflict*, 20-32.

interdependent other. So when one party interprets the situation as a zero-sum dilemma (i.e., a situation in which one party's gain results from opposing party's equivalent loss), struggle is the most likely option.

A second theoretical model which is regularly used to explain the decision-making process of strategic action is the *dual concern model*.⁴⁵ Unlike the theory of Deutsch, the dual concern model distinguishes between two motives: concern for self and concern for others. Self-concern refers to placing importance on one's own needs or interests or those of one's group. Conversely, other-concern involves placing importance on the interests of another party. Each of these concerns is independent of the other and ranges from low to high (or weak to strong). So when a disputant combines a high (or strong) concern for self with a low (or weak) concern for others, contention or struggle will be the natural conclusion. In terms of explanatory merit, the positive corollary to this suggestion (i.e., low self-concern combined with high other-concern, or possibly even, low self-concern combined with low other-concern) may offer some insight into the absence of destructively contentious actions within the conflict in first-century CE Asia Minor. This theoretical perspective will be helpful as we explore the question of why escalated conflict between Christians and non-Christians was more often sporadic and episodic rather than permanent and decisive, and why Christianity was not swiftly and summarily exterminated by legal prosecution (see Ch. 6).

A final condition that is thought to affect a disputant's choice between strategic options is the *perceived feasibility perspective*.⁴⁶ According to this perspective, the perceived effectiveness of a strategy to accomplish a party's goals at an acceptable cost and risk affects the likelihood that it will be adopted. So while the dual concern model helps to explain which option might be preferred, the perceived feasibility perspective is more readily able to predict which alternative will actually be chosen. The key for this approach to be effective is an accurate understanding of the *capabilities* of oneself or one's group and the *weaknesses* of one's opponent(s). This consideration underlines the

⁴⁵ See Peter J. Carnevale and Dean G. Pruitt, "Negotiation and Mediation," *AnnRevPsy* 43 (1992) 531-82 (539-43); Pruitt and Carnevale, *Negotiation in Social Conflict*, 104-18; Pruitt, "Social Conflict," 481-83.

⁴⁶ Pruitt and Carnevale, *Negotiation in Social Conflict*, 114-16; Pruitt, "Social Conflict," 483; Pruitt and Kim, *Social Conflict*, 47-53.

importance of a proper appraisal of both the readers of 1 Peter and the various contentious tactics that could have been employed against them in the first century CE.

3. Struggle and Conflict Escalation

Theories of conflict management help us better understand why disputants might prefer one strategic choice over another, but they do not explain the processes which fuel conflict escalation. What has, therefore, not been discussed is how a seemingly minor conflict situation might intensify—either within or between groups—to the point where one or both parties experiences serious injury. The question that needs further exploration is, when conflict does emerge and disputants choose struggle over cooperation, how does the situation escalate from one level to the next?

a. Nature of Conflict Escalation

Conflict escalation is simply the progressive intensification of conflict over time.⁴⁷ It occurs when one party in a conflict first uses a contentious tactic or when a party adopts a more contentious tactic than previously employed. One of the primary motives behind conflict escalation is reciprocity (or retaliation).⁴⁸ When a person or group perceives him/herself or themselves to have been treated unfairly, the emotional response is often anger and spite,⁴⁹ which triggers competition⁵⁰ and subsequent attempts at punitive retribution by the angered party.⁵¹ This attempt at punishing the annoyance from an opposing party is referred to as retaliatory escalation.

⁴⁷ See Pruitt and Kim, *Social Conflict*, 85-168; Dean G. Pruitt, "Conflict Escalation in Organizations," in *The Psychology of Conflict and Conflict Management in Organizations* (eds. C. K. W. De Dreu and M. J. Gelfand; New York/London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008) 245-66.

⁴⁸ Daniel P. Skarlicki and Robert Folger, "Broadening Our Understanding of Organizational Retaliatory Behavior," in *The Dark Side of Organizational Behavior* (eds. R. W. Griffin and A. O'Leary-Kelly; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004) 373-402.

⁴⁹ Nico H. Frijda, et al., "Relations Among Emotion, Appraisal, and Emotional Action Readiness," *JPSP* 57 (1989) 212-28. Cf. Madan M. Pillutla and J. Keith Murnighan, "Unfairness, Anger, and Spite: Emotional Rejections of Ultimatum Offers," *OBHD* 68 (1996) 208-24.

⁵⁰ Keith G. Allred, et al., "The Influence of Anger and Compassion on Negotiation Performance," *OBHD* 70 (1997) 175-87; J. P. Forgas, "On Feeling Good and Getting Your Way: Mood Effects on Negotiator Cognition and Bargaining Strategies," *JPSP* 74 (1998) 565-77.

⁵¹ John M. Darley and Thane S. Pittman, "The Psychology of Compensatory and Retributive Justice," *PSPR* 7 (2003) 324-36.

To more accurately understand conflict escalation, researchers distinguish between two types of escalation sequences. The first is *bilateral* escalation. This involves the intensified development of conflict between two parties who each progressively contribute to the escalation. The process by which this occurs is referred to as a conflict (escalatory) spiral: party A offends party B, who then retaliates, provoking a more intense tactic from party A. This type of dispute is especially prevalent within international politics and security, where, according to the spiral model, “statesmen see hostility as indicating that the other is out to get them and believe that the best, if not the only way to cope with this threat is with negative sanctions.”⁵²

The second type of conflict escalation is *unilateral* escalation. In this case, only one party escalates the conflict. Ordinarily the situation involves an asymmetrical structure in which one party desires change while the other wishes to maintain the status quo.⁵³ One example of this type of conflict is the dispute between a husband and wife over the performance of household duties.⁵⁴ The party who desires change views the persistent and stagnant response of the other party as an act of aggression and consequently envisions him/herself as the victim who is being deprived of valuable resources. As this persistent annoyance continues, an orderly progression of tactics often ensues: requests, demands, angry statements, threats, harassment, and finally abuse.⁵⁵ This theory of unilateral escalation is especially important when it comes to understanding the conflict between Christians and non-Christians in Roman Anatolia. For one might naturally wonder, what would happen if Christians, who were a minority group with little influence

⁵² Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1976) esp. 62-83 (quote 89).

⁵³ Carsten K. W. de Dreu, et al., “The Structure and Management of Conflict: Fighting or Defending the Status Quo,” *GPIR* 11 (2008) 331-53.

⁵⁴ When this type of conflict has been explored in marital situations, researchers have typically found that a demanding spouse becomes increasingly irritated and persistent regarding his or her position, while the evasive spouse continues to withdraw further and further in a non-responsive position (see Esther S. Kluwer, et al., “The Marital Dynamics of Conflict over the Division of Labor,” *JMF* 59 [1997] 635-53).

⁵⁵ In a laboratory experiment on the sequences of unilateral escalation, Joseph M. Mikolic, et al., “Escalation in Response to Persistent Annoyance: Groups Versus Individuals and Gender Effects,” *JPSP* 72 (1997) 151-63, examined the response of participants whose confederates consistently withheld supplies needed to complete a project. The experiment involved participants being given access to a central room where supplies such as scissors, pencils, paper, glue, and paper were given to all participants. Confederates posing as fellow participants would then take the supplies and fail to return them, thus depriving other participants of valuable resources. An internal telephone system allowed participants to leave messages for the confederates. The data collected from these messages marked a clear progression of intensified tactics, beginning with a polite request and ending with harassment and abuse.

in the Roman world, chose not to reciprocate the hostility? Unilateral escalation provides an explanation of this phenomenon, showing that the situation could still intensify apart from the retaliation of Christians.

b. Psychological Processes in Conflict Escalation

As we have previously mentioned, the primary motivational influence behind conflict escalation is retaliation. There are several different psychological factors that might fuel a party's propensity toward retaliation and thus could (potentially) play a significant role in the course and outcome of a conflict situation. The first involves *hostile attributions*. In human interaction, *what* a person says or does is particularly important. Yet, an equally noteworthy consideration to which significant attention is often directed is *why* a person may have engaged in a certain action. When a disputant reaches the conclusion that an opposing party acted in a malevolent manner, it is more likely to lead to anger from the offended party and, as a result, further and more intensified conflict.⁵⁶ Therefore, the *intentionality* of an offending party is a key facilitator for retaliation.⁵⁷ Furthermore, when hostile attributions do occur, minor transgressions are overblown, and rather than

⁵⁶ See Robert A. Baron, "Reducing Organizational Conflict: The Role of Attributions," *JAppPsy* 70 (1985) 434-41; idem, "Attributions and Organizational Conflict: The Mediating Role of Apparent Sincerity," *OBHD* 41 (1988) 111-27; cf. D. L. Shapiro, et al., "Explanations for Rejection Decisions: What Factors Enhance Their Perceived Adequacy and Moderate Their Enhancement of Justice Perceptions?," *OBHD* 58 (1994) 346-68. Even when an opponent's motivation is ambiguous or difficult to interpret, a personal characteristic known as *hostile attributional bias* may cause a person to view a person's actions either positively or negatively. For those who possess a high hostile attributional bias, any uncertainty with regard to another's seemingly provocative actions would likely be understood as a calculated attempt to thwart his or her own interests (see Kenneth A. Dodge, et al., "Hostile Attributional Biases in Severely Aggressive Adolescent Males," *JAbPsy* 99 [1990] 385-92).

⁵⁷ Mark J. Martinko and Kelly L. Zellars, "Toward a Theory of Workplace Violence and Aggression: A Cognitive Appraisal Perspective," in *Dysfunctional Behavior in Organizations: Violent and Deviant Behavior* (eds. R. W. Griffin, et al.; vol. 23A; Stamford, CT.: JAI Press, 1998) 1-42. Further empirical proof of this thesis can be in Thomas N. Bradbury and Frank D. Fincham, "Attributions and Behavior in Marital Interaction," *JPS* 63 (1992) 613-28, and Robert J. Bies, et al., "At the Breaking Point: Cognitive and Social Dynamics of Revenge in Organizations," in *Antisocial Behavior in Organizations* (eds. R. A. Giacalone and J. Greenberg; Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1997) 18-36. A further consideration aside from intentionality is also *owned responsibility*. When an offending party fails to see him/herself as responsible for the annoyance, retaliation is more likely (see Keith G. Allred, "Anger and Retaliation: Toward an Understanding of Impassioned Conflict in Organizations," in *Research on Negotiation in Organizations* [eds. R. J. Bies, et al.; vol. 7; Greenwich, CT.: JAI Press, 1999] 27-58).

attributing the actions to temporary causes or factors beyond the person's control, they are interpreted as symptomatic of the other's permanent disposition.⁵⁸

Two more psychological factors which play a significant role in fueling retaliation are *naïve realism* and *egocentric misperceptions*. Naïve realism is simply envisioning oneself (and therefore one's decisions) as rational and reasonable, while attributing opposing actions or decisions to a lack of intelligence or to some deviant agenda.⁵⁹ Very often those involved in conflict perceive those who disagree with them as biased, and, consequently, any effort toward cooperation is understood to be an exercise in futility. Such a viewpoint naturally leads to biased-perception conflict spiral.⁶⁰ Serving as a complement to naïve realism, egocentric misperceptions often shape the escalation of conflict. What this means is that when social conflict emerges between two parties, disagreements are usually exaggerated, and the disagreements that are most pronounced among partisans are those values perceived to be central to the perceiver's own ideology.⁶¹ Such cognitive divergence makes resolution particularly difficult.

One final psychological process that regularly becomes a factor as conflict intensifies is the *escalation of commitment* (which has been variously labeled as psychological

⁵⁸ Kenneth A. Dodge and John D. Cole, "Social-Information-Processing Factors in Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Children's Peer Groups," *JPSP* 53 (1987) 1146-58.

⁵⁹ Lee Ross and Andrew Ward, "Naive Realism: Implications for Social Conflict and Misunderstanding," in *Values and Knowledge* (eds. E. S. Reed, et al.; Mahwah, NJ.: Erlbaum Associates, 1996) 103-35. Three basic tenets of naïve realism are proposed by Ross and Ward (from a first-person perspective): "1. That I see stimuli and events as they are in objective reality, and that my social attitudes, belief, preferences, priorities, and the like follow from a relatively dispassionate, unbiased, and essentially 'unmediated' apprehension of the information or evidence at hand. 2. The other rational social perceivers generally will share my reactions, behaviors, and opinions—provided that they have had access to the same information that gave rise to my views, and provided that they too have processed that information in a reasonably thoughtful and open-minded fashion. 3. That the failure of a given individual or group to share my views arises from one of three possible sources: (a) the individual or group in question may have been exposed to a different sample of information that I was . . . (b) the individual or group in question may be lazy, irrational, or otherwise unable or unwilling to proceed in a normative fashion from objective evidence to reasonable conclusions; and (c) the individual or group in question may be biased (either in interpreting the evidence, or in proceeding from evidence to conclusions) by ideology, self-interest, or some other distorting personal influence" (Lee Ross and Andrew Ward, "Psychological Barriers to Dispute Resolution," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (ed. M. P. Zanna; vol. 27; San Diego: Academic Press, 1995) 255-304 [279]).

⁶⁰ See especially Robert J. Robinson, et al., "Actual Versus Assumed Differences in Construal: 'Naive Realism' in Intergroup Perception and Conflict," *JPSP* 68 (1995) 404-17, and Kathleen A. Kennedy and Emily Pronin, "When Disagreement Gets Ugly: Perceptions of Bias and the Escalation of Conflict," *PSPB* 28 (2008) 385-92.

⁶¹ John R. Chambers, et al., "Misperceptions in Intergroup Conflict: Disagreeing About What We Disagree About," *PsySci* 17 (2006) 38-45; John R. Chambers and Darya Melnyk, "Why Do I Hate Thee? Conflict Misperceptions and Intergroup Mistrust," *PSPB* 32 (2006) 1295-311.

entrapment, the sunk cost effect, and the too-much-invested-to-quit syndrome).⁶² As a conflict progresses, partisans often become more and more committed to (or entrapped in) their disputatious position. If one strategy is ineffective in producing a desired resolution, one competitive response after another is employed in an effort to achieve that end. Part of the reason why these commitments are maintained—sometimes against all reason—is because disputants feel the need to justify previous actions or decisions and to recover incurred losses.

What is important to recognize is that many of these psychological antecedents of negative reciprocity are both *sources* and *products* of contentious behavior. That is, they both cause and result from conflict spirals. Thus, the contentious actions of party A lead to the development of certain psychological conceptions in party B, who in turn responds with negative reciprocating actions against party A. This response creates similar psychological conceptions in party A, who further reciprocates the contentious actions of party B, and so on. This escalating spiral is particularly relevant to the struggles of early Christians. In this light it is easy to imagine how the conflict between Christians and non-Christians may have progressed: the contentious actions of Christians (e.g., ingroup favoritism) result in negative appraisals by members of Anatolian society. The prejudice and discrimination shown to the Christians in turn causes them to either reciprocate the hostility or to retreat back to the Christian community, where greater ingroup favoritism is created and thus more struggle is produced.

c. Amplifying Factors of Conflict Escalation

Now that we have explored the nature of conflict escalation and the psychological processes affecting its course, we will conclude by examining certain amplifying factors which serve to promote conflict escalation. The question which will direct our efforts will be whether there are certain influences which contribute to a conflict's further amplification or intensification.

⁶² For more on the escalation of commitment, see Allan I. Teger, *Too Much Invested to Quit* (Pergamon General Psychology Series 83; New York: Pergamon, 1979); Joel Brockner and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, *Entrapment in Escalating Conflicts: A Social Psychological Analysis* (Springer Series in Social Psychology; New York: Springer-Verlag, 1985); Barry M. Staw and Jerry Ross, "Understanding Behavior in Escalation Situations," *Science* 246 (1989) 216-20.

On an individual level, a key amplifying factor of conflict escalation is the personal and psychological variation that exists from person to person. In some cases, for example, an individual may simply possess a high need for power.⁶³ Those who are driven by such a motive are often identified by confrontational and exploitative negotiation style and commonly evidence a tendency toward verbal and physical aggression.⁶⁴ As one might expect, such people show a greater propensity toward retaliation.⁶⁵ Self-esteem is another variable that must be considered. Retaliation is thought to be more likely from someone with high (rather than low) self-esteem, especially if it is unstable, if there is low self-concept clarity, or if it yields an inflated or grandiose view of one's person.⁶⁶ Finally, conflict escalation is affected on the individual level by personal beliefs about the malleability of personality. When a party holds to entity beliefs (i.e., the notion that personality is fixed and therefore that change is not likely) about their opponent rather than incremental beliefs (i.e., the notion that personality is flexible and therefore that

⁶³ David G. Winter, "The Role of Motivation, Responsibility, and the Integrative Complexity in Crisis Escalation: Comparative Studies of War and Peace Crises," *JPSP* 92 (2007) 920-37.

⁶⁴ Confrontational and exploitative negotiation style: Kenneth W. Terhune, "Motives, Situation, and Interpersonal Conflict within Prisoner's Dilemma," *JPSP* 8 (1968) 1-24. Tendencies toward verbal and physical aggression: David G. Winter and Nicole B. Barenbaum, "Responsibility and the Power Motive in Women and Men," *JPers* 53 (1985) 335-55. Studies have also shown that persons high in power motivation experience high physiological reactivity to "power stress," i.e., stress that further arouses power motivation while at the same time impedes the actual exercise of power (see David C. McClelland, "Sources of Stress in the Drive for Power," in *Psychopathology of Human Adaptation: Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Kittay Scientific Foundation held April 6-8, 1975 in New York, NY* [ed. G. Serban; New York: Plenum, 1976] 247-70; cf. Eugene M. Fodor, "The Power Motive, Group Conflict, and Physiological Arousal," *JPSP* 49 [1985] 1408-15).

⁶⁵ Similarly, researchers have shown that type A personalities are more likely to retaliate than type B (see Michael J. Strube, et al., "Interpersonal Aggression and the Type A Coronary-Prone Behavior Pattern: A Theoretical Distinction and Practical Implications," *JPSP* 47 [1984] 839-47; Robert A. Baron, et al., "Social and Personal Determinants of Workplace Aggression: Evidence for the Impact of Perceived Injustice and the Type A Behavior Pattern," *AggBeh* 25 [1999] 281-96; cf. Charles S. Carver and David C. Glass, "Coronary-Prone Behavior Pattern and Interpersonal Aggression," *JPSP* 36 [1978] 361-66).

⁶⁶ Unstable: Michael H. Kernis, et al., "Stability and Level of Self-Esteem as Predictors of Anger Arousal and Hostility," *JPSP* 56 (1989) 1013-22. Low self-concept clarity: Tanja S. Stucke and Siegfried L. Sporer, "When a Grandiose Self-Image Is Threatened: Narcissism and Self-Concept Clarity as Predictors of Negative Emotions and Aggression Following Ego-Threat," *JPers* 70 (2002) 509-32; Carsten K. W. de Dreu and Daan van Knippenberg, "The Possessive Self as a Barrier to Conflict Resolution: Effects on Mere Ownership, Process Accountability, and Self-Concept Clarity on Competitive Cognitions and Behavior," *JPSP* 89 (2005) 345-57. Yields inflated or grandiose view of the person: Brad J. Bushman and Roy F. Baumeister, "Threatened Egotism, Narcissism, Self-Esteem, and Direct and Displaced Aggression: Does Self-Love or Self-Hate Lead to Violence?," *JPSP* 75 (1998) 219-29; Julie Juola Exline, et al., "Too Proud to Let Go: Narcissistic Entitlement as a Barrier to Forgiveness," *JPSP* 87 (2004) 894-912.

change is possible), the probability of retaliation and escalation is enhanced considerably.⁶⁷

A second, and probably more important, amplifying factor is the individual-group discontinuity effect. As we have previously discussed, intergroup conflict is more *likely* than interpersonal conflict.⁶⁸ Research has shown, for example, that in social dilemmas (i.e., situations in which parties are forced to choose between self-interest and collective interest) an increase in group size⁶⁹ results in decreased cooperation.⁷⁰ Furthermore, intergroup conflict is more *intense*. Groups are more aggressive than individuals when an adversarial party is punitive and insulting; they use more threats; and they react more harshly towards norm violation.⁷¹ But most crucial for our purposes is the fact that, within a conflict situation, groups employ *more escalated* tactics than individuals.⁷²

⁶⁷ Lara K. Kammrath and Carol Dweck, "Voicing Conflict: Preferred Conflict Strategies Among Incremental and Entity Theorists," *PSPB* 32 (2006) 1497-508.

⁶⁸ Wildschut, et al., "A Quantitative Review of the Interindividual-Intergroup Discontinuity Effect,". Numerous proposals have been offered to explain this phenomenon: defense of social identity, group polarization, group dynamism, de-individualization, diffusion of responsibility, anonymity, sense of group power and invulnerability, tendency to distrust opposing groups more than opposing individuals (see Schopler and Insko, "The Discontinuity Effect in Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations,"; Amélie Mummendey and Sabine Otten, "Aggression: Interaction between Individuals and Social Groups," in *Aggression and Violence: Social Interactionist Perspectives* [eds. R. B. Felson and J. T. Tedeschi; Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1993] 145-67).

⁶⁹ The corollary between group size and group cooperation does not extend indefinitely, as though the decline of the latter would unendingly result from the increase of the former. When groups reach a certain level—some have suggested that this number is anything greater than eight members—the negative effect of group size is brought to a point of consistency which is maintained despite an increase in size (e.g., Wim B. G. Liebrand, "The Effect of Social Motives, Communication and Group Size on Behavior in an *N*-Person Multi-Stage Mixed-Motive Game," *EJSP* 14 [1984] 239-64, found no differences in levels of cooperation between groups of seven and groups of twenty in a commons dilemma game).

⁷⁰ Studies have shown, for example, that there is less cooperation in *n*-Party Prisoner's Dilemma than in Two-Party Prisoner's Dilemma (S. S. Komorita and C. William Lapworth, "Cooperative Choice among Individuals Versus Groups in a *N*-Person Dilemma Situation," *JPSP* 42 [1982] 487-96), and within the *n*-Party Prisoner's Dilemma there is less cooperation in larger groups than smaller groups (John Fox and Melvin Guyer, "Group Size and Other's Strategy in an *N*-Person Game," *JCR* 21 [1977] 323-38). Correspondingly, research on commons dilemmas and on public goods dilemmas have produced similar effects (David M. Messick and Carol L. McClelland, "Social Traps and Temporal Traps," *PSPB* 9 [1983] 105-10; Kaori Sato, "Trust and Group Size in a Social Dilemma," *JapPsyRes* 30 [1988] 88-93).

⁷¹ Aggression: Yoram Jaffe and Yael Yinon, "Collective Aggression: The Group-Individual Paradigm in the Study of Collective Anti-Social Behavior," in *Small Groups and Social Interaction* (eds. H. H. Blumberg, et al.; vol. 1; New York: Wiley, 1983) 267-75. Increased threats: Brian Betz and William R. Fry, "The Role of Group Schema in the Selection of Influence Attempts," *BAsoPsy* 16 (1995) 351-65. Harsher reaction to norm violation: Hein F. M. Lodewijckx and Jacob M. Rabbie, "Group-Centered and Self-Centered Behavior in Intergroup Relations," *IJP* 27 (1992) 267-78; Jacob M. Rabbie and Hein F. M. Lodewijckx, "Aggressive Reactions to Social Injustice by Individuals and Groups as a Function of Social Norms, Gender, and Anonymity," *SJR* 8 (1995) 7-40.

⁷² Mikolic, et al., "Escalation in Response to Persistent Annoyance," esp. 157-58, 161.

One of the major contributing factors behind escalated intergroup conflict is *vicarious retribution*. “Vicarious retribution occurs when a member of a group commits an act of aggression toward members of an outgroup for an assault or provocation that had no personal consequences for him or her, but did harm a fellow ingroup member.” Very often this retaliation is leveled at members of the outgroup who were not direct causal agents of the initial assault. For this reason, “retribution is vicarious in the sense that neither the agent of retaliation nor the target of retribution were directly involved in the original event that precipitated the intergroup conflict.”⁷³

Such a retributive strategy plays a significant role in the maintenance and escalation of intergroup conflict, and it is frequently promoted by various factors. One factor that serves to promote vicarious retribution is ingroup identification. The more closely a group member identifies with an ingroup, the greater the likelihood that he or she will engage in vicarious retribution. A further consideration is perceived unity (or entitativity) of the group. “Groups that are high in perceived entitativity are assumed to have unity and coherence, and their members are expected to show consistency among them.”⁷⁴ When a group is high in perceived unity, the actions of an individual group member can result in collective blame (and thus retribution) for the entire group, even apart from the direct causal role of the group as a whole.⁷⁵ The context of the dispute is also an important factor. Vicarious retribution is more likely to be carried out in a public rather than a private setting.⁷⁶ A final amplifying factor is ingroup power. When low-power groups provoke members of high-power group, for example, it is more likely to result in anger and retaliation from the high-power group.⁷⁷

⁷³ Brian Lickel, et al., “Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression,” *PSPR* 10 (2006) 372-90 (372-73).

⁷⁴ David L. Hamilton and Steven J. Sherman, “Perceiving Persons and Groups,” *PsyRev* 103 (1996) 336-55 (345). Cf. Donald T. Campbell, “Common Fate, Similarity, and Other Indices of Status of Aggregates of Persons as Social Entities,” *Science* 3 (1958) 14-25 (17).

⁷⁵ Brian Lickel, et al., “A Case of Collective Responsibility: Who Else Was to Blame for the Columbine High School Shootings?,” *PSPB* 29 (2003) 194-204; Douglas M. Stenstrom, et al., “The Roles of Ingroup Identification and Outgroup Entitativity in Intergroup Retribution,” *PSPB* 34 (2008) 1570-82.

⁷⁶ Lickel, et al., “Vicarious Retribution,” 381-82.

⁷⁷ Diane M. Mackie, et al., “Intergroup Emotions: Explaining Offensive Action Tendencies in an Intergroup Context,” *JPSA* 79 (2000) 602-16; Yzerbyt and Demoulin, “Intergroup Relations,” 1048-51.

Conclusion

The insights that have been gleaned from modern conflict theory will help to shape the way in which the topic is approached and diagnosed in 1 Peter. Not only have we gained a better understanding of the problem with which we are dealing, we have also been given a much clearer direction about where to look and what to look for when it comes to the nature of conflict. Our first task is to try to ascertain the kinds of people with which we are dealing. Who were the members of the Christian groups to which 1 Peter is addressed? How should we understand the Anatolian environment in which they lived? From what socio-economic strata did they come? In order to answer such questions, our attempt to accurately diagnose the conflict in first-century CE Roman Anatolia will begin with a reconstructed “social profile” of the readers and the world in which they lived.

Section One:

A “Social Profile” of the Addressees of 1 Peter

The first step towards diagnosing the problem of suffering in 1 Peter begins with a proper understanding of the audience to whom the epistle is addressed. In the following section, our investigation will attempt to construct a detailed “social profile” of the Petrine readers, as a way of more clearly delineating the identity of the victims in the Anatolian conflict. Chapter Three will be given to the question of the geographical setting of 1 Peter. In the past, certain historical assumptions have colored the way interpreters have viewed the provinces of Asia Minor. This understanding has, in turn, prevented many commentators from gaining an accurate perspective on the present conflict. In this chapter, we will seek to rectify this problem by providing a more historically-informed, geographical backdrop against which to read the situation.

In Chapter Four, our attention will be given to the readers themselves. As part of our “social profile” of the audience, we will offer a detailed assessment of both the recipients’ ethnic composition as well as their socio-economic condition(s). In the case of the former, we will examine the validity of some of the more recent challenges to the modern consensus that the letter was addressed to a primarily Gentile-Christian readership. With respect to the latter, we will seek to engage the discussion at a point where few others have ventured, *viz.*, within the economic context of first-century CE Roman Anatolia. The conclusions that are reached on each of these issues will dictate how our study proceeds in locating the larger cause(s) of conflict. By attempting to contextualize the identity of the addressees in this way, we will thus move our investigation one step closer toward understanding the nature of the readers’ suffering.

Chapter 3 – The Geographical Setting of 1 Peter

The epistle of 1 Peter is addressed to ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας, καὶ Βιθυνίας (1.1). The five proper names listed in the prescript refer to Roman provinces, which comprised a large portion of what was once ancient Anatolia.¹ These provincial areas spread across a vast expanse of land that spanned somewhere between 160,000 and 200,000 square miles, depending on the time of the letter's composition.² Their borders stretched from the Euphrates River in the East all the way to the Aegean Sea in the West. In the North, the territory extended to the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus), while the Taurus Mountains served as the boundary to the South.

When dealing with this particular geographical setting, there are two questions in particular that require attention if we intend to properly contextualize the location of the existing conflict. The first question is whether the readers to whom the letter is addressed were located primarily in urban centers scattered across Asia Minor (and thus should be

¹ Most modern commentators read the five areas designated in the prescript as Roman provinces rather than districts (one exception is Green, *1 Peter*, 14 n. 7). A problem, however, arises from the fact that Bithynia and Pontus are mentioned separately, even though they had been joined together as a single province since ca. 63 BCE. (Few have mentioned the equally precarious fact that Galatia and Cappadocia were also combined at this time, but mentioned separately in the prescript.) In response, Elliott (*1 Peter*, 84-86) lists two examples from the inscriptional evidence where a similar phenomenon is recorded (*CIL* III nos. 249 [= *ILS* no. 1396], 318 [= *ILS* no. 263]). The latter example is unfortunately invalid. The PONTI referred to on the milestone is not the province of Pontus but either Pontus Polemoniacus or Pontus Galaticus, which, along with the rest of the named areas, had been incorporated into the mega-province of Galatia-Cappadocia. This is evidenced by the fact that A. Caesennius Gallus, who is listed as the *legatus Augusti pro praetor*, was the governor of the province in 80-82 CE (cf. *CIL* III no. 312; *PIR*² C 170). Despite this fact, Elliott's point remains valid. Had the author intended to refer to districts, it would have been strange for him to omit the districts of Paphlagonia, Pontus Galaticus, Pontus Polemoniacus, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia (see Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 60). Moreover, this does not mean (as argued by Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 25-26) that the author was ignorant of the geographical specificities. If it was his intention to send the letter-carrier to each of these areas in order (starting and ending in Pontus-Bithynia), there is no other way that he could have constructed his list.

² The estimate of 128,889 square miles given by Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 60 (using the figures of T. R. S. Broughton, "Roman Asia Minor," in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, vol. 4: *Roman Africa, Roman Syria, Roman Greece, Roman Asia* [ed. T. Frank; Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1938] 499-918 [815]), which has been repeated by many subsequent commentators, is not the most accurate measurement of the Petrine provinces during the latter half of the first century CE. The problem with Elliott's calculation is that it only accounts for the provinces proper. That is, Elliott simply adds the sizes of the five provinces (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia) according to the measurements of Broughton, without considering the additions that were made during the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods. His total, therefore, does not include the territories of Lycaonia (originally part of Amyntas' territory in Galatia), Pontus Galaticus (added to Galatia by Augustus), Pisidia (originally included in Amyntas' territory, with parts being later removed from Galatia under Claudius but then returned under Galba), Pamphylia (removed from Galatia under Claudius; later added back but then removed again by the time of Vespasian), Pontus Polemoniacus (added to Galatia-Cappadocia under Nero), and Armenia Minor (added to Galatia-Cappadocia under Vespasian).

conceptualized similar to the Pauline churches described in the book of Acts), or whether a rural setting is more appropriate (wherein our categories for understanding the recipients might require further adjustment). The second question, which is closely tied together with the first, is whether and to what extent first-century CE Anatolia had experienced the effects of Hellenism and Roman urbanization. The reason why these two matters are of such importance is because they provide us with a more narrowed focus on the types of conflicts that the readers might have faced and the various means by which they could have been resolved. The problem, however, is that it has been quite common for interpreters to either overlook these issues or to espouse (seemingly) contradictory notions with regard to their resolution (e.g., an urban setting combined with a lack of urbanization). For this reason, the following discussion will not only be beneficial in diagnosing the nature of persecution in 1 Peter, it will also serve to bring resolution to a commonly misunderstood issue within Petrine studies.

In his pioneering work *Home for the Homeless*, John H. Elliott was the first to draw serious attention to the local setting of 1 Peter. Built upon the idea that the addressees were socially and politically “resident aliens” and “visiting strangers” in their respective residences, Elliott conceived of a readership that was located primarily in the country rather than the city. As one might expect, such a proposal had a significant impact on how he envisioned the nature of suffering depicted in the letter. In particular, the types of risks that threatened the recipients were radically transformed in Elliott’s reconstruction. For, as he noted, “[t]he problems that Christian converts confronted in the cities and hellenized province of Asia, as reflected in Acts and the Apocalypse as well as in the correspondence of Paul, cannot be assumed to be those of the Christians in the interior of Asia Minor.” Instead, it was Elliott’s contention that, “[t]ypical, recurrent causes of social and local tensions between natives and displaced aliens and outsiders in their midst must be considered in the case of the situation presented in 1 Peter.”³

While Elliott’s theory has been questioned on a number of fronts (see Ch. 4), few have recognized one of the more important points at which his position seems to hold true: how one reconstructs the audience’s geographical setting could have significant

³ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 65.

bearing on how one conceives the nature of suffering.⁴ In other words, if Hellenism had made little headway into the cities of Anatolia, and if the urban centers of Asia Minor were πόλεις in name only (i.e., they were little different from the villages scattered across the Anatolian countryside), then the cause and extent of the conflict described in the letter should most naturally be sought with a rural setting in mind. The types of conflict that

⁴ While the validity of this contention will be assumed throughout this chapter as a way of further defining the type of audience addressed in 1 Peter, the distinction that Elliott draws between the rural and urban environments of Roman Anatolia is not so clear-cut. It is true that the two settings should not be simply equated. For Christians, however, the cause(s) of conflict and the means of dealing with that conflict would have been much more uniform than Elliott imagines. First, we must recognize that these two environments were not completely isolated from one another. In many cases, the local urban dignitaries lived outside the city on their country property. For instance, the Polemones were a wealthy family who lived in a rural area outside the city of Kibyra (see Thomas Corsten, “Estates in Roman Asia Minor: The Case of Kibyris,” in *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* [eds. S. Mitchell and C. Katsari; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005] 1-51 [5-6]), yet they are nonetheless honored by a guild of leather workers from the city (*RECAM* III no. 63). Nearby the city of Pisidian Antioch we find the village of Kuyucak honoring an official from the colony (*CIL* III no. 6833 = *ILS* no. 7199). In another village we find the son of a councilor from Pisidian Antioch residing in the village (*I. Sterrett* II no. 373, l. 11; cf. also *I. Sterrett* II nos. 364, 376, l. 2; *CIL* III no. 6826). Secondly, the inhabitants of the villages, just like those of the cities, were fervently devoted to the traditional gods and even to the imperial cult. There is little need to list the abundance of evidence for temples and sanctuaries that filled the countryside. The data collected from the villages around one urban location (Kibyria) should suffice (e.g., Dionysus [Thomas Corsten, et al., “Forschungen in der Kibyris,” *EA* 30 (1998) 47-78 (58 no. 6)]; the Mother of Gods [Ibid., 51-53 no. 3; 65 no. 12]; Poseidon [Reinhold Merkelbach and Josef Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten 5. Register* (Munich/Leipzig: Saur, 2004) 44-45 no. 24/30]; Zeus Saouazios [*RECAM* III no. 114]). As is evident from the words of Libanius, the worship of the gods was part and parcel to village life: “Temples, O Emperor, are the soul of the countryside, marking the beginning of its settlement and having been passed down through many generations to the present time” (*Or.* 30.9). One of the reasons why this devotion was especially prominent in the country was because of their dependence upon agriculture, and thus the power of the gods to provide good crops (Johannes Nollé, “Boars, Bears, and Bugs: Farming in Asia Minor and the Protection of Men, Animals, and Crops,” in *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* [eds. S. Mitchell and C. Katsari; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005] 53-82 [64-66]). If a group like the Christians were to end their devotion to these traditional deities, serious backlash would have occurred, for the whole village, it was assumed, would have then become susceptible to the wrath of the gods. Likewise, the imperial cult was not restricted only to urban centers (*pace* S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984] 79). Its presence could be felt even in the countryside (see *RECAM* II, pp. 34-37). Thus, two of the primary causes of conflict (social withdrawal and “good works”) would have been the same whether the readers were in a village or in a city (*pace* Steenberg, “Reversal of Roles,” 36, who argues that “it is even questionable whether these social activities occurred out in the country”). Finally, the forms of conflict resolution would have been similar as well. Village inhabitants possessed the same freedom to make use of the legal system as city-dwellers. On a local level, the villagers would have been under the jurisdiction of the cities with which they were connected (Andrew P. Gregory, “Village Society in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor,” [Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997] 447-596). On a larger scale, rural inhabitants could also make use of provincial courts. From the province of Asia alone there are numerous examples of interaction between the proconsul and rural villages (see Stephen Mitchell, “The Administration of Roman Asia from 133 BC to AD 250,” in *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert* [ed. W. Eck; SHK 42; Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1999] 17-46 [33-46, esp. 41]). Likewise, in Antioch we find representatives from four villages waiting for the arrival of the Syrian legate’s *conventus* (Denis Feissel and Jean Gascou, “Documents d’archives romains inédits du moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle après J.-C.),” *CRAI* 133 [1989] 535-61 [545]).

might arise in city contexts, similar to those recorded in the book of Acts, would (presumably) provide little insight into the situation of the Petrine communities, because the two would be very different environments.

The purpose of this chapter will be to re-examine both the local setting to which the epistle is addressed and the level of Hellenization/urbanization within first-century CE Anatolia. First, I will begin by analyzing the local setting of 1 Peter in an effort to pinpoint the epistle's target audience. In doing so, I will attempt to show that while neither position (rural or urban) can lay claim to overwhelming evidential support, the more plausible setting appears to be an urban context. With this groundwork in place, our focus will then shift to the urban environment of Asia Minor. Through an investigation into the impact of Roman rule in this area, I will endeavor to demonstrate that the cities of ancient Anatolia were Hellenized and urbanized to the point that a kind of homogeneity can be assumed, one that consisted in a certain degree of shared social, political, economic, and religious experiences. For while cultural variation did exist among the population, it was the shared experiences that were part and parcel of the first-century urban environment that posed particular threats to Christians in cities throughout the Empire.

If we are successful in achieving these aims, it will serve our ultimate goal in two important ways. To the extent that we can demonstrate a general degree of continuity (or homogeneity) between the inhabitants of Anatolia, we will be able to effectively remove a major objection against historical reconstruction in 1 Peter (*viz.*, that cultural and geographical variation prevents us from reconstructing a single or coherent historical background to the letter). Furthermore, by revealing the urbanization which swept across Asia Minor during the early Imperial period, affecting both the western as well as the central and eastern portions of the continent, we will thereby establish a firm foundation upon which to seek out the probable cause(s) of conflict facing the readers along with the risks and threats involved therein. By thus establishing continuity between the urban inhabitants of Anatolia, we will in effect be able to narrow down the specific types of conflicts that could arise in the various Christian communities.

A. The Local Setting of 1 Peter

Prior to Elliott's sociological study of 1 Peter, the local setting of the epistle was a non-issue. The letter, most assumed, was addressed primarily to city-dwellers within the designated provinces. Much like the Pauline communities of Asia Minor and Macedonia, it was presumed that the Anatolian recipients were situated firmly within an urban context. Elliott's work, however, served as a full-frontal assault on this widely held assumption. Yet while other portions of his theory have been called into question, few have addressed this particular issue in detail.⁵ For this reason, the question of local setting still requires further consideration. In what follows, I will provide a detailed critique of Elliott's position, demonstrating that while an urban context may not be able to boast of overwhelming evidential support, it is nonetheless the preferable option.

1. The Case for a Rural Setting

The first and most detailed argument for a rural setting for 1 Peter can be found in Elliott's *Home for the Homeless*.⁶ It is here that he offers three pieces of evidence to support his contention. The first reason Elliott gives for postulating a rural audience is the population distribution that marked first-century CE Asia Minor. Since the great majority of the population consisted of inhabitants from the countryside,⁷ and since the epistle is addressed to an extremely broad readership, a rural context would seem like the more probable locale. But while on the surface these statistics may appear somewhat compelling, population figures tell us little about the setting of 1 Peter, for the numeric

⁵ Those who argue for an urban setting include: Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, 72; Best, *1 Peter*, 117; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 11; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 82-83 (who seems to lean in this direction); Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 34-36; Horrell, "Addressees of 1 Peter," 190-91.

⁶ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 63. Cf. also Senior, *1 Peter*, 8; Armand Puig i Tàrrach, "Le Milleu de la Première Épître de Pierre," *RCT* 5 (1980) 95-129, 331-402 (97, 106-107, 395-97), although in a later work, "Els cristians com a foraster en la Primera Carta de Pere," in *La Bíblia i els immigrants* (ed. A. Puig i Tàrrach; Scripta biblica 6; Barcelona: Associació Bíblica de Catalunya/Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2005) 197-242 (214-20), he is somewhat more open to both rural and urban setting. Even though Elliott's primary objective is to defend a rural setting for 1 Peter, there are a few instances in which he does allow for the possibility that the letter reached cities as well (see, e.g., Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 63).

⁷ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 1: *The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 244, claims that there was an 8:1 ratio between the rural and urban populations of central Anatolia.

proportions of the Anatolian population neither require nor refute one location over another.

The second piece of evidence upon which Elliott draws is the type of language found within the epistle. Three facts in particular are said to bear the marks of the countryside rather than the city. First is the large amount of rural metaphors contained in 1 Peter (1.22-24 [agrarian]; 2.25; 5.2-4 [herding]; the abundant recurrence of household imagery [domestic]). Secondly, he draws attention to “the allusions to the rural environment of Asia Minor.” These include, “the graphic term *phrouroumenos* of 1:5 recalling the many forts and strongholds [*phrouria*] of the provincial interior,” as well as “the term *klēroi* in 5:3 reminiscent of the apportioned sections of land given to clients of the king or to Roman military veterans.”⁸ His third proof lies in “the striking absence of *polis*-related terminology for Christian community such as Paul’s preferred term *ekklesia* or the *politeuma* image of Phil. 3:20.”⁹

What this argument fails to take into consideration, however, is the fact that “agrarian metaphors are stock in trade for the most urbanized Roman authors and their urbanized auditors.” Paul’s letters, as Frederick W. Danker points out, are filled with similar imagery (Rom 11.17-24; 1 Cor 3.8, 9; 9.7, 11; 15.20-23, 37-38, 42-44; 2 Cor 9.6, 10).¹⁰ Likewise, allusions to the rural environment say little about where the actual audience may have been located. The final point offers little more support, for it demands that we read the epistle in light of Paul and not on its own terms. Strangely enough, Elliott elsewhere tries to break 1 Peter free of its Pauline bondage, but here he seems to demand that the letter be compared to a Pauline pattern. On a broader scale, each of these arguments suffers from the same logical flaw. Each assumes that certain imagery is exclusive to a particular local setting. The problem, of course, is that rural imagery is not exclusive to those who inhabit the countryside nor is urban imagery only for those who dwell in cities.

⁸ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 63. He also lists “the obviously rural metaphor of the ravenous lion in 5:8.” Cf. also Puig i Tàrrach, “Le Milieu,” 343. Puig i Tàrrach also lists the use of *σπορά* in 1 Pet 1.23 and the quotation of Isa 40.6-8 in 1 Pet 1.24-25 as other indicators of a rural setting (336; for a critique, see Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 67 n. 82).

⁹ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 63.

¹⁰ Danker, “First Peter in Sociological Perspective,” 87.

The final and most important piece of evidence which Elliott produces as an indicator of a rural context is the socio-political status of the Petrine readers. According to his reconstruction, the recipients of this letter are literally *πάροικοι* (“resident aliens”) and *παρεπίδημοι* (“visiting strangers”) in the provinces of Asia Minor. Given this disadvantageous socio-political position, the audience would have most naturally consisted of tenant farmers and other agricultural laborers who were situated in country villages and rural estates. While a full-scale critique of this proposal will be attempted below (Ch. 4), here I will simply note that such a view is highly problematic. Therefore, it cannot supply support for a rural setting.

2. The Case for an Urban Setting

Lacking any evidence to support the notion of a rural setting for 1 Peter, a crucial point of interest is whether there is any indication that the letter was intended for Christians in Anatolian cities. In some of the more recent treatments of the subject, an assortment of evidence has been set down in support of this position. Yet upon closer review one will discover that much of this “proof” is inadmissible. One piece of evidence that is sometimes used to substantiate an urban setting is the quality of Greek in which the letter has been written.¹¹ The thought is that since the stylistic level of composition from the Anatolian countryside (via the inscriptional evidence) is somewhat “barbarous,”¹² the elevated style of 1 Peter would naturally point to an urban destination. This evidence, however, does little to bolster the claim of one setting over another, for it incorrectly assumes that the literary abilities which an author demonstrates in a given composition reveal the cultural sophistication of his/her audience. In order for such an argument to be valid, one would need further evidence to support the idea that authors often altered the quality of their writing based simply on their intended readership.

Secondly, the reference to *οἰκέται* (“domestic servants/slaves”) in 1 Pet 2.18 is often used to suggest that the audience to whom 1 Peter is addressed were located in an urban context.¹³ While it is true that there is some evidence that *οἰκέται* could be found in rural

¹¹ Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 35; Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter,” 190-91.

¹² To borrow a description from Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, 174.

¹³ Best, *1 Peter*, 117; Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter,” 192.

settings as well (e.g., *I.Sardis* VII no. 1; Philo, *Somn.* 1.7), both the literary and epigraphic sources tend to situate these types of slaves most often in cities. Of course, one objection that might be raised against such an argument is the problem caused by the character of the source material. Given the fact that most of the extant inscriptional evidence has been located in cities and that most ancient literature was composed by urban elites who gave little thought to the countryside, these statistics may only represent the bias of our sources. Considering the relative paucity of inscriptional and literary evidence from country-dwellers, this could be a real problem for this position. Despite the lopsidedness of our data, one point would nevertheless seem to confirm this conclusion. Normally, as T. R. S. Broughton points out, slaves did not fulfill agricultural roles in Anatolia during the Roman period. Instead, these jobs were usually “performed by free proprietors on small holdings or by free tenants on rented lands.”¹⁴ Thus, it would seem that the reason why *οικέται* are rarely mentioned in rural agricultural contexts is because this was not their normal sphere of service.

Regardless of the fact that Broughton’s conclusion has been recently called into question,¹⁵ a more serious objection that might be leveled against this consideration is the nature of the responsibilities performed by the *οικέται*. These types of servants, as noted by Elliott, were ordinarily responsible for *household* management, a task that could take place either on a country estate/manor or in an urban community. This was true in Hellenistic times all the way down to the Roman period.¹⁶ Such a fact makes the reference to *οικέται* of little value in determining the location of the recipients.

A further consideration that could be used in support of an urban setting is the metaphorical imagery employed to depict the readers’ difficult situation. Toward the end of the epistle, the devil is said to be prowling around like a “roaring lion” (*λέων ὠρυόμενος*), looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5.8). Such imagery would have

¹⁴ Broughton, “Roman Asia Minor,” 690-92, 839-40 (quote 691). Cf. C. R. Whittaker, “Rural Labour in Three Roman Provinces,” in *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. P. Garnsey; CPSSup 6; Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1980) 73-99 (76-79).

¹⁵ See Gregory, “Village Society,” 101-102.

¹⁶ For the Hellenistic evidence, see Heinz Kreissig, “Landed Property in the Hellenistic Orient,” *Eirene* 15 (1977) 5-26 (23). An example from the Roman period comes from the numerous *οικέται* who worked the Appianus estate in the Fayum district of Roman Egypt (see Dominic Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century A.D. Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991] 91-116).

certainly been readily understood within the cities of Asia Minor, where *venationes* were commonplace. In fact, the lion may have been specifically employed as a way of conjuring up images of an *ad bestias* execution (cf. Seneca, *Clem.* 1.25.1).¹⁷ But while there is certainly some validity to this suggestion, it cannot be used as support for one setting over against another. In the same way that rural metaphors do not specify a particular type of audience (see above), urban metaphors do not necessarily suggest that the readers were located in the city.

What becomes apparent from this general assessment is that much of the evidence used to support an urban setting simply falls short of being persuasive.¹⁸ This does not mean, however, that there are no indications of an urban context. There are other pieces of evidence that do seem to offer somewhat more viable support. The first is the correspondence between Pliny and the emperor Trajan (ca. 111-112 CE).¹⁹ In *Ep.* 10.96.9, Pliny describes the Christian presence in the province of Bithynia-Pontus noting, “It is not only the towns (*civitates*), but the villages (*vicos*) and rural districts (*agros*) too which are infected through contact with this wretched cult” (trans. Radice [LCL]). Such a statement seems to imply that the Christian movement began as an urban phenomenon which later spread into the villages.

One could legitimately raise the objection that the origins of Christianity pre-date Pliny’s arrival in Pontus-Bithynia, or that such a view (if it is correct) may reflect nothing more than Pliny’s own urban bias. Just as Tacitus assumes that the city of Rome is

¹⁷ Boris A. Paschke, “The Roman *ad bestias* Execution as a Possible Historical Background for 1 Peter 5.8,” *JSNT* 28 (2006) 489-500.

¹⁸ Another possible argument, which I have yet to see employed, is the exhortation to submit to the provincial governor (*ἡγεμόνων*) and his administration of justice (1 Pet 2.14). When read in an Anatolian context, such an appeal would seem much more applicable to readers located in urban centers than to those in the countryside. The travel of a governor was normally restricted to the major assize centers (i.e., important cities where the governor held court) within the territorial domain of his province. Although inhabitants from local villages were not barred from the *conventus*, certain deterrents often prevented their attendance (e.g., cost of travel, lodging expenses, etc.). It was much more common for villages to send a delegation when the need for adjudication arose. Of course, two objections might be leveled against this proposal. First, similar to the urban/rural imagery, the mention of the governor would not necessarily demand an urban setting, because this imagery would register even with those in the countryside. Second, even if one were to press the argument further by claiming that inhabitants of Anatolian cities would be in a better position to offer their submission (*ὑποτάγητε*) to the governor, the difficulty would still not be fully removed. For based on this conception, one could just as easily argue that neither setting would be conducive to submission to the emperor (2.13), with whom neither group was likely to have direct contact.

¹⁹ For instance, see Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter,” 191. Cf. Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Patterns of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale, 1960) 61.

“where all things all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue” (*Ann.* 15.44; trans. Jackson [LCL]), the words of Pliny may simply reflect his assumption that Christianity must have necessarily begun in the cities. Yet an important point of qualification should also be inserted in response to these types of objections. Even though one may be hesitant to attribute too much weight to Pliny’s testimony, we must also take into account the scarcity of the evidence with which we have to work. Although Pliny may (or may not) be an untrustworthy voice of urban bias, his is one of the only voices from which we hear. Furthermore, the fact that such an assumption would be made may go a long way in substantiating Christianity’s urban roots, for this is exactly what we find in the earliest Christian mission.

This brings us to the second consideration. During the earliest missionary efforts of the church, the precedent set by Paul and others was to take the gospel to cities rather than the countryside. This pattern demands that any search for the location of the Petrine readers must begin in the cities. From what is known of other missionary endeavors in Asia Minor, Christianity spread primarily through urban areas (cf. Acts). On the basis of earlier precedent, therefore, one would naturally assume an urban setting, barring further evidence to the contrary. The circumstances surrounding 1 Peter seem to confirm this assumption. The epistle is addressed to an extremely large geographical area (1 Pet 1.1), and thus, logistically, it seems most natural to suppose that it would be carried from city to city via the major highways that stretched across Asia Minor.²⁰ A journey into the vast

²⁰ For the most part, modern commentators have understood the sequence in which the provinces are listed as representing the intended route of the letter-carrier (a view popularized by Hort, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 157-84). Accordingly, the messenger would have traveled by ship from Rome via the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas up through the Hellespont and the Bosphorus straits into the Pontus Euxine (Black Sea) where he may have arrived in port at either Sinope (Hort, *First Epistle of Peter*, 176) or, more likely, Amisus (Colin J. Hemer, “The Address of 1 Peter,” *ExpTim* 89 [1978] 239-43), which contained “the only great road in Pontus from north to south” (J. Arthur R. Munro, “Roads in Pontus, Royal and Roman,” *JHS* 21 [1901] 52-66 [53]). Recently, this proposal has been called into question (note, e.g., Seland, *Strangers in the Light*, 28-36; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 66). One of the strongest arguments against the traditional position has been the size of the territory over which a single letter-carrier would be forced to travel. This difficulty could have been easily overcome, however, by simply delivering the epistle to the major provincial centers for distribution, thus significantly shortening the journey. Furthermore, when one looks closer at the issue, the singling out of Silvanus would seem to imply that he was personally responsible for taking the letter into each of the designated provinces. Otherwise, mentioning his role as the letter-carrier—if indeed δὲ Σιλουανοῦ . . . ἔγραψα denotes the letter-carrier rather than amanuensis—and then commending him as a “faithful brother” (1 Pet 5.12) would seem unwarranted. Such a commendation may have been especially important given that in many cases letter-carriers not only delivered the written correspondence, they also further supplemented the message of the author (see Peter M. Head, “Named Letter-Carriers among the

Anatolian countryside by those unfamiliar with the territory would not only be extremely taxing and time-consuming due to the difficult terrain and minimal roads but also very dangerous.²¹

Admittedly, what little evidence the letter provides concerning the location of its addressees is not overwhelmingly conclusive proof for one location over another. Nevertheless, given the scarcity of our data and the fact that all historical inquiry is carried out on the level of probability rather than certainty, an urban setting does seem to be the more plausible of the two options. Therefore, it will be this foundation from which I will attempt to sketch the situation of the Petrine readers.²²

B. The Impact of Roman Rule in Anatolia

The impact of Hellenism and urbanization across the provinces of Asia Minor was variegated, with some parts being more heavily influenced than others. Its progress in the province of Asia is, of course, well documented and widely acknowledged. After the province's official founding in ca. 129 BCE, it soon became known as the land of 500 cities.²³ With the abundance and splendor of πόλεις like Ephesus and Pergamum, Asia has drawn significant scholarly attention for the last two centuries. There has nonetheless been a marked distinction in the way scholars have assessed the progress of Asia's neighboring provinces, especially those in the central and eastern portions of Anatolia.

When describing the inhabitants of the other provincial areas designated in 1 Peter, it is not uncommon for interpreters to place considerable stress upon their lack of Hellenization and/or urbanization. Karen H. Jobes, for instance, argues that “[i]t would . . . be a great mistake to assume that the sociopolitical situation of Asia applied

Oxyrhynchus Papyri,” *JSNT* 31 [2009] 279-99; idem, “Letter Carriers in the Ancient Jewish Epistolary Material,” in *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon* [eds. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias; LSTS 70; London: T&T Clark, 2009] 203-19).

²¹ Brent D. Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” *P&P* 105 (1984) 3-52 (esp. 9-10).

²² It is important to realize that the basic thesis of this work does not stand or fall on the specificity of the local setting. As we have already shown (see p. 60 n. 4), for Christians, the same types of threats that were posed in an urban context would have been present in a rural setting as well. Therefore, even if an urban setting were to be rejected, my overall theory of persecution would remain relatively unaffected. The importance of establishing the specific environment to which the letter was addressed only helps us to better and more precisely diagnose the problem by exploring locations (i.e., Anatolian cities) that have produced much more material evidence.

²³ Josephus, *War* 2.366; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 548; Apollonius of Tyana, *Ep.* 58.7; cf. *I.Ephesos* no. 1308 (ἀπειρεσίων πόλιων, “countless cities”).

equally to Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, where Hellenized urban centers were few and far between and where Greek or Latin was spoken only by administrative officials.”²⁴ In the same vein, Elliott points out the “limited success of Rome’s urbanization program” in these areas.²⁵ In fact, these provinces have even been referred to as the “‘backwoods’ of the Empire.”²⁶

The question that must be addressed then is, to what extent had Anatolian cities—especially those in the central and eastern portions of the region—been affected by the processes of Hellenization and urbanization during the mid- to late-first century CE? But even before this question can be addressed, an important point of clarification must be made. The problem with both the treatments of Jobes and Elliott is the fact that they fail to recognize that the *number* of urban centers across the central and eastern portions of Roman Asia Minor is *irrelevant* to the present topic of inquiry. After quoting Broughton to the effect that no cities existed in Galatia at the advent of the Imperial period, Elliott

²⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 20-21. What is most remarkable about this statement is its claim regarding the languages of Asia Minor. Elsewhere Jobes develops this idea further: “The problem of linguistic diversity would have been an obstacle to any evangelistic efforts of the indigenous peoples, since Greek and Latin are poorly attested in vast areas of Asia Minor except among officials in the cities that became Roman administrative centers” (22). But while it is true that in the more rural areas Greek and Latin were not as readily used by everyone, there is plenty of epigraphic evidence for their presence even in the remote portions of Anatolia. Recently, Rosalinde A. Kearsley, ed., *Greeks and Romans in Imperial Asia: Mixed Language Inscriptions and Linguistic Evidence for Cultural Interaction until the End of AD III* (IGSK 59; Bonn: Habelt, 2001), collected over 150 bilingual inscriptions from the “private” sector of Asia (from the regions of Mysia, Aiolis, Ionia, Karia, Lydia, and Phrygia as well as some from the Aegean coastline) to show that “Latin was not only the language of Roman officials in the East nor was it used only in official contexts” (1). In fact, after a survey of the various languages that existed in Roman Anatolia, Mitchell notes that only a few spoke no Greek at all, and these were mainly “women who had less contact outside of the household with commerce, officialdom, or public life.” Moreover, he claims that “a majority of the inhabitants of Asia Minor were in some measure bilingual in Greek and an indigenous language” (*Anatolia I*, 175). What is more, in certain cities there was a natural proclivity towards the classical languages. Latin was used, for instance, in the various Roman colonies which were established across Asia Minor (e.g., Pisidian Antioch, Sinope), and in the city of Ancyra, a city whose population was a mixture of Greek, Roman, Phrygian, Celtic, virtually all of the inscriptional evidence from the Imperial period has been written in either Greek or Latin (on this anomaly, see David H. French, *Roman, Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions of Ankara: A Selection* [Ankara: The Foundation of Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 2003] 67-69). This is true of the honorific inscriptions of the wealthy all the way down to the lowliest gravestones (a fact which is demonstrable in each volume of the *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*). Thus, “epigraphic habit” cannot explain away all of the inscriptional evidence as simply the inscriber’s adoption of a more esteemed language.

²⁵ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 62. This is a view that is shared by most commentators who have dealt with the subject (so, e.g., Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 47-52; Best, *1 Peter*, 16-17; Puig i Tàrrach, “Le Milleu,” 395-97; J. H. L. Dijkman, “The Socio-Religious Condition of the Recipients of I Peter: An Attempt to Solve the Problem of Date, Authorship and Addressees of the Letter,” [Ph.D. diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1984] 207-208; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 83-85).

²⁶ Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 8.

goes on to state, “In Galatia, as elsewhere, a few city territories eventually replaced the tribes but in general urbanization and even colonization were remarkably minimal.”²⁷ In a similar manner, Jobes emphasizes that in the provinces of Pontus, Bithynia, Galatia, and Cappadocia, “Hellenized urban centers were few and far between.”²⁸ What these arguments fail to take into account is that if the letter is addressed to urban centers (as suggested above), the *amount* of cities in a given province is unimportant. What matters is the *nature* of those cities (i.e., political structures, public buildings, social institutions, languages, etc.).

It will not be our intent, therefore, to argue that the *quantity* of Hellenization and urbanization within the central and eastern portions of Asia Minor (specifically Galatia and Cappadocia) was anywhere near that of the province of Asia. It certainly was not. Instead, my concern is with the *quality* of Hellenization and urbanization across Roman Anatolia. I simply intend to draw attention to a fact that too many Petrine commentators have overlooked, *viz.*, that Roman rule had a dramatic effect on the urban landscape of Anatolia from the first century BCE to the first century CE. Moreover, I will seek to demonstrate that even the cities in the “less-developed” portion of the continent had experienced radical transformation during the early Principate, and as a result of these urbanization efforts, certain shared experiences were created for those in urban centers. Therefore, in attempting to live out their faith among the urban populace, Christians in cities like Pessinus (Galatia) and Comana (Cappadocia) were prone to the same types of risks and threats as those posed to believers in “more-developed” cities like Ephesus and Pergamum.

1. Roman Annexation²⁹

The Roman presence in Asia Minor officially began with the founding of the province of Asia in 129 BCE. Roman rule progressive spread across the remainder of continent during the next century as cities were founded and structures of local and provincial government

²⁷ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 61. Cf. Betsy J. Bauman-Martin, “Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine Haustafel,” *JBL* 123 (2004) 253-79: “1 Peter is addressed to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, all well-populated with cities, *with the possible exception of Galatia*” (269 n. 58; emphasis added).

²⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 20-21.

²⁹ For a fuller discussion of the specifics of this process, see Appendix 2: Roman Annexation of Asia Minor.

were put into place. This vast Roman annexation and expanse across the urban landscape of Asia Minor—while initially seeming unconnected to the primary intent of this chapter—holds out important implications regarding the quality of Hellenization and urbanization in first-century CE Anatolia. What it reveals is that there was an active Roman involvement in Asia Minor stretching as far back as the second century BCE. To put this in perspective, by the time 1 Peter was written, Galatian cities such as Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium had been under Roman control (including the rule of the Roman governor) for nearly 100 years! Therefore, we cannot assume *a priori* that the “backwoods” character of these territories during the Hellenistic period necessarily remained unchanged in the first century CE. In fact, what I will seek to demonstrate is that by the first century CE the Roman world had exerted considerable influence on the urban centers of Anatolia and their inhabitants. In what follows, therefore, we will explore some of the transformations that resulted from Roman influence as well as the means by which these changes were facilitated.

2. Roman Road-Building

One of the most important means of facilitating change in Asia Minor was the construction of Roman roads. In the ancient world, a road could be defined as “any line of communication between pre-existing points.”³⁰ “Road” is therefore a more generic term that encompassed both official Roman highways designed for administrative and military transport as well as unofficial pathways created from natural use rather than human construction. Most who speak of Roman road building have in mind a specific type of road: the highway/roadway. These were more “specific terms for built, engineered, paved and maintained lines of communication, either broad i.e. more than 2.5 m. wide (highway) or narrow i.e. less than 2.5 m. wide (roadway).”³¹ These official lines of transport were not the only roads over which travel proceeded, however. Where Roman highways and roadways were unavailable, one could also find various tracks and

³⁰ The definitions below have been adopted from the study of David H. French, “A Study of Roman Roads in Anatolia: Principles and Methods,” *AS* 24 (1974) 143-49 (144). In a later article, he increases the specificity by adding further to his list of terminology (see *idem*, “The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor,” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 698-729 [703]).

³¹ French, “A Study of Roman Roads in Anatolia,” 144.

paths connecting towns and villages. Such means of transportation were simply non-built, non-paved lines of communication, whether regularly (track) or irregularly (path) used.

The Romans were not the first to build major road systems across Asia Minor. Although we are unable to say for sure when the first roads appeared, there is evidence for Hittite, Persian, and Greek trackways (i.e., a constructed and regularly employed line of communication that is unpaved) extending across ancient Anatolia. Herodotus, for instance, describes the Persian Royal Road that ran from Sardis (or Ephesus) to Susa (*Hist.* 5.52-54; 7.26-44; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.2.29).³² The one area in which the Romans did make a significant contribution to the road-network of Asia Minor was in the creation of paved roads (i.e., highways/roadways).³³ Prior to this point even the main lines of communication probably remained unpaved.³⁴ Having apparently been conceived as one organic unit, there was a natural uniformity to the make-up of Roman highways/roadways. “[A]s a rule they measure about eight metres wide; each side was stabilized by a row of *magine*s, rectangular blocks measuring up to sixty centimeters along the sides, which contained a surface of packed cobbles sloping gently down on either side from a central *spina*.”³⁵

³² The Royal Road of Herodotus has been the topic of some debate over the years (see David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* [New York: Arno, 1975] 787-89). Most have understood Herodotus’ Royal Road as running northeast from Sardis through Gordium, Ancyra, and Pteria and then east toward the Euphrates (e.g., William M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* [London: J. Murray, 1890; repr., New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972] 29; W. M. Calder, “The Royal Road in Herodotus,” *CR* 39 [1925] 7-11 [8]; Pierre Debord, “Les routes royales en Asia Mineure Occidentale,” *Pallas* 43 [1995] 89-97 [91]; David F. Graf, “The Persian Royal Road System,” in *Achaemenid History VIII. Continuity and Change: Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6-8, 1990 - Ann Arbor, Michigan* [ed. A. Kuhrt, et al.; Leiden: Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994] 167-89 [177-78]). Recently, David H. French, “Pre-and early-Roman Roads of Asia Minor,” *Iran* 36 (1998) 15-43, has challenged this reading of Herodotus, arguing instead that “[t]he Royal Road from Sardis ran eastwards through Phrygia, (2) came to the borders of Cappadocia, (3) arrived at the ‘Halys Gates’ (4) where it passed by (or beside or alongside) the river; (5) it then continued on through Cappadocia to the ‘Double Gates’” (16).

³³ French, “Pre-and early-Roman Roads,” 16.

³⁴ It is difficult to determine whether or to what extent the pre-Roman roads of Asia Minor were paved. While there is evidence for the paving of the Persian road between Persepolis and Susa (see W. Kleiss, “Ein Abschnitt der achämenidischen Königsstrasse von Pasargadae und Persepolis nach Susa, bei Naqsh-e Rostam,” *AMI* 14 [1981] 45-53), it is debatable whether such construction was carried out across Asia Minor. With no evidence from Anatolia itself (possibly because the Romans paved over existing roads?), it is best to conclude that the pre-Roman roads were unpaved.

³⁵ Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, 125-26. On the construction of the Pilgrim’s Road, see David H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor: Fasc. 1: The Pilgrim’s Road* (BARIS 105; Oxford: B.A.R., 1981) 19-22.

The process of Roman highway/roadway construction began under the Republic. Soon after turning the kingdom of Attalus III into an official Roman province (129 BCE), the first step towards establishing and maintaining administrative and military control was through the construction of an adequate means of transport. During the administration of M. Aquillius, a large-scale project was undertaken wherein a massive highway was built.³⁶ The road extended south from Pergamum to Ephesus and then east to Laodicea before turning southeast into Pisidia. Its final destination was the city of Side in Pamphylia.³⁷

As Rome began to acquire more and more territory in Asia Minor, the need for roads continued to grow. Under the Julio-Claudian dynasty, road construction moved further east. Picking up from where M. Aquillius had left off, the evidence from the early Principate shows that during the time of Augustus a highway was built to connect the Roman colonies that had been established in Pisidia. The *Via Sebaste*, as it was called, began at Perge and ran northwest to Comama and then to Antioch. The semi-circular route continued on to Iconium and was finally completed at Lystra.³⁸

The greatest surge in Roman road-building took place under the Flavians, with the largest concentration of the work being carried out between 75 and 83 CE.³⁹ During this time, each of the major provinces of Asia Minor (Pontus-Bithynia, Galatia-Cappadocia, and Asia) benefited from the construction efforts. The end result of this massive project was the creation of the most intricate and costly roadway network prior to the modern

³⁶ *CIL* III no. 479; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7177; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7183; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7184; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7205; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14202⁴.

³⁷ David H. French, "Sites and Inscriptions from Phrygia, Pisidia and Pamphylia," *EA* 17 (1991) 51-68 (53-54).

³⁸ *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 6974; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14401a; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14401b; *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14401c. Cf. David H. French, "Roads in Pisidia," in *Forschungen in Pisidien* (ed. E. Schwertheim; AMS 6; Bonn: Habelt, 1992) 167-75. Note the description found in the Claudian Monument uncovered at Patara (Lycia): [Τιβέρ]ιος Κλαύδιος [Δρού]σου υἱὸς Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς, ὁ τῆς οἰκου[μένης] ἀ[ν]τοκράτω[ρ], ὁδοὺς καθ' ἑ[λ]λην Λυ[κί]αν ἐποίησεν διὰ τῆ[ν Κοίντου] Οὐηραν[ίου] τοῦ ἰδίου π[ρ]εσβευ[τ]οῦ ἀντιστ[ρα]τήγου ὑπερ[ε]σίαν ("Tiberius Claudius, son of Drusus, Caesar Augustus Germanicus, the emperor of the world, made roads throughout all Lycia by the agency of Quintus Veranius, his *legatus propraetore*") (*SEG* 51 [2001] no. 1832, B, ll. 1-7 = *AE* [2001] no. 1931, B, ll. 1-7).

³⁹ *Vespasian*: *IGR* IV no. 1598(?); *CIL* III no. 470 (75 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7203 (75 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 7204 (75 CE); *IGR* IV no. 267 (75 CE); *I. Mackay* no. 2 (75-76 CE). *Vespasian/Titus/Domitian*: *CIL* III no. 306 [= *ILS* no. 8904] (75 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 6993 (77/78 CE); *I. Robinson* no. 77 (82-83 CE). *Titus/Domitian*: *CIL* III no. 318 [= *ILS* no. 263] (80 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 12218 (81 CE). *Domitian*: *CIL* III, Suppl. nos. 7191-4 (?); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14188³ (77-78 CE); *CIL* III no. 312 [= *ILS* no. 268] (81 or 82 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14184⁴⁸ (82 CE); *CIL* III, Suppl. no. 14200¹ (90 or 91 CE). See further French, "The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor," 727-28.

era.⁴⁰ The main purpose of this huge undertaking was to facilitate military transport. Vespasian, “having established a frontier line (on or near the Euphrates), conceived and initiated the construction of a road-system which served both the military and administrative requirements of the territory in Roman control.” Thus, “[t]he road-network . . . was intended to provide logistic support to the *limes*; the civilian sector was integral but . . . secondary.”⁴¹

Even though the civilian sector may have only been a secondary consideration in the purposes of Rome, it was greatly affected by the new system of roads. The provision of a high quality road network afforded further assistance in ventures such as travel and trade. It even helped to facilitate the spread of new ideas.⁴² But the most important consideration for our purposes is the manner in which roads contributed to the process of Romanization. As Chevallier concludes, “It must be accepted then that the extent of Romanisation was closely connected, both as cause and effect, with the system of roads. Roads, indeed, formed the essential framework for human settlement and land-division and, by easing the transport of commodities, led to the accumulation of wealth.” Yet what is more, “as men and goods moved from place to place, there came in their train influence of a subtler nature, in the realm of art and religion, which tended to unify the whole Empire. Roads brought innovation but they also conserved and unified.”⁴³

Therefore, with the territories annexed and under complete Roman control, and with an adequate means of transport established, the groundwork was laid for the transformation of the “backwoods” territories of Anatolia. In what follows, we will provide a brief glimpse into what this process looked like within individual communities.

3. Roman Urbanization

In 155 CE, during his second trip to Rome, Aelius Aristides delivered his encomium on Roman power and dominion. Here in the presence of the imperial court he sought to

⁴⁰ On the enormous cost of the project, see Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 126-27.

⁴¹ French, “The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor,” 709.

⁴² It was this very system that allowed the apostle Paul to easily move from one city to another, spreading the gospel, see David H. French, “Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor,” in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (eds. D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf; vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. B. W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 49-58.

⁴³ Raymond Chevallier, *Roman Roads* (trans. N. H. Field; Batsford Studies in Archaeology; London: Batsford, 1976) 204.

praise the one lasting impact of Roman rule—the establishment and adornment of cities across the Empire:

Now I think that one would not be wrong in saying that all former men, even those who ruled the largest portions of earth, ruled over, as it were, only the naked bodies of their people, but you have filled your whole empire with cities and adornments. When were there so many cities on land or throughout the sea, or when have they been so thoroughly adorned? Who then ever made such a journey, numbering the cities on land or throughout the sea, or sometimes passing through two or three cities on the same day, as it were through avenues (στενωπῶν)? . . . Now all of the Greek cities flourish under you, and the offerings in them, the arts, and all their adornments bring honor to you, as an adornment in a suburb. The seacoasts and their interiors have been filled with cities, some founded, others increased under you and by you. (Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 26.92-94; trans. Behr)

While the central and eastern portions of Anatolia were probably not what Aristides had in mind when he composed this speech, his words do alert us to an important fact that few Petrine interpreters have taken into consideration when attempting to sketch the landscape of first-century CE Asia Minor: Roman rule brought with it significant changes. The urbanization efforts of the Imperial period vastly transformed meager Hellenistic territories into thriving Anatolian cities.

The most important change that Roman rule brought with it was the new conceptualization of the Greek πόλις. What constituted a city under the Principate was categorically different from that of the classical and Hellenistic periods.⁴⁴ Whereas a πόλις was previously defined by its political autonomy, under Roman rule a city's status came to be measured by its amenities (i.e., public buildings). So, for instance, when Pausanias, the second-century CE Greek geographer, described Panopeus (a city of the Phocians), he questioned whether the establishment could truly be called a πόλις. The reason for his doubt rested in the fact that the settlement had no government offices, no gymnasium, no theatre, no market-place, no running water, and the people lived in mountain cabins.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 81. The theory of Mitchell has not gone unchallenged. Note, for instance, Gregory, "Village Society," 7-20, who argues that an emphasis on amenities did not *replace* the more abstract notion of autonomy.

⁴⁵ Pausanias, *Descr.* 10.4.1; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.1.27; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 39.5; 48.9. A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940) 236, points out that there were certain buildings "which every self-respecting city had to possess." These included: "colonnaded streets and market squares, aqueducts and fountains, temples, gymnasia, baths, a stadium, a hippodrome, a theatre, an odium. To these may be added buildings to house the various administrative services—the office of the several boards of magistrates, the record office, the treasury, and the council chamber." For the basic

Such a transformed understanding of a city has significant implications for how we view urban life in the “less-developed” provinces of Galatia and Cappadocia. While it is true that ancient Anatolia was marked by cultural diversity, once we realize that recognition as an official Greek *πόλις* or Roman *colonia* meant the possession of certain public amenities and socio-political structures, then it forces us to reassess urban life in the “backwoods” territories of central and eastern Anatolia. It means that one might naturally assume the presence of particular buildings and structures in each of the urban areas across the continent (e.g., fortifications, religious structures, political meeting places, cultural or educational facilities, civic amenities, and decorative monuments).⁴⁶

During the first century CE, not all of the Anatolian cities within the provinces listed in 1 Peter would have possessed each of these distinguishing marks of urbanization. But from what can be known about these areas through the epigraphic, archaeological, and literary sources, a number of the cities within this designated perimeter would have contained many if not most of these amenities, and all of the cities would have possessed certain elements which seemed to cause difficulties for Christians, as evidenced not only in 1 Peter but also in other Christian literature as well: worship of the traditional gods, the imperial cult, social organizations (e.g., voluntary associations, entertainment, meals), etc. For while a vast landscape of cultural variation did exist among the population of Asia Minor, as we will see in the following chapters, it was the shared experiences that were part and parcel to the first-century CE urban environment that posed particular threats to Christians of all areas.

In what follows, we will take a detailed look at the effects of Roman urbanization on one particular city in first-century CE Asia Minor: the city of Pessinus.⁴⁷ What makes this task difficult is the scarcity of the material evidence with which the modern interpreter has to work. Relatively few cities from ancient Anatolia have been properly and

elements of an Anatolian city, see David Parrish, “Introduction: The Urban Plan and Its Constituent Elements,” in *Urbanism in Western Asia Minor: New Studies on Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Hierapolis, Pergamon, Perge, and Xanthos* (eds. D. Parrish and H. Abbasoğlu; JRASup 45; Portsmouth, RI.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2001) 9-41.

⁴⁶ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 80.

⁴⁷ For the effects of urbanization in other Anatolian cities, see Appendix 3: Cities of First-Century CE Anatolia. In order to gain a more complete perspective across a much wider range of Anatolian cities, see Broughton, “Roman Asia Minor,” 715-33, 747-94. The evidence he produces on the monumental structures speaks clearly of an effort towards increased urbanization.

completely excavated, and where archaeological work has been done, a much greater concentration has (naturally) centered upon the province of Asia. Despite this fact, our efforts are not doomed to failure; it simply means that our picture of Roman Pessinus must be supplemented by evidence from other urban areas (see Appendix 3). The average Anatolian city will only become clear through the *combined* voice of a number of urban communities. That is, rather than expecting a complete record of urbanization in each and every location, the evidence from each community must be viewed from the perspective of what it contributes to our overall conception of the average Anatolian city. Thus, from the limited amount of material evidence which has been produced, we will offer a tentative proposal concerning the relative degree of Hellenization and/or urbanization across the provinces of Asia Minor.

We have intentionally chosen a *πόλις* from the province that is often considered to be the least developed of those mentioned in 1 Pet 1.1: Galatia.⁴⁸ If we can show that even a city in the central portion of Asia Minor had been affected by Roman urbanization, then a similar impact in the progress of the rest of Anatolia could more readily be assumed. As we proceed through this examination, two points of interest will be highlighted. To begin with, we will investigate the character of the settlement before and after its official Roman founding, concentrating specifically on the changes that took place as it was incorporated into the Empire. We will also focus on the nature of the city itself, observing its political setup, social structures, and whether and to what extent it possessed the characteristic amenities that came to define a *πόλις* in the Roman world. What will become clear from this survey is that despite the immense cultural variation that existed across the continent, the inhabitants of Asia Minor shared a number of important social, political, economic, and religious experiences.

⁴⁸ A secondary criterion for choosing this particular location was the amount of epigraphic, archaeological, and numismatic evidence. In the case of some ancient cities, very little archaeological fieldwork has been performed. For instance, although Nicomedia was one of the largest cities in Pontus-Bithynia during the first century CE, rivaling Nicaea for the title of “first city” (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 38.30; cf. Dio Cassius, 51.20.6), little archaeological evidence is available today, because it lies beneath the modern city of İzmit (Turkey). Therefore, we are forced to look elsewhere.

For the city of Pessinus, the transition from settlement to πόλις was an altogether different journey than that of neighboring Anycra.⁴⁹ It was not originally part of the territory controlled by the Gauls who settled into north-central Anatolia after their defeat by Antiochus I (ca. 268 BCE), but eventually, as the Galatian tribes increased their holdings, the area came under the influence of the Tolistobogioi. During the Hellenistic period, Pessinus was not a city but a temple-state governed by priests. It was the cult center of the Phrygian goddess Cybele, the great Mother of Gods.⁵⁰ Legend has it that Midas, king of Phrygia, was the one responsible for constructing her temple, which was known across the ancient world (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 3.59.8; Theopompus, *FGrH* II B no. 115 F 260; Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 2.73). However, in 204 BCE the Mother of Mount Ida—in the form of a meteoric stone—was removed from the temple of Pessinus and taken to Rome in an effort to ward off the impending threat of Hannibal.⁵¹ Sometime thereafter the temple was enlarged by the Attalid kings. To it was added a *temenos* wall, and it was further adorned with porticoes of white marble (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3).⁵²

Being a temple-state meant that the ruling power of the community rested in the hands of priests. Throughout the Hellenistic period these men possessed great authority (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3). Their influence can be seen in a number of different encounters with Rome. In 189 BCE, two *Galli* of the Great Mother were sent by Attis and Battacus to Manlius, the Roman consul, to predict his victory and dominion over the region (Polybius, *Hist.* 21.37.4-7; Livy, 38.18.9-10). Years later (163-156 BCE), there is evidence of correspondence between the Attalids of Pergamum and Attis the high priest

⁴⁹ For the history of Pessinus, see John Devreker, “L’histoire de Pessinonte,” in *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte: 1967-1973* (eds. J. Devreker and M. Waelkens; Brugge: De Tempel, 1984) 13-37; Johan H. M. Strubbe, “Pessinus: van stam tot stad,” *Leidschrift* 21 (2006) 97-112.

⁵⁰ On the cult of Cybele, see Hugo Hepding, *Attis, seine mythen und sein kult* (RVV 1; Giessen: J. Ricker, 1903); Henri Graillot, *Le culte de Cybèle, mère des dieux, à Rome et dans l’Empire romain* (BEFAR 107; Paris: Fontemoing, 1912); Pierre Lambrechts, *Attis, van herdersknaap tot God* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1962); Grant Showerman, *The Great Mother of the Gods* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1969); Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult* (trans. A. M. H. Lemmers; London: Thames & Hudson, 1977); Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1999).

⁵¹ Livy, 29.10.4-11.8; Ovid, *Fast.* 4.255-72; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 34/35.33.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3; Arrian, *Tact.* 33.4; Herodian, *Hist.* 1.11.1-5.

⁵² Horace L. Jones (LCL) renders *κατεσκευάσται* in Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3 as “has been built up,” which could give the impression that nothing had previously existed. A better way of translating this text might be “[the sacred precinct] has been enlarged,” for the Attalid efforts simply provided further adornment to an already existing structure (John Devreker, et al., “The Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus and its Predecessors: A Revision,” *AnatAnt* 3 [1995] 125-44 [125-27]).

(*I.Pessinous* nos. 1-7). Herein it appears that the Attalid rulers were attempting to conspire to gain control of Galatia, which Rome had declared independent and autonomous.⁵³ Later still (102 BCE), we find a Cybelene priest named Battaces coming to Rome to protest the defilement of the temple (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 36.13.1-3; Plutarch, *Mar.* 17.5-6).

The first century BCE was a turbulent time for the city of Pessinus. With the reign of central Anatolia being passed between numerous potentates, the territory was afforded little stability. In 86 BCE, Mithridates of Pontus summoned the sixty leading men of Galatia to Pergamum in the guise of friendship. All but three of these leaders were then massacred (Plutarch, *Mulier virt.* 23 [*Mor.* 259A-D]; Appian, *Mith.* 46; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.1). The Galatian leadership structure was completely transformed, as these three chieftans (or tetrarchs) then became rulers over the three Galatian tribes.⁵⁴ This structure was later confirmed upon Pompey's overthrow of Mithridates in 63 BCE (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.1). In 37/36 BCE, further change occurred when Mark Antony bequeathed the entire territory of Galatia to Amyntas, the king of Pisidia (Dio Cassius, 49.32.3), under whose control it remained until his death in 25 BCE.

Structurally, Hellenistic Pessinus was no more well endowed than its Galatian neighbors (i.e., Ancyra, Tavium). "Before the beginning of our era, Pessinous had no monumental civic buildings; no coins were struck by Pessinous as a civic entity. All characteristics of Greek civic life were lacking."⁵⁵ This situation would change dramatically, however, upon Galatia's transformation from kingdom to Roman province. Shortly after the murder of Amyntas, the small settlement of Pessinus was turned from a temple-state into a Greek πόλις.⁵⁶ But, of course, the founding of the city did not bring

⁵³ Anders H. Rasmussen, "The Attalid Kingdom and the Cult of Cybele at Pessinous," in *Ancient History Matters: Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. K. Ascani, et al.; *AnalRom* 30; Rome: "L'erma" di Bretschneider, 2002) 159-64.

⁵⁴ Magie, *Roman Rule*, 223; Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 29, 33.

⁵⁵ Johan H. M. Strubbe, ed., *The Inscriptions of Pessinous* (IGSK 66; Bonn: Habelt, 2005) x.

⁵⁶ The city of Pessinus used an era date on both coins and inscriptions. Since the latter (*I.Pessinous* nos. 92, 121) are not independently dated, they are not as helpful as the former. The most useful evidence for dating the city's foundation are two coins belonging to the reign of Tiberius (ca. 14-37 CE). One is dated in the forty-third year of the city (Michael Grant, "The Official Coinage of Tiberius in Galatia," *NC* 6.10 [1950] 43-48 [43-4, nos. 1-2 = *RPC* I nos. 3552-3553]), while the other dates back to the fiftieth year (Grant, "Coinage," 44, no. 3 = *RPC* I no. 3554). The coins thus reveal that the founding of the city took place sometime between 29 and 13 BCE, yet they are unable to provide us with a more precise timeframe. With the majority of scholarship, we have dated the founding at 25 BCE. For more on the numismatic

overnight transformation. With little upon which to build, it would take the Romans decades to provide the city with the kinds of structures characteristic of an official Greek πόλις.

The one area that presumably did experience immediate change was the city's political organization. The system of priestly leadership, which had held sway on a local level for centuries, was exchanged for a more modern, Greek model.⁵⁷ It is likely that the constitution of Pessinus, as well as the other Galatian cities, was based in large part on the organizational structure of the cities in Pontus-Bithynia, which had been set out by Pompey.⁵⁸ Under the *lex Pompeia*, certain regulations were laid down with regard to age requirements for those in public office, size and composition of civic councils, and even the types of magistracy a city should possess (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80, 112, 114-115). “[T]he aim of these arrangements would have been . . . to ensure that the cities survived as viable self-governing units, and that their authority extended over the whole of provincial territory.”⁵⁹ Due to these regulations, Bithynian cities shared a strong continuity in their internal structures, a continuity that was rare outside Bithynia and Pontus. Pessinus (along with Ancyra), however, shared many of these same features.⁶⁰

evidence from Pessinus, see John Devreker, “Les monnaies de Pessinonte,” in *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte: 1967-1973* (eds. J. Devreker and M. Waelkens; Brugge: De Tempel, 1984) 173-215, which is supplemented by John Devreker, “Les monnaies de Pessinonte: A Supplement,” *EA* 24 (1995) 85-90; G. de Wilde, “Monnaies au Musée de Pessinonte,” *EA* 28 (1997) 101-14; and idem, “Monnaies au Musée de Pessinonte,” *EA* 31 (1999) 187-95.

⁵⁷ This is not to say that the priests lost all of their former power. While it is true that their authority had begun to wane in the first century BCE (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.3), it is likely that many were simply transformed into civic officials (cf. Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51, which records that Pylaemenes, son of Amyntas, was chosen as priest of Augustus and Rome at Ancyra). This would allow for a much smoother transition, and it would account for the continuity between the leadership being in the hands of the wealthy both before and after the city's founding.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 88-89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁰ The cities were led by a group of ἄρχοντες (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 100; *I.Pessinous* nos. 13, 170) who were headed up by a πρῶτον ἄρχων (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 140 = *IGR* III no. 203). The lower level offices consisted of the ἀγορανόμος (*I.Pessinous* nos. 13, 15, 170), εἰρήναρχος (*I.Pessinous* no. 13), γυμνασιαρχος (*I.Pessinous* no. 17), etc. The more unusual offices included the πολειτογράφος (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 288 = *IGR* III no. 179) and βουλογράφος (Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 288 [= *IGR* III no. 179], 289 [= *IGR* III no. 206]). Furthermore, the cities were divided into tribes for administrative purposes, with each of these smaller bodies being governed by phylarchs (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 117 [= *IGR* III no. 208]; *I.Pessinous* no. 21). For more on these features in Bithynian cities, see Walter Ameling, “Das Archontat in Bithynien und die Lex Provinciae des Pompeius,” *EA* 3 (1984) 19-31; cf. also idem, ed., *Die Inschriften von Prusias ad Hypium* (IGSK 27; Bonn: Habelt, 1985) 19-26.

In terms of appearance, first-century CE Pessinus was well on its way towards the public architectural structures that defined urban centers during the Roman Empire.⁶¹ One of the earliest pieces of evidence for the change from temple-state to Greek-style πόλις was the construction of a canal system to restrain and remove seasonal waters from the Gallos River.⁶² Begun under the reign of Augustus, the canal was frequently added to during the early part of the first century CE, and at some point during this time, quay walls were constructed around the sharp bend in the river as a way of protecting the surrounding terrain which continued to be exposed to heavy construction. For there were three major architectural structures in particular being built at this time: an imperial temple, a theater-stairway, and a colonnaded square. “The whole area forms one monumental concept and the three buildings together with the canal were constructed at the same time as one entity.”⁶³

Situated on the hill at the southern end of the city stood the temple which appears to have been dedicated to the imperial cult.⁶⁴ Although there has been general agreement about the time of its completion (between 25 and 35 CE),⁶⁵ scholars have been somewhat more divided over whether the temple housed the provincial or municipal emperor cult.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Fortunately for modern scholarship, the city has produced a wealth of archaeological evidence. Pessinus was first identified with the village of Ballıhisa near the town of Sivrihisar (Turkey) by Charles Texier (1834). Modern excavations were carried out by the University of Gent (Belgium) from 1967-1973 under the supervision of Pierre Lambrechts. Some of the fruits of this work include: Pierre Lambrechts, *Excavations at Pessinus (Turkey) by the University of Ghent: Belgium and the Common Market* (Brussels: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1968), and John Devreker and Marc Waelkens, eds., *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte: 1967-1973* (2 vols.; Brugge: De Tempel, 1984). The project was renewed in 1987 by John Devreker and a team from the same university. Their findings have been published in a number of monographs and articles. Annual preliminary reports can be found in *Kazi Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara), *Anatolia Antiqua* (Istanbul), and the yearbooks of the Province of East-Flanders (Ghent). On this renewed archaeological work in the city, see John Devreker, “The New Excavations at Pessinus,” in *Forschungen in Galatien* (ed. E. Schwertheim; AMS 12; Bonn: Habelt, 1994) 105-30.

⁶² Marc Waelkens, “Le système d’endiguement du torrent,” in *Les fouilles de la Rijksuniversiteit te Gent à Pessinonte: 1967-1973* (eds. J. Devreker and M. Waelkens; Brugge: De Tempel, 1984) 77-141.

⁶³ Johan H. M. Strubbe, “The Imperial Cult at Pessinus,” in *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Fifth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire, 200 BC-AD 476*, Münster, June 30-July 4, 2004 (eds. L. de Blois, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 106-21 (108).

⁶⁴ Marc Waelkens, “The Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus: Epigraphical and Numismatic Evidence for its Date and Identification,” *EA* 7 (1986) 37-73 (esp. 67-73); Strubbe, “Imperial Cult at Pessinus,” 108-13.

⁶⁵ On the dating of the temple, see Devreker, et al., “Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus,” 137-43; Hugo Thoen, “Dating the Temple Area: The Evidence of the Finds,” *AnatAnt* 10 (2002) 145-54. Strubbe, “Imperial Cult at Pessinus,” 110-13, dates it more precisely at 31/32 CE under the high priest M. Lollius.

⁶⁶ Provincial: Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 103-104; Devreker, et al., “Imperial Sanctuary at Pessinus,” 129. Municipal: Strubbe, “Imperial Cult at Pessinus,” 115-121.

But regardless of the nature of the Sebasteion (in this case, a provincial cult seems most probable), this structure would have undoubtedly exerted considerable influence upon the lives of Pessinus' inhabitants.⁶⁷ "The prominently located temple was a symbol of the central position of the imperial cult and of the impact of the Roman Empire on the life of the new πόλις. At Pessinous, just as in other towns, the architecture of the emperor cult determined the spatial organization of the town."⁶⁸

This influence is evidenced in the way in which the two other adjacent structures were connected to it. In front of the temple, leading down into the valley was a stairway. On both sides of this stairway were seats that curved around to form a theater.⁶⁹ This combination of temple and theater serves to confirm the tremendous impact of Rome, even down to the level of city planning, for the closest parallels come directly from Italy (Tivoli, Gabii, Cagliari). The theater apparently served both religious and entertainment purposes, as can be deduced from the fact that the steps do not reach all the way to the lowest level. Such structural design was likely intended to protect spectators from the gladiatorial games and wild animal fights/hunts that took place below.⁷⁰ Given that these games were often associated with the imperial cult, it is clearly evident how strongly the influence of Rome was exerted on the inhabitants.

Located in the valley below the temple and the theater stood the third structure of the three-part complex: the colonnaded square. In Strabo's time, Pessinus is said to have been the most prominent trading center (ἐμπόριον) in that part of the continent (*Geogr.* 12.5.3). During the late-first century CE, this portico would have been filled with various shops and vendors,⁷¹ and it would not be a stretch to imagine that the present design would have only further stimulated these commercial activities. Ultimately, one cannot help but speculate that this three-part monumental complex was in some way in direct

⁶⁷ Note, in particular, the participation in the cult by the local elite (*I.Pessinous* nos. 12, 14, 17-19).

⁶⁸ Strubbe, "Imperial Cult at Pessinous," 121.

⁶⁹ On the stairway theater, see Inge Claerhout and John Devreker, *Pessinous: Sacred City of the Anatolian Mother Goddess: An Archaeological Guide* (HAG 7; Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2008) 75-78.

⁷⁰ Cf. Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51 (M. Lollius gave ten pairs of gladiators to Pessinus, ca. 31/32 CE). On security measures at gladiatorial events, see Alex Scobie, "Spectator Security and Comfort at Gladiatorial Games," *Nikephoros* 1 (1988) 191-243.

⁷¹ Evidence of amphorae and pots were found in a fire layer dating to ca. 400 CE, see John Devreker, et al., "Fouilles archéologiques de Pessinonte (Tuquie): La campagne de 1999," *AnatAnt* 9 (2001) 61-72 (61-64).

competition with the tremendous building projects taking place at Ancyra, the provincial capital.⁷²

Aside from these amenities, the city also contained other public structures common among urban centers: gymnasium, an archive, and public baths.⁷³ The social world of ancient Pessinus was also comparable with that of surrounding πόλεις. The city contained an assortment of clubs or voluntary associations,⁷⁴ and the inhabitants were often treated to public banquets and spectacular shows as a result of benefactions from local elites (*I.Pessinous* no. 15; Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51). Thus, while Pessinus had once been merely a temple-state dedicated to the cult of Cybele, the Mother Goddess, by the first century CE, it had been radically transformed into a thriving Greek πόλις.⁷⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to discern the geographical setting in which the recipients of 1 Peter were most likely located. This was first begun through a re-examination of the local setting of the Petrine communities.⁷⁶ We discovered that even amidst recent challenges, an urban context serves as the most plausible setting. Once the location had been established, we next turned to the nature of these Anatolian urban communities. The question that fueled our efforts here was, to what extent were the cities of Anatolia Hellenized and urbanized during the first century CE? What we discovered was that even

⁷² Jürgen Süß, “Kaiserkult und Urbanistik. Kultbezirke für römische Kaiser in kleinasiatischen Städten,” in *Die Praxis der Herrscherverehrung in Rom und seinen Provinzen* (eds. H. Cancik and K. Hitzl; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 249-81 (268).

⁷³ See Claerhout and Devreker, *Pessinous*, 35.

⁷⁴ *I.Pessinous* nos. 17-18 (*Attabokai*, initiates of mysteries), 22 (guild of gardeners), 19, 35 (guild of Dionysiac artists).

⁷⁵ The evidence which has been discussed concerning the transformation of the Galatian city of Pessinus (see also the cities discussed in Appendix 3) reveals the inadequacy of many descriptions found in Petrine literature, e.g., “Roman colonization was concentrated along the major southern route in Galatia, leaving the Celtic tribal lands of the northern interior relatively unaffected” (Jobes, *1 Peter*, 21), or “Galatian tribal organization and its chief centers at Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus were little influenced by Hellenization and urbanization” (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 87-88).

⁷⁶ The combined evidence from Ancyra and Pessinus reveals how quickly urban centers could be transformed under Roman rule. Of course, it was certainly not unnatural for an annexed province to be Romanized in such a short period of time. The kingdom of Nabataea—which became the Roman province of Arabia in 106 CE—is a prime example of how quickly Roman ideas and practices could consume an annexed territory (see Hans Julius Wolff, “Römisches Provinzialrecht in der Provinz Arabia,” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 13; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 763-806; Naphtali Lewis, et al., eds., *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri* [JDS 2; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989] 16-19, 27-28).

the urban centers of central and eastern Asia Minor were heavily influenced by Roman rule.

An examination of three cities in particular demonstrated the kinds of transforming effects Roman urbanization had on local communities. Although the processes of Hellenization and urbanization were still in their infancy in many parts of this vast expanse, they were nonetheless present and increasing realities in the lives of urban inhabitants.⁷⁷ Urban existence in first-century Anatolia would have therefore been much more uniform than most commentators have recognized. In many ways, the lives of the inhabitants of Pessinus, for example, were not all that different from those who resided in a larger civic community such as Ephesus. Both would have shared the same civic structure, being administered on the local level by the wealthier members of the society (magistrates and βουλή), while at the same time being in subjection to the Roman governor. On a religious level, certain diversity would have existed between deities that received greatest prominence (e.g., Artemis at Ephesus; Cybele at Pessinus). Nevertheless, a great pantheon of similar gods and goddess would have been represented in each city along with the ever-popular imperial cult. Likewise, the social world of both cities would have been much the same (e.g., gladiatorial contests, temple meals, voluntary associations, etc.).

While it is true that life in first-century Anatolia was more than the worship of the traditional gods, participation in the imperial cult, and social interaction at festivals and voluntary associations, it was certainly not less than that. It is this fact that we must keep in mind when reconstructing the nature of suffering in 1 Peter. The problems for these Petrine communities⁷⁸ arose out of an effort to navigate their Christian existence within the context of urbanized centers across Roman Asia Minor.

⁷⁷ A further point that must also be remembered is that 1 Peter is not simply addressed to communities within the “less-developed” portions of central and eastern Asia Minor. It was also intended for the thriving province of Asia as well as the up-and-coming πόλεις in Pontus-Bithynia. Thus, when we conceive of its readership, we need not fall into the trap of thinking *a priori* that they were “backwoods country bumpkins.”

⁷⁸ This particular designation (“Petrine communities”) is simply a shorthand convenience and does not reflect an assumption about authorship nor about any distinctive character of these communities.

Chapter 4 – The Addressees of 1 Peter

To this point, our efforts to properly contextualize the persecutions of 1 Peter have been focused primarily on the world in which the readers lived. But accurately diagnosing the risks and threats to which the Petrine communities may have been susceptible also means that we must probe deeper into the lives of the readers themselves. In this chapter we will provide a fuller description of the addressees of the epistle by focusing on two questions that hold out the most promise for understanding the conflict situation: the audience's ethnic identity and socio-economic status(es). Both of these topics will play an important role in further delineating the nature of the readers' suffering. As more detail is added to the addressees' "social profile," we will be afforded significant insight into both the probable cause(s) of conflict as well as the form(s) which that conflict might have taken.

A. Ethnic Composition

Since the rise of historical criticism, the question of the Petrine audience's ethnic composition has been a matter of some debate. Commentators have been divided over whether the letter represents an address to a predominantly Jewish- or predominantly Gentile-Christian audience. Where this debate intersects with the present topic is in providing further clarity to the reconstructed conflict situation. If the Anatolian communities were made up primarily of Jewish Christians, then we must consider the trouble that could have arisen out of inner-Jewish disputes (e.g., dietary matters, ritual observance, synagogue attendance, etc.). On the other hand, if these were Gentile converts, another set of issues might come into play (e.g., non-participation in pagan activities, negative notoriety that came to be associated with Christian ethics, etc.). Therefore, in order to more accurately understand the cause(s) of conflict in 1 Peter, we must discern the ethnic composition of its readers.

In recent literature, the question of the audience's ethnic identity has found some resolution in the form of a modern consensus. Scholarship has reached a widespread agreement that the epistle was originally meant for readers of a primarily Gentile origin.¹ Like all scholarly constructs, though, this opinion stops short of complete unanimity. The most recent challenge to this popular conviction can be found in the commentary of Ben

¹ See Dubis, "Research on 1 Peter," 204-205.

Witherington.² Offering both a sustained defense of a predominantly Jewish-Christian audience as well as a critique of the modern consensus, Witherington's case rests primarily upon two key arguments. The first is the language of 1 Peter. He argues that the strongly Jewish character of the epistle, combined with the references to *πάρριοι*, which also refers specifically to Jews in both the Old and New Testaments, points most clearly to an audience of Jewish origin. The second consideration is the letter's call for its readers to live out their lives "among the Gentiles" (*ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*) (1 Pet 2.12). This description, Witherington argues, would be somewhat unusual if it was addressed to a primarily Gentile-Christian audience. To further supplement his case, Witherington concludes by drawing attention to the large Jewish population in Asia Minor during this same period as well as the fact that the earliest commentators on the text understood the readers as Jewish Christians.³

It becomes quite apparent, as we assess the merit of this proposal, that none of these arguments are compelling enough to overturn the modern consensus. The final two points could only be drawn upon to confirm an already strong case, for they reveal nothing specific about the ethnicity of the recipients. Therefore, Witherington's case hangs upon the initial two arguments laid out above. The major setback of the first consideration is that it is built upon a highly questionable assumption, *viz.*, that language which is reserved for Israel in the OT must necessarily refer to Jews when it is employed in the NT. Because he begins with this assumption, Witherington has no other choice but to conclude that the readers are Jewish Christians. What such an interpretive maneuver fails to recognize is 1 Peter's appropriation of Israelite language (and even Israelite reality) for the NT Church.⁴ This hermeneutical transfer on the part of the author of the epistle demands that all "Jewish" language be read in a fresh light.⁵

² Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 22-37. Cf. also Dijkman, "Socio-Religious Condition," 25-27, 70-72, 196-97; Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in 1 Peter," 8-21, who argues not "that the community [*sic*] is exclusively Jewish," but that "1 Peter is addressed to Jews within this Christian community [*sic*] who are under particular pressure" (10); Jobes, *1 Peter*, 23-24 (seems to lean in this direction); James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol. 2: *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 1158-60.

³ Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 22-28.

⁴ Cf. Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (SNTSMS 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 171-75; Paul J. Achtemeier, "Newborn Babes and Living Stones: Literal and Figurative in 1 Peter," in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J.* (eds. M. P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelski; New York: Crossroad, 1989) 207-36 (226-28); Horrell, *1 Peter*, 61-73; Betsy J. Bauman-Martin, "Speaking Jewish: Postcolonial Aliens and Strangers in First Peter," in

The second point likewise suffers from serious difficulties. Elsewhere this exact phrase (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν)⁶ is used in letters written to predominantly Gentile-Christian audiences in an effort to describe unbelieving Gentiles outside the community of faith. In 1 Cor 5.1, for example, Paul chides the Corinthian church, which was made up primarily of Gentiles (cf. 1 Cor 12.2): “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and it is of such a kind that is not found even among the Gentiles (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).” The reason why this phrase is not as unusual as Witherington claims is because there are few other ways through which one could communicate a neutral description of non-Jews outside the Christian community.

Despite the fact that Witherington’s defense of a Jewish-Christian readership fails to be persuasive, perhaps his more important contribution to the discussion is his attempted refutation of the consensus opinion.⁷ For although he is unable to offer much positive support for his own position, his critique does require that the traditional “prooftexts” be given fresh examination. The two most difficult passages for Witherington’s theory to explain, and the two to which he devotes the majority of his attention, are 1 Pet 1.18 and 4.3-4. While the latter creates only minor difficulty for his position, the former clearly shows it to be insufficient. Witherington begins by pointing out the fact that the readers themselves are not referred to as “Gentiles” (ἔθνη). Rather, the Gentiles are the group whom the audience is no longer joining in excess and revelry. Instead of seeing this text as an inter-Gentile conflict, Witherington claims that the passage refers to Jewish (non-)

Reading 1 Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter (eds. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin; LNTS 364; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2007) 144-77.

⁵ The implications of this point are recognized by Witherington as he states, “In some early Christian contexts such language did in due course come to be applied to all Christians, including Gentile believers, but we should not simply assume that this is the case here in 1 Peter. That conclusion needs to be demonstrated” (*1-2 Peter*, 28). But his failure to interact with any of the secondary literature on this subject, leads me to assume that he is simply unaware of those who have “demonstrated” this interpretation. What is more perplexing, however, is the fact that later he acknowledges that 1 Peter holds to a completionist or supersessionist reading of early Israelite history: “Whether we call this completionist or supersessionist rhetoric, clearly enough our author feels that he can make such a hermeneutical leap in the way he handles the Hebrew Scriptures, and he is comfortable in applying terms previously reserved for non-Christian Israel to his audience” (31). Yet even in this he fails to see that such a hermeneutical strategy in 1 Peter annuls any notion that language which is reserved for Israel in the OT must necessarily refer to Jews when it is employed in the NT.

⁶ Although this exact construction (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) is found in the majority of MSS containing 1 Peter (see *ECM*, 134-35), a recent papyrus fragment has been discovered in which the article is omitted (P.Oxy. 4934 [late 3rd century - early 4th century CE]).

⁷ Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 28-37.

participation in pagan temple feasts. For Jews who were thoroughly Hellenized and highly acculturated participating in such activities would have been seen as quite natural. Thus, the author “is warning these Jewish Christians against having any longings to go back to their past *Gentile-like* behavior . . .”⁸

In response to this claim, we must admit that, on the surface, nothing in these verses *demand*s a Gentile audience. On the other hand, given the fact that Witherington admittedly views these former activities as “Gentile-like behavior,” and given the weakness of his arguments for a Jewish audience, then surely the most likely implication is that these are Gentile readers. Confirmation for this conclusion might be found in the question which the passage naturally tends to raise: why would conversion from Judaism to Christianity suddenly alter the audience’s propensity to dine at temples and partake of sacrificial meat? It is quite possible that Christian tradition would have been more lax when it came to such practices (cf. 1 Cor 10.27-30). The situation described in the passage therefore seems much easier to explain if the readers were formerly pagans who had no association with either Judaism or Christianity.

Even more serious difficulties arise for Witherington’s theory as we turn to the second text: “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors” (1 Pet 1.18a, NRSV). Witherington approaches this passage through what he describes as “completionist” or “supersessionist” lens. In this way, he views the condemnation of “the futile ways inherited from your ancestors (*ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαράδοτου*)” as a critique of Jewish practices prior to the coming of Christ (e.g., inefficacy and inadequacy of Jewish sacrifice; futile ways of the wilderness generation; disobedience of the Babylonian exiles).⁹ Yet this explanation simply does not suffice. The word *πατροπαράδοτος* (“handed down from one’s ancestors”) is never used in a derogatory sense as a way of critiquing Jewish life and practice prior to the time of Christ; instead, it is used by Christian authors to condemn the former influences of

⁸ Ibid., 30 (original emphasis).

⁹ Ibid., 31. Cf. also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 119, who argues: “Since the ‘ignorance’ in 1 Pet. 1:14 is specifically in the context of the redemption achieved by Christ and because the adjective ‘useless’ in verse 18 generally describes all cultural systems that are not based on the reality of Christ, these verses do not decisively indicate that only Gentiles are in Peter’s view.”

paganism and idolatry in the lives of *Gentiles*.¹⁰ Moreover, if, as Witherington admits, the author of 1 Peter holds to a completionist or supersessionist view of Israel, then the use of derogatory comments about the history of this people only serves to diminish the Christian identity that he is trying to construct. For the new identity that the readers are taking on is that which has been handed down by the fathers (i.e., the fathers of Israel).

In further assessing the merit of the “Jewish-Christian readership” proposal, there is one historical problem that arises for which adequate explanation has not been given, *viz.*, the unlikely coming together of a number of historical variables. If one were to assume that 1 Peter addresses a primarily Jewish-Christian audience, all of the following circumstances would need to be assumed: (a) that a large number of Jews across Asia Minor had been converted to the Christian faith, enough, in fact, to create the congregations addressed in the epistle; (b) that many, if not most, of these Jewish readers had formerly been participating in the Gentile-like activities repudiated in 1 Pet 4.3-4; and (c) that, for some reason, the audience’s propensity to partake of these Gentile-like behaviors (e.g., dining at temples or partake of sacrificial meat) was altered by their conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Of course, it is true that all of these assumptions are (individually) possible: there were Jewish communities spread out across Asia Minor, many of which being highly acculturated into Greco-Roman society, and some Christians would have called for a complete separation from these pagan activities. But it is highly questionable that all three of the possibilities materialized *together*—especially given that 1 Peter would be our only source for this assumption.

It seems best, therefore, along with the majority of commentators, to posit a primarily Gentile-Christian readership as the intended audience of 1 Peter. What this means for our understanding of suffering in the epistle is that inner-Jewish conflict (e.g., dietary matters, ritual observance, synagogue attendance, etc.) can be set aside, and our focus can be placed on the problems caused by Gentile conversion to the Christian faith.

¹⁰ W. C. van Unnik, “The Critique of Paganism in 1 Peter 1:18,” in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black* (eds. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969) 129-42.

B. Socio-Economic Status(es)

A topic that has received considerable attention in recent NT studies is the socio-economic status(es) of the earliest Christian communities. Yet, as is often the case, the contribution of 1 Peter has been all but ignored within the wider field of NT scholarship. What makes this omission somewhat surprising, however, is that during this same period significant debate on this issue has taken place within Petrine studies. In fact, one will find just as much diversity of opinion here than in the discussion of the Pauline communities. Views on the addressees of 1 Peter have spanned the entirety of the socio-economic spectrum, ranging from wealthy “upper-class” elites to poor tenant farmers just trying to stay above the subsistence level. Nevertheless, in the most recent scholarship, the dialogue has faded into the periphery. As a result, interpreters have failed to reach any kind of resolution on the matter.¹¹ Given the significant implications this question holds out for the nature of suffering in 1 Peter, the presence of such an interpretive stalemate is unfortunate.

Throughout the history of research, Petrine scholarship has often been guilty of treating the churches of Asia Minor as one undifferentiated unity. But as we attempt to break free from this mold and begin to distinguish between different groups within these communities, the socio-economic status(es) of the readers becomes vitally important. A key component in judging the seriousness of the threats held out by persecution as well as the form(s) that persecution might have taken is the social and financial condition(s) of individuals within these Anatolian communities. One wonders, for instance, whether a member of the provincial or civic elite who provided financially for the needs of a city would have been as prone to persecution as a lowly slave? Moreover, we might ask whether the form(s) of persecution would have differed among those of varying socio-economic statuses?¹² Before questions like these can be answered, however, we must

¹¹ The question has recently been revived by Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter.”

¹² Warden, “Alienation and Community,” 161-99, focuses considerable attention on the role of socio-economic conditions in the conflict facing the letter’s recipients. Undergirding and firmly shaping his efforts is a particular view of social conflict in antiquity. Throughout his treatment of the subject, Warden is at pains to demonstrate that the readers, along with the majority of Christians, were recruited from the “lower classes” of society. As a result, he is able to situate the recipients’ conflict with their Asian neighbors within the larger struggle between the wealthy and poor of Greco-Roman society (cf. also Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 70-72). If he is correct in this assessment, then socio-economic standing becomes a key ingredient in diagnosing the problems described in 1 Peter. Where his theory tends to falter, though, is

gain a clearer understanding of the types of individuals that made up the Anatolian congregations. This section will be an attempt to break through the interpretive stalemate and to bring some type of resolution to the discussion.

1. The Question in Recent Discussion

Within the literature on the socio-economic status(es) of the Petrine readers, there have been two basic extremes. One interpretive strand that appears quite frequently is the view that some of the Christians to whom 1 Peter is addressed were economically affluent members of the social elite. There are two particular passages that serve as the basis for this view. The first is the instruction which the letter offers to the women of the Anatolian communities (1 Pet 3.3). Since they are warned against braided hair and the wearing of gold and fine clothes, some have concluded that the author had in mind women of considerable wealth and position.¹³ The merit of this assessment will be explored in greater detail as our discussion progresses. The second passage is 1 Pet 2.14-15: “[accept the authority] of governors, as sent by [the emperor] to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, namely, to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.” In this text, some commentators have proposed that the “good” for which praise may be rendered is a reference to civic benefaction. It is argued further that since this convention required the practitioner to possess a considerable degree of wealth, at least some of the recipients must have been financially capable of fulfilling such a request. But, as we will demonstrate below (see Ch. 7), public benefaction does not appear to be the referent behind the “good works” of 1 Peter. As a result, it creates serious problems for anyone attempting to portray members of the Petrine congregations as wealthy, “upper class” elites from this evidence.

in the means by which it is developed. Little attention is given to the socio-economic indicators provided by the letter itself. Instead, Warden’s proposal is primarily dependent upon a generalization of early Christianity and a preconceived “social profile” of its members. Therefore, he fails to realize that the conflict addressed by the epistle was something new to the recipients (cf. 1 Pet 4.12) rather than the same class struggle that had always existed. Furthermore, the troubled stemmed not from socio-economic distinctions (although these differences may have further exasperated the problems) but from the activities that the readers had recently undertaken as Christians (see Ch. 7).

¹³ E.g., Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 130-31; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 155; Frankemölle, *1 Petrusbrief*, 53; Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 117-18; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 212; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 163-64.

A second and much more influential view concerning the socio-economic condition(s) of the recipients is that the Petrine communities consisted largely of the poorer members of Anatolian society.¹⁴ In many cases, the basis for this assumption rests on the tendency to locate the readers in a rural setting. This view was most clearly articulated in Elliott's *Home for the Homeless*. While not everyone who holds to this view follows Elliott's theory to its fullest extent, it was his study that laid the foundation for all subsequent treatments.¹⁵ Therefore, his work will receive our primary attention.

The fundamental tenet upon which Elliott's view is built is his reconstruction of the recipients' socio-political standing. In an effort to break free from the cosmological perspective (or pilgrimage theology) that often colors the designations *παροικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι*, Elliott interprets these terms as literal descriptions of the addressees' political, legal, and social status both before and after conversion.¹⁶ Such a consideration, according to Elliott, carried significant ramifications for a person's economic standing in the world of first-century Anatolia. Due to the fact that "[t]he economic role of the *paroikoi* was determined by their legal and social status,"¹⁷ the addressees found themselves in a rather precarious financial situation. "Since only full citizens were permitted to own land, the opportunities for support and survival were restricted to the tilling rather than the owning of the soil, and to local crafts, commerce and trade. Removed from the main source of wealth and profit, the limitation of their economic

¹⁴ Those who hold to a "poor" view of the recipients include: Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, 73; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 5; Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 63, 67-73; Puig i Tàrrach, "Le Milleu," 395-97; Thomas P. Osborne, "Christian Suffering in the First Epistle of Peter," (S.T.D. diss., Faculté de Théologie of the Université Catholique de Louvain [Louvain-la-Neuve], 1981) 255-59; Warden, "Alienation and Community," 161-99; Marie-Louise Lamau, *Des chrétiens dans le monde: Communautés pétriniennes au 1er siècle* (LD 134; Paris: Cerf, 1988) 97-99; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 11; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 24-26, 47-52; Fika J. van Rensburg, "A Code of Conduct for Children of God Who Suffer Unjustly: Identity, Ethics and Ethos in 1 Peter," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. J. G. van der Watt; BZNW 141; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 473-509 (475-81).

¹⁵ Although Puig i Tàrrach's work (1980), which is quite similar to that of Elliott, predates *Home for the Homeless* (1981), it is Elliott who is credited for disseminating this particular reading within modern scholarship (see John H. Elliott, *1 Peter Estrangement and Community* [Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1979]). In fact, it is reported that Puig i Tàrrach's work grew out of a course taught by Elliott (1978) soon after the first draft of *Home for the Homeless* was completed (see Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 64-65 n. 73).

¹⁶ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 21-58.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

status and power within society was assured.”¹⁸ In other words, their legal position as “resident aliens” and “visiting strangers” doomed them to a life of poverty.

Over the years, Elliott’s view concerning the “social profile” of the Petrine audience has gained only a handful of followers.¹⁹ At many points, his theory has been seriously questioned by numerous interpreters.²⁰ So rather than retracing all of the objections that have been raised against this position, we will list a few of the more problematic aspects pertaining to the readers’ socio-economic status and then move on to the difficulties that have yet to be surfaced. As many have previously pointed out, Elliott’s theory regarding the recipients’ socio-economic condition stands or falls on his interpretation of the audience’s legal status. Yet it is at this very point that his position is most vulnerable. Aside from the problems surrounding his definition of *πάροικοι*,²¹ there are serious issues with his insistence on interpreting the term (along with *παρεπίδημοι*) literally in 1 Peter.²²

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ E.g., Puig i Tàrrach, “Le Milleu,” esp. 101-16; Dijkman, “Socio-Religious Condition,” 209-12; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 24-26, 47-52; idem, “Aliens and Exiles: Social Location and Christian Vocation,” *WW* 24 (2004) 378-86; Fika J. van Rensburg, “Christians as ‘Resident and Visiting Aliens’: Implications of the Exhortations to the *παρόικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* in 1 Peter for the Church in South Africa,” *Neot* 32 (1998) 573-83; idem, “Code of Conduct,” 475-81; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 23-24.

²⁰ E.g., Danker, “First Peter in Sociological Perspective,” 84-88; Paul J. Achtemeier, “Review of John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*,” *JBL* 103 (1984) 130-33; Moses Chin, “A Heavenly Home for the Homeless: Aliens and Strangers in 1 Peter,” *TynBul* 42 (1991) 96-112; Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde*, esp. 203-10; Birger Olsson, “A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter,” in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (eds. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 827-46; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 64-83; Jason Jit-Fong Lim, *The Trials of the Christians as Elect Resident Aliens and Visiting Strangers in 1 Peter, with an Emphasis on the Context of 1 Peter within the Graeco-Roman Milieu* (Jian Dao Dissertation Series 11; Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2005); Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter,” 187-90.

²¹ There are two different definitions that Elliott employs for the technical, legal meaning of *πάροικος* (Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 25). The first, which is taken from Karl L. Schmidt, et al., “*πάροικος*, *παροιμία*, *παροιμέω*,” in *TDNT* (ed. G. Friedrich; vol. 5; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 841-53, focuses on their geographical displacement. The second comes from Hans Schaefer, “*Paroikoi*,” in *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (eds. A. F. von Pauly, et al.; vol. 18/4; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1949) 1695-707, and emphasizes non-citizenship. Where his argument runs into trouble is in giving precedence to the former, which was born out of the LXX usage, even to the point of using it as the lens through which the latter is understood. The problem with this, as Bechtler has pointed out, is that “the terms *πάροικοι* and *peregrini*—as technical terms—were not simply legal designations for resident aliens but denoted a recognized social stratum that included both native and nonnative residents who were not fully citizens and so did not possess the rights of citizenship” (*Following in His Steps*, 73 [original emphasis]; cf. Feldmeier, *Christen als Fremde*, 12-17).

²² In the past, interpreters have argued that the presence of the adverbial modifier *ὡς* in 1 Pet 2.11 reveals that the designations *παρόικος* and *παρεπίδημος* are metaphorical descriptions of how the author wants the readers to conceive of themselves, rather than indicators of their socio-legal status (so, e.g., Danker, “First Peter in Sociological Perspective,” 87; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 56; Torrey Seland, “*πάροικος*

The first trouble that this position encounters is the somewhat loose manner in which these two terms are employed in 1 Peter. In 1.1 the author addressed *all* of the readers as *παρεπίδημοι*; whereas in 2.11 the *παρεπίδημοι* seem to be distinguished from the *πάροικοι*. If Elliott is correct to assume that these terms are being used literally as a way of denoting their technical, socio-political status, and therefore that the two descriptions should be distinguished, then we would be forced to conclude that in 1.1 (the epistolary prescript for the entire correspondence) the author is only addressing a certain percentage of the Petrine communities rather than all of the letter's readers. Rather than being forced into such an interpretive predicament, a much simpler solution would be to view these designations as figurative descriptions of the conceptual identity the author is trying to ascribe to his readers.

A second consideration that seems to point to a metaphorical rather than a literal usage of the terms *πάροικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* is the clearly Jewish background out of which these concepts flow.²³ As Steven R. Bechtler has so aptly demonstrated,²⁴ the imagery and language surrounding the term *παρεπίδημοι* in the prescript (i.e., *ἐκλεκτός; διασπορά*) has been drawn from the LXX as a way of transferring the situation and status of Israel to the Gentile readers of Asia Minor. Likewise, the employment of *παροιμία* is

καὶ παρεπίδημος: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?," *BBR* 11 (2001) 239-68 [257]). Yet the particle's range of usage in 1 Peter rules out the possibility of making an *a priori* judgment based solely on its presence or absence. As Elliott has pointed out, *ὡς* can serve as a *marker of identification* wherein it marks out the essential quality of the term it modifies (*1 Peter*, 357, 457). Therefore, in this particular passage the audience's status as socio-political *πάροικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* could be the qualifying condition on which the exhortation is grounded ("since you are aliens and strangers [i.e., in light of all of the difficulties which that creates] . . ."). However, it could just as easily be intended to provide a *conceptual referent* for the readers to follow. Thus, similar to the exhortation in 1 Pet 2.2 ("As newborn babies [*ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη*], long for the pure, spiritual milk so that you may grow up to salvation"), the image could serve as a conceptual metaphor depicting how they are supposed to perceive themselves in relation to the following exhortation. Nothing in the verse demands one interpretation over the other. Consequently, the presence of the particle reveals nothing about the validity of Elliott's proposal.

²³ Sophie Laws, "Review of *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* by John H. Elliott," *Theology* 86 (1983) 64-66 (65), argues for a metaphorical reading based on the attribution of the characteristics from ancient Israel. Against this assertion, Elliott denies that a comparison with Israel makes a literal reading of these terms impossible or even unlikely. Instead, he claims that "the similarity between the situation of both collectivities as resident aliens in hostile societies would strengthen the claims 1 Peter makes concerning the similar manner in which unification with God provides a home for the homeless" (*Home for the Homeless*, xxix). Such logic, however, cannot be used to justify Elliott's reading. For by this same logic, one could just as easily posit a primarily Jewish-Christian audience rather than Gentile: since the abundance of Israelite imagery in the epistle would make a stronger appeal to a Jewish-Christian readership, the recipients must be of Jewish origin. But, of course, such a notion has been almost unanimously rejected, including by Elliott (see above).

²⁴ For a full treatment, see Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 75-81.

intricately tied to early Christian usage of the LXX. But what is especially informative in this context is the combination of the terms *πάροιχοι* and *παρεπίδημοι*. These words are found in conjunction with one another on two other occasions in the LXX. In Gen 23.4 Abraham uses these terms in a literal manner as a way of describing his foreignness in relation to the Hittites among whom he dwells: *πάροιχος καὶ παρεπίδημος ἐγὼ εἰμι μεθ' ὑμῶν* (“I am an alien and a stranger among you”).

In Psa 38.13 LXX (Eng. 39.12) this same concept of foreignness is picked up by the psalmist, but employed in a much different way. Here he describes the transiency of human existence (*καθὼς πάντες οἱ πατέρες μου*, “just like all my ancestors” – v. 13). As he reflects on the fleeting nature of his life (v. 5-6), he concludes: “Surely, every person alive is the sum total of vanity” (v. 6, NETS). In fact, in his last plea to the Lord for vindication against his enemies, it is his own fleetingness to which he appeals: “Listen to my prayer, O Lord, and to my petition give ear; do not pass by my tears in silence, because I am a sojourner (*πάροιχος*) with you, and a visiting stranger (*παρεπίδημος*), like all my fathers” (v. 13, NETS). Rather than being a literal foreigner—as was the case with Abraham—the psalmist employs these terms metaphorically as a way of denoting his temporal status in relation to the transcendence of the Lord. With the influence of the LXX weighing heavily on 1 Peter’s conceptualization of his audience, it seems most natural to conclude that the use of such terminology is another instance of the Jewish background out of which the letter flows.

A final problem that arises for a literal interpretation of *πάροιχοι* and *παρεπίδημοι* is explaining the absence of any reference to hostility that *preceded* their conversion. According to Elliott, the trouble the readers faced was the conflict that marked the social divide between citizens and non-citizens. Upon their conversion these troubles were only further intensified. Yet each time the author describes the cause of the audience’s suffering, he either points to the Christian activities in which they are involved (1 Pet 2.20; 3.14, 16; 4.3-4) or simply to the fact that they are Christians (4.16) and never to their socio-legal status. There is nothing in the text to suggest that the hostility they faced was in any way related to their legal standing *prior* to conversion, nor is there any indication that conversion exacerbated pre-existing troubles. From this, we would have to

conclude that the problems stem solely from their *post*-conversion behavior.²⁵ Such a fact raises serious problems for any attempt to posit a legally disenfranchised existence prior to their entrance into the Christian community.

Each of these points is somewhat commonplace when it comes to the critique interpreters have mounted against Elliott's proposal. One point that has not received significant attention, however, is the extent to which the theory stands up against further historical scrutiny. For the most part, previous discussions have been concerned with questions of terminology—both the meaning of words (e.g., *πάροικοι* and *παρεπίδημοι*) and their usage (i.e., literal vs. figurative). The question that few have raised is, how accurate are the *historical* claims upon which Elliott's theory is based?

Upon closer review one will find that some of the historical assumptions from which Elliott works deserve considerable reassessment. The first is the manner in which he depicts all rural inhabitants as economically depressed and poverty-stricken.²⁶ Despite the fact that most (elitist) literary sources from antiquity tend to caricature the rural population as helplessly impoverished, this was certainly not the lot of all who lived in rural areas and who made their living from agriculture. For example, Μῆνις Νικιάδου Ἡρακλείδου, a tenant farmer on the Ummidii estate outside of Kibyra (*I. Sterrett* I no. 53), was able to accumulate enough wealth to become a *μισθωτός* (one who rented large portions of the estate and sublet smaller plots to farmers; *RECAM* III no. 114). Likewise, we know of tenant farmers on the imperial estates in the Bagradas valley of North Africa who made a surplus and were thus able to accumulate capital.²⁷

That these were not just rare exceptions is suggested by the large number of rural inhabitants from the villages around Kibyra who are recorded as investing their excess

²⁵ Cf. Miroslav Volf, "Soft Difference: Reflections on the Relation Between Church and Culture in 1 Peter," *ExAud* 10 (1994) 15-30 (18).

²⁶ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 68-69. Related to this, he also paints a very bleak picture of the economic situation in Asia Minor. Following the work of Samuel Dickey, "Some Economic and Social Conditions in Asia Minor Affecting the Expansion of Christianity," in *Studies in Early Christianity* (ed. S. J. Case; New York/London: Century, 1928) 393-416, Elliott lists many of the economic difficulties created for Anatolia during the Republican period (*Home for the Homeless*, 70-72), and in doing so, he repeats a few tenets of traditional Finleyan orthodoxy (e.g., high cost of land transport). Yet such a Finleyan approach to the ancient economy—especially as it relates to Asia Minor—is inappropriate during the early Imperial period (see Appendix 4: Ancient Economics in Recent Discussion).

²⁷ Dennis P. Kehoe, *The Economics of Agriculture on Roman Imperial Estates in North Africa* (Hypomnemata 89; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988) 71-116.

income. There are some 57 people listed in two fragmentary inscriptions (with more still unpublished) who are honored by the ὄχλος because of the money they donated/invested (*J. Sterrett* I nos. 72-75; *RECAM* III no. 115). The amounts range from 10 to 275 *drachmai*, with the average falling somewhere between 25-50 *drachmai*.²⁸ While these are not exorbitant amounts, they nonetheless demonstrate that rural inhabitants were capable of earning more than enough income for survival. Consequently, the socio-economic status of rural Anatolian inhabitants was much more stratified than Elliott's proposal allows.²⁹

A second erroneous notion from which Elliott constructs his theory of an economically depressed audience is the assumption that non-citizens were barred from owning land.³⁰ While this may have been true in an early period, it was certainly not the case in *Roman Anatolia*. Recently, Andrew P. Gregory has provided a significant correction to this misunderstanding. He notes that, "despite the importance attached to the 'right to own property' within a Greek *polis*, it seems likely that numerous *paroikoi* [in the Roman period] could own land that was traditionally part of their *kômê*, but were not allowed, since they were not *politai*, to buy land outside those prescribed limits, but (still) within city territory."³¹ With this foundational tenet thus removed, Elliott's proposal that the recipients were socio-political *παροικοι* would not necessarily doom them to a life of serfdom and abject poverty. In the end, therefore, we must look beyond Elliott's work in order to come to a more accurate understanding of the readers' socio-economic condition(s).

Some of the problems surrounding the various theories on the socio-economic situation of the addressees of 1 Peter should now be somewhat clearer. What has still yet to be discussed, though, are the most significant shortcomings among almost all previous treatments: the lack of engagement with ancient economic discussion and the failure to situate the letter within the economic conditions of first-century CE Anatolia.³² The first

²⁸ See Corsten, "Estates in Roman Asia Minor," 13, 15-16.

²⁹ On the economic stratification of rural inhabitants, see Gregory, "Village Society," 118-29. Cf. also Lukas de Ligt, "Demand, Supply, Distribution: The Roman Peasantry between Town and Countryside: Rural Monetization and Peasant Demand," *MBAH* 9 (1990) 24-56 (50-51).

³⁰ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 68.

³¹ Gregory, "Village Society," 24.

³² One notable exception to this trend is the recent essay by Horrell, "Addressees of 1 Peter." A further, though somewhat less serious, problem is that the terminology used to describe the socio-economic

of these considerations is especially important given the major paradigm shifts that have taken place both within classical and biblical studies. While NT scholarship has effectively overlooked 1 Peter in its effort to understand the socio-economic conditions of early Christianity, Petrine scholars have been equally oblivious to the advances and insights gained from recent economic discussion. Secondly, when one surveys the breadth of the secondary literature on the subject, it becomes apparent that very little evidence from the economic world of Asia Minor has actually been brought to bear on the text of 1 Peter.³³ For the most part, commentators have been content with the scant evidence provided in the letter itself. These two significant lacunae have prevented scholarship from gaining a clear insight into the economic situation(s) of the epistle's readers.

Using the theoretical insights gleaned from the recent discussion on ancient economics (both within classical and biblical studies),³⁴ the following section we will attempt to provide a detailed description of the socio-economic status(es) of the audience of 1 Peter by situating the recipients firmly within the economic conditions of first-century CE Roman Anatolia.

2. The Economic Situation in Roman Anatolia

The text of 1 Peter provides very few indicators of the socio-economic status(es) of its readers. To a large extent, therefore, what we know about the economic conditions in Asia Minor is just as important for understanding the audience as the letter itself. In what follows, we will offer a broad description of the economic situation in Roman Asia Minor during the first century CE, thus providing a backdrop against which to interpret the information found in the epistle. As we attempt to situate the letter more firmly within its

conditions is never clearly defined. Just as few have been specific about the kinds of activities that led to suffering, so also few have articulated what they mean by designations such as "rich" and "poor" or "wealth" and "poverty." Ernest Best (*1 Peter*, 17), for example, argues that "what is said about wives in 3:1-6 suggests that some . . . were wealthy." But the description he uses ("wealthy") is given without any standard of reference or quantification. So we are only left to surmise the precise financial situation in which this group may have functioned.

³³ Note, for instance, how little attention the primary source evidence from Asia Minor receives in the recent treatment of Puig i Tàrrach, "Els cristians com a foraster," 220-28.

³⁴ In Appendix 4: Ancient Economics in Recent Discussion, we have provided a theoretical justification for the particular economic setting which is proposed in this section.

Anatolian context, we will also seek to clarify the discussion somewhat further by quantifying the levels of wealth and poverty that existed in the first century CE.

a. Methodological Considerations

In order to bring greater specificity to our understanding of the economic conditions in Roman Anatolia (and thus in 1 Peter), we will employ a few of the most recent NT studies on the subject, which are intended to serve as patterns to guide our approach. Some of the most helpful works in this regard have been produced by Steven J. Friesen and Bruce W. Longenecker.³⁵ Each of the studies contributed by these scholars has proved to be a positive step forward in measuring the economic conditions of individuals and social groups in the Roman world. Yet they are not without problems. Even though Friesen and Longenecker have moved the discussion forward by great strides, their analyses could be further refined with a greater concentration being shown to particular regions and specific time-periods. Therefore, the present section seeks to build upon, but also extend and qualify these works in significant ways. Our goal is to produce a region- and time-specific model for measuring the economic conditions in the urban centers of Asia Minor during the early Empire. In doing so, we aim to provide Petrine studies with a somewhat more focused approach to socio-economic inquiry.

Of course, any attempt to quantify the economic conditions across an area the size of Asia Minor will naturally be marked by certain limitations.³⁶ For example, the conditions in cities like Ephesus or Pergamum may not be representative of those in smaller πόλεις such as Tavium or Amastris. But given the fact that 1 Peter is addressed to Christian congregations spread out all across Asia Minor, we are forced to account for a variety of civic communities (rather, for example, than just the larger urban environments in the province of Asia). And considering that very few Anatolian cities would have amassed

³⁵ Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004) 323-61; Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, "The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire," *JRS* 99 (2009) 61-91; Bruce W. Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity," *JSNT* 31 (2009) 243-78.

³⁶ Although note the recent attempt to provide a more quantitative analysis of the Roman economy: Alan Bowman and Andrew Wilson, eds., *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems* (Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

urban populations of more than 25,000,³⁷ there may be more uniformity than it first appears. For this reason, I do feel that it is possible to provide a *reasonable estimate* of the *average* economic scale within *most* Anatolian cities. What makes our task difficult, however, is that it requires employing a small amount of fragmentary evidence and piecing it together into a coherent whole. Therefore, while our conclusions must remain (in many respects) tentative, they can nonetheless afford considerably more insight into the specific situation of the Petrine readers than previous assessments.

b. Economic Conditions in Urban Centers of Roman Anatolia

To understand the economic conditions in first-century CE Asia Minor, we will begin at the top of the civic hierarchy. In provincial cities of the eastern Empire, the administrative duties lay firmly in the hands of the magistrates and council (*βουλή*). Membership in the *βουλή* was closely monitored, as each council had a set number of members. In fact, many cities had a censor (*βουλογράφος* or *τιμητής*) for just such a purpose.³⁸ In order to gain entrance into the council, one had to meet certain requirements such as a minimum age, a property qualification, or the prior performance of civic magistracies.³⁹ Since the magisterial posts demanded a considerable amount of wealth in order to perform them, and since economic standing was one of the primary determinants of *βουλή* membership, the leadership of provincial cities (both magistrates and

³⁷ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 244 (listing Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Ancyra, Thyateira as examples). Pergamum had a population of 180,000 to 200,000 (calculated from the 40,000 male inhabitants mentioned by Galen, *Aff. Dig.* 5.49). The cities of Ephesus and Smyrna probably contained similar numbers (although, see P. Duane Warden and Roger S. Bagnall, “The Forty Thousand Citizens of Ephesus,” *CPh* 83 [1988] 220-23, for the misinterpretation of *I.Ephesos* no. 951 and thus the Ephesian population). Sardis is said to have possessed a total of 60,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (George M. A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times: Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958-1975* [Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1983] 146), while the colony of Pisidian Antioch only contained about 10,000 (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 92-94). Figures for other city populations are listed by Broughton, “Roman Asia Minor,” 812-14.

³⁸ Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 79, 112, 114; Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 288 [= *IGR* III no. 179], 289 [= *IGR* III no. 206]; *IGR* III nos. 60, 64, 66.

³⁹ The stipulations drawn up for the province of Pontus-Bithynia under the *lex Pompeia* required a man to be thirty years of age before entering into the council. Nevertheless, this age limit was lowered to twenty-two by Augustus (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80). There is evidence to suggest that the provinces of Asia (Dio Cassius, 37.20.2) and Galatia (see discussion of Pessinus in Ch. 3) were structured in the same manner. Concerning the property requirement, a census qualification of HS 100,000 (or 25,000 denarii) was required for councilors (see Friedemann Quaß, *Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens: Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* [Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1993] 343, 383). On the performance of prior magistracies, see Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80.

councilors) consisted of the most financially affluent members of the community.⁴⁰ Therefore, if we were able to determine the size of local councils, we would have a rough approximation of the number of wealthy elites in the average provincial city.

Fortunately, we possess some evidence on the numbers of decurions (or local councilors) present in each civic community. Through a compilation of a number of sources, we learn that the size of the βουλή of a provincial city in Asia Minor was often (though not always) dependent upon the size of the city. The numbers range from anywhere between 50 as the interim limit for the city of Tymandus (*CIL* III no. 6866 = *ILS* no. 6090) to 500-650 for a larger city like Thyatira (*IGR* IV no. 1222).⁴¹ Considering that few cities across Anatolia amassed a population over 25,000, and allowing for the fact that not all wealthy inhabitants served on the council, the number of decurions in the average city of Asia Minor might be around 100.⁴² If we factor in wives and children,⁴³ total number of elite citizens within each provincial community would add up to about

⁴⁰ It is difficult to quantify the amount of wealth possessed by the provincial or municipal elite. One possible indicator might be the fee (*summa honoraria* [a.k.a. *summa legitima* or *honorarium decurionatus*]) paid by a decurion upon entering the council (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.39.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 48.11; *I.Ephesos* no. 1487 [= *SIG*³ no. 838]; for further evidence, see Quasß, *Die Honoratiorenschicht*, 328-43). In Bithynia, for instance, those who were admitted to the βουλή above and beyond the number fixed by law paid sums of 1,000 or 2,000 denarii (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.112-113). The problem is that such a requirement was probably not in place prior to the early-second century CE (Peter Garnsey, “Honorarium decurionatus,” *Historia* 20 [1971] 309-25).

⁴¹ Some of the available numbers from Asia Minor include: 100 at Prusa (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 45.7); 500 at Oenoanda (*IGR* III no. 492); 100 at Halicarnassus (*I.Cos* no. 13; cf. *I.Halicarnassus* no. 3); 450 at Ephesus (*GIBM* no. 481). For the number of councilors in other Greco-Roman cities, see Wilhelm Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im Römischen kaiserreiche* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900) 229-30 n. 5.

⁴² Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Greek Culture in the Roman World; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 29, estimates 200-400 individuals per council, but this seems a little bit too high for our purposes, considering the size of the average Anatolian city and the time period under consideration. Comparative evidence from elsewhere around the Empire suggests an average around 100 (see Richard P. Duncan-Jones, “Costs, Outlays and *Summae Honorariae* from Roman Africa,” *PBSR* 30 [1962] 47-115 [70-74]; idem, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* [2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982] 283-87). Moreover, we must take into account the fact that we (unlike Zuiderhoek) are concerned with the situation during the mid- to late-first century CE. It is true that the population of the Roman Empire slowly rose during the early Principate, and as a result, this could explain the considerably large councils (i.e., over 100) in Asia Minor—the number of wealthy landowners increased while the census criterion for βουλή membership remained the same (as argued by Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence*, 54). But during the first century CE, these numbers—assuming that there was a change—would have been smaller.

⁴³ Here we are assuming that the ratio of adult males to the rest of the population was approximately 1:3.6 (cf. Richard P. Duncan-Jones, “City Population in Roman Africa,” *JRS* 53 [1963] 85-90 [87]).

360. Assuming an average city population of about 7,000,⁴⁴ this would amount to approximately 5% (if rounded down) of a city's total inhabitants.⁴⁵

Standing in sharp contrast to this group were those at the opposite end of the economic spectrum, a group who barely managed to stay above the level of subsistence. Included in this demographic are unattached widows, orphans, the disabled, and unskilled day laborers. The goal of this group was simply to procure enough calories to maintain human existence. Of course, required calorific intake differs according to number of variables (e.g., age, gender, physical activity, etc.), but a basic daily minimum for the ancient world has been estimated at somewhere between 1,625 and 2,012 calories.⁴⁶ When other expenses are factored into the equation (e.g., clothing, rent, taxes), a family of four living in an urban area would need a yearly income of approximately 600-700 denarii just to maintain minimum existence.⁴⁷ Although the specific evidence needed to determine what portion of the Anatolian population lived at this level is unavailable, based on estimates from elsewhere in the Empire we may tentatively suggest that this was the fate of approximately 25% of a city's total population.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, 244 (following Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, 259-87), projects that the majority of Anatolian cities possessed a total population between 5,000 and 15,000, listing an average of approximately 7,000.

⁴⁵ This group could be further sub-divided. A distinction should be drawn between those civic officials who held public office and the rest of the βουλῆ. The former were usually the "super-wealthy," the provincial elites. The majority of the latter were what we might call the "upper-middle class" (excusing the anachronistic terminology). The difference between these two groups can be seen in the difficulty often associated with the fulfilling of local magistracies. Due to the fact that significant financial contributions were expected from those who held these offices (cf. *I. Magnesia* no. 179, which distinguishes between the benefactions that the city ἀγορανόμος performed ἐξ ἔθους ["according to custom"] and those performed ἐκ φιλοτειμίας ["out of personal benevolence"]), cities were often hard-pressed to find officials to fill certain positions (see Sviatoslav Dmitriev, *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005] 143-44, 158-59). This does not mean that only the provincial elite could afford such positions. It does, however, show that even among a community's "elite" citizens, the number of those who could (and would) take on such financial burdens were considerably less than those who possessed council membership.

⁴⁶ Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 19.

⁴⁷ Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (trans. O. C. Dean, Jr.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999) 80-85. Their calculation is based on a 2,500-calorie diet for an adult male.

⁴⁸ This figure is taken from the study of C. R. Whittaker, "The Poor in the City of Rome," in *Land, City and Trade in the Roman Empire* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993) ch. 7 [pp. 1-25], who examined the conditions of pre-industrial European cities between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries as a comparison to the poverty situation in ancient Rome. He notes that, "a fairly steady 4-8% of the population were incapable of earning a living (by handicap, age etc.) another 20% were permanently in crisis through price fluctuations and low wages" (4). While this is admittedly a somewhat fragile basis upon which to calculate

While these figures are important for providing the basic economic range that existed in an Anatolian city, we are still left to account for the majority of the population. While some have argued that, “in real terms there were few economic differences between those that found themselves outside of the rarefied circles of the élite,”⁴⁹ there was clearly a distinguishable economic stratification that encompassed those who fell somewhere between the wealthy elite and those in abject poverty. In order to understand where various groups and individuals might have been located in this economic taxonomy, there are a few points that must be taken into consideration.

First, we must recognize the impact that Roman rule would have exerted on first-century Asia Minor. Although we would certainly not want to go so far as to conjure up any comparisons with a modern capitalist system (as did M. I. Rostovtzeff), it is necessary to move beyond the primitivist approach of Moses I. Finley to appreciate the changes that took place under the Empire and how they served to fuel commercial ventures.⁵⁰ Roman rule brought with it numerous stimulants for economic growth. Assize centers of the provincial governor created a boom for local businesses.⁵¹ Urban building

the levels of poverty in Anatolian cities, we are left with few options due to the lack of other substantial evidence.

⁴⁹ Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 7. Likewise, statements such as “those devoid of political power, the non-élite, over 99% of the Empire’s population, could expect little more from life than abject poverty” (idem, 50; cf. Jerry P. Toner, *Rethinking Roman History* [Cambridge: Oleander, 2002] 50-51), do not accurately reflect the situation in first-century CE Asia Minor.

⁵⁰ Evidence for the (slight) increase in the prosperity of the “middle” sector of the Anatolian economy may be provided from the animal bones which have been collected from across the Roman Empire (for the evidence, see Anthony C. King, “Diet in the Roman World: A Regional Inter-Site Comparison of Mammal Bones,” *JRA* 12 [1999] 168-202). From this data, Willem M. Jongman, “The Rise and Fall of the Roman Economy: Population, Rents and Entitlement,” in *Ancient Economies and Modern Methodologies: Archaeology, Comparative History, Models and Institutions* (eds. P. F. Bang, et al.; Pragmateiai 12; Bari: Edipuglia, 2006) 237-54, argues that there was a dramatic increase in the consumption of meat during the late Republic and on into the early Principate. Given that “[meat] reflects prosperity at a level just a bit above subsistence,” this could indicate a small increase in the per capita incomes of those who found themselves in the middle sector of the Roman economy. For, according to Jongman, “If you really live at base subsistence, meat will be too expensive. If you live at a level many times above subsistence you are unlikely to consume a great deal more than if you are only living at a few times subsistence. In short, it may be a sensitive indicator of intermediate prosperity” (245).

⁵¹ The words of Dio Chrysostom concerning the impact of the *conventus* on the local economy are worth quoting in full: “they bring together an unnumbered throng of people—litigants, jurymen, orators, princes, attendants, slaves, pimps, muleteers, hucksters, harlots, and artisans. Consequently not only can those who have goods to sell obtain the highest prices, but also nothing in the city is out of work, neither the teams nor the houses nor the women. And this contributes not a little to prosperity; for wherever the greatest throng of people comes together, there necessarily we find money in greatest abundance, and it stands to reason that the place should thrive. . . .” (*Or.* 35.15-16 [trans. Crosby (LCL)]; cf. Plutarch, *An. Corp.* 4 [*Mor.* 501E-F]).

projects (e.g., the development of cities like Ancyra and Pessinus) would have demanded both increased labor and materials. And even though the movement of troops throughout the continent would have created only a marginal number of commercial advantages (compared to numerous disadvantages),⁵² the stationing of legions on the eastern frontier would have generated significant amounts of trade to supply the large spending of Roman soldiers.⁵³ When these developments are combined with the aspects of local economies that were already strong (e.g., revenues generated by religious centers like Comana Cappadocia and Comana Pontica; major trade emporiums at Ephesus, Apameia, Pessinus), then we must assume that commerce held a greater place of prominence in the economy of Asia Minor than a primitivist approach will allow.⁵⁴ At the same time, we must be careful not to go too far in the other direction, since the most significant economic advances did not take place until the later Empire.⁵⁵ As it stood, the economy of Anatolia during the early Principate was in many respects still in its infancy.

The second point that is of benefit in locating groups and individuals in the economic strata of first-century Anatolia is a person's occupation. An important distinction that must be made with regard to the economic conditions of urban traders and artisans is the nature of the profession within which a person was employed. This is due to the fact that there was variation in financial yield among different occupations. Those who worked in purple-dye trade, for example, were in a much higher-yield profession than someone who traded wool. The fact that purple products were luxury items sought after by those of

⁵² Stephen Mitchell, "The Balkans, Anatolia, and Roman Armies across Asia Minor," in *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at University College, Swansea, in April 1981* (ed. S. Mitchell; BARIS 156; Oxford: B.A.R., 1983) 131-50 (139-45).

⁵³ Gren, *Kleinasien und der Ostbalkan*, 89-155.

⁵⁴ In a recent article on the Roman economy in Asia Minor, Barbara Levick, "The Roman Economy: Trade in Asia Minor and the Niche Market," *G&R* 51 (2004) 180-98, has demonstrated how Anatolia excelled in commerce due to a number of important factors (e.g., geographical position, necessary lines of communication and travel, favorable climate and soil conditions, and the existence of sophisticated πόλεις which stimulated for various staples). Even from Pessinus, a city in what is often thought to be the "backwoods" province of Galatia, there is archaeological evidence that reveals possible large, long-distance trade (see P. Monsieur, "Note préliminaire sur les amphores découvertes à Pessinonte (Annexe I)," *AnatAnt* 9 [2001] 73-84, who describes many fragments of amphorae from productions centers such as Chios, Lesbos(?), Kos, Rhodos, Thasos, and even Italy).

⁵⁵ The mass-production of olive oil, for instance, was one area that did not develop in Asia Minor until the later Roman Empire. During the early Principate, production seems to have been designed around the needs of local markets, especially in the inland portions of the continent (Stephen Mitchell, "Olive Cultivation in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor," in *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* [eds. S. Mitchell and C. Katsari; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005] 83-113).

higher social status meant that the purple-traders were able to generate much greater profits than other types of artisans.⁵⁶ Consequently, we find a man by the name of Euschemon, a purple-trader of considerable wealth, who dedicated a temple and statue of Tyche to the city of Miletupolis (*I.Kyzikos* II no. 35).⁵⁷

Physician was another profession by which one could accumulate both wealth and social standing.⁵⁸ Although doctors in classical Greece were not considered part of the social elites, many were able to enhance their statuses by adopting the non-utilitarian philosophic views of the wealthy and privileged. By aligning themselves with the intellectual ideology of the elite, many—particularly those in urban areas—were able to procure upward social mobility.⁵⁹ This was especially the case in the eastern part of the Roman Empire (cf. *I.Ephesos* no. 946 [membership of an association of physicians included civic councilors]).⁶⁰ “Here the doctor is frequently a prosperous member of local provincial society, and if not as wealthy as a great magnate like Polemo and Herodes Atticus, at least on speaking terms with them.”⁶¹ Of course, many physicians did not reach such considerable social and economic standing, especially during the early

⁵⁶ On purple products in the Roman world, see Meyer Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (Brussels: Latomus, 1970); Elizabeth J. W. Barber, “Colour in Early Cloth and Clothing,” *CAJ* 9 (1999) 117-20. For the status of purple-traders in particular, see G. H. R. Horsley, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Volume 2: *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1977* (North Ryde: Macquarie University, 1982) 25-28; idem, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Volume 3: *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978* (North Ryde: Macquarie University, 1983) 53-55.

⁵⁷ In Hierapolis (Phrygia) another man was both a purple-dyer as well as a city councilor (*I.Hierapolis* no. 156).

⁵⁸ H. W. Pleket, “Arts en maatschappij in het oude Griekenland: de sociale status van de arts,” *TG* 96 (1983) 325-47; idem, “The Social Status of Physicians in the Greco-Roman World,” in *Ancient Medicine in Its Socio-Cultural Context: Paper Read at the Congress Held at Leiden University 13-15 April 1992* (eds. P. J. van der Eijk, et al.; Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995) 27-34.

⁵⁹ See Hui-Hua Chang, “Rationalizing Medicine and the Social Ambitions of Physicians in Classical Greece,” *JHM* 63 (2008) 217-44; cf. also H. F. J. Horstmannshoff, “The Ancient Physician: Craftsman or Scientist?,” *JHM* 45 (1990) 176-97 (187-96).

⁶⁰ Other craftsmen and traders who were able to gain membership in the civic council include: a shipper from Nicomedia (*SEG* 27 [1977] no. 828); shippers from Ephesus (*I.Ephesos* nos. 1487-1488); goldsmiths from Sardis (Baruch Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives: Répertoire des dédicaces grecques relatives à la construction et à la réfection des synagogues* [CRB 7; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1967] nos. 22-23); and a baker from Korykos (Cilicia) (*MAMA* III no. 756).

⁶¹ Vivian Nutton, “Healers in the Medical Market Place: Towards a Social History of Graeco-Roman Medicine,” in *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays* (ed. A. Wear; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 15-58 (42). The inscriptional evidence on physicians in the Roman world has been collected by Hermann Gummerus, *Der Ärztestand im römischen Reiche nach den Inschriften* (Helsingfors/Leipzig: Akademiska Bokhandeln/Harrasowitz, 1932). This list has been further supplemented by Vivian Nutton, “The Medical Profession in the Roman Empire from Augustus to Justinian,” (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1970) 255-57.

Imperial period.⁶² Nevertheless, the point is that the nature of their profession allowed for sizeable financial gains (which some did attain) beyond what other artisans might have been able to secure. Therefore, they served a “middle” position between the wealthy elites and the poverty stricken.⁶³ What must be kept in mind, however, is that the number of “high-yield” professions would have been considerably less than the numerous “low-yield” occupations.⁶⁴

At one level, then, it is imperative to differentiate between “high-yield” and “low-yield” professions. At the same time, it is also possible to draw lines of demarcation within a particular occupation. Even among those who shared the same profession, there was diversity of wealth. The association of Ephesian fishermen and fish-dealers who dedicated a customs house for fishery toll is one such example (*I.Ephesos* no. 20).⁶⁵ The stele which marked the dedication (situated in the southeast corner of the harbor of Ephesus) lists some 100(?) names of donors, with each being listed in descending order according to the level of contribution. The amounts range from four columns to 5 denarii. Not only does this serve as evidence of economic surplus among local traders, it also demonstrates that those who performed the same occupation existed at varying levels of financial stability. Therefore, we must allow for some fluidity between levels of economic statuses.⁶⁶

⁶² Certain factors made acquiring wealth much more feasible and thus separated the substantially wealthy physicians from those with moderate or even very little wealth. One such factor was the location of a doctor’s practice. A physician in a large city like Ephesus, for instance, would be much more likely to succeed financially than one who traveled around treating patients in small villages.

⁶³ Walter Scheidel, “Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life,” in *Poverty in the Roman World* (eds. M. Atkins and R. Osborne; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 40-59; cf. Quaß, *Die Honoratiorenschicht*, 355-65.

⁶⁴ See the numerous “lower class” professions discussed in Mima Maxey, *Occupations of the Lower Classes in Roman Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

⁶⁵ For a more complete discussion of this text, see G. H. R. Horsley, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Volume 5: *Linguistic Essays with Cumulative Indexes to Vols. 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 95-114.

⁶⁶ This is demonstrated further by the references to those who appear to be in “low-yield” professions, yet somehow possess a surplus of wealth. Upon his death, a nail-smith from Hierapolis in Phrygia left 150 denarii for crowing his grave with a garland each year (*I.Hierapolis* no. 133B). In Aphrodisia (Caria) numerous craftsmen from various occupations donated to the building of a Jewish soup-kitchen (*SEG* 36 [1986] no. 970). We are not told the amounts that were given, but it is nonetheless evidence for a surplus of wealth among a considerable number of traders and artisans. The gravestone of Alexandros, the vegetable handler from Nicaea, is a marble pedimental stele with akroteria (*I.Nikaia* no. 197), well beyond those of the poverty-stricken and certainly beyond those who were unable to afford gravestones altogether. Finally, there is evidence of a baker from Sardis who was member of *γερονσία* (*I.Sardis* VII no. 166). This, of course, does not mean that he possessed a high social status, only that he was financially capable of paying

A final point that must be taken into account is the presence of certain groups that appear to have possessed much more stable and identifiable financial standing somewhere between the civic elite and the destitute paupers.⁶⁷ There are two groups in particular that stand out.⁶⁸ The first are military veterans. Upon being honorably discharged from service, a Roman military veteran would receive a large sum of money (*missio nummaria*) and possibly a piece of land (*missio agraria*).⁶⁹ As a result, many attained a considerably higher social standing. It has been estimated that at any given time there were some 100,000 to 120,000 living veterans spread out across the Empire.⁷⁰ Considering that the number of veterans would be comparatively higher in Asia Minor due to the Roman initiative on the eastern *limes*,⁷¹ we might assume an average of about 80 per city.⁷² When wives and children are calculated in, this would amount to approximately 3% of the average city population.⁷³

a substantial entrance fee (cf. Pierre Paris, “Inscriptions de Sébasté,” *BCH* 7 [1883] 448-57 (452-56), who records an inscription which lists Εὐφραστός Καίσαρος, a freedman of Sebaste, as a member of the *γερουσία*).

⁶⁷ Cf. Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle,” 264-67.

⁶⁸ Another group that is somewhat rare and thus would probably only make a slight impact on the demographics of Anatolian cities is the Roman army. Although the pay varied according to one’s rank and the status of one’s unit, the compensation would have put each soldier well above the subsistence level and beyond the limits of abject poverty (for military pay scale, see M. Alexander Speidel, “Roman Army Pay Scales,” *JRS* 82 [1992] 87-106; Peter Herz, “Finances and Costs of the Roman Army,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army* [ed. P. Erdkamp; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007] 306-22 [308-13]). The use of Roman military in constructing an economic scale can be somewhat tricky, however. Not only were soldiers far removed from most cities of Asia Minor (although even the *inermes provinciae* “unarmed provinces” [Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.11] possessed some military forces, see Ch. 5), in some cases, the military positions were filled by urban elites (for the inscriptional evidence, see Jocelyne Nelis-Clément, “Carrières militaires et fonctions municipales: à propos de L. Granius Proclinus d’Aequum,” in *Historia testis. Mélanges d’épigraphie, d’histoire ancienne et de philologie offerts à Tadeusz Zawadzki* [eds. M. Piérart and O. Curty; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1989] 133-51 [139 n. 15]).

⁶⁹ Gabriele Wesch-Klein, “Recruits and Veterans,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. P. Erdkamp; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 435-50 (439-49). After 13 BCE, retiring soldiers were often given cash payments in lieu of land grants (*Res Gestae* 16; Dio Cassius, 54.25.5; cf. George R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* [Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; London: Thames & Hudson, 1969] 147).

⁷⁰ Walter Scheidel, “Marriage, Families, and Survival: Demographic Aspects,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. P. Erdkamp; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 417-34 (432).

⁷¹ For inscriptional evidence on the location of legionary veterans across Asia Minor, see Michael P. Speidel, “Legionaries from Asia Minor,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) 730-46 (732-35).

⁷² This figure assumes a total of approximately 1,500 cities across the Roman Empire (cf. Friedrich Vittinghoff, “Gesellschaft,” in *Handbuch der europäischen Wirtschaft- und Sozialgeschichte. I: Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit* [ed. F. Vittinghoff; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990] 161-369 [258], who projects that there were 1,500 to 2,000 cities in the middle Roman Empire). If the number of veterans (using the number 100,000) were spread out evenly across these urban areas, each city would contain approximately 67 veterans. But since the number was not likely spread out

The *apparitores* are another group that would have constituted a more stable “middle” position in the economic spectrum. Members of this group were the assistants who served the magistrates of a provincial city. They held offices such as scribe (*scriba*), lictor (*lictor*), messenger (*viator*), herald (*praeco*), etc. Although the salary that one received from performing these duties was somewhat meager,⁷⁴ the social status and upward mobility that could be achieved therein was what made these positions highly sought-after.⁷⁵ In fact, numerous inscriptions attest to the fact that *apparitores* were able to acquire considerable wealth.⁷⁶ However, since each civic official was allowed only a limited amount of *apparitores*, the numbers of those who held these appointments would not have been too significant. If we take the colony of Urso (*ILS* no. 6087) as a template, the average provincial city might possess a total of thirty *apparitores*. When families are factored in, it brings the total to 108 inhabitants on a “middle” position of the economic spectrum (or 1.5% of the city’s population).

With these considerations in mind, we are now in a better place to fill in the “middle” strata of urban inhabitants. The chart below, which builds on but amends and corrects the models of Friesen and Longenecker, lists a tentative economic scale of urban centers for first-century CE Asia Minor.

evenly, and since Anatolia would have possessed a higher concentration of soldiers because of the eastern *limes*, this figure has been raised to 80.

⁷³ In the case of military veterans, we have not used the common ratio of 1:3.6 to calculate the size of the family. Instead, we have lowered the ratio to 1:2.5. This is due to a number of factors. First, in many cases during the early Principate soldiers were deployed far away from their homeland. In such an alien environment family formation was somewhat difficult. Second, there were legal provisions against soldiers entering into recognized marriages (*Dig.* 23.2.63). Although neither of these factors prevented cohabitation with women or even the raising of children (see Richard P. Saller and Brent D. Shaw, “Tombstones and Roman Family Relations in the Principate: Civilians, Soldiers and Slaves,” *JRS* 74 [1984] 124-56), the numbers do seem to be slightly lower during the early Empire (Sara E. Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C. - A.D. 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* [CSCT 24; Leiden: Brill, 2001] esp. 404-409).

⁷⁴ Theodor Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (3rd ed.; Graz: Akademisches Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1969) 1:334-37. The *lex Ursonensis* 62 (*ILS* no. 6087) lists the *apparitores* afforded to each *duovir* and aedile (along with their respective salaries) at the colony of Urso (see the chart by Michael Swan, “*CIL* XIV 353 and S 4642: *Apparitores* at Ostia and Urso,” *Latomus* 29 [1970] 140-41 [141]).

⁷⁵ Nicholas Purcell, “The *Apparitores*: A Study in Social Mobility,” *PBSR* 51 (1983) 125-73.

⁷⁶ *I.Ephesos* nos. 648, 857, 1540 [= *ILS* no. 8833], 1544 [= *CIL* III no. 6078 and 12254 = *ILS* no. 1925], 1545; *CIL* VI nos. 1872 [= *ILS* no. 7266], 1924, 1925 [= *ILS* nos. 1919].

Figure 1. *Economic Scale for Urban Areas of First-Century CE Anatolia*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>%</i>
ES1	Unlimited Surplus	provincial elite (senators[?]; equestrians; a few decurions)	1 ⁷⁷
ES2	Substantial Surplus	municipal elite (most decurions, which may include: some veterans, a few “high-yield” artisans, and a few traders; a few others who possibly did not serve on the βουλή)	4
ES3	Moderate Surplus	many veterans, most “high-yield” artisans, a few traders, those connected to the elite (e.g., <i>apparitores</i>)	10
ES4	Small, Stable Surplus	some “high-yield” artisans, some “low-yield” artisans (esp. large business owners), some traders, regular wage earners	27
ES5	Meager, Unstable Surplus	some traders (esp. those employed by others), many “low-yield” artisans (small business owners, those who are employed by others), skilled/unskilled laborers	33
ES6	No Surplus	unattached widows, orphans, beggars, disabled, unskilled day laborers	25

What becomes apparent from this economic scale is that we have made slight, although important, alterations to the previous proposals of Friesen and Longenecker. To begin with, our scale seeks to clearly delineate distinct and comparable categories by which the reader may gain a better understanding of the quantifiable differences between various economic positions. The lack of such continuity is one of the major shortcomings of the table provided by Friesen.⁷⁸ Rather than describing each group in relation to their distinguishable, social and financial situations, Friesen mixes the levels at which socio-economic comparison takes place. For instance, some groups are socio-political categories (imperial/provincial/municipal elite); others are descriptions of the group’s (in)ability to maintain basic human existence (below/at/near subsistence); others describe their financial holdings (moderate surplus). In the table provided above, we have attempted to maintain more comparable descriptions.

⁷⁷ The figure would have likely been lower than this, but for the sake of maintaining whole numbers, we have rounded up the percentage of provincial elites to 1%.

⁷⁸ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 341. This shortcoming has been rectified in Friesen’s most recent work (see Scheidel and Friesen, “The Size of the Economy,” 84-91).

Stemming from our attempt to construct a more time- and region-specific model of the Anatolian economy, we have also provided minor adjustments to the economic percentages of our predecessors. In particular, the evidence which we have surveyed suggests that the scale offered by Friesen may be just a little too bleak for first-century CE Roman Anatolia. Given the economic progress that resulted from Roman rule and the various stimulates for economic growth, it seems appropriate to enlarge Friesen's "middle" strata, if only slightly. The work of Longenecker, on the other hand, seems to require just the opposite. While his treatment serves as a helpful correction of Friesen, representing the greater stratification of the economic conditions in the Roman world, he tends to err somewhat in the opposite direction.⁷⁹ With these changes in place, the chart above will provide the economic scale from which we will attempt to locate the socio-economic conditions of the recipients of 1 Peter.

3. The Socio-Economic Status(es) of the Addressees of 1 Peter

Within the text of 1 Peter, we are given only a few brief glimpses into the audience's socio-economic condition(s).⁸⁰ Yet from these clues, we are able to provide a tentative

⁷⁹ There are a couple of areas where Longenecker's treatment requires alteration if it is to serve as a template for urban centers of first-century Roman Anatolia. While it is true (as pointed out by Longenecker) that there were "middling" groups (e.g., *Augustales*, *apparitores*) between the wealthy elites and the indigent beggars, these groups would not have made up a large percentage of the population. Even when we bring in traders and artisans that were clearly above abject poverty (e.g., the "high-yield" professions), the percentages were still probably not as high as Longenecker supposes (17% for ES4, see "Exposing the Economic Middle," 263-64). The numbers of "low-yield" professions far outweighed the "high-yield." Furthermore, the data he uses to calculate his figures (which is drawn from Scheidel, "Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life," 53-54) is representative of rural landowners in Late Roman Egypt. While this might give us a better impression on the broader economic conditions of the Roman world, it is not as helpful in assessing the economic strata in urban areas. A final consideration concerns the timeframe of the proposed conditions. Although there was certainly more economic activity in Roman Anatolia than in times past, we must be careful to situate the projected economic conditions within the *early* Empire. For while a huge economic boom is evident in the second century CE, during the early Principate many aspects of economic development were still in their infancy. With these considerations in mind, we have chosen to slightly reduce Longenecker's "middle" strata.

⁸⁰ Among this list of "indicators," there are some that tell us little to nothing about the readers' socio-economic status(es). One such feature is the reference to a future inheritance (*κληρονομία*) in 1 Pet 1.4. Contrary to what one might conclude from this statement (*viz.*, that a reference to an inheritance suggests that the audience was poor), this passage tells us nothing about the readers socio-economic standing, because an inheritance would have been good news to both the rich and poor. Likewise, the fact that masters are not addressed alongside slaves (2.18-25) does not point to the inferior financial status of the Anatolian communities (*pace* Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 70; cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 172). This same omission also appears in the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Tim 6.1-2; Tit 2.9-10) where there were clearly household heads who were responsible for wives, children, and slaves (1 Tim 3.12; cf. Horrell, *1 Peter*, 48-49). Instead, this absence is rather part of "the letter's rhetorical strategy of casting the Christian addressees

reconstruction of the readers' economic situation. Because the most useful indicators relate to specific groups of people within the congregations, a large portion of these appear in the Petrine *Haustafel* (1 Pet 2.18–3.7). The first group that is addressed in the “household code” is the *οἰκέται*. In most cases, these were servants/slaves who were responsible for the daily administration of the household. Their duties would have included tasks such as meal preparation and service (Philo, *Spec.* 1.127-128), extending dinner invitations (Plutarch, *De garr.* 18 [*Mor.* 511D-E]), or virtually any other chore the master desired.

What is important in this particular case is that the author singles out a specific type of slave who was ordinarily employed in a domestic capacity, rather than simply addressing slaves (*δοῦλοι*) in general. Whereas the latter functioned in a variety of different roles, some being doomed to toil in extremely laborious and dangerous tasks (e.g., the mines), aside from the possibility of a cruel master, the former could expect a somewhat more bearable existence. In fact, these particular kinds of slaves could have been highly educated and versed in a variety of languages (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.264) with masters who entrusted them with considerably important duties (cf. Josephus, *War* 1.233; Philo, *Plant.* 55).⁸¹

This distinction is especially important in assessing their socio-economic condition. For while their servile status would have generally placed the *οἰκέται* below freedmen and full citizens on the social hierarchy of the larger civic community,⁸² the economic situation of many would have been well above that of the indigent beggar. Because they

in the role of slaves badly treated by their non-Christian owners” (Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 69; on this strategy, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 542-43). One indicator that is absent from the text of 1 Peter is the mention of any particular occupations. Yet if any information can be gleaned from later periods, we can assume that there were a wide variety of jobs undertaken by members of the Christian communities. In later Christian epitaphs from Anatolia, we find such occupations as shoemaker (Johnson, *Epitaphs*, no. 2.19), merchant (no. 3.13), wood carver (no. 3.14), baker (no. 3.15), goldsmith (no. 3.16), orchard keeper (no. 3.17), butcher (no. 3.18), and lawyer (no. 4.12).

⁸¹ On slavery in the cities of Asia Minor, see E. S. Golubcova, “Sklaverei- und Abhängigkeitsformen in Kleinasien,” in *Die Sklaverei in den östlichen Provinzen des römischen Reiches im 1.-3. Jahrhundert* (trans. J. Kriz, et al.; Übersetzungen ausländischer Arbeiten zur antiken Sklaverei 5; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992) 77-138 (83-109).

⁸² There were some slaves, however, who were afforded a much higher degree of social prominence. The *familia Caesaris* was one particular group, see P. R. C. Weaver, “Social Mobility in the Early Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Imperial Freedmen and Slaves,” *P&P* 37 (1967) 3-20; idem, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

served as important investments for their masters, *οἰκέται* would have been provided basic essentials such as food, clothing, and shelter (and possibly even necessary medical treatment [cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 10.9]). Their financial stability was thus greater than some who possessed freedom.⁸³ In fact, it was even possible for an *οἰκέτης* to accumulate at least a small amount of financial surplus.⁸⁴ Based on these facts, it might be appropriate to place some at the level of ES5, with a very small number possibly even climbing as high as ES4. For most *οἰκέται*, though, the situation would have been somewhat less comfortable. Even though food was normally provided, slaves were apportioned “the poorest and cheapest food in the household.”⁸⁵ Moreover, when famine or financial difficulty struck the household, slaves were the first to feel the negative repercussions. In most cases, therefore, these *οἰκέται* would have been located at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder (ES6).

The second passage that may provide some insight into the socio-economic status(es) of the readers is the warning directed at the women of these Anatolian communities. They are instructed: “Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight” (1 Pet 3.3-4, NRSV). Against the applicability of such a reference, Bechtler argues that “the injunction in 1 Pet 3:3 is stereotypical and so should not be used as evidence for the economic status of the women addressed.”⁸⁶ Likewise, Elliott claims that “[t]he echo here in 1 Peter of conventional sentiments concerning appropriate attire . . . reveals little if anything about the actual social status of the wives addressed.”⁸⁷

But while it is true that this warning is a common *topos* found in both Judaeo-Christian and Greco-Roman moral exhortation,⁸⁸ this does not rule out the possibility that it could provide us with some indication of the audience’s financial bearing. One would

⁸³ Cf. Maurice Carrez, “L’esclavage dans la première épître de Pierre,” in *Études sur la première lettre de Pierre. Congrès de l’ACFEB, Paris 1979* (ed. C. Perrot; LD 102; Paris: Cerf, 1980) 207-17 (213).

⁸⁴ See Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 106-16.

⁸⁵ Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 101. Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.127; Tertullian, *Apol.* 14.1.

⁸⁶ Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 68 n. 87. Cf. also Michaels, *1 Peter*, 172; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 221.

⁸⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 564.

⁸⁸ See David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981) 101-103.

assume, as Alicia J. Batten has noted, that “there must have been some women for whom the instructions were relevant, otherwise the teachings would be gratuitous.”⁸⁹ What must be remembered is that the use of stereotypical warning does not necessarily imply that no danger stands behind the admonition.⁹⁰ In later periods, Christian writers would continue this same trend, not simply because they wanted to preserve a long-standing ideology, but because of the wealth and opulence acquired and paraded by some Christians.⁹¹ Furthermore, when Pliny writes about the Christians in this area a few decades later, he notes that “a great many individuals of every age and class (*ordinis*), both men and women, are being brought to trial . . .” (*Ep.* 10.96.9; trans. Radice [LCL]; cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 1.7).

The question, therefore, becomes, how wealthy did one have to be in order to have braided hair and to wear gold and fine clothes? When we realize that “[j]ewelry . . . played a prominent role in Roman society in distinguishing one’s rank and state” and that “[i]n all periods it spoke of one’s wealth,”⁹² then we must admit that the mere possession of these kinds of luxury items would place a person well above the daily fight of many who simply sought to procure minimum calorific intake (ES6). Likewise, when we consider the fact that complex hairstyles marked the rich and leisured women in Greco-Roman society,⁹³ it would appear that these instructions are aimed at women of substantial wealth.

On the other hand, we must differentiate between the extravagancies of the imperial and provincial elites and the ornamentation of those in the “middle” sectors of the socio-

⁸⁹ Alicia J. Batten, “Neither Gold nor Braided Hair (1 Timothy 2.9; 1 Peter 3.3): Adornment, Gender and Honour in Antiquity,” *NTS* 55 (2009) 484-501 (497). Cf. also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 212; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 204; Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter,” 195-96.

⁹⁰ Below we will see that elders are warned against performing their duties “greedily” (*αἰσχροκερδῶς*). While this is a common feature among instructions to church leaders, it was not without reason. Christian leadership faced serious temptation to use their position as a way of acquiring material gain (cf. *Pol. Phil.* 11.1-4, which describes Valens, an elder who gave into this temptation).

⁹¹ Christian warnings against the opulent ornamentation of women: Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.1.1; Tertullian, *Cult. fem.* Evidence for opulence among Christians: Friedrich W. Deichmann, et al., eds., *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, Band 1: *Rom und Ostia* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1967) 33-45, with plate nos. 39-45.

⁹² Ann M. Stout, “Jewelry as a Symbol of Status in the Roman Empire,” in *The World of Roman Costume* (eds. J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante; Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001) 77-100 (83).

⁹³ Alexandra T. Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000) 96-105.

economic strata.⁹⁴ These words of warning could just as easily have been given to those who sought to imitate the rich and powerful in their dress and appearance, yet who could not afford the most extravagant items (ES3, ES4).⁹⁵ In conclusion, then, the Petrine warning could indicate a broad range of wealth and status among the Anatolian communities. While the warning could be directed at those on the levels of ES3 and ES4, we cannot rule out the possibility that some may have been as high as ES2.

A further indicator of the readers' economic condition(s) may be their former participation in the activities described in 1 Pet 4.3 ("living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, excess feasting, carousals, and lawless idolatry"). These types of practices are often associated with the meetings of local voluntary associations.⁹⁶ If this is the particular referent here, it may hold the key to understanding a significant portion of the social strata represented in the Petrine communities. This is due to the fact that voluntary associations are often regarded simply as burial clubs which the poorer members of society would join as a way of guaranteeing that they would receive a proper burial, while at the same time providing them with the opportunity to experience fellowship and conviviality.⁹⁷ If so, it would reveal a great deal about the socio-economic status(es) of the recipients. This, in fact, seems to be the view taken by Armand Puig i Tàrrach. Before going on to associate the Anatolian churches with ancient *collegia*, he offers the following description of how these clubs are to be understood: "c'est surtout l'aspiration des classes basses, des affranchis, des esclaves, des femmes, qui peut être la plus comblée

⁹⁴ E.g., Julius Caesar bought Servilia a pearl worth six million sesterces (Suetonius, *Jul.* 50.2); Lollia Paulina wore jewelry totaling forty million sesterces to a betrothal banquet (Pliny, *Nat.* 9.58); cf. Petronius, *Satyr.* 67.

⁹⁵ With reference to popular trends in jewelry in the Greco-Roman world, Croom (*Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 114) notes that, "[d]esigns in precious metals were often copied in cheaper materials for the lower classes." That gold jewelry could be attained by those outside the upper-level elites can be seen in the cemetery excavations from Pessinus. While much of the jewelry and other accessories were made of bronze or iron, excavators did uncover one gold finger ring, one gold pendant, and a few gold earrings (see John Devreker, et al., *Excavations in Pessinus: The So-Called Acropolis: From Hellenistic and Roman Cemetery to Byzantine Castle* [Archaeological Reports Ghent University 1; Gent: Academia, 2003] 92-95).

⁹⁶ See, e.g., Gerd Theissen, "Urchristliche Gemeinden und antike Vereine: Sozialdynamik im Urchristentum durch Widersprüche zwischen Selbstverständnis und Sozialstruktur," in *In Other Words: Essays on Social Science Methods and the New Testament in Honor of Jerome H. Neyrey* (ed. A. C. Hagedorn, et al.; SWBA 2/1; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007) 221-47 (234).

⁹⁷ See the discussion of voluntary associations below (Ch. 7).

par et dans l'association: le besoin de briser l'isolement est un des facteurs qui semblent jouer un rôle assez décisif.”⁹⁸

Such an understanding of voluntary associations, however, is demonstrably inaccurate. Recently, the idea that most associations were devoted solely to the burial of their members (*collegia tenuiorum* or *funeraticia*) has been soundly refuted, due in large part to a shift in focus. As interpreters have begun to approach these clubs from the *profile* of their membership rather than their presumed *purpose*, much greater clarity with regard to their nature and variety has been attained.⁹⁹ One of the results of this reassessment has been a greater specificity with regard to the socio-economic diversity within these clubs. The membership of voluntary associations, as Philip A. Harland has shown, was much more economically stratified than many have assumed.¹⁰⁰ What this means for the audience of 1 Peter is that their participation in these groups (assuming this to be the referent behind 1 Pet 4.3) would reveal little about their socio-economic status. The same would also be true if the author's description reflected meals that took place at a pagan temple or a banquet located at someone's house. Because there would have been considerable variety among those who were involved in such practices, little can be deduced about where they stood on the socio-economic spectrum.

A final indicator of socio-economic conditions is the specific warning given to the elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*) within the Anatolian communities. In 1 Pet 5.2 the members of this group are instructed to eagerly (*προθύμως*) fulfill their duties within the local congregations, seeking to meet the needs of others rather than greedily (*αἰσχροκερδῶς*) desiring to make a profit through deceit and dishonesty.¹⁰¹ From this, the question that naturally arises is, how much financial profit could the elders hope to gain (whether honestly or dishonestly), and what does that tell us about their (as well as the community's) socio-economic condition(s)?

⁹⁸ Puig i Tàrrach, “Le Milleu,” 385, who follows the work of Kornemann, “Collegium,” very closely (although he incorrectly attributes the work to M. Ziebarth).

⁹⁹ See John S. Kloppenborg, “Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson; London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 16-30.

¹⁰⁰ Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) esp. 25-53.

¹⁰¹ BDAG, 870.

It is true that the avoidance of greedy and dishonest financial gain is a fairly standard warning in the early church, especially as it pertains to Christian leadership.¹⁰² But despite the common parlance, there does seem to be a real threat behind this counsel. Not only did elders receive compensation for their services (1 Tim 5.17-18; cf. 1 Cor 9.3-12; Gal 6.6), they may have been involved in the finances of the community as well (Acts 11.30; cf. 5.1-5; 6.1-3). This suggests that the elders in the Petrine communities could have made sizeable financial gains from their position of leadership (cf. Pol. *Phil.* 11.1-4; Tit 1.11). The difficulty is in determining how much this data reveals about the socio-economic status(es) of the readers. If the elders were able to make a profit from the surplus wealth that members of these communities entrusted to them, then we might assume that some, or even many, of these Christians were in a fairly stable financial situation somewhere above the subsistence level (ES2-4). On the other hand, if the wealth and possessions of the community were pooled together for distribution by the elders (cf. Acts 2.44-45; 4.32-37), then it would actually reveal very little about their socio-economic condition(s).¹⁰³ It seems best therefore not to draw too much from these warnings.

A more helpful indicator may be the nature of eldership itself. In his monograph on elders in the earliest Christian communities, R. Alastair Campbell has provided NT scholarship with a more precise way of understanding early Christian leadership.¹⁰⁴ Arguing that the idea of eldership traces its origin back through Judaism (although being comparable to the structure of Greco-Roman society), Campbell proposes that elder rule was “a form of leadership that was collective and representative, with an authority derived from their seniority relative to those they represented, whether household, clan, tribe or nation.” Thus, the designation “elder” was “a term of honour for those whose

¹⁰² Acts 20.32-35; 1 Tim 3.3, 8; Tit 1.7; *Did.* 15.1; Pol. *Phil.* 5.2; 6.1. Cf. Wolfgang Nauck, “Probleme des frühchristlichen Amtsverständnisses (I Ptr 5,2f.),” *ZNW* 48 (1957) 200-20 (214).

¹⁰³ If this were the case, it might suggest that many in the community were fairly poor and in need of financial assistance (as in Acts). It could therefore indicate a number of congregants at the level of ES6. However, such a conclusion would be drawn from the deduction of a deduction and therefore would be highly questionable.

¹⁰⁴ R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within the Earliest Christianity* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994). For further examination of elders in 1 Peter, see John H. Elliott, “Elders as Leaders in 1 Peter and the Early Church,” *CurTM* 28 (2001) 549-59; Johann Michl, “Die Presbyter des ersten Petrusbriefes,” in *Ortskirche, Weltkirche: Festgabe für Julius Kardinal Döpfner* (ed. H. Fleckenstein; Würzburg: Echter, 1973) 48-62.

power was based on relationships that already existed, rather than a precise office, entered through appointment, election or ordination.”¹⁰⁵

Such a conclusion holds significant implications for how we understand the socio-economic status of elders within the Petrine communities. For if the reference to elders describes an office in the early church which was held without regard to social or economic standing, then very little can be known about their financial situation. If, on the other hand, eldership was a position that was naturally assumed by those who were mature and well respected within the community and who already functioned in a role of leadership within the household structure, then we would naturally assume that the elders were among the wealthiest members of the local Christian communities. Furthermore, one cannot rule out the possibility that in some cases they may have even been part of the leadership of the larger civic community.

This particular passage clearly indicates that the elders fulfilled some type of leadership position, for they are specifically instructed: “tend (ποιμάνετε) the flock of God that is in your charge” (1 Pet 5.2, NRSV). This task, it is stated, is carried out by exercising oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες) and by not lording over those who have been assigned to their care (5.2-3). The reference to both “elders” (πρεσβύτεροι) and “those who are younger” (νεώτεροι), however, suggests that the passage is concerned to draw some kind of age distinction between the members of the community: the πρεσβύτεροι are clearly those of a more mature age, while the νεώτεροι are younger in comparison. Here, the reference to νεώτεροι is likely the author’s way of referring to all others in the congregations apart from the elders.¹⁰⁶ The question that remains then is whether these

¹⁰⁵ Campbell, *Elders*, 238.

¹⁰⁶ The identity of the νεώτεροι in 1 Peter has produced a wide variety of interpretive suggestions in modern literature. Some have argued that this refers to a group who filled a junior office in the church (e.g., Ernst Kühl, *Die Briefe Petri und Judae* [6th ed.; KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897] 278-79; Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 165). There is, however, no record of a permanent ministerial position carried out by individuals with such a designation. Furthermore, in this particular passage, the νεώτεροι do not receive instructions for performing a specific service in the church; instead, they are simply encouraged to conform to the standard ideological principle which differentiated positions of authority and submission in the early church: “youth defers to age” (see John M. G. Barclay, “There is Neither Old Nor Young? Early Christianity and Ancient Ideologies of Age,” *NTS* 53 [2007] 225-41 [235]). Others see this group as neophytes in the faith, those who had been recently baptized (e.g., John H. Elliott, “Ministry and Church Order in the NT: A Traditio-Historical Analysis (1 Pt 5, 1-5 & plls.),” *CBQ* 32 [1970] 367-91 [375-86]). But while it is certainly natural to suppose that some of the πρεσβύτεροι were more mature in the faith with some of the νεώτεροι being new converts, this is deduced from historical probability rather than from the

elders were leaders of house-churches as a result of a system in which those of age and social status naturally assumed positions of leadership, or whether they represent a further developed hierarchy in which eldership was an office to which one was appointed (akin to the Pastoral Epistles and the Apostolic Fathers).

It is our contention that 1 Peter represents the former leadership structure, as there are a number of considerations that seem to point in this direction. First, if the reading ἐπισκοποῦντες (“exercising oversight”) in 1 Pet 5.2 is original,¹⁰⁷ then it would seem to

text. If, as most assume, the gospel had only recently penetrated these areas, then all of the members would have been fairly new to the faith. It has also been suggested that these were younger persons who formed a group similar to the νέοι in the larger Greco-Roman society (e.g., Ceslas Spicq, “La place ou le rôle des Jeunes dans certaines communautés néotestamentaires,” *RB* 76 [1969] 508-27 [518-27]). Yet such a conclusion suffers from a lack of evidence both in 1 Peter as well as other Christian literature. Others have posited a reference specifically to the younger men of the community (e.g., Frankemölle, *I Petrusbrief*, 67-68; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 134). But it is difficult to understand why this specific group would be singled out at this point. For unlike *I Clement*—which is often cited in this context—the letter gives no indication of any type of conflict between the older and younger men of the communities. Most commentators understand νεώτεροι as a reference to all of the other members of the community apart from the elders (e.g., Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 79; Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, 130; Michaels, *I Peter*, 288-89; Goppelt, *I Peter*, 350-51; Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 331-32; Jobes, *I Peter*, 307). Against the objections of Elliott (*I Peter*, 838), this is the most natural solution. While it is true that “such a collective use of νεώτεροι would be without parallel in the NT,” no other passage sets up a similar two-tiered comparison such as we find in 1 Peter. Elsewhere other groups are involved: older men, older women, and younger women (1 Tim 5.1-2; Tit 2.1-6). In such cases, the νεώτεροι could not refer to the whole community, but would have to refer to one specific group. Likewise, Elliott’s claim that “this theory would not fit the present context, since it is v 5b that first introduces an appeal to ‘all’ (*pantes*) members of the community” fails to take into account that νεώτεροι does not refer to “all” members of the community, but only to those who are not elders. Therefore, it is perfectly natural to find an exhortation directed to all believers (1 Pet 5.5b) following directly on the heels of instructions to two separate groups: elders (5.1-4) and non-elders (5.5a).

¹⁰⁷ There are a few important witnesses which lack the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες (ℵ* B 323 sa aeth AnastS Did). Nevertheless, the external pedigree for its inclusion is considerably strong (℞⁷² ℵ² A P Ψ [33]. 69. 81. 945. 1241. 1739 **Π** al lat [sy^p] bo [*sed* ε-πυουντες 614. 630. 1505 *pc* sy^h]). Some have been reticent about going against such early and formidable witnesses as ℵ* and B (so, e.g., Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri*, 189; Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, 127; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 164; Karl H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief* [6th ed.; HTKNT 13/2; Freiburg: Herder, 1988] 128-29 n. 4; Richard, *Reading I Peter*, 206; Feldmeier, *First Epistle of Peter*, 230). Overall, the external evidence is noticeably balanced, however, if not in favor of the addition. The participle ἐπισκοποῦντες is able to boast of an early attestation (e.g., the second hand of Sinaiticus (ℵ) made his changes at an early period while the MS was still in the scriptorium, see H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* [London: British Museum, 1938] 40-50; Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* [TS 3/5; Piscataway, NJ.: Gorgias, 2007] 39-55) and solid Alexandrian (ℵ² A Ψ [33]. 81 bo) and Byzantine testimony. Furthermore, the presence of alternative forms of ἐπισκοποῦντες within the MS record (see *ECM*, 188-89) suggests that the participle was originally part of the text. When we turn to internal considerations, an even stronger case can be made for the deliberate omission of the participle (see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994] 625). On a stylistic level, its presence creates a somewhat awkward redundancy following the main verbal form ποιμάνετε. Therefore, despite the connection between the present verse and 1 Pet 2.25, the participle’s presence would create a more difficult reading. But even if ἐπισκοποῦντες was not originally omitted for stylistic purposes,

indicate a time prior to the establishment of a monoepiscopate, for once this hierarchical structure had been established, it would be unusual for the author to instruct the elders (the second-tier office) to perform the duty of exercising oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες) when this was the task of the overseer (the first-tier office). Secondly, if, as most agree, these Christian communities had only a brief history of establishment prior to the composition of 1 Peter, then it seems reasonable to assume that they would have possessed a more primitive form of leadership like that which was found in the earliest Pauline communities. If Campbell is correct in thinking that this form of government developed out of the pre-existing structures of the larger society, then there is no need to assign a more developed form to these fledgling groups. Finally, the specific instructions given to the elders may imply the presence of this particular leadership structure. In 5.2 they are exhorted to exercise oversight willingly (ἐκουσίως) rather than because they are under compulsion (ἀναγκαστῶς) to do so. As opposed to a system in which leaders were elected or appointed to office, this may indicate a situation in which church leadership was the natural lot of those who already held positions of authority, whether they desired it or not.

What this means for the socio-economic status of the Petrine audience is that the elders of these churches consisted of the wealthiest and most socially affluent members of the Christian community. The level of their socio-economic status within the larger community, however, is difficult to discern. Some elders may have been part of the more socially prominent and financially affluent members of local provincial communities (ES2, ES3).¹⁰⁸ The problem is that such a postulation can only remain on the level of possibility, since we do not know whether there was any disconnect (and if so, how much?) between prominence in local Christian communities and prominence in provincial and municipal society.

ecclesiastical conviction could have just as easily given rise to its excision. Later copyists who were uncomfortable with assigning the duties of an overseer to the elders may have intentionally dropped the reading. Overall, then, it seems that the bulk of the evidence—both externally and internally—speaks for the participle’s authenticity (cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 276; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 343–44 n. 17; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 320; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 824 n. 665; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 310).

¹⁰⁸ Given the extremely small amount of provincial elites in the cities of first-century Anatolia (less than 1% of the population), we can probably rule out the category ES1.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the audience of 1 Peter consisted of people of mixed socio-economic background.¹⁰⁹ It is possible that a very small number (elders, possibly some women) were able to climb as high as ES2, but it may be pushing the evidence too far to say that this was probable. We simply have no way of knowing for sure because the evidence is inconclusive. Based on the percentages of Asia Minor as well as the evidence provided in the letter itself, many of the congregants likely fell into the range of ES4–ES5. Of those groups mentioned in 1 Peter, the *οικέται* probably held the lowest position on the socio-economic scale (ES6); however, this is not to say that all were necessarily destitute. Because of the importance of their function within the household, some *οικέται* would have been well taken care of and may have even been able to accumulate a small amount of financial surplus (ES5; possibly ES4).

What must also be given due weight is the larger economic situation of first-century Anatolia. While the letter itself provides us with only a few brief glimpses into the lives of the Petrine readers, we are left with many more unanswered questions. The evidence from Asia Minor is of critical importance in filling out this picture. If the conditions sketched above were in any way representative of the types of individuals found within the Petrine communities (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.9), then we might expect the majority of the readers to be spread out somewhere between levels ES4 and ES6. Like a large percentage of the local population, many believers probably struggled just to stay above the subsistence level (ES6). Unlike many interpreters have suggested, though, this would not have been the lot of all within the Christian communities. Although it is certainly possible that a few attained a moderate (ES3) or even a substantial amount (ES2) of wealth (or surplus), these would have been much more rare occasions, and it is highly unlikely that any reached the highest level of the socio-economic hierarchy (ES1).

Therefore, consistent with recent attempts to expose the “middle” economic strata with Christianity and the wider Greco-Roman world, it seems that most of the readers of 1 Peter probably fell somewhere between abject poverty and limitless wealth. While differences would have existed between levels of financial surplus and economic

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 49; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 55-57; Horrell, “Addressees of 1 Peter.”

stability, most probably performed trades that provided a level of income that placed them above worry over attaining caloric intake requirements, although far from a life of leisure and economic freedom.

Conclusion

The goal of the present chapter was to further delineate the “social profile” of the Petrine audience by addressing two questions: the recipients’ ethnic identity and socio-economic status(es). In the first section, we addressed a recent challenge to the modern consensus with regard to the readers’ ethnicity. In general, commentators have come to agree that the addressees of 1 Peter were primarily of Gentile origin. Recently, however, this opinion has been scrutinized and questioned by a handful of interpreters. Nevertheless, as these objections were further examined, we discovered that there was little basis for their validity. For this reason, we maintained that the audience was composed primarily of Gentile-Christians.

When we turned our attention to the readers’ socio-economic status(es), we entered into a somewhat more complex matter. What we discovered was that scholarship contained a variety of interpretive opinions which spanned the entirety of the economic spectrum. After addressing some of the shortcomings of prior assessments, we noted that the major problem with previous studies was that very few had been undertaken with an eye towards ancient economics or, more specifically, the economic conditions of first-century CE Asia Minor. This led us to construct a region- and time-specific model of the economic conditions in urban centers of Roman Anatolia. Once this economic taxonomy was developed, we then applied our findings to 1 Peter. What we concluded was that the audience of the epistle consisted of a mixed socio-economic background. We argued that some—although probably a very small percentage—would have been able to accumulate a moderate or even a substantial surplus of funds. Nevertheless, for the most part, the large majority of the readers would have found themselves in an unstable and precarious financial situation.

The conclusions that have been reached in the present chapter hold out significant implications for our understanding the nature of suffering in 1 Peter. First, with regard to the audience’s ethnic identity, it is important to realize that the problems which have

arisen for the Petrine readers do not seem to be the result of any type of inner-Jewish dispute. Unlike the troubles which the Jews stirred up for Paul and his missionary companions in the book of Acts (cf. 13.13–14.20; 17.1-15; 18.1-17), this conflict appears to have a Gentile origin. When 1 Pet 4.3-4 is read in light of the findings of this chapter, it becomes clear that one of the primary causes of hostility was the readers' withdrawal from the pagan practices with which they were formerly associated. Therefore, in order to gain a proper perspective on the situation, our investigation must explore the problems that Gentile conversion would have created within Anatolian society.

Secondly, this chapter holds out important implications for the dangers which interpersonal conflict posed to the Petrine readers. On the basis of their limited socio-economic standing, few, if any, of the readers would have been afforded special privileges in conflict situations—whether in local or provincial courts or in the court of public opinion. Whereas wealthier citizens may have been able to quell significant misgivings of the community through public and private donations, it is unlikely that those in the Christian communities would have had this same recourse. Furthermore, since most of the recipients were only a small step away from financial peril to begin with, when hostility did arise, it could have easily driven them into serious economic crisis. So not only would the audience's socio-economic condition(s) have made them vulnerable to numerous kinds of attacks from opponents, it would have seriously tested their fortitude in the midst of those conflicts.

Section Two: Contextualizing the Conflict in 1 Peter

In the second section of our investigation into the nature of persecution in 1 Peter, our goal will be to further contextualize the conflict situation by examining conflict management in a first-century CE Anatolian setting. Once the task is complete, this section will serve as a backdrop against which to read the suffering described in the epistle. In Chapter Five, we will survey various conflict strategies afforded to an aggrieved party in Roman Asia Minor. Our investigation will include both informal tactics like physical violence, economic oppression, and spiritual affliction as well as the more formal process of the Anatolian legal system. In Chapter Six, we will narrow our focus more closely on one particular aspect of conflict between Christians and non-Christians: the legal situation of Christians during the first three centuries CE. Since the problems described in 1 Peter relate, in some way, to the readers' adherence to the Christian religion, it is important to explore some of the dangers that Christians faced under the Roman Empire. In particular, we will examine the nature of the Christian legal status and how the religion came to be treated as though it were illegal in a Roman court of law.

Chapter 5 – Conflict Management in Roman Anatolia

In the previous section, we attempted to construct a detailed “social profile” of the Petrine readers as a way of more clearly locating possible causes of hostility as well as predicting the various forms which this conflict may have taken. Now that we have a better understanding of those who are being afflicted in the current circumstances, it is important to explore strategies of conflict management. Therefore, we will turn to the world of first-century CE Asia Minor in order to discover how aggrieved or offended parties dealt with conflict. Our discussion will focus on two types of conflict management strategies: separate action and third-party.

A. Separate Action Strategies in Roman Anatolia

According to most modern commentators, the primary type of persecution experienced by the recipients of 1 Peter was informal harassment initiated by members of the local populace. Unfortunately, scholars rarely delineate the specific forms which this kind of hostility may have taken, nor is consideration given to the assortment of ways in which different members of the community might have been affected. Yet much of the blame for this significant omission rests not on the shoulders of modern interpreters but on the problematic nature of the ancient evidence.

Two roadblocks stand before the one who desires to reconstruct conflict in Roman Anatolia. First, there is the fact that informal conflict is only infrequently recorded in our source material. Much of this, of course, is due to the nature of the sources themselves. One of the primary means for reconstructing the history of Asia Minor is through the epigraphic record. It is difficult, however, to uncover much about informal, personal disputes from the inscriptional evidence.¹ Secondly, there is the problem of the variegated nature of this type of conflict management strategy. The various shapes and forms which separate action could have taken were innumerable. Therefore, it would be impossible to delineate each individual tactic. For this reason, we will only attempt to survey a few of the more prominent forms.

¹ There is, however, one epigraphic source that provides some insight into interpersonal conflict: the “confession inscriptions” from Lydia-Phrygia (see below).

1. Physical Violence

One of the most basic forms of separate action strategy was physical violence. Very often this type of maneuver was the result of an escalated conflict situation in which verbal threats had given way to more destructive forms. An example of this strategy can be found in the story of Demonax, a well-respected Cynic philosopher of Athens. On one occasion, Demonax began to mock the clothing of a local Olympic athlete. In return, the athlete pelted Demonax in the head with a rock, which drew blood (Lucian, *Demon.* 16). A somewhat more escalated situation was the apostle Paul's missionary visit to Lystra (Acts 14.8-19). After narrowly escaping the plot of the Jews at Iconium, Paul arrived at Lystra ready to spread his gospel message. But in spite of an initially warm reception from the crowds, the atmosphere quickly changed with the arrival of Jews from Antioch and Iconium. The fickle crowd was won over, and Paul was stoned and dragged outside of the city (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.7; 6.41.3-8).

In some cases, general harassment could turn into a very serious problem, even apart from the violent intentions of the offended party. From the city of Astypalaia, we read of a dispute between Philinus and a husband and wife named Eubulus and Tryphera respectively (*SIG*³ no. 780 = *IGR* IV no. 1031). This conflict was carried out as Philinus went to the home of the couple for three nights in a row, insulting them and threatening to take their house by storm. On the third and final night, Philinus brought his brother (also named Eubulus) along to join in the harassment. The family, terrified by their threats, ordered their slaves to drive away the assailants. Their planned attack was to empty the contents of a chamber pot onto the agitators' heads. Unfortunately, one slave lost his grip, and the pot dropped and struck a death-blow to Eubulus (the husband). This situation reveals just how easily a small dispute could turn into a serious problem—even apart from the intentions of the aggravated party.

While physical violence always remained a viable conflict tactic, it did hold out the possibility of certain consequences. In the case of Demonax's assailant, for example, the matter could have quickly resulted in legal accusations. In fact, immediately after the philosopher was pelted in the head, the bystanders began to shout, "(To) the Proconsul! (To) the Proconsul!" (Lucian, *Demon.* 16). Of course, as we see with Gallio's (the governor of Achaia) lack of concern for the beating of Sosthenes (Acts 18.12-17), there

was no guarantee that a governor would respond in such matters. Consequently, those at greatest risk for this form of conflict would have been slaves and others members of society who found themselves at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum (i.e., those who would have been afforded very few legal rights).

2. Economic Oppression

A second type of separate action strategy that one would have found in Roman Anatolia was economic oppression.² Like other means of conflict tactics, economic oppression could take a number of different forms. In some cases, these attacks were fueled by the anger and aggression of the antagonists. Dionysius, in an epistle to Fabius, relates the situation of Christians in Alexandria prior to the reforms of Decius (ca. 249 CE). With public hostilities against Christians on the rise, he notes,

Then with one accord they all rushed to the houses of the godly, and, falling each upon those whom they recognized as neighbours, they harried, spoiled (ἐσύλων) and plundered (διήρπαζον) them, appropriating the more valuable of their treasures, and scattering and burning in the streets the cheaper articles and such as were made of wood, until they gave the city the appearance of having been captured by enemies. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.5; trans. Lake [LCL])

There were instances, however, in which actions were fueled by economic gain rather than personal animosity. On various occasions, houses or properties would be looted following the imprisonment or removal of its occupant(s). Lucian of Samosata tells the story of a Christian “convert” named Peregrinus (or Proteus), who experienced just such a calamity. After being imprisoned for his Christian commitment and later freed by the governor of Syria, Peregrinus returned home to find that “[m]ost of his possessions had been carried off in his absence” (*Peregr.* 14; trans. Harmon [LCL]; cf. Philo, *Flacc.* 56).

A means of economic oppression that may have been more often and more readily felt in Roman Anatolia was the disruption of another person’s economic stability. For the majority of urban inhabitants in Asia Minor, income was generated through some form of commercial undertaking. In most cases, these local trades or businesses did not generate

² In his examination of the problem of suffering at Philippi, Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (SNTSMS 110; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) esp. 89-96, concludes that “the most serious long-term suffering seems likely to have been economic.” “This,” he argues, “was true even though the initial forms of suffering that each group was likely to face varied a great deal” (96).

large financial surpluses. Therefore, even the slightest economic hindrance could have produced a devastating impact on a person's (or family's) financial stability. Numerous ways could be listed in which one could be ruined through this form of economic oppression: censoring or boycotting of business and trade relations, breaking of patron-client relationship, canceling the tenancy of a person's place of business operation, or withdrawing financial assistance.

3. Spiritual (or Religious) Affliction

A third means by which an inhabitant of Roman Anatolia might have attempted to manage interpersonal or intergroup conflict was through what one could describe as spiritual (or religious) affliction. In the Greco-Roman world, there was a widespread custom of invoking a pagan deity to pour out vengeance upon an adversary. One of the specific means by which this type of religious affliction was carried out was through the use of ancient curse tablets (or *defixiones*).³ These tablets were “inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of thin sheets, intended to bring supernatural power to bear against persons or animals.”⁴

The procedure by which the curses of the gods were invoked was fairly simple. The person invoking the curse would first inscribe the imprecation—either through the employment of a professional magician⁵ or simply through one's own design—onto a thin piece of lead.⁶ The petitioner would then deface the tablet somehow or simply drive a nail through it while verbally cursing the opponent. The tablet would then either be

³ For a fuller discussion on *defixiones*, see Eugen G. Kagarow, *Griechische Fluchtafeln* (Eus Supplementa 4; Leopolis: Societas Philologa Polonorum, 1929); Karl Preisendanz, “Fluchtafel (Defixion),” in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (ed. T. Klauser; vol. 8; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1972) 1-29; John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). For a bibliographic survey, see David R. Jordan, “New Greek Curse Tablets (1985-2000),” *GRBS* 41 (2000) 5-46.

⁴ David R. Jordan, “Defixiones from a Well Near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 54 (1985) 205-55 (206).

⁵ Plato, *Resp.* 364C. Several caches of *defixiones* have been discovered which seem to represent the efforts of the same individual(s) copying the identical formula in an attempt to mass-produce tablets (e.g., Audollent, *Defixionum*, nos. 22-35, 37 [from a well at Kourion (or possibly Amathous)]; 140-187 [from a columbarium on the Appian Way]).

⁶ Along with these lead tablets, a variety of other mediums were used as well. Sometimes wax or clay dolls would accompany the tablets (*SGD* nos. 152-153, 155; *PGM* IV 296-305), and at other times, they might be connected with the bound/twisted bodies of small animals (e.g., rooster [Audollent, *Defixionum*, no. 241]; puppy [Audollent, *Defixionum*, nos. 111-112]; chameleon [Libanius, *Or.* 1.245-249]; fish [Ovid, *Fast.* 2.577-78]).

buried into the ground, placed in various bodies of water (e.g., wells, baths, fountains, springs, cisterns), or it would be deposited in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore.⁷

Generally, *defixiones* were connected with certain spheres of life in the ancient world. Christopher A. Faraone lists four different social contexts in which these curse tablets were ordinarily employed.⁸ The first was commercial rivalry. In an effort to inhibit the success and profit of competitors, craftsmen and artisans sometimes turned to curse tablets (*DTA* nos. 69-70; *SGD* nos. 20, 44, 48, 52, 72, 124). An example from the Attic world shows the extent to which these business rivalries could be taken: “I bind Callias, the local shopkeeper (τὸν κάπηλον τὸν ἐγ γειτόνων), and his wife Thraitta, and (I bind) the shop of the bald man, and the shop of Anthemion, . . . and (I bind) Philon the shopkeeper. I bind the soul, work, hands, feet, and shops of all these people” (*DTA* no. 87A). In this *defixio* (of which only half of the binding spell has been reproduced) curses are offered not merely for one competitor but seemingly for all competing businesses across the entire community.

A second context in which *defixiones* often occur is in the framework of athletic or artistic competition. In this context curses are “employed by or on behalf of one contestant to alter or impede the performance of an opponent.”⁹ For instance, before a wrestling match, Betpy is invoked to bind Eutyechian, one of the competitors: “mighty Betpy, I hand over (παραδίδωμι) to you Eutyechian, who is going to wrestle with Secundus, that you may chill (καταψύξης) Eutyechian and his purposes and his power, his strength, his wrestling, and in your dark air also those with him” (*SGD* no. 25; trans.

⁷ For the evidence on curse tablets in bodies of water, see W. Sherwood Fox, “Submerged Tabellae Defixionum,” *AJP* 33 (1912) 301-10; cf. Jordan, “Defixiones from a Well,” 207 n. 3. For the evidence of tablets in the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore (as well as other chthonian divinities), see Nancy Bookidis and Ronald S. Stroud, *Corinth: The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. Topography and Architecture* (Results of excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 18/3; Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1997) 285-86.

⁸ Christopher A. Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (eds. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 3-32 (10-17). Some interpreters add a fifth category, “prayers of justice” (so, e.g., Daniel Ogden, “Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 2: *Ancient Greece and Rome* [eds. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999] 1-90 [31-44]). But these are slightly different from the other *defixiones* and therefore should not be included in the categorization (see H. S. Versnel, “Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* [eds. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991] 60-106).

⁹ Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells,” 11.

Jordan). As evident in this particular *defixio*, these curses were often employed for specific competitions (cf. *SGD* no. 24 [ἐν τῇ μελλούσῃ παρασκευῇ, “on this coming Friday”]). In some cases, the binding spell went even beyond the arena of competition itself. A curse tablet from Oxyrhynchus not only binds the abilities of rival racers, it even invokes a daemon to prevent competitors from sleeping and eating before the race (*SGD* no. 157).¹⁰

The third type of social context in which one is likely to find the employment of curse tablets is in the area of love and the competition that is generated by its pursuit. In general, there are two distinct types of amatory curses: those aimed at a rival lover (“separation curses”) and those aimed at the object of one’s affection (“erotic curses”). Only the former is relevant for our purposes.¹¹ In this instance, “if a lover or would-be lover feared the outcome of a contest, he [or she] might turn to the use of a *defixio* in order to impede the advances, the flirting, and even the sexual performance of his or her rival.”¹² This type of binding spell often prescribed merely keeping the rival party away from the object of one’s affections.¹³ On the other hand, there are also cases where one might try to “bind” certain body parts or abilities of a rival in order to impede their skills of pursuit (e.g., Audollent, *Defixionum*, no. 86A).

Judicial curses constituted the fourth and final social context (according to Faraone) in which *defixiones* were employed. These curses served to connect the informal means of conflict resolution with the more formal methods. Similar to the curses found in the

¹⁰ This particular context would have been especially appropriate in late-first-century CE Anatolia. With agnostic games on the rise and with the various competitions associated with the imperial cult becoming more and more popular, one might expect a heightened sense of rivalry to be developed among competitors.

¹¹ The distinction between the two types of love curses is succinctly delineated by Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 75: “Erotic spells resemble [‘separation’] curse tablets in that they describe the binding and tormenting of the persons toward whom the spells are directed, but they differ from [‘separation’] curse tablets in that their ultimate goal is not to harm individuals, but rather to attract their love.” For a fuller discussion on erotic curses, see J. C. B. Petropoulos, “The Erotic Magical Papyri,” in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology: Athens, 25-31 May 1986* (ed. B. G. Mandilaras; Athens: Greek Papyrological Society, 1988) 2:215-22; John J. Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (eds. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 214-43.

¹² Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells,” 13.

¹³ In Boeotia, for instance, we find a curse invoked with the intention of warding off Zoilos, a rival pursuer (Audollent, *Defixionum*, no. 85A). On the difficult syntax of this curse, see Erich Ziebarth, “Neue attische Fluchtafeln,” *NGWG* 2 (1899) 105-35 (132-33); Richard Wunsch, “Neue Fluchtafeln,” *RhM* 55 (1900) 62-85, 232-71 (70).

athletic sphere, judicial *defixiones* were used in an effort to hinder an opponent's (and his or her advocate's) performance during the trial process as a way of ensuring legal victory.¹⁴ From the city of Athens (late fifth – early fourth century BCE), we find a judicial curse aimed at impeding the verbal abilities and mental cognition of a legal adversary and his advocates:

Let Thersilochos, Oino[philos], Philotios, and whoever else is a legal advocate for Pherenikos be bound (*καταδέδεσθω*) before Hermes Chthonios and Hecate Chthonia. The soul, the mind, the tongue, the plans of Pherenikos, and whatever else he is doing or plotting with regard to me—let all these things be contrary for him and for those who plot and act with him. (*DTA* no. 107A; trans. Faraone)

As can be seen from this example, little about the litigation itself can be deduced from the invocations. Thus, we are often left only to surmise the nature of the dispute (e.g., criminal vs. civil; subject of the case; etc.).¹⁵

While these social contexts represent the general areas of life in which an offended party might turn to spiritual (or religious) affliction, they in no way serve as exclusive limits. Even some of the seemingly “mundane” issues of life such as community slander and discrimination could cause someone to turn to this conflict strategy. An example can be found in the “confession inscriptions” of Lycia and Phrygia:

Great are Artemis Anaetis and Men Tiamou! When Jucundus got into a manic state and it was being rumored about by all that poison was being given him by Tatias his mother-in-law, Tatias set up a scepter (*σκήπτρον*) and placed curses (*ἀράς*) in the temple so that she would get her satisfaction about her being talked about in such a blameworthy way. But the gods put her into a punishment, from which she did not escape. Likewise her son Socrates, as he was going through the entrance that leads to the grove, holding a grape-cutting sickle in his hand—it fell on his foot, and thus he was dispatched in same-day punishment. Great then are the gods in Axitta! And they instructed the scepter and curses which had been made in the temple to be canceled, and Jucundus's and Moschius's children, Tatias's grandchildren, Sokrateia and Moschas and Jucundus and Menekrates did cancel them, in all ways propitiating (*ἐξειλασάμενοι*) the gods, and from now on we bless them, writing the gods' power on a stele. (*I. Beichtinschriften* no. 69; trans. adapted)

¹⁴ Pace Ziebarth, “Neue attische Fluchtafeln,” 122, who initially argued that judicial curses were invoked *after* the trial by the losing party. After being critiqued by Wünsch (“Neue Fluchtafeln,” 68), Ziebarth modified his position slightly. He later concluded that these curses were employed while the trial was still in process, but only after a litigant had realized that he or she would be on the losing end of the judicial decision (see Erich Ziebarth, “Neue Verfluchungstafeln aus Attika, Boiotien und Euböia,” *SPAW* [1934] 1022-50 [1028-32]). For a further discussion of this point, see Paul Moraux, *Une défexion judiciaire au Musée d'Istanbul* (Académie royale de Belgique. Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques. *Memoires* 54/2; Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 1960) 42-44.

¹⁵ One exception is *SGD* no. 179, which concerns a dispute over slaves, property, and papers.

from Ramsay MacMullen and Eugene N. Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity, 100-425 CE, A Sourcebook* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992] 103-104)

From this inscription, a number of points surface, especially with regard to the nature of the conflict situation and how it was handled. We discover that the conflict which led to the invoking of curses involved rumors being spread throughout the community.

According to the inscription, Tatia was rumored to have poisoned her son-in-law. In response, Tatia proceeded to erect a scepter and to place curses within the temple as a way of recompensing her detractors.¹⁶ Shortly thereafter, however, she experienced what was perceived to be divine retribution (possibly death?), and as a result, her family had the curses canceled. This not only reveals the power of community accusations, it also shows the prominent role which spiritual affliction played in Roman Anatolia: it seemed natural enough for the community to assume—based on what evidence we do not know—that Jucundus was under a potion, and Tatia’s natural response to the subsequent slander was the use of curses.

B. Third-Party Strategies in Roman Anatolia

When discussing the conflict facing the Anatolian readers in 1 Peter, the majority of modern commentators are reticent about postulating the involvement of local and provincial courts. On the rare occasions that judicial matters are taken into account, attention is normally focused on the difficulties experienced at the local level. The legal troubles of Paul, which are rehearsed in the book of Acts, are generally seen as paradigmatic of the types of situations in which the recipients may have found themselves. Due to this hesitancy among interpreters, however, the legal context to which the letter was addressed is often unappreciated and very rarely understood.

What has been frequently overlooked in the previous discussion is the fact that the courts had become a standard and regularly appealed-to means of conflict management in first-century CE Asia Minor. After the conquest of Rome, Anatolian society, like most other provincial societies, became increasingly litigious. This is evident, for instance, in the *Icaromenippus* of Lucian of Samosata. After a journey to heaven, the character

¹⁶ Cf. Audollent, *Defixionum*, no. 4A, where Demeter and Kore are implored to take vengeance on the one who publicly spoke against the dedicatee as well as those who wrote and conspired to accuse the dedicatee.

Menippus begins to see mankind more clearly. As a result, he recognizes that there are four primary activities with which people are preoccupied: commerce, war, farming, and litigation (Lucian, *Icar.* 12). Even among Christian writers, the importance of the Roman legal system was readily understood. According to the Muratorian Canon 3-4 (ca. 170 CE), the apostle Paul selected Luke to be his traveling companion because of his expertise in Roman law (*quasi ut iuris studiosum*).¹⁷ Despite the fact that the historical accuracy of this statement could be called into question, it does serve to emphasize the usefulness of such knowledge in the ancient world.

Symptomatic of this preoccupation with litigious affairs was the burgeoning of what one might describe as “trivial” cases. The Anatolian judicial systems were not merely employed for pressing legal matters. Even the mundane conflicts of provincial society were increasingly being taken before the courts. The previously mentioned example of Demonax, the Cynic philosopher, is a case-in-point. After Demonax was pelted in the head with a rock, the bystanders who witnessed the scene immediately shouted, “(To) the Proconsul! (To) the Proconsul!” (Lucian, *Demon.* 16). This situation not only demonstrates the importance of the legal system within provincial life, it also reveals why the courts had become so popular. It was here that inhabitants could achieve what was painfully absent from many of the informal solutions: a (seemingly) definitive resolution to the conflict situation.

¹⁷ Proper caution should be used at this point due to the questionable nature of the present reading, *quasi ut iuris studiosum* (“as so to speak, one learned in the law”). Over the years, this text has been variously interpreted and often emended (for a discussion of the different views, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1987] 305 n. 2). Two considerations, however, do suggest that *quasi ut iuris studiosum* is likely to be the original reading, and, as such, that the author intended to represent Luke as an expert in the law. First, the idea of Luke’s legal expertise as represented in the Latin text of the Muratorian Fragment is later repeated by Chromatius of Aquileia (d. 406/407 CE). In his commentary on Matthew (Prologue §2), Chromatius refers to Luke as one who was “very educated in the law” (*eruditissimus legis*). One would assume that either Chromatius was dependent on the Fragment or, more likely, that both were drawing on an earlier source. Second, as Arnold Ehrhardt points out, the description *iuris studiosus* was “a technical expression for a student of the Roman law” (cf. *Dig.* 1.22.1; 48.19.9.4; 50.13.4). But more than that, it also applied to “a legal expert who acts on behalf of a Roman official” (*The Framework of the New Testament Stories* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964] 17). In the present context, this meaning would fit quite naturally. Luke would be viewed as an assessor who served the apostle Paul. So despite the fact that the third Gospel was written by Luke, it is ultimately thought to be sourced in and thus to gain its authority from the apostle Paul (cf. F. F. Bruce, “Some Thoughts on the Beginning of the New Testament Canon,” *BJRL* 65 [1983] 37-60 [56]).

Furthermore, what is often overlooked by various Petrine interpreters is the fact that conflict involving the employment of separate action strategies could quickly and easily turn to the courts for formal resolution.¹⁸ The trial of Apuleius is a prime example (Apuleius, *Apol.* 1-2).¹⁹ For a period of some days, Apuleius' political enemy, Sicinius Aemilianus, had verbally assaulted him, falsely declaring him to be the murderer of Pontianus (Aemilianus' nephew and Apuleius' stepson). Even though the charge had no substance, the situation became so heated that Aemilianus eventually took the case before the governor's tribunal.²⁰ The accusation of murder was dropped (due to the fact that it was fabricated), and Aemilianus ultimately accused Apuleius of practicing magic, a nebulous accusation that was difficult to defend and one that carried with it a certain degree of disdain. Such an episode is indicative of how popular hostility and court proceedings cannot be firmly separated in the Roman world.

Although these examples could be multiplied further (see below), the present evidence should be sufficient to demonstrate the importance and prevalence of third-party legal conflict in Roman Anatolia. Yet this fact alone brings only partial clarity to the situation of 1 Peter. In order to understand the various dangers threatening the Petrine readers, we must delve deeper into these judicial systems (both local and provincial) to explore how the processes actually worked. In what follows, therefore, we will seek to examine the functions and functionaries of the judicial systems of Roman Anatolia.

1. Civic Courts

Difficulty surrounds any attempt to reconstruct the civic judicial systems that existed across the land of Asia Minor. Much as the case with the separate action strategies, the barrier at which all interpreters frustratingly arrive is the scarcity of ancient evidence. Due to the fact that local magistrates dealt with only minor civil disputes and cases involving less serious infractions, the daily administration of local jurisdiction has left

¹⁸ It is not uncommon for disputants in a conflict to employ a variety of different tactics in order to achieve a desired outcome, and when one particular approach proves unsuccessful, it is often promptly replaced by alternative (and escalated) forms (see Ch. 2).

¹⁹ A similar illustration comes from the autobiography of Libanius. When the rhetorician became sick, and some of his friends suspected that the ailment was the result of incantations, he was urged to "prosecute (*ἐκλίβου*) certain individuals who were rumored to be responsible" (Libanius, *Or.* 1.248).

²⁰ On the specifics behind this trial, see Thomas N. Winter, "Apology as Prosecution: The Trial of Apuleius," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1968).

little impact on the literary and epigraphic records. But even from the paucity of data, a basic arrangement of judicial activities can nonetheless be constructed.

a. Local Officials

Any discussion on the civic courts of Asia Minor must begin with the duties of local authorities, for it is here that the most basic level of jurisdiction lies. Within each Anatolian city, “regular city magistrates, like their equivalents at Rome, had powers of jurisdiction within their own spheres of responsibility.”²¹ This is evident, in part, from the fact that local officials could impose fines on law-breakers, but only within the designated confines of their control.²² An inscription from Ilion, for example, lists various magistrates to whom fines should be paid along with their respective amounts (*I.Ilion* no. 65).²³

The role of city magistrates, however, is most clearly demonstrated from the evidence found in the book of Acts. In this particular narrative, each time a disturbance is created or accusations are made, resolution is sought from the civic leaders. After casting out an evil spirit from a slave girl in Philippi, Paul and his associates are dragged before the authorities (most likely the *duumviri*²⁴), beaten with rods, and then thrown into jail (Acts 16.19-24). In Thessalonica, the fury of the crowd was turned upon Paul’s host, as Jason and other believers were taken before the magistrates and accused of acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar (Acts 17.5-9; cf. 13.50; 14.4-5). As a result, Jason was required to post bond in order to be released from custody (cf. *OGIS* nos. 484, ll. 50-51; 629, l. 101).

Other evidence seems to confirm the idea that local officials served as the judicial authorities of provincial communities. One indication is the titles that are often attributed to these magistrates. In Side, the *δημιουργός*, Decimus Junius Zendotos, is honored with

²¹ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 201.

²² On the administration of cities in Asia Minor, with particular regard for officials and their duties, see Isidore Lévy, “Études sur la vie municipale de l’Asie Mineure sous les Antonins: Première Série,” *REG* 8 (1895) 203-50; idem, “Études sur la vie municipale de l’Asie Mineure sous les Antonins: Seconde Série,” *REG* 12 (1899) 255-89; idem, “Études sur la vie municipale de l’Asie Mineure sous les Antonins: Troisième Série,” *REG* 14 (1901) 350-71; Magie, *Roman Rule*, 639-51; Dmitriev, *City Government*.

²³ Cf. *OGIS* no. 483, where the city warden (*ἀστυνόμος*) of Pergamum was given the ability to fine those who did not maintain the appropriate upkeep of their property.

²⁴ William M. Ramsay, “The Philippians and Their Magistrates: On the Title of the Magistrates at Philippi (Acts xvi.19-22),” *JTS* 1 (1899) 114-16; Harry W. Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul: A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles* (WUNT 2/35; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989) 9-11.

the titles *ἀγνός* and *δίκαιος* (*I.Side* no. 76), titles closely akin to those ascribed to governors of Lycia-Pamphylia.²⁵ A similar situation can be found in the Roman colony of Pisidian Antioch. Here the *duumvir*, Saturninus, is lauded for the justice and integrity shown in the administration of the matters under his jurisdiction (*CIL* III no. 6844 = *ILS* no. 7202). These inscriptions illustrate the fact that local officials had authority to render rulings in judicial disputes.

Further substantiation comes from the recently discovered Claudian Monument at Patara (Lycia). Among the numerous positive results which the inscription attributes to the establishment of the province of Lycia-Pamphylia, one of the more significant relates to judicial administration: *τῆς πολιτείας τοῖς ἐξ ἀρίστων ἐ[π]ιλελεγμένοις βουλευταῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀκρίτου πλήθους π[ι]στευ[θ]είσης* (“the administrative affairs having been entrusted to councilors chosen from among superior people by the incompetent majority”).²⁶ What this suggests is that local jurisdiction rested firmly in the hands of city magistrates, as they were considered more than competent to officiate such matters.

A second group of local officials which are of particular importance for reconstructing the legal processes of Roman Anatolia are the officers of the peace (or police officers). In the minds of some commentators, it was these officials who posed the

²⁵ For the inscriptional evidence, see Georgy Kantor, “Roman Law and Local Law in Asia Minor (133 B.C. - A.D. 212),” (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2008) 306 n. 939.

²⁶ There is some debate over the meaning of the preposition *ἀπό* in line 28. According to the translation of Jones (“The Claudian Monument at Patara,” 163, 168 n. 30), the preposition denotes direct agency (“drawn [or chosen] by the incompetent majority”). However, this decision has been questioned by a number of interpreters who prefer a more local meaning (“taken *away from* the incompetent majority”; see, e.g., Thomas Corsten, *SEG* 51 [2001] no. 1832; *AE* [2001] no. 1931; Marksteiner and Wörrle, “Ein Altar für Kaiser Claudius,” 564; Kantor, “Roman Law,” 291 n. 885). The interpretive choice one makes at this point dictates the level of involvement exercised by the common people in electing their leaders (and thus, their judicial authorities). If the preposition denotes *direct agency*, then the people would play a sizeable role in the selection of their administrators—though the fact that Rome narrows this list (*ἐξ ἀρίστων*) relativizes this decision considerably. If a *local* meaning is preferred, no such decision-making prerogative is revealed. To go against the majority here is difficult, but a local reading seems inadmissible in this case. Such an interpretation demands that the preposition modify *πιστευθείσης* and provide a contrast to the bestowal of privileges to the councilors (i.e., “taken *from* the people and given *to* the councilors”). Yet *πιστεύω* + *ἀπό* cannot sustain such a meaning. If this were the case, one would have expected the presence of an additional verbal form denoting the removal or taking away of privileges. Therefore, given that all allow for the possibility of a direct agency reading (for examples, see LSJ, 192 III 4; BDAG, 107 5εβ), and since a strong grammatical indicator is present in the modification of a passive verbal form (*ἐπιλεγμένοις*), agency is the most natural reading. On the grammatical use of *ἀπό* to denote agency, see Raphael Kühner and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, Zweiter Teil: *Satzlehre* (3rd ed.; Hannover/Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1898) 1:457-58; Antonius N. Jannaris, *A Historical Greek Grammar Chiefly of the Attic Dialect* (London: Macmillan, 1897) §1507; BDF §210(2).

most serious threat to the Anatolian communities. For instance, as Selwyn describes it, “what the Christians in the first century had to fear was not the Roman law-court but the Roman police and the ebb and flow of public feeling which might precipitate its action. Its business was to keep order and to suppress suspicious movements before they became formidable.”²⁷ Such a conclusion is, of course, natural given that the rounding up of Christians by police officials is part of the standard picture of Christian persecution within the ancient literature. One needs only to turn to the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* to understand how this image became permanently stamped onto the Christian memory. What must be determined, however, is whether such an account provides an accurate description of police activities in first-century CE Asia Minor. As such, it is imperative that we clearly delineate the identity of these police officials as well as their given responsibilities.

In some respects, maintaining law and order in a provincial city was a community project. Due to the fact that the Roman State did not have enough resources at its disposal to facilitate a centralized network of police forces, most of the relevant policing duties were entrusted to civic communities.²⁸ In many cases, private measures were taken to ensure peace and safety.²⁹ The real authority for such tasks, however, rested firmly in the hands of civic leadership. Within this structure, there was very little compartmentalization of policing duties. The imposition of law and order might be carried out by any number of local officials (cf. the use of lictors [ῥαβδοῦχοι] by the *duumviri* at Philippi [Acts 16.35, 38]). This was especially the case during times of trouble. For example, in Ephesus the *γραμματεὺς* took on the task of breaking up the riot of the silversmiths (Acts 19.35-41). Nevertheless, in most Anatolian cities, there was at least one elected official specifically responsible for policing the community.

²⁷ Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 55. Cf. Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 20; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 34.

²⁸ For this reason, Selwyn’s (*First Epistle of St. Peter*, 55) claim that it was the Roman police which the Christians had to fear is technically inaccurate. This same confusion between local officials and Roman officials appears to be insinuated by Jobes (*1 Peter*, 9), who notes that the persecutions were “probably reinforced at the local level by the increasing suspicions of Roman officials at all levels.” Who these “Roman officials” may have been remains unstated and undocumented.

²⁹ In many cases, people made what little effort they could to prevent themselves from being victimized. For example, to guard against thieves in the night, a simple solution was loud commotion (Apuleius, *Metam.* 3.27; cf. Luke 12.39). At other times, large groups of people banded together in moments of crisis (e.g., Apuleius, *Metam.* 7.25-26; 8.29; Pliny, *Ep.* 6.25). Those with considerable wealth had more substantial options, however. Very often personal security guards were employed to provide protection (e.g., Apuleius, *Metam.* 4.18; Petronius, *Saty.* 53).

The policing systems of the eastern provinces were considerably more developed than those in the West.³⁰ In Asia Minor in particular we find a well-organized law enforcement structure. Here the highest-ranking police official was the local eirenarch (εἰρηναρχος).³¹ This office, which was an annual magistracy in Anatolian cities,³² appears to have developed sometime during the early Principate.³³ In fact, the earliest attestations come from the first century CE.³⁴

The late-third-century CE jurist Arcadius Charisius describes the eirenarchate as a personal *munera* (*Dig.* 50.4.18.7), which was “carried out by mental application and by the deployment of bodily effort without any [financial] loss to the man undertaking them” (50.4.18.1; trans. Watson). Yet, despite such a noble definition, the eirenarchate was performed at a great financial cost to the office holder. Therefore, it was normally reserved for men of considerable wealth and high social standing. This is evident from the fact that those who filled this office also held some of the highest magistracies in the

³⁰ Otto Hirschfeld, “Die Sicherheitspolizei im römischen Kaiserreich,” in *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1913) 578-612 (609). The most important source for the study of police activity in the ancient world is the Egyptian papyri. For this reason, a large portion of modern attention has been devoted to this particular province (e.g., Roger S. Bagnall, “Army and police in Roman Upper Egypt,” *JARCE* 14 [1976] 67-88; Jean-Jacques Aubert, “Policing the Countryside: Soldiers and Civilians in Egyptian Villages in the 3rd and 4th Centuries A.D.,” in *La hiérarchie (Rangordnung) de l’armée romaine sous le haut-empire: actes du congrès de Lyon (15-18 septembre 1994)* [ed. Y. Le Bohec; Paris: De Boccard, 1995] 257-65; Patrick Sängler, “Die Eirenarchen des Römischen Ägypten,” [Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 2004]; John Bauschatz, “Policing the Chora: Law Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt,” [Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2005]).

³¹ See Alessandro Zamaï, “Gli irenarchi d’Asia Minore,” *Patavium* 17 (2001) 53-73; Christopher J. Fuhrmann, “Keeping the Imperial Peace: Public Order, State Control and Policing in the Roman Empire during the First Three Centuries AD,” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005) 61-73.

³² Cf. *IGR* III no. 450 (in Termessos, Oassas held the office five times); *IGR* III no. 461 (in Pergamum, Tiberius Claudius Veter held the office three times).

³³ Another police official of Asia Minor was the παραφύλαξ. This particular officer appears to be of a somewhat lower ranking than the eirenarch (Keith Hopwood, “Policing the Hinterland: Rough Cilicia and Isauria,” in *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at University College, Swansea in April 1981* [ed. S. Mitchell; BARIS 156; Oxford: B.A.R., 1983] 173-87). The major difference may have been that the παραφύλαξ actually patrolled the territory in person while the eirenarch assigned such duties to his subordinates (as suggested by Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 196).

³⁴ E.g., *I.Kyzikos* II nos. 25 [= *IGR* IV no. 130], 26 [= *ILS* no. 9108] (Flavian period). Cf. also Louis Robert, *Études anatoliennes: recherches sur les inscriptions grecques de l’Asie mineure* (Paris: Boccard, 1937) 339 no. 1, who lists a dedication from Sebastopolis (Caria) which is made by a certain P. Staius Hermas in honor of the emperor Trajan (116/117 CE). The inscription records Hermas as being honored with the *ornamenta* of *strategos* of the night and as having held the offices of ἀγορανόμος, παραφύλαξ, and τειμὴ εἰρηναρχικός. If this final office marks a more prestigious position within the ranks of the eirenarchate (“honored eirenarch”), then we would have to posit the origin of the eirenarch at some time prior to 116/117 CE in order to allow for such a hierarchical development (as proposed by Nikos Yannakopoulos, “Preserving the *Pax Romana*: The Peace Functionaries in Roman East,” *MedAnt* 6 [2003] 825-905 [832]).

city.³⁵ It was even possible to be both chief archon and eirenarch at the same time (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 117 = *IGR* III no. 208). Confirmation of their status can be found in the appointment of the office itself. As seen in the familiar story of Aelius Aristides, the eirenarch was appointed to the office by the governor, having been selected from a list of the ten leading citizens of the community (*Or.* 50.72).

The responsibility of a first-century police official was to seek out known or suspected criminals (i.e., those who have already been charged or convicted of a crime). One of the most important aspects of this task was the suppression of brigandage. Much of his work therefore consisted of patrolling the outer territory of the city rather than the city itself. A good example appears in the story of Xenophon of Ephesus. Though the account is somewhat exaggerated, it provides considerable insight into the work of an ancient police officer. In this case, ὁ τῆς εἰρήνης τῆς ἐν Κιλικίᾳ προεστῶς (the basic equivalent of the eirenarch)³⁶ trails a group of brigands who had abducted a woman with the intention of sacrificing her to Ares. While many of the brigands are killed in the scuffle, the few that remain are brought back to the city and thrown into jail to await trial (2.13). This episode not only reveals one of the primary tasks of a local police official, it also shows the manner in which these responsibilities were carried out. Rather than undertaking any preventative policing measures, most of the efforts undertaken by police were *reactive* in nature. This was due, in large part, to the limitations of their forces.

To aid him in his duties, the eirenarch (or the lower-ranked παραφύλαξ) might have under his command a small group of men called διωγμίται (cf. *Mart. Pol.* 7.1; *OGIS* no. 511).³⁷ It was this group who actually made the arrests and who would be the primary combatants if a situation turned violent. For some time, the level at which this group might be equipped had been only a matter of conjecture (with a few conclusions being drawn from Christian sources, e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 7.1; Mark 14.43). However, a funerary relief discovered in the Cayster valley (near Ephesus) has shed significant light on the

³⁵ For a complete list of references to eirenarchs as well as other police officials in the eastern part of the Roman world, see Yannakopoulos, "Peace Functionaries in Roman East," 883-97; Catherine Wolff, *Les Brigands en Orient sous le Haut-Empire Romain* (CEFR 308; Rome: École française de Rome, 2003) 235-39.

³⁶ See Joseph L. Rife, "Officials of the Roman Provinces in Xenophon's 'Ephesiaca'," *ZPE* 138 (2002) 93-108 (94-104).

³⁷ H. O. Fiebiger, "Diogmatai," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (eds. A. F. von Pauly, et al.; vol. 5; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1905) 784.

subject (*I.Ephesos* no. 3222). This relief, which honors Μητρας Ἀνδρῆα παραφύλαξ Ἡρώων (“Metras, son of Andreas, *paraphylax*, Hero”), depicts three διωγμίται hailing their deceased παραφύλαξ.³⁸ The men are dressed in tunics, with each possessing a short sword, a curved club, and a small round shield. Thus, it would appear, based on such light armament, that these groups were employed more in swift pursuit of brigands than in full-scale combat.³⁹

b. Legal Jurisdiction

In most cases, the discretion of local magistrates would be sufficient to try disputes that arose within an Anatolian community. Their jurisdiction, however, was not unlimited.⁴⁰ The bulk of a civic magistrate’s judicial attention was given to minor civil cases and petty crimes. When larger issues arose, alternative means were taken to adjudicate the conflicts. Very often when conflicts arose between two different communities, or when lawsuits exceeded the financial limits of a magistrate’s jurisdiction, foreign judges were

³⁸ On the παραφύλαξ relief, see Robert, *Études anatoliennes*, 102-103, who was the first to identify the three men as διωγμίται. Cf. also Thomas Drew-Bear, “Three Inscriptions from Asia Minor,” in *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow on His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. A. L. Boegehold; GRBM 10; Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1984) 61-69; Michael P. Speidel, “The Police Officer, A Hero: An Inscribed Relief from Near Ephesos,” *EA* 5 (1985) 159-60. For further inscriptional evidence on διωγμίται, see Louis Robert, “Études épigraphiques. Première série,” *BCH* 52 (1928) 407-25 (407-409).

³⁹ On the basis of this armament, Christopher P. Jones, “A Note on Diogmitae,” *ICS* 12 (1987) 179-80, has argued that “the diogmitae were neither ‘mounted policemen’ nor ‘a tough crowd of vigilantes or enforcers,’ but light-armed local constables” (180; against Barry Baldwin, “Leopards, Roman Soldiers, and the *Historia Augusta*,” *ICS* 10 [1985] 281-83). However, we should be careful in over-interpreting this relief to the neglect of other evidence. Elsewhere διωγμίται are associated with *mounted* pursuit. For instance, those who captured Polycarp (*Mart. Pol.* 7.1) were διωγμίται and ἵππεῖς (“horsemen”). Similarly, a dedication from upper Caria reveals a group made up of a παραφύλαξ, a νεανισκάρχη along with ten youths under his command, and six slaves to tend the horses (Louis Robert and Jeanne Robert, *La Carie: histoire et géographie historique, avec le recueil des inscriptions antiques*, Tome II: *Le plateau de Tabai et ses environs* [Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1954] 281-83, no. 162). Although διωγμίται are not mentioned specifically, the inscription does show how the group, under the command of the παραφύλαξ, might pursue criminals—on horseback.

⁴⁰ Umberto Laffi, “I limiti della competenza giurisdizionale dei magistrati locali,” in *Estudios sobre la Tabula Siarensis* (eds. J. González and J. Arce; AAEA 9; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988) 141-56. The clearest evidence on the jurisdiction limitations of magistrates comes mainly from outside of Asia Minor, but the variation should suggest caution in applying the information directly to Anatolian cities. From Greece, there are two classic examples which seem to demonstrate considerable restriction on the jurisdiction of local magistrates (see James H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* [MAPS 178; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1989] nos. 91, 156). At Urso in Baetic, however, the *lex coloniae Genetivae Iuliae* regulates fines up to 20,000 sesterces (*RS I* no. 25, chs. 61, 93), seemingly providing the *duumviri* with considerable jurisdiction.

brought in to provide a ruling.⁴¹ These were usually men of considerable social standing (e.g., magistrates or former magistrates themselves, who may have been selected by lot from a larger pool of worthy candidates [*TAM* II no. 508, ll. 21-27]) who could offer an impartial hearing. These judges might be assigned the task of adjudication as a result of an agreement between the two disputants, or in some instances, the case might be taken to the governor *in iure*, having it then delegated to a third party under a *formula* (e.g., *CIL* I².ii.4 no. 2951a⁴²; *OGIS* no. 437 = *IGR* IV no. 297).⁴³

Aside from the larger quarrels between communities and those involving significant financial disputes, local courts were also limited in the types of criminal cases they could hear. Normally, civic communities were excluded from capital jurisdiction. This is nowhere more evident than in the words of Philostratus. In describing the positive influence that the sophist Polemo exerted on the city of Smyrna, Philostratus notes,

He helped them also in the following manner. The suits which they brought against one another he did not allow to be carried anywhere abroad, but he would settle them at home. I mean the suits about money, for those against adulterers, sacrilegious persons and murderers, the neglect of which breeds pollution, he not only urged them to carry them out of Smyrna but even to drive them out. For he said that they needed a judge with a sword in his hand (*δικαστοῦ γὰρ δεῖσθαι αὐτὰς ξίφος ἔχοντος*). (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 532; trans. Wright [LCL])

This particular statement reveals two things about the local court–provincial court relationship in the province of Asia. First, it hints at a growing proclivity to by-pass local courts and to take one’s case (even though it might be an insignificant matter) directly to the governor’s tribunal (cf. *IGR* III no. 582). It is this tendency about which Plutarch had railed a century earlier (*Praec. ger. rei publ.* 19 [*Mor.* 815A]). But not only does it reveal a proclivity towards the governor’s court, it also reveals a *need* to transfer certain cases to his tribunal. The types of cases which call for such a reassignment are said to be adultery,

⁴¹ For the inscriptional evidence, see Robert, “Études épigraphiques,” 417-18; Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1517-18 n. 49; Dmitriev, *City Government*, 298-99.

⁴² See John S. Richardson, “The *Tabula Contrebiensis*: Roman Law in Spain in the Early First Century B.C.,” *JRS* 73 (1983) 33-41; Peter Birks, et al., “Further Aspects of the *Tabula Contrebiensis*,” *JRS* 74 (1984) 45-73.

⁴³ On the surface, the presence of this type of system could hold important implications with regard to the trial of Christians. In that there were adequate means by which to circumvent the possible bias of one judicial authority or another, the legal situation of Christians may not have been as grim as it might first appear. But due to the fact that this type of arbitration seems to have been reserved for higher profile cases (often those between entire communities), it is unlikely that the average Christian would have been presented with such an opportunity (for the socio-economic conditions of the Petrine readers, see Ch. 4).

sacrilege, and murder—all capital crimes. In fact, that is exactly what we find some years earlier in this very city. At the martyrdom of Polycarp, it was the governor, not the local magistrates, who rendered the final death sentence (*Mart. Pol.* 9-16).

For this reason, an important topic of concern with regard to the jurisdiction of local communities is the autonomy of “free/federated cities” (*civitates liberae/foederatae*). It is apparent that under the Roman Empire, “a free city meant not an independent sovereign state, but a state subject to her [Rome’s] suzerainty enjoying by her grace certain privileges.”⁴⁴ The question of course is, how far did the limits of these privileges extend? To what extent could the jurisdiction of these “free cities” be carried out? This question is particularly important when trying to reconcile the judicial responsibilities of the provincial governor with those of local communities, for if there were numerous communities within the provinces which possessed judicial autonomy and which were thus able to adjudicate capital cases without the interference of the leading promagistrate, then the governor’s tribunal becomes somewhat less important for our purposes. Much closer attention would then need to be given to the formal means of conflict resolution at the local level. However, if these *civitates liberae* and *foederatae* were free in name only (being required to yield to the governor for capital jurisdiction), his court would need to become the primary focus of our investigation.

The point at which inquiry must begin is with the jurisdiction of the governor. While in office, a provincial governor was not allowed to leave his province, nor did his jurisdiction extend beyond the assigned provincial boundary (*Dig.* 1.18.3; *RS* no. 12, Cnidos Copy, col. III; cf. *I.Aphrodisias* I no. 48). Technically, *civitates liberae* and *foederatae* were independent and thus not part of any province. In theory, therefore, it would seem that free cities should have possessed complete judicial autonomy without any interference from Roman magistrates or promagistrates. In fact, that is exactly what we find in the free city of Colophon during the late Republican period (ca. 130-110 BCE). Inscribed on the sanctuary of Claros, we read a decree from Colophon in honor of

⁴⁴ A. H. M. Jones, “*Civitates liberae et immunes* in the East,” in *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler* (eds. W. M. Calder and J. Keil; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939) 103-17 (106). In this way, the Romans governed these “independent” cities of Asia Minor in the same manner as Alexander the Great and the later Hellenistic monarchs (see Elias J. Bickerman, “Alexandre le Grand et les villes d’Asie,” *REG* 47 [1934] 346-74; idem, “La Cité grecque dans les monarchies hellénistiques,” *RPh* 13 [1939] 335-49).

Menippos, a prominent citizen who made five embassies to Rome in order to preserve the community's judicial autonomy (*SEG* 39 [1989] nos. 1243-1244).⁴⁵ Though the rights of the Colophonians were being encroached upon by former proconsuls, through the efforts of Menippos, the city was assured of the governor's lack of jurisdiction outside the province (col. 2, ll. 4-5). Furthermore, its right to try not only Colophonians but also resident aliens (col. 1, ll. 37-38) and Roman citizens was also upheld (col. 1, ll. 42-44). This included not just minor civil cases, but "all charges" (παντὸς ἐγκλήματος), including capital offenses (col. 1, l. 41).

Moving closer toward the Augustan era, we find the autonomy of some free cities beginning to wane, and others, while being confirmed, being slowly relativized. The recently published inscription from the Martin Schøyen Collection (P.Schøyen 25) stands out as a noteworthy witness to this revocation. This important bronze tablet, which dates to the time of Julius Caesar, records the treaty that was struck between Rome and the Lycian League on July 24, 46 BCE. Aside from the issues of military alliance and territorial boundaries, a portion of the treaty is taken up with the question of legal jurisdiction.⁴⁶ It is here that we begin to see a slight change from the situation at

⁴⁵ Scholars have been divided over the background of Menippos' fifth and final embassy. The primary point of contention is the meaning of the enigmatic expression ἐπὶ Ῥωμαϊκῷ θανάτῳ. In the *editio princeps*, Louis Robert and Jeanne Robert, *Claros I: Décrets hellénistiques* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1989) 87, took the phrase to mean that the man was charged with the murder of a Roman citizen. While not denying this possibility, Jean-Louis Ferrary, "Le statut de cités libres dans l'empire romain à la lumière des inscriptions de Claros," *CRAI* 135 (1991) 557-77 (567-70), has suggested that the expression could imply that a Roman citizen had been convicted of a capital offense in a Colophonian court and subsequently executed. Thus, the person in custody would either be the accuser or the magistrate who tried the case (here Ferrary is followed by Stephen Mitchell, "The Treaty between Rome and Lycia of 46 BC (MS 2070)," in *Papyri Graecae Schøyen (PSchøyen I)* [ed. R. Pintaudi; PapFlor 35; Firenze: Gonnelli, 2005] 163-250 [200-202]). The difficulty for this position, though, is in explaining why the blame would fall on one member of the community rather than the entire city (cf. Kantor, "Roman Law," 238). More recently, a third approach has been proposed by Gustav A. Lehmann, "Polisautonomie und römische Herrschaft an der Westküste Kleinasiens: Kolophon/Klaros nach der Aufrichtung der *Provincia Asia*," in *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Bertinoro 19-24 July 1997* (ed. L. Mooren; StudHell 36; Leuven/Paris: Peeters, 2000) 215-38 (234-37). According to Lehmann, the person in custody was a Colophonian citizen who had been charged with a capital crime under Roman law and was thus threatened with a Roman-style execution. But this theory, too, is not without problems. For, as Mitchell ("Treaty between Rome and Lycia," 202) points out, such a reconstruction is contrary to the chronological sequence of the text. Overall, a decision on this matter is somewhat difficult given the evidence. Until further details come to light, it seems best simply to adopt the reading of Robert and Robert.

⁴⁶ For a more complete discussion of the judicial issues surrounding the inscription, see Mitchell, "Treaty between Rome and Lycia," 199-205; Pierre Sánchez, "La convention judiciaire dans le traité conclu entre Rome et les Lyciens (P.Schøyen I 25)," *Chiron* 37 (2007) 363-81; Kantor, "Roman Law," 248-60.

Colophon. Concerning the trying of capital crimes, the tablet reads, “if a Roman citizen is charged in Lycia, let him be judged according to his own laws in Rome, and let him not be judged anywhere else. But if a citizen of Lycia is charged, let him be judged according to his own laws, and let him not be judged anywhere else” (P.Schøyen 25, ll. 35-37; trans. Mitchell). So, unlike the freedom granted to the Colophonians, the Lycians were required to transfer all capital cases involving Roman citizens directly to Rome.

A similar shift is evident in the civil and non-capital disputes as well:

If any Roman concerning other matters should be engaged in a dispute with a Lycian, let him be judged in Lycia according to the laws of the Lycians, and let him not be judged anywhere else. But if a Lycian is engaged in dispute by a Roman, whatever magistrate or promagistrate happens to be dispensing justice, whichever of them the disputants approach, let him dispense justice and let him set up a court for them (P.Schøyen 25, ll. 37-41; trans. Mitchell)

Therefore, rather than having their case heard in the local court of the free/federated city, Roman defendants were assigned to the jurisdiction of the nearest Roman magistrate or promagistrate, who would have the case tried via the traditional formulary process. Each of these prescriptions marks a significant departure from the decreed rights of the Colophonians. This agreement serves as a middle position between the complete autonomy described above and the heavily restricted autonomy found in later free states.⁴⁷

One example of a city whose autonomy did not experience such reduction, however, is Chios. In the later part of the reign of Augustus (ca. 4/5 BCE),⁴⁸ we read of a grievance placed before the proconsul of Asia (*SIG*³ no. 785 = *IGR* IV no. 943 = *SEG* 22 [1972] no. 507). The nature of the conflict is difficult to discern. It may have involved a legal

⁴⁷ A similar agreement was made with the citizens of Plarasa and Aphrodisias only a few years later (*I.Aphrodisias* I no. 8, ll. 46-48 = *Iaph2007* no. 8.27, ll. 46-48). In 39/38 BCE, the *senatusconsultum de Aphrodisiensibus* granted this city jurisdiction over local citizens: ἀλλ]ὰ ἐλευθέρους εἶναι τῶ <τε> δικαίῳ καὶ ταῖς [ιδίαις κρίσεσιν ἔνεκεν τοῦ] δήμου τοῦ Ῥωμαίων τῆ[ν] πολιτείαν τὴν Πιλαρασέων καὶ Ἀφροδισιέων χρῆσθαι (“the community of Plarasa and Aphrodisias should be free and enjoy [its own] law [and courts ?as far as] the Roman People [are concerned]”; trans. Reynolds).

⁴⁸ Pace W. G. Forrest, *SEG* 22 (1972) no. 507, who dates the inscription during the reign of Nero, connecting Anitistius Vetus (ll. 3, 6) with the consul of 55 CE (*PIR*² A 776) and thus placing his proconsulship at 64/65 CE. The problem with this suggestion is that “the disgrace and suicide of L. Antistius Vetus in A.D. 65 (Tac. *Ann.* 16.10f) makes this identification difficult in view of the honorific reference to Vetus in line 4 [*sic*] of the Chios inscription.” Furthermore, “[t]he wording of the reference to Augustus in lines 18-19 also implies that the latter was alive at the date of composition” (Anthony J. Marshall, “Romans under Chian Law,” *GRBS* 10 [1969] 255-71 [255 n. 2]).

dispute in which a Roman citizen refused to be tried in a Chian court.⁴⁹ A more probable solution is that the letter comes in response to the actions of C. Antistus Vetus (*PIR*² A 771), the governor's predecessor. The problem, it would seem, was that the former proconsul had encroached upon the city's judicial autonomy, a clear breach of a *senatusconsultum* from 80 BCE (cf. Livy, 38.39.11; Appian, *Mith.* 61; Pliny, *Nat.* 5.38). In response, the current governor reaffirms their status, acknowledging their right to subject Romans to the jurisdiction of Chian courts rather than having them tried at the provincial tribunal under Roman law.⁵⁰ But while the proconsul's response does uphold the fact that the city possessed a certain freedom, the need to offer proof of this autonomy (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.47-48, 92-93) shows how easily this privileged status could be encroached upon by aggressive governors.

What the Chian letter demonstrates is that “[t]he status of ‘free city’ and the consequential rights . . . needed constant reaffirmation and protection.” In fact, this was true of all privileged communities: “the meaning of all the different statuses enjoyed by cities under the Empire was subject to change over time, and to constant dialogue, dispute and redefinition.”⁵¹ This is nowhere more evident than in a recently discovered letter from the emperor Trajan to the city of Aphrodisias. Prior to this correspondence, Aphrodisias had been granted jurisdiction over its own citizens by the *senatusconsultum*

⁴⁹ Suggested by Robert K. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East: Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969) 353.

⁵⁰ While most commentators allow for a very broad interpretation of the rights afforded to the Chians (claiming that the rights of the Chian court extended to all disputes involving Roman citizens resident in the city, including capital cases), there are some who understand the scope of the ruling to be much more limited. Given the rarity with which Rome would concede this right, they argue that οἱ τε παρ' αὐτοῖς ὄντες Ῥωμ[αῖ]οι τοῖς Χείων ὑπακούωσιν νόμοις (II. 17-18) only extended to civil trials (so e.g., Theodor Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* [Systematischen Handbuchs der Rechtswissenschaft; Leipzig: Duncker & Humboldt, 1899; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck, 1955] 111 n. 1 [who changed his previous stance which allowed for both civil and criminal cases, see Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, 3:702 n. 2, 706 n. 2]; Marshall, “Romans under Chian Law,”; Mitchell, “Treaty between Rome and Lycia,” 204). Yet given the fact that there is clear evidence that Rome did (at times) concede the jurisdiction of its citizens to free cities (see the decree of Colophon above, *SEG* 39 [1989] nos. 1243-1244), it remains to be seen why this decree should not be read in an inclusive manner, granting the Chians both civil and criminal jurisdiction.

⁵¹ Fergus Millar, “*Civitates liberae, coloniae* and provincial governors under the Empire,” *MedAnt* 2 (1999) 95-113 (109, 112). The grey areas of jurisdiction would have grown especially blurry during the transition from one emperor to the next. As some evidence tends to suggest, privileges granted to a city by one emperor may not have been recognized by subsequent rulers. The city of Astypalaea, for example, had its freedom taken away under the Flavians, but it was soon restored by Trajan (*JG* XII,3 nos. 174-175 [= *IGR* IV no. 1031], 176 [= *IGR* IV no. 1032]). Likewise, in a letter to the Vanacini in northeast Corsica, Vespasian restores privileges granted to the community by Augustus, which had lapsed under Galba (*CIL* X no. 8038 = *FIRA* I no. 72 = *AE* [1993] no. 855).

de Aphrodisiensibus of 39/38 BCE (*I.Aphrodisias* I no. 8, ll. 46-48 = *I Aph2007* no. 8.27, ll. 46-48), and although Trajan claims to have confirmed this earlier privilege (*I Aph2007* no. 11.412, letter 2, ll. 17-19), in reality his decision serves to erode its foundation by tightening its restrictions even further:

[if a Greek] who is a citizen of Aphrodisias either by birth or by adoption into the citizen body [is prosecuted by a] Greek who is a citizen of Aphrodisias the trial is to be heard under your [laws and at Aphrodisias], but if, on the contrary, a Greek [from another city (is prosecuted by a Greek Aphrodisian) the trial is to be held under] Roman law and in the province; those, however, who are [in debt to the city or stand surety for such a debt] or in short have a financial involvement with your public [treasury] are to undergo [trial in Aphrodisias]. (*I Aph2007* no. 11.412, ll. 6-11; trans. Reynolds)

Whereas the previous decree was loose enough for the Aphrodisians to exercise jurisdiction over all non-Romans, Trajan's slight alteration now excludes a second group: resident aliens. What this shift reveals is the ease with which the autonomy of "free" cities could slip away. "It is a commonplace that a small and powerless city-state lying inside a Roman province was liable to find that its privileges were steadily eroded, and might even collaborate, without realizing it, in the process."⁵²

Such a transition, of course, simply marked further Roman intrusion into the fleeting notion of local autonomy. In fact, it may be that the Julio-Claudian jurist Proculus better reflects the actual state of affairs in the provinces when he notes, "persons from *civitates foederatae* may be charged in our courts, and we inflict punishments on them [if] condemned" (*Dig.* 49.15.7.2; trans. Watson). Such a statement seems natural enough given the power of the governor. As Hannah M. Cotton put it, "it would be naïve to speak of [free cities] as some kind of extra-territorial enclaves in the province, outside the direct control of the provincial governor."⁵³ For while a small number of communities may

⁵² Joyce Reynolds, "New Letters from Hadrian to Aphrodisias: Trials, Taxes, Gladiators and an Aqueduct," *JRA* 13 (2000) 5-20 (13). The loss of judicial autonomy was not always to a city's dismay, however. In some ways, the presence of Rome was welcomed. Many free cities seemingly traded their autonomy—whether officially or simply in practice—for the pomp and splendor that went along with being an official assize site of the governor's tribunal (so, e.g., Ephesus, Pergamum).

⁵³ Hannah M. Cotton, "Private International Law or Conflict of Laws: Reflections on Roman Provincial Jurisdiction," in *Herrschen und Verwalten: Der Alltag der römischen Administration in der Hohen Kaiserzeit* (eds. R. Haensch and J. Heinrichs; KHA 46; Köln: Böhlau, 2007) 234-55 (241).

have been able to cling to a few privileges emanating from their free status,⁵⁴ most felt the strong arm of Rome steadily pulling these privileges away.

In summary, then, each civic community of first-century Asia Minor possessed local courts wherein litigants could have cases tried. Jurisdiction in these local communities was held by city magistrates whose legal authority extended to various civil suits and minor criminal infractions. For larger disputes or those associated with capital offenses, however, these leaders were forced to yield to higher authorities, whether foreign judges or (in the case of capital crimes) the governor himself. Although there were some “free” cities scattered across Asia Minor, their jurisdiction remained somewhat negotiable and never really beyond interference from the governor.

2. Provincial Courts

For most litigants, civic courts were more than sufficient to meet their legal needs, and given the great cost associated with the governor’s tribunal (e.g., travel expenses, court fees, etc.), they provided local inhabitants with the most efficient means of administering justice.⁵⁵ The jurisdiction of civic courts was not sufficient to try every case, however. Certain matters demanded the kind of special jurisdiction that could only be found at the provincial level. During the Principate, there existed two types of provincial courts within the provinces of Asia Minor. In some cases—though probably not enough to deserve much attention—trials were conducted before provincial jury courts. On the other hand, the vast majority of cases were heard before the tribunal of the provincial governor.

⁵⁴ The list in Pliny, which is most surely not exhaustive, contains a total of eleven *civitates liberae* in Asia (*Nat.* 4.23; 5.29, 33, 39), three in Cilicia (5.27), and two in Pontus-Bithynia (1.49; 6.2).

⁵⁵ For some, however, the thought of having one’s case heard before the highest court in the province would have been an extremely appealing proposition (cf. Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 19 [*Mor.* 815A]). In some instances, in fact, litigants were so overanxious about presenting their case before the governor’s tribunal that they failed to recognize the insignificance of their disputes. As a result, they were referred back to the local civic courts (*IGR* III no. 582). As such, there were certain preventative measures in place to avert frivolous cases. For instance, appealing the decision of civic courts was an option, although certain factors often made it difficult. A man from Thyatira tried to appeal the decision of a lower court (probably that of Thyatira), but was denied a hearing by the governor (*IGR* IV no. 1211). In the same vein, appeals could be extremely expensive. In the city of Cos, the proconsul of Asia set the security for appealing the decision of a local court at 2,500 denarii (*I.Cos* no. 26 [= *IGR* IV no. 1044] + *AE* [1976] no. 648). Appealing a magistrate’s verdict was thus well beyond the means of those from the lower strata of society.

a. Provincial Jury Courts?

In 1926, five imperial edicts (and one *senatusconsultum*) dating to the early Principate were discovered in the modern city of Libya (ancient Cyrene). These edicts, which have been described as “the most important epigraphical find for the reign of Augustus since the famous *Res Gestae*,”⁵⁶ mark an attempt by Augustus to regulate the judicial process in the public province of Cyrene. The first (7/6 BCE) describes the Augustan reform of provincial jury courts (*SEG* 9 [1959] no. 8, ll. 1-40). In order to remedy the problems caused by unfair treatment and Roman bias against Greeks in capital cases, Augustus set the lower age-limit for serving on the jury at twenty-five, raised the census requirement from 2,500 to 7,500 denarii (30,000 HS),⁵⁷ and ruled that an equal number of both Greek and Roman jurors must be appointed in cases involving the trial of Greeks. The role of this inscription in reconstructing capital jurisdiction in a provincial setting has proven vitally important, for, as A. N. Sherwin-White points out, “[h]itherto it was held that all criminal jurisdiction in provinces was decided by the personal *cognitio* of the governor sitting with the usual *consilium* of officials and *comites*, the system which finally prevailed in the Principate.”⁵⁸

But more than just serving as validation for the existence of criminal jury-courts within the provinces, the Cyrene Edict has led to a re-examination of familiar texts from other areas. On the basis of this evidence, Sherwin-White has offered a fresh reading of two previously published inscriptions from the province of Asia. During the latter part of the reign of Augustus (or possibly the early Principate of Tiberius), we hear of a certain Q. Decius Saturninus who held the post of *praef(ectus) fabr(um) i(ure) d(icundo) et sortiend(is) iudicibus in Asia* (*CIL* X no. 5393 = *ILS* no. 6286). Similar to the *album* (i.e., list of citizens qualified to serve as jurors) in Cyrene, this text indicates the selection by lot, a procedure unknown for civic *iudices privati*. This, according to Sherwin-White, is further indication of provincial *quaestiones* (“jury courts”). In addition to this text, he proposes a similar jury system in an inscription dating to the time of Trajan (*CIL* XI no.

⁵⁶ Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Roman Civilization, Selected Readings*, vol. 1: *The Republic and the Augustan Age* (3rd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) 590.

⁵⁷ This financial restriction most likely served as a line of demarcation between the elite group who served as provincial judges and those who were lower level civic judges (*iudices privati*).

⁵⁸ A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) 640.

3943 = *ILS* no. 7789).⁵⁹ But his reappraisal does not end there. He also provides a new interpretation of an obscure passage from the letters of Pliny. At Prusa ad Olympium, Pliny notes that he was “summoning jurors (*iudices*) and preparing to hold assizes” (*Ep.* 10.58.1; trans. Radice [LCL]). Due to the fact that there was little need for a governor to form an *album* of private judges in an assize setting, Sherwin-White suggests that this is another example of a jury court similar to the *quaestiones* at Rome.

By all appearances, then, there seems to be a very limited amount of evidence for the existence of jury courts in at least two of the provinces listed in 1 Peter (Asia and Pontus-Bithynia). The strength of this present data, however, is not sufficient to uphold elaborate theories of influence and jurisdiction.⁶⁰ Given the current state of our knowledge, a much safer approach would be to focus the weight of our attention on the governor’s tribunal. This seems to be confirmed by the evidence itself, since, as Kantor notes, both the Cyrene Edict as well as the letters of Pliny tend to point toward his ultimate authority: “the governor could decide for himself whether to give judgement personally or to sit with a *quaestio*: ‘αὐτὸς διαγεινώσκειν κ[αί] ἰστάναι ἢ συμβούλιον κριτῶν παρέχειν’ (*SEG IX 8, 1. 66*). The right δικάζειν αὐτοί [Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 40.10] still depended to a certain extent on his goodwill.”⁶¹ Furthermore, when one surveys the history of Christian persecution throughout the Imperial era, there is no evidence to suggest believers were ever tried before a court of jurors. For this reason, our primary focus will be on the role of the provincial governor in the Anatolian judicial process.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Such a view is contrary to the way previous scholars normally interpreted this inscriptional material, viz., as references to *iudices privati* (so, e.g., Ludwig Mitteis, *Reichsrecht und Volksrecht in den oestlichen Provinzen des roemischen Kaiserreichs, mit Beiträgen zur Kenntniss des griechischen Rechts und der spätrömischen Rechtsentwicklung* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1891; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1963] 132-33 n. 4; Dessau, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, 2:598).

⁶⁰ In an attempt to reconcile the capital jurisdiction afforded to the courts of Cyrene with the judicial authority of the governor, Jones, *Criminal Courts*, 98-101, has argued that the latter “was probably bound to use the jury for crimes falling within the scope of the criminal statutes, *crimina iudiciorum publicorum*, but could exercise *cognitio* for *crimina extraordinaria*” (100). With the number of Roman citizens in the provinces on the rise, these courts (according to Jones) would remedy a potentially problematic situation, namely, citizens being charged and convicted of criminal offenses, then simply claiming *provocatio* as a way of being sent to Rome for appeal. When assessing the pertinence of this evidence for the trying of Christians as Christians, it becomes clear that these courts are of little relevance to the prosecution of Christians as Christians. Christianity was not a crime that fell under the *crimina iudiciorum publicorum*, and therefore a jury would not have been required. This is evident in the trying of Christians by Pliny. Rather than assigning the case to a jury, he simply tried and condemned the accused them himself. Even when we look beyond this one event, it is clear that our sources provide us with no other evidence of juries playing any role in the condemnation of Christians as Christians.

⁶¹ Kantor, “Roman Law,” 111.

b. Roman Provincial Governor

(1) The Office and Jurisdiction of the Governor

The provincial governor was the most important and most powerful official in the Roman provinces. Usually drawn from the Roman aristocracy, the governor was responsible for the administration of the province, being entrusted with ultimate authority (barring interference from the emperor) over its inhabitants and all of the affairs that took place therein (*Dig.* 1.16.8). The office arose as a necessary corollary to Roman conquest and expansion.⁶² As the boundaries of the State were extended during the Republic, the military need exceeded that which could be performed by the two annually elected consuls.⁶³ In the process of expansion, it thus became necessary to extend the power (*imperium*) of the magistrates beyond the temporal limits ascribed to the office. With such commanders acting *pro consule*, their extended position came to be referred to as proconsul.⁶⁴ As the numbers of these promagistracies later multiplied further through the introduction of the propraetor (295 BCE; Livy, 10.25.11; 10.26.12-15; 10.30.1), Rome not only aided the process of territorial expansion (through an increased supply of military commanders), it also set the foundation for administering its newly acquired territories, for these promagistracies of the Republic would later evolve into the governorships of the Empire.

Understanding the evolutionary process from promagistrate to provincial governor begins with a distinction between types of *provinciae* (“tasks,” “assignments,” “spheres of influence”) assigned to consuls (and thus proconsuls) and praetors (and thus propraetors).⁶⁵ With the concern of the State being focused both on previously conquered

⁶² George H. Stevenson, *Roman Provincial Administration Till the Age of the Antonines* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939) 1-35; John Richardson, *Roman Provincial Administration 227 BC to AD 117* (London: MacMillan, 1976) 11-26.

⁶³ According to tradition, the last king of Rome (Tarquinius Superbus) was expelled and replaced by two consuls, colleagues who possessed all of the decision-making powers of the State (Livy, 1.60.3-4). Regardless of the reliability of this tradition, during the Republican period the two consul system was fully developed (cf. Polybius, 6.11.11-12).

⁶⁴ The first recorded instance of a Roman consul performing his duties *pro consule* is Quintus Publilius Philo (327 BCE) who was allowed to continue his attack on Neapolis and Palaeopolis (Livy, 8.23.12).

⁶⁵ For a full treatment, see Fred K. Drogula, “The Office of the Provincial Governor under the Roman Republic and Empire (to AD 235): Conception and Tradition,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2005) 94-198.

territories and their subsequent administration and on future plans of military expansion, consulate and praetorian duties commonly became divided up along the lines of these two *provinciae*. Due to the respective ranks of the two offices, the consuls were normally assigned more task-oriented duties such as pressing military campaigns, while the praetors were often given a geographical territory which they were expected to administer and protect. It was this traditional distinction between *provinciae* that Augustus so brilliantly used to his own advantage during his rise to emperor.

During the “First Settlement” of 27 BCE, Augustus formally relinquished his control of the provinces gained under the Triumvirate. Nevertheless, there were three that remained under his control: Spain, Gaul, and Syria.⁶⁶ Unlike most of the Mediterranean territories, these were strategic *provinciae* which held out the possibility of further expansion through military conquest. So rather than appointing these spheres of service to the annually elected consuls, Augustus assigned the *provinciae* to members of the imperial family along with his own trusted friends. Since he himself held *imperium maius* (“ultimate power”) over these areas (Dio Cassius, 53.32.5), these *legati* were assigned the praetorian rank and given the lesser *imperium pro praetore*, indicating that their power was derived from the emperor. Thus, the official title of these governors was *legati Augusti pro praetore*, while the provinces they administered came to be referred to as imperial provinces.

Since the traditional military, task-oriented *provinciae* were taken by imperial legates, public magistrates (both consuls and praetors) were left only to attend to the geographically defined provinces in which the primary task was administration and protection. These provinces, which in name belonged to the People of Rome, are referred to as public provinces.⁶⁷ Herein a type of hierarchy was constructed. As a way of drawing

⁶⁶ Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.3.25; Suetonius, *Aug.* 47; Dio Cassius, 53.12. Other provinces began as public provinces, but were later changed to imperial provinces (e.g., Illyricum [Dio Cassius, 54.34.4]; Sardinia [CIL X nos. 8023-8024]; Achaia and Macedonia were converted to imperial provinces by Tiberius [Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.76], but restored again to public provinces by Claudius [Suetonius, *Claud.* 25]).

⁶⁷ It is common to refer to these provinces as “senatorial” provinces. This terminology will nonetheless be avoided due to the fact that it could imply the notion that there were separate administrative hierarchies within the provinces, a notion that is simply untenable (Fergus Millar, “The Emperor, the Senate and the Provinces,” *JRS* 56 [1966] 156-66; cf. *idem*, “‘Senatorial’ Provinces: An Institutionalized Ghost,” *AncW* 20 [1989] 93-97). While there were some minor differences between the two offices (e.g., manner in which they were chosen [*legati* were chosen by the emperor; proconsuls appointed to their province by lot]; length of tenure [*legati* served until they were replaced; proconsuls served for one year]; number of lictors [*legati*

distinction between consulars and praetorians, Augustus determined that the governorship of the provinces of Asia and Africa could only be filled by ex-consuls, while all other (lesser privileged) provinces were to be governed by ex-praetors (Dio Cassius, 53.14.2; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.3.25). But despite this distinction, both were commonly referred to as proconsuls (Dio Cassius, 53.13; cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.22). These two provincial administrations would serve as the primary means by which Roman provinces were governed throughout the remainder of the Principate.⁶⁸

During the late-first century CE, Asia Minor contained both imperial and public provinces, and despite the differing titles, the overall duties of these governing officials would have been somewhat similar. There were three areas of responsibility to which all provincial governors would have needed to devote significant attention.⁶⁹ First, while the Republican picture of a provincial governor as a gallant military commander had all but faded in the public provinces, all governors held some *military* responsibility. Even in *inermes provinciae* (“unarmed provinces”) such as Asia or Pontus-Bithynia,⁷⁰ a proconsul would have possessed at least a small number of troops to command.⁷¹ For instance, troops were employed in escorting important provincial officials (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.27; cf. Dio Cassius, 57.23.4). During the Trajanic and Antonine periods, soldiers (*beneficiarii*) were often taken from their legionary units and stationed at various strategic points along Roman roads (*stationes*) in order to aid local police activities

possessed five lictors; the number of proconsulate lictors varied according to their position as ex-consul or ex-praetor]; dress [*legati* wore a sword and military attire; proconsuls did not]; cf. Dio Cassius, 53.13), both types of provincial governor possessed unlimited *imperium* in their respective provinces (barring interference from the emperor).

⁶⁸ Another type of provincial governor, which holds little relevance for the provinces of Asia Minor, is the praesidial procurator. These were men appointed by the emperor and chosen not from among the senatorial ranks but from the lower, equestrian order (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.60) to govern certain provinces (e.g., Raetia, Noricum, Thracia). One might also mention the prefect, to whom the emperor assigned the duties of administering other provinces (e.g., Egypt, Judea).

⁶⁹ For the duties of provincial governors, see *Dig.* 1.16-19. Cf. also Drogula, “Office of the Provincial Governor,” 357-419; Graham P. Burton, “Powers and Functions of Pro-Consuls in the Roman Empire, 70-260 A.D.,” (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1973).

⁷⁰ Cf. Josephus, *War* 2.366-368, who notes that these provinces contained no Roman legions during the time of Nero.

⁷¹ Robert K. Sherk, “The *Inermes Provinciae* of Asia Minor,” *AJP* 76 (1955) 400-13; Werner Eck, *Die Verwaltung des römischen Reiches in der Hohen Kaiserzeit: Ausgewählte und erweiterte Beiträge* (AREA 1, 3; Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1995-1998) 2:187-202. Cf. E. Ritterling, “Military Forces in the Senatorial Provinces,” *JRS* 17 (1927) 28-32.

against the threat of brigands.⁷² It is very possible that the early traces of these same *beneficarii* could have been used in similar ways.⁷³ Furthermore, there was the presence of provincial militia over whom a Roman officer would normally have been given command (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.21).⁷⁴ What made the military responsibilities of most proconsular governors different from their Republican counterparts, however, was the lack of an “external” border and any type of foreign foes that might be fought and conquered.

One place where foreign enemies posed a much more serious threat and where military glory could still be won was in the imperial province of Galatia-Cappadocia. During the time of Nero, Cn. Domitius Corbulo (and for a short period Caesennius Paetus) was named *legatus Augusti pro praetor* and given total control of the united province in an effort to bring resolution to the festering conflict in Armenia (see Appendix 2).⁷⁵ To carry out this mammoth task, a large array of Roman troops was placed at his disposal. Once this threat had been subdued and Vespasian had risen to power in Rome, military stability was afforded to the area as two legions (*legio XII Fulminata* and *legio XVI Flavia Firma*) were assigned to the province.⁷⁶ For one serving as *legatus Augusti pro praetor* in Galatia-Cappadocia, therefore, military responsibilities

⁷² *CIL* III no. 7136 [= *ILS* no. 2052]; *CIL* VIII nos. 2494 [= *ILS* no. 2636], 2495; *IGR* I no. 766; *IGR* IV no. 886; *TAM* II nos. 953, 1165; *SEG* 2 (1952) no. 666. See Robert L. Dese, Jr., “Trajan, the Antonines, and the Governor’s Staff,” *ZPE* 116 (1997) 273-83.

⁷³ See *AE* (1967) no. 525; *CIL* VIII no. 27854; *CIL* XII no. 2602 [= *ILS* no. 2118].

⁷⁴ Antoine Stappers, “Les milices locales de l’empire romain: leur histoire et leur organisation d’Auguste à Dioclétien,” *MusB* 7 (1903) 198-246, 301-34.

⁷⁵ Given that much of Corbulo’s time was taken up with military affairs (often outside of the province), legates would have in all likelihood controlled the province much like a governor (i.e., taking care of administrative and judicial affairs). In fact, inscriptional evidence reveals the name of C. Rutilius Gallicus, whose title (*legatus provinciae Galaticae*) shows that he was subordinate to Corbulo’s ultimate authority (*I.Ephesos* no. 715 [= *ILS* no. 9499]; *CIL* III no. 4591; cf. Statius, *Silv.* 1.4.76-79).

⁷⁶ In the provinces of Asia and Pontus-Bithynia, there is evidence for an increasing military presence during this same period. During the time of Pliny, Pontus-Bithynia was home to two active auxiliary cohorts (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.21, 106; see D. B. Saddington, “The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Augustus to Trajan,” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 3; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975] 176-201 [193-94]), which were most likely stationed in the province during the Flavian period. In Asia, we find evidence for the presence of two cohorts under the command of M. Aemilius Pius in ca. 69-71 CE (*AE* [1920] no. 55). What this reveals is that even governors in *inermes provinciae* (“unarmed provinces”) were responsible for some type of military presence under the Flavians.

would have demanded significant attention, as the eastern *limes* were of vital importance to the Empire.⁷⁷

A second area of responsibility to which all provincial governors would have needed to devote serious attention was the *administration* of the province. In practice, administrative duties took on a variety of forms. One of the first tasks of a governor was the publication of his provincial edict. Upon entrance into office, each governor would issue an edict whereby he set forth the body of law on which his administration would be based (repeating but also supplementing the existing *lex provinciae*), thus providing the inhabitants with an idea of how the provinces would operate.⁷⁸ “In theory each new governor might issue a completely new edict”; however, “in practice it was not so, partly because each governor would in this way have given himself a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and partly because by any great innovations he would have been sure to injure the web of complicated interests in his province, and so make enemies, and court an accusation.”⁷⁹ The edict of Q. Mucius Scaevola (Pontifex), governor of Asia in 98/97 BCE,⁸⁰ became a standard model that most either completely adopted or slightly adapted (Valerius Maximus, 8.15.6; cf. Cicero, *Att.* 6.1.15). Regardless of how it was composed, the publication of a provincial edict allowed a governor to address a number of judicial, administrative, and fiscal issues with speed and efficiency.⁸¹

⁷⁷ During this time, governing officials were drawn from both consular and praetorian ranks. Consulars were given the title *legati Augusti pro praetore*, while praetorians—their subordinates—simply held the title of *legati Augusti* (E. Ritterling, “Zu zwei griechischen Inschriften römischer Verwaltungsbeamter,” *JÖAI* 10 [1907] 299-311). The common hierarchical structure of the province would have been one consul, who functioned like a traditional provincial governor, and three praetors, two commanding the legions and one helping the governor with administrative and judicial matters (Sherk, “Roman Galatia,” 998).

⁷⁸ See W. W. Buckland, “L’edictum provinciale,” *RD* 13 (1934) 81-96; B. D. Hoyos, “*Lex Provinciae* and Governor’s Edict,” *Antichthon* 7 (1973) 47-53.

⁷⁹ W. T. Arnold, *The Roman System of Provincial Administration* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1914) 55-56.

⁸⁰ On dating Scaevola’s governorship prior to his Roman consulate of 95 BCE, see B. A. Marshall, “The Date of Q. Mucius Scaevola’s Governorship of Asia,” *Athenaeum* 54 (1976) 117-30; Jean-Louis Ferrary, “Les gouverneurs des provinces romaines d’Asie Mineure (Asie et Cilicie), depuis l’organisation de la province d’Asie jusqu’à la première guerre de Mithridate (126-88 av. J.-C.),” *Chiron* 30 (2000) 161-93 (163-67); *pace* Ernst Badian, “Q. Mucius Scaevola and the Province of Asia,” *Athenaeum* 34 (1956) 104-23, who argues for a date of 94/93 BCE, a year after his Roman consulate.

⁸¹ The one downside of using edicts as a way of speeding up the administration process was the fact that all gubernatorial edicts were dependent upon the *potestas* of the governors who issued them. Their efficacy, therefore, did not transcend successive administrations. This resulted in numerous requests for incoming governors to confirm previously conferred privileges (e.g., religious [Josephus, *Ant.* 16.60, 160-161, 167-173; Philo, *Legat.* 311-315; *I.Ephesos* nos. 24 (= *SIG*³ no. 867), 213 (= *SIG*³ no. 820)]; prominent individuals [Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 50.88, 93]; cities [*SIG*³ no. 785 = *IGR* IV no. 943]).

While local magistrates were responsible for posting these edicts, along with other documents/laws whereby the citizens of the province were governed (cf. *lex Irnitana*, ch. 85),⁸² their presence in local communities did not always result in adherence. A few examples should illustrate this fact. During the reign of Augustus, rules were put in place to prevent the exploitation of State transport in the provinces. Yet soon after the accession of Tiberius, it was necessary for Sextus Sotidius Strabo Libuscidianus, the governor of Galatia, to set forth an edict that tightened existing regulations due to provincial abuse (*AE* [1976] no. 653).⁸³ Similarly, in 113/114 CE a proconsular edict was made in Ephesus concerning a free zone in the city's aqueduct system. Only a few years later (120/121 CE), however, another edict was required in order to enforce the previous regulations (*I.Ephesos* no. 3217a, b). As these examples demonstrate, the decree of laws and edicts did not always lead to Roman initiatives being carried out. Often gubernatorial rulings went unheeded (cf. *I.Ephesos* no. 23). Therefore, it was necessary for governors not only to produce legislation but also to enforce it.⁸⁴

One way that governors enforced their will in the provinces was through local assize tours. Unlike many ancient magistrates who controlled their realms from capital cities, provincial governors traveled the extent of their territories, administering justice and overseeing affairs of the province. To facilitate this process, Roman provinces were divided up into judicial districts, and each district contained a principal city in which the governor would hold annual court sessions.⁸⁵ The various stops along his assize tour were

⁸² For the text, translation, and commentary of the *lex Irnitana*, see Julián González, "The Lex Irnitana: A New Copy of the Flavian Municipal Law," *JRS* 76 (1986) 147-243.

⁸³ See Stephen Mitchell, "Requisitioned Transport in the Roman Empire: A New Inscription from Pisidia," *JRS* 66 (1976) 106-31.

⁸⁴ As Graham P. Burton, "Proconsuls, Assizes and the Administration of Justice under the Empire," *JRS* 65 (1975) 92-106, has noted, "vast though the powers of the proconsul were in theory, there were severe physical restraints upon the manner in which he could exercise them; his interventions were bound then to be unevenly spread geographically, and sporadic in their frequency" (106). On the disparity between the absolute power of the governor and his inability to exercise complete control in his province, see Christina Kokkinia, "Ruling, Inducing, Arguing: How to Govern (and Survive) a Greek Province," in *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives: Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop of the International Network, Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 B.C. - A.D. 476), Leiden, June 25-28, 2003* (eds. L. de Ligt, et al.; *Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 B.C. - A.D. 476)* 4; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2004) 39-58.

⁸⁵ By the end of the first century CE, the province of Asia contained thirteen assize centers (from Republican period to the end of the Flavian period): *I.Priene* no. 106 (56-50 BCE); *SEG* 39 (1989) no. 1180, ll. 88-91 (17 BCE); Pliny, *Nat.* 5.95-126 (sources from Augustan date); *I.Didyma* no. 148 (40 CE; for the identification of the thirteen νεοποιοί as delegates from the various assize centers, see Louis Robert, "Le culte de Caligula à Milet et la province d'Asie," in *Hellenica: recueil d'épigraphie de numismatique et*

known as *διοικήσεις* or *conventi*.⁸⁶ While in each city a major part of the governor's time was given over to judicial matters, his administrative tasks were also at the forefront of his agenda.

An area to which a governor might devote a portion of his attention during a local *conventus* stop was the economic condition of a given city. Although he was not directly responsible for the taxes of his provinces (a task normally performed by the quaestor or procurator), his duties did extend to the supervision and monitoring of the financial affairs of the provincials.⁸⁷ Similarly, the task of overseeing the general welfare of local communities was one that required considerable effort.⁸⁸ For not only was the governor faced with the occasional community in crisis (e.g., *AE* [1925] no. 126 [famine in Galatia-Cappadocia]), he was also forced to deal with the more mundane issues that inevitably arose in each provincial city. In his *Duties of Proconsul*, the jurist Ulpian describes a theoretical gubernatorial agenda for each *conventus* stop:

He should go on a tour of inspection of sacred buildings and public works to check whether they are sound in walls and roofs or are in need of any rebuilding. He should see to it that whatever works have been started, they are finished as fully as the resources of that municipality permit, he should with full formality appoint attentive people as overseers of the works, and he should also in case of need provide military attachés for the assistance of the overseers. (*Dig.* 1.16.7.1; trans. Watson)

Despite such a general prescription, however, we must remember that “Roman governors were not confined or defined by their responsibilities in the manner of a modern bureaucrat, but rather they enjoyed considerable freedom to use their office to pursue those activities that they found personally attractive or important.”⁸⁹ As a result,

d'antiquités grecques [vol. 7; Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1949] 206-38); *I.Ephesos* no. 13 [= *SEG* 37 (1987) no. 884] (70-90 CE; see Christian Habicht, “New Evidence on the Province of Asia,” *JRS* 65 [1975] 64-91). Unfortunately, the same precision cannot be attained for the assize centers of other Anatolian provinces. For references to assizes in Pontus-Bithynia, see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 40.33; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.58.1.

⁸⁶ The assize itself (the court not the location) was referred to either as *ἀγορὰ δικάων*, ἡ *ἀγοραῖος*, or ἡ *ἀγοραία*. On the governor's *conventus* tour, see Burton, “Proconsuls,”; Naphtali Lewis, “The Prefect's *Conventus*: Proceedings and Procedures,” *BASP* 18 (1981) 119-29; Francesco Amarelli, “Il *conventus* come forma di partecipazione alle attività giudiziarie nelle città del mondo provinciale romano,” in *Politica e partecipazione nelle città dell'impero romano* (ed. F. Amarelli; SSA 25; Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2005) 1-12.

⁸⁷ E.g., *I.Ephesos* nos. 15-17; *OGIS* no. 669 [= *IGR* I no. 1263]; *IGR* III no. 739, c. 18; *SIG*³ no. 784; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.47-48. Of course, financial administration was one task that could have been easily overlooked, because there was very little return in diligent management (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.18).

⁸⁸ Cf. *I.Ephesos* no. 23; *SEG* 48 (1998) nos. 1582-1583; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.33-34, 65.

⁸⁹ Drogula, “Office of the Provincial Governor,” 357-58.

many of these mundane tasks could be pushed aside for more rewarding endeavors. One type of activity that held out far more personal reward was public building. It was in this way that a governor could inscribe and memorialize his name for future generations, leaving a lasting legacy of his great deeds and successful administration. One of the more common building projects was the construction of Roman roads.⁹⁰ This was especially true of governors in Asia Minor during the time of the Flavians. Roads became particularly important in moving troops to and from the eastern *limes*. It was also quite common for a governor to partake in the construction, or at least the dedication, of various public buildings such as temples, theaters, hospitals, or baths.⁹¹ And if the construction of new buildings was not what was needed, the restoration and repair of old, dilapidated structures would have been a comparable priority.⁹²

The final area of a governor's provincial responsibilities—and the one most pertinent for our purposes—was his service as the supreme *judicial* arbitrator of the province. As the most powerful official in the Roman provinces, the governor possessed complete judicial authority (*Dig.* 1.16.7.2). His jurisdiction covered the extent of the legal spectrum. As such, he was afforded the liberty to dispense justice in any and all circumstances. Therefore, while in one sense the immensity of the governor's power was something that provincials wanted to avoid as much as possible, especially if they were on the receiving end of his fury (cf. Acts 16.38-39; 19.35-40; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 48.1-2), in many respects his presence was a highly sought after and valued commodity. Litigants knew that any dispute could be tried before his court, with both parties receiving the most authoritative decision in the province.

The means by which the governor's judicial duties were carried out, as mentioned above, was through an annual *conventus* or assize tour. During this tour, the governor and his staff traveled along an announced circuit, visiting each of the major assize centers and setting up public tribunals to dispense justice to the inhabitants of the surrounding district. The types of cases that might be heard at these *conventi* varied considerably,

⁹⁰ *AE* (1902) no. 169; *AE* (1936) no. 157; *AE* (1995) no. 1551; *CIL* III nos. 318 [= *ILS* no. 263], 3198 [= *ILS* no. 5829], 14401c [= *ILS* no. 5828]. For more on Roman road-building, see Ch. 3.

⁹¹ Temples: *CIL* VIII no. 2681; *AE* (1920) no. 72. Theaters: *AE* (1977) no. 827. Hospitals: *AE* (1987) no. 952. Baths: Pliny, *Ep.* 10.23-24.

⁹² Examples of governors repairing or restoring dilapidated structures include: *AE* (1933) no. 99 (odium); *AE* (1968) no. 537 (portico); *AE* (1975) no. 834 (theater).

including both civil and criminal affairs. For instance, a large portion of the cases brought before the governor (at least, according to the epigraphic record) were territorial disputes, whether between communities or individuals.⁹³ The reason was that unlike certain legal matters that could be summarily dealt with through letters or edicts (e.g., taxation [IGR III no. 1056 (4)]; requisitioned transport [AE (1976) no. 653; P.Lond. 1171]), boundary disputes required considerable investigation by an imperial official who was sanctioned to provide an authoritative demarcation.⁹⁴

At each stop, the number of litigants seeking to have their disputes adjudicated could have been substantial. During the early-third century CE, the Egyptian prefect Subatianus Aquila received 1,009 petitions at one *conventus* stop (P.Oxy. 2131) and 1,804 at another (P.Yale 61; and this in a span of only two and a half days!). Although these figures may not be representative of a typical Anatolian assize, they nonetheless illustrate the great demand on a governor's tribunal. So while at times governors chose to hear cases that could have been handled at the local level (AE [1976] no. 673; cf. Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 19 [Mor. 815A]), given the great demand for gubernatorial jurisdiction, it was much easier to let local communities handle smaller matters themselves (*I.Kyme* no. 17 = SEG 18 [1968] no. 555⁹⁵). In fact, there are known instances in which a governor refused to hear matters that could be handled by civic officials (IGR III no. 582; cf. P.Yale 1606 [governor refused to hear a case that had been previously tried in a local court]).

In an attempt to ease the burden of his tremendous duties, the governor had a number of legates (*legati*) to whom he could delegate certain responsibilities.⁹⁶ Ordinarily these were men with considerable administrative experience. We know, for example, that two

⁹³ Graham P. Burton, "The Resolution of Territorial Disputes in the Provinces of the Roman Empire," *Chiron* 30 (2000) 195-215 (206-12), lists the inscriptional evidence for some 88 known boundary disputes where the provincial governor was brought in to make a ruling. These types of disputes held out some of the greatest reward for a provincial governor (see Drogula, "Office of the Provincial Governor," 390-92).

⁹⁴ This is not to say that governors always (if ever) surveyed the land and marked the boundaries themselves. Normally, this type of work would be delegated to a lower-ranking official (AE [1967] no. 355; AE [1966] no. 356; AE [1979] no. 563; cf. also G. H. R. Horsley and Rosalinde A. Kearsley, "Another Boundary Stone between Tymbrinassos and Sagalassos in Pisidia," *ZPE* 121 [1998] 123-29, where the *legatus pro praetore* and the procurator set the boundary).

⁹⁵ This citation assumes the reading of John A. Crook, "An Augustan Inscription in the Rijksmuseum at Leyden (*S.E.G.* XVIII, no. 555)," *PCPhS* 8 (1962) 23-29.

⁹⁶ See Bengt E. Thomasson, *Legatus: Beiträge zur römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte* (Stockholm/Göteborg: Svenska institutet i Rom/P. Åström, 1991). Cf. also Romuald Szramkiewicz, *Les Gouverneurs de province à l'époque Augustéenne: Contribution à l'histoire administrative et sociale du principat* (Études prosopographiques; Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1975) 267-94.

of Cicero's four *legati* were former governors themselves (Gaius Pomptinus, former governor of Transalpine Gaul and Quintus, Cicero's brother and former governor of Asia). Therefore, the powers and privileges afforded to these men could be quite extensive, including jurisdiction in legal proceedings (Strabo, *Geogr.* 3.4.20; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 50.85; *CIG* no. 2954). During the Principate, it became common for legates to hold tribunals at the same *conventus* site as the governor (Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 50.96-98). But what is more, there is also evidence of gubernatorial delegates being assigned to different locations altogether (Cicero, *Att.* 5.21.6-7). In fact, we hear of a number of occasions where a governor forwarded a dispute to his legate who was at an alternate location, presumably because he was in a better position to make a ruling (e.g., *SEG* 28 [1978] no. 1169 + *SEG* 41 [1991] no. 1236; *AE* [1999] no. 1592).

Another member of the governor's staff who commonly held judicial proceedings was the quaestor. The quaestor, who was appointed not by the governor but by the people and then assigned to a province by lot, was a junior magistrate responsible for the financial affairs of the province.⁹⁷ Yet, on occasions, the quaestor could even fulfill certain judicial roles. While evidence for the independent jurisdiction of this office is somewhat sparse (e.g., *AE* [1998] no. 1361; cf. *I.Aphrodisias* I no. 53), the emergence of the title *quaestor pro praetore* (*ILS* nos. 911, 981, 1048) may give some indication of the great lengths to which his authority could be extended.⁹⁸

Alongside the staff of the governor, another Roman official who exercised judicial responsibilities in the provinces was the provincial/imperial procurator (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.60). While the limit to which his jurisdiction extended has been a matter of some debate,⁹⁹ it is commonly agreed that procurators on imperial estates exercised some (albeit low level) jurisdiction over the territories under their supervision. Likewise, most

⁹⁷ Aside from the quaestor and his *legati*, the governor also had other staff at his disposal (see Arnold, *Provincial Administration*, 65-69; Richardson, *Roman Provincial Administration*, 28-31). Another group that made up the governor's cabinet was the *comites*. These were younger men, usually of close acquaintance with the governor, who wanted to gain experience in administrative duties. He also brought along *apparitores* (civil servants) to aid him in daily administrative duties (e.g., scribe, lictor, messenger, herald, etc.).

⁹⁸ A. H. J. Greenidge, "The Title *Quaestor Pro Praetore*," *CR* 9 (1895) 258-59. Whether they received capital jurisdiction remains to be demonstrated.

⁹⁹ See Fergus Millar, "Some Evidence on the Meaning of Tacitus *Annals* XII.60," *Historia* 13 (1964) 180-87; idem, "The Development of Jurisdiction by Imperial Procurators: Further Evidence," *Historia* 14 (1965) 362-67; P. A. Brunt, "Procuratorial Jurisdiction," *Latomus* 25 (1966) 461-89.

concur that provincial procurators exercised judicial responsibilities over minor fiscal cases. But in these roles the procurator would have made little to no impact on the possible legal disputes arising against Christians in Asia Minor. More relevant for our purposes (and somewhat more puzzling as well) is the occasional reference in the legal sources to the procurator's involvement in civil and criminal cases. Here it seems best to understand these activities as sporadic necessities created by the high demand for justice combined with the low number of officials who could provide it: "sometimes procurators exercised (or attempted to exercise) jurisdiction in civil and criminal suits in response to the demands of individual provincial subjects who wished to avoid the potential difficulties and delays inherent in any attempt to gain a hearing at the governor's tribunal."¹⁰⁰

Overall, these gubernatorial subordinates would have eased the judicial burdens of the governor considerably.¹⁰¹ By thus dividing his administrative staff across the province, a governor could much more rapidly cover the extent of the assize circuit. There were nevertheless certain instances in which these lower level officials were required to forward a case directly to the governor's tribunal. In his treatise *Duties of Proconsul*, the Severan jurist Venuleius Saturninus notes the limitations of a legate's judicial authority: "If a matter should arise which calls for one of the heavier punishments, the legate must refer it to the proconsul's court. For he has no right to apply the death sentence or a

¹⁰⁰ Graham P. Burton, "Provincial Procurators and the Public Provinces," *Chiron* 23 (1993) 13-28 (27-28). Given this great imbalance between the supply and demand of justice, it is possible that at times other unsanctioned figures were called on to adjudicate between conflicting parties. For example, in later periods there is considerable evidence of Roman soldiers being called upon to settle disputes (e.g., *I.Prusias* no. 91; *TAM* II no. 953; *Cod. justin.* 9.2.8; see Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 122-24, and John Whitehorne, "Petitions to the Centurion: A Question of Locality?," *BASP* 41 [2004] 155-69).

¹⁰¹ In combination with the governor's tribunal, these were the only courts in Asia Minor officiated by Roman authorities. It is true that in Egypt there were standing courts overseen by Roman officials which were put in place as a way of reconciling the problems created by the transient nature of the assize system (see Jean N. Coroi, "La papyrologie et l'organisation judiciaire de l'Égypte sous le principat," in *Actes du Ve Congrès International de Papyrologie* [Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1938] 615-62). From this, some have postulated the existence of similar courts in other provinces as well (so, e.g., Moriz Wlassak, *Zum römischen Provinzialprozess* [SAWW 190/4; Wien: A. Hölder, 1919] 35 n. 54; Max Kaser, *Rechtsgeschichte des Altertums*, Teil 3, Band 4: *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht* [2nd ed.; rev. K. Hackl; HAW 10.3.4; Munich: Beck, 1996] 470). Nevertheless, in Asia Minor the evidence for standing courts operated by Roman officials is sorely lacking. Even the judicial duties carried out by gubernatorial delegates were performed on an *ad hoc* basis without any pre-arranged territorial divisions or "dioceses" (*pace* Ernst Kornemann, "Diocesis," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* [eds. A. F. von Pauly, et al.; vol. 5; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1905] 716-34 [716-17]). On the organization and jurisdiction of various courts within the provinces, see Hans Volkmann, *Zur rechtsprechung im principat des Augustus* (2nd ed.; MBPF 21; Munich: Beck, 1969) 126-50.

sentence of imprisonment or of severe flogging” (*Dig.* 1.16.11; trans. Watson). While such a statement certainly reflects the hierarchy of authority developed in later periods, these restrictions likely stretch back to a time just prior to Augustus.¹⁰² Because the governor alone possessed the power of execution (*Dio*, 53.14.5; cf. 52.22.2-3), his was the only jurisdiction that extended to capital cases (cf. *Dig.* 1.16.6). Even the matter of two runaway slaves is forwarded to Pliny due to the fact that capital punishment may have been demanded by further investigation into the specifics of their case (*Pliny, Ep.* 10.29-30).

By all appearances then it would seem as though the governor’s jurisdiction over provincial inhabitants was virtually limitless. Years ago, however, the brilliant classicist, Theodor Mommsen, proposed that all citizens accused of capital charges were sent directly to Rome. This, according to Mommsen, was due to the fact that not all provincial governors possessed capital jurisdiction (*ius gladii*) until the second century CE. While some governors were said to have abused their powers, condemning citizens without proper authority, this was thought to be the exception rather than the rule.¹⁰³ Such a contention, if it were true, would hold out significant implications for the judicial authority of governors during the first century CE (and in particular, for those with whom the recipients of 1 Peter may have come into contact).

The problems with this proposal, however, have been clearly exposed by Peter Garnsey. In his treatment of the jurisdiction of provincial governors, Garnsey concludes that, “while it is true that governors were not permitted to execute citizens *summarily*, they were certainly able to execute them *judicially*. That is to say, they could try, condemn and execute citizens, provided that an appeal did not reverse the sentence.”¹⁰⁴ During the second century CE, “lower-class” citizens and non-citizens alike could clearly

¹⁰² Kantor, “Roman Law,” 206-12. During the late Republican period, the restrictions on a legate’s jurisdiction do not appear to have been so narrow. Cicero (*Att.* 5.21.6-7) was able to send his legate, Q. Volusius, to undertake judicial proceedings at Cyprus without ever visiting the site himself. Such a maneuver would have been difficult if the jurisdiction of Volusius had been restricted. Similarly, a story is related by Cicero in which Heraclides of Temnus was able to take a lawsuit before a gubernatorial legate after losing his case at the governor’s tribunal (*Flacc.* 49).

¹⁰³ Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht*, 229-50. Cf. also James L. Strachan-Davidson, *Problems of the Roman Criminal Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912) 166-69; A. H. M. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960) 53-65.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Garnsey, “The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors,” *JRS* 58 (1968) 51-59 (54 [original emphasis]).

be tried and condemned by the governor.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, even when we search for first-century CE evidence, there are various texts that reveal similar actions taken by governors.¹⁰⁶ In fact, even the often referred to right of appeal (*provocatio*) afforded to Roman citizens was no guarantee of escape, for “[i]n practice, the efficacy of appeal depended on the discretion of the governor. In effect, the man who gave judgement in the provinces in criminal cases had the power, but not the right, to refuse an appeal against his own sentence.”¹⁰⁷

In summary, then, the provincial governor possessed supreme authority in the provinces of Asia Minor. One of his primary duties as the chief representative of Rome was to oversee the administration of justice. In discharging this duty, the governor traveled the length of his province in an annual assize tour wherein he tried cases that were beyond the jurisdiction of the local civic courts as well as many others which merely sought a hearing from the highest court in the land. What remains to be seen, though, is how these trials took place. For this reason, we will conclude our discussion on the Anatolian judicial system with an investigation into the legal procedures of the provincial tribunal.

(2) Legal Procedure

One of the most important aspects for understanding the nature of conflict resolution—and especially Christian conflict resolution—within first-century Roman Anatolia is the process of legal arbitration before the governor’s tribunal. For while it is possible (and even probable) that some early Christians were brought before local courts on minor civil charges, it was only at the provincial level that serious accusations could be made. It would only be here that Christians could be charged as Christians and thus be prone to all

¹⁰⁵ Examples of gubernatorial punishment include: flogging (*Dig.* 47.21.2); hard labor (*Dig.* 48.13.8.1; 48.19.9.11; 49.18.3); imprisonment (*Dig.* 48.3.1, 3); execution (*Dig.* 48.19.15; 48.22.6.2); exposure to wild beasts (*Dig.* 28.3.6.10; 47.9.12.1; 49.16.3.10; 49.18.1.3); crucifixion (*Dig.* 48.19.9.11; 49.16.3.10); burning alive (*Dig.* 48.19.28.11).

¹⁰⁶ E.g., Suetonius, *Galb.* 9.1 (crucifixion of a Roman citizen in Spain); Pliny, *Ep.* 10.58 (Velius Paulus, the proconsul of Bithynia, condemned Flavius Archippus of Prusa to the mines); Pliny, *Ep.* 2.11.2-9 (Marius Priscus, proconsul of Africa, condemned two Roman *equites* and their friends, one *eques* being exiled while the rest of the group was killed).

¹⁰⁷ Peter Garnsey, “The *Lex Iulia* and Appeal under the Empire,” *JRS* 56 (1966) 167-89 (167). To demonstrate the discretion of a governor, there is considerable evidence to show both his power to try prisoners (see above) and to send them to the emperor (Josephus, *War* 2.77-78, 243-246; *Ant.* 18.88-89; *Vita* 407-409; Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.13; Suetonius, *Dom.* 16).

of the legal repercussions associated with that name (see Ch. 6). On this basis, our focus here will be on the procedure surrounding criminal trials before the provincial assize. There are three aspects of the process in particular with which we will be concerned: how the defendant was brought to trial, the governor's method of rule in the case, and the problems inherent in this system of justice.

The Roman judicial system operative in the Anatolian provinces was by nature an *accusatorial* process. In order for proceedings to be undertaken, accusations first had to be brought by a private individual (which would include local magistrates functioning in the office of eirenarch) rather than by the State. In this way, the accuser had to face the accused in an official hearing, rather than simply providing anonymous information regarding suspected transgressions (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.97; Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3). This could take place in one of two ways, as the manner in which a defendant arrived before the governor's court was largely dependent upon the crime for which he or she was accused. One way in which known criminals (i.e., those who had been accused of or condemned for a specific crime) were rounded up and brought to trial was through the efforts of the local eirenarch and his *διωγμίται*. After apprehending notorious law-breakers, the eirenarch was responsible for interrogating the suspects and then presenting them before the governor with specific written charges (cf. Xenophon of Ephesus, 2.13; *Mart. Pol.* 7-9).¹⁰⁸ But even then his task was not complete, for once the case went to trial, the eirenarch was required to attend the hearing and to give an account of his report (*Dig.* 48.3.6.1).

The second way in which a defendant might arrive at the governor's tribunal was through the personal accusation of another member of the local populace. A requirement at every trial before the provincial governor was the presence of a *delator* ("informer") who could bring formal charges against the accused.¹⁰⁹ As we see in Paul's appearance before Felix, no trial could take place without this key ingredient (Acts 23.35; cf.

¹⁰⁸ This is evident from the provincial edict of Antoninus Pius, governor of Asia between ca. 130-135 CE (see *Historia Augusta: Pius*, 3.2-4). Pius demanded that "[e]irenarchs, when they had arrested robbers, should question them about their associates and those who harbored them, include their interrogatories in letters, seal them, and send them for the attention of the magistrate" (*Dig.* 48.3.6.1; trans. Watson).

¹⁰⁹ Olivia F. Robinson, "The Role of Delators," in *Beyond Dogmatics: Law and Society in the Roman World* (eds. J. W. Cairns and P. J. du Plessis; Edinburgh Studies in Law; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) 206-20.

Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3). But rather than simply moving from accusation to trial, there were a number of important steps that preceded the actual hearing itself. The preliminary stage of the legal procedure was the called *iurisdictio*.¹¹⁰ This process began with the litigant petitioning the governor to grant a hearing. At this point, there was no guarantee that the case would even be tried. For example, when Jews from Achaia brought Paul before the tribunal of Gallio, he refused to grant them a trial because he considered the matter to be a question of words and names from their own law (Acts 18.12-17). In this way, “[i]t was [the accusers], not the governors, who tested the system, to see what ‘crimes’ were admissible for trial by the Roman authorities.”¹¹¹

If the governor did, in fact, agree to try to the case, the next decision to be made involved the nature of the trial itself: would the governor hear the case himself using the process of *cognitio*,¹¹² or would he assign judges according to the traditional *formula* procedure? Although the formulary process may have been on its way out during the Principate, there is sufficient evidence to show that it nonetheless remained a viable option, especially in matters of civil dispute (cf. *Dig.* 1.18.8-9).¹¹³ If this option was chosen, a jury would be selected and limits would be set on their jurisdiction. Yet since the *formula* was a somewhat less common procedure, and since we are concerned primarily with the manner in which Christians would have been tried (i.e., capital cases),

¹¹⁰ On the important division between the two stages of Roman legal proceedings (*iurisdictio* and *iudicatio*), see Fritz Schulz, *Classical Roman Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951) 13-17; cf. E. I. Bekker, “Über Anfang und Ende des ‘in iure’ - Verfahrens im römischen Formularprozeß: *ius dicere – litem contestari*,” *ZRG* 27 (1906) 1-45 (1-12).

¹¹¹ Jill Harries, *Law and Crime in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 31.

¹¹² In modern literature on the subject, one of three designations is usually employed to describe the judicial process at work in the Roman provinces: *cognitio* (“investigation”), *cognitio extraordinaria* (“extra-ordinary investigation”), or *cognitio extra ordinem* (“investigation outside the order”). In this study, we will avoid the latter two descriptions in an attempt to circumvent possible confusion which they might create (cf. Riccardo Orestano, “La *cognitio extra ordinem*: una chimera,” *SDHI* 46 [1980] 236-47 [esp. 236-37]). Unlike the way it may sound, the language itself (*extraordinaria*, *extra ordinem*) is not intended to describe proceedings which are in some way exceptional. Rather, the terms arose out of conservative legal discourse where jurists described hearings in which a governor ruled on matters not formally addressed by civil, praetorian, or criminal law (Harries, *Law and Crime in the Roman World*, 9, 29-33).

¹¹³ See Maxime Lemosse, “Le procès provincial classique,” in *Mélanges de droit romain et d’histoire ancienne: Hommage à la mémoire de André Magdelain* (eds. M. Humbert and Y. Thomas; Histoire du droit; Paris: Editions Panthéon-Assas, 1998) 239-46; Kaser, *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht*, 163-71. Examples of the *formula* process in the Roman provinces include: *RS* no. 19, col. I, l. 36–col. II, l. 5 (68 BCE); P.Schøyen 25, ll. 38-41 (46 BCE); *SEG* 9 (1959) no. 8 (7/6 BCE); Pliny, *Ep.* 10.58.1 (ca. 110 CE); P.Yadin 28-30 (ca. 125 CE); Francisco Beltrán Lloris, “An Irrigation Decree from Roman Spain: The *Lex Rivi Hiberiensis*,” *JRS* 96 (2006) 147-97 (col. III, ll. 38-43) (between 117 to 138 CE).

we will focus on the judicial role of the governor and the carrying out of his duties through the process of *cognitio*.¹¹⁴

Once the nature of the trial had been determined, the accused would be notified prior to the hearing (cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* 1-2). The form which an official summons might take is revealed in a number of documents from the Cave of Letters. One such example is the summons given to John, the son of Josephus, who was accused of misappropriating funds designated for the orphaned Jesus over whom he had been appointed guardian (125 CE):

. . . before the attending witnesses Babatha daughter of Simon son of Menahem—through her guardian for this matter, Judah son of Khthouision—summoned (παρήγγει[λεν]) John son of Joseph Eglas, one of the guardians appointed by the council of Petra for her son Jesus the orphan of Jesus, saying: On account of your not having given . . . to my son, the said orphan . . . just as ‘Abdoöbdas son of Ellouthas, your colleague, has given by receipt, therefore I summon (παρηνγέλλω) you to attend at the court of the governor Julius Julianus in Petra the metropolis of Arabia until we are heard in the tribunal in Petra on the second day of the month Dios(?) or at his next sitting in Petra . . . (P.Yadin 14; trans. Lewis)

When this text is compared with the other summons decrees discovered in the Babatha find, it becomes evident that each notice contained five basic elements: (a) the name of the accuser, (b) the name of the accused, (c) the specific accusation, (d) the court where case would be tried, and (e) a list of witnesses (cf. P.Yadin 23, 25-26, 35[?]). In other words, this document provided the accused with proper notification concerning the specifics of the upcoming trial.

An important point to consider is that bringing charges against someone in a Roman court involved exposing oneself to certain risks. When the day of the *conventus* arrived,

¹¹⁴ One of the greatest problems in studying the process of *cognitio* during the early Principate is the paucity of historical data (see Ignazio Buti, “La ‘cognitio extra ordinem’: da Augusto a Diocleziano,” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 14; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982] 29-59 [29-30]). Some of the early evidence was collected by the jurist Callistratus (late 2nd – early 3rd CE) in his *De cognitionibus*, but only parts of this work still survive (Roberto Bonini, *I “Libri de cognitionibus” di Callistrato: ricerche sull’elaborazione giurisprudenziale della “cognitio extra ordinem”* [SGUB 38; Milan: Giuffrè, 1964]). Moreover, the little information we do possess derives mostly from the classical lawyers and imperial rescripts found in the *Digest*. But the basic agreement between the few, early imperial sources and the later testimony from classical jurists seems to suggest that the *cognitio* process was in effect and of a similar nature during the latter half of the first century CE (see A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1963] 13-23). Even if we disallow the erroneous notion that the transition from *formula* to *cognitio* was the result of the political upheaval that took place as the Republic was turned into an Empire (as suggested by Max Kaser, “The Changing Face of Roman Jurisdiction,” *IrJur* 2 [1967] 129-43 and Buti, “La ‘cognitio extra ordinem’,” 31, but refuted by William Turpin, “*Formula, cognitio, and proceedings extra ordinem*,” *RIDA* 46 [1999] 499-574), the *cognitio* process was clearly at work in first-century CE Asia Minor.

one of the first tasks of the plaintiff was to submit a *libellus* to the governor's court in which he or she registered in a formal *subscriptio* (or *inscriptio*) the details of the charges, the name of both the accused and the accuser, and his or her own signature. "This [procedure] was devised so that no one should readily leap to an accusation (*accusationem*) since he knows that his accusation will not be brought without risk to himself" (*Dig.* 48.2.7; cf. *Cod. theod.* 9.1.9, 11, 14). For, by its very nature, a judicial system driven by popular accusations was prone to abuse. To remedy, or, at least, to counter, these problems, the Romans instituted three procedural offenses to deter would-be accusers (see *Dig.* 48.16, *senatusconsultum Turpillianum* of 61 CE): *calumnia* (making false accusations, whether out of malice or frivolity, with little regard for the truth),¹¹⁵ *praevaricatio* (conspiring with the defendant to conceal the truth), and *tergiversatio* (failure to carry out the prosecution of a formally laid accusation). Penalties for these offenses ranged from fines, to bans on legal privileges, to degradation and expulsion.¹¹⁶ Of course, there were ways of getting around these regulations, but for the most part, these rules were effective.¹¹⁷

Moving from the preliminary matters to the actual trial itself, we finally come to the *iudicatio* stage of the process. It is at this stage that judgment is rendered by the judge or jury based on the facts of the case. In the *cognitio* procedure, the presentation of the case was somewhat different from the formulary process. Here the governor made full investigation into the matter for himself. He controlled the submission of evidence, the

¹¹⁵ Julio G. Camiñas, "Le 'crimen calumniae' dans la 'Lex Remnia de calumniatoribus'," *RIDA* 37 (1990) 117-34; Donato Antonio Centola, *Il crimen calumniae: contributo allo studio del processo criminale romano* (Pubblicazioni del dipartimento di diritto romano e storia della scienza romanistica dell'università degli Studi di Napoli 'Federico II' 14; Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica, 1999) esp. 61-106. There were certain people who could make accusations without fear of *calumnia*. These included minors (Apuleius, *Apol.* 2); a parent pursuing the death of a child (*Dig.* 48.1.14); and a husband who accused his wife of adultery (*Dig.* 4.4.37.1).

¹¹⁶ Fines: *Dig.* 47.15.3.3 (5 pounds of gold). Bans on legal privileges: *Dig.* 47.15.5 (prevented from bringing future prosecution). Degradation and expulsion: *Dig.* 50.2.6.3 (removable from office); Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.41 (Valerius Ponticus expelled from Italy). Under later law, the seriousness of these penalties gradually increased. For instance, in the *Theodosian Code* we read: "if the suit of the plaintiff should be adjudged unjust, he shall pay to the defendant the expenses; he shall pay the costs which the defendant is proved to have sustained for the entire time of the litigation . . ." (4.18.1.4; trans. Pharr). During the time of Constantine, all failed accusers faced the penalty which threatened the accused (*FIRA* I nos. 459-60, ll. 10-23; *Cod. theod.* 9.1.14, 19; 9.2.3; cf. Harries, *Law and Crime in the Roman World*, 22).

¹¹⁷ The story of Apuleius is a case-in-point (see above).

presentation of witnesses, and the interrogation of the defendant.¹¹⁸ In essence, he was at liberty to direct the hearing in whatever manner he saw fit.

In Roman law, the burden of proof theoretically rested on the shoulders of the plaintiff.¹¹⁹ As the jurist Paul states, *Ei incumbit probatio qui dicit, non qui negat* (“Proof lies on him who asserts, not on him who denies,” *Dig.* 22.3.2; trans. Watson; cf. *Cod. justin.* 4.19.23; Justin, *1 Apol.* 4.4). In theory, this rule should have applied equally in the provinces as well. The jurist Marcian, for instance, records that, “[t]he deified Hadrian wrote to Julius Secundus in a rescript, and similar rescripts have been given elsewhere, that credence should certainly not be given to the letters of those who remitted [accused persons] to the governor as if they had already been condemned” (*Dig.* 48.3.6; trans. Watson). But the very fact that such a reminder was necessary suggests that the innocence of a defendant often needed just as much substantiation as his or her guilt. This demonstrates just how easily the burden of proof could shift from the plaintiff to the defendant.

What would make this process even more difficult for many defendants is the fact that social status played a significant role in the Roman legal system.¹²⁰ In Roman thought and practice, individuals did not experience equality before the law. This is evident in the later connection between social status and prescribed punishment. With a categorical distinction being drawn between the *honestiores* and the *humiliores* (second century CE), two different legal standards of punishment were created.¹²¹ But even during the early Principate, the situation differed very little. Ulpianus reports that the Augustan jurist Labeo refused to hear cases of fraud if they were brought by persons of lower social orders against someone of a higher order (*Dig.* 4.3.11.1). The case of Aelius Aristides before the proconsul of Asia (C. Julius Severus) illustrates just how easily social status

¹¹⁸ Andrew Borkowski and Paul du Plessis, *Textbook on Roman Law* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 81.

¹¹⁹ Maxime Lemosse, *Cognitio: étude sur le rôle du juge dans l’instruction du procès civil antique* (Paris: Librairie André Lesot, 1944) 236-39; Erwin J. Urch, “Procedure in the Courts of the Roman Provincial Governors,” *CJ* 25 (1929) 93-101 (100).

¹²⁰ See Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); Elizabeth A. Meyer, “The Justice of the Roman Governor and the Performance of Prestige,” in *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis: Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im römischen Kaiserreich: Akten der Tagung an der Universität Zürich, 18.-20.10.2004* (ed. A. Kolb; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006) 167-80.

¹²¹ Guillaume Cardascia, “L’apparition dans le droit des classes d’*honestiores* et d’*humiliores*,” *RD* 28 (1950) 305-37, 461-85.

could result in legal privilege. Even before the trial began, the details of the case had essentially been decided. As a result, Aristides was allowed to turn the court into his own special performance, being rewarded with a ruling in his favor (Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 50.89-92).

Ordinarily, the governor's deliberation on a case was not made in isolation. Like most Roman officials, the governor employed a group of councilors (called a *consilium*) to offer advice on judicial decisions.¹²² The composition of this group could be considerably diverse, as members were selected at the magistrate's own discretion.¹²³ Members could be drawn from the governor's staff or friends or even from elite members of the local civic community.¹²⁴ This group differed from the *quaestio* in that the governor was not bound to follow the *consilium*'s advice.¹²⁵ He alone was responsible for the final verdict, which he issued in written form.

If the governor decided to rule against the defendant, he was then at his own discretion to determine the appropriate penalty.¹²⁶ The *lex Valeria* and three *leges Porciae* protected Roman citizens from summary physical abuse as well as providing

¹²² Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, 1:307-19.

¹²³ A passage from Josephus illustrates how diverse a group of councilors could actually be. In *Ant.* 14.229, 238-239, he provides a full list of the members of the *consilium* of L. Lentulus Crus, the consul of 49 BCE. The membership of this group ranges from the propraetorian legate, T. Ampius Balbus, to two Roman businessmen who were active in the province, P. Servilius Strabo and T. Ampius Menander (a freedman). See further Jaakko Suolahti, "The Council of L. Cornelius P. f. Crus in the Year 49 B.C.," *Arctos* 2 (1958) 152-63.

¹²⁴ Examples of the governor's staff serving on his *consilium* include: legate and quaestor (*CIL* X no. 7852 = *ILS* 5947), and *comites* (*AE* [1921] no. 38). Examples of local elites serving on the governor's *consilium* include: Cleombrotus, a young lawyer from Amasia (*IGR* III no. 103), and M. Aristonicus Timocrates, head of the museum at Smyrna (*IGR* IV no. 618).

¹²⁵ P. R. C. Weaver, "Consilium praesidis: Advising Governors," in *Thinking Like a Lawyer: Essays on Legal History and General History for John Crook on His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. P. McKechnie; MnemSup 231; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002) 43-62 (43, 52); *pace* Wolfgang Kunkel, "Die Funktion des Konsiliums in der magistratischen Strafjustiz und im Kaisergericht," *ZRG* 84 (1967) 218-44; *idem*, "Die Funktion des Konsiliums in der magistratischen Strafjustiz und im Kaisergericht," *ZRG* 85 (1968) 253-329.

¹²⁶ Whether a magistrate, using his own personal discretion, could decide the penalty in criminal cases during the latter half of the Principate has been a matter of some debate. While some have argued that imperial legislation bound the magistrates to prescribed penalties (so, e.g., Francesco M. De Robertis, "Arbitrium iudicantis e statuizioni imperiali: Pena discrezionale e pena fissa nella cognitio extra ordinem," *SZ* 59 [1939] 219-60), others have claimed that they possessed unfettered judicial discretion (so, e.g., Ernst Levy, *Gesammelte Schriften. Zu seinem achtzigsten Geburtstag mit Unterstützung der Akademien der Wissenschaften zur Göttingen, Heidelberg und München sowie von Basler Freunden ihm dargebracht von Wolfgang Kunkel und Max Kaser* [Köln/Graz: Böhlau, 1963] 2:459-90). Though the weight of the evidence tends toward the former (see Bauman, *Crime and Punishment*, 136-39), both sides agree that during the early Principate, judges (and especially provincial governors) were at their own discretion in selecting penalties for criminal cases.

them with the opportunity to appeal a death sentence through *provocatio ad populum* (cf. Acts 16.35-39; 25.6-12).¹²⁷ The same Porcian laws offered considerable protection for those who committed capital crimes. According to these regulations, a citizen could choose exile rather than face capital punishment.¹²⁸ While these laws were not always followed in the treatment of suspected criminals (cf. *FIRA* I no. 103 = *CIL* VIII no. 10570 = *ILS* no. 6870), they nonetheless provided the accused some safeguard against the threat of violence. The form of punishment ultimately inflicted upon a convicted criminal was dependent upon a number of factors: the nature of the crime, the social standing and legal status (e.g., free vs. slave; citizen vs. non-citizen; etc.) of the defendant,¹²⁹ the personal inclinations of the governor, and even practicality.¹³⁰ Sentences could therefore range from a fine for less serious offenses to hard labor in the mines¹³¹ and even death for more severe criminal actions.¹³²

¹²⁷ *Lex Valeria*: Cicero, *Rep.* 2.53. *Leges Porciae*: Livy, 10.9.3-6; Cicero, *Rep.* 2.54; *Rab. Perd.* 4.12; Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 51.21-22.

¹²⁸ Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 51.22, 40; cf. Dio Cassius, 40.54.2; Polybius, 6.14.4-8. Most regard this privilege as belonging solely to the higher social strata of the Empire, positing very little leniency to those of lower status (as suggested, e.g., by Wolfgang Kunkel, *Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des römischen Kriminalverfahrens in vorsullanischer Zeit* [Munich: Beck, 1962] 67 n. 253; Jones, *Criminal Courts*, 14-15). Yet this view has recently been questioned on the grounds that the source material does not make such a distinction, and that in many cases no such privilege is shown (see Bauman, *Crime and Punishment*, 13-18). If social esteem was the determining factor in such instances, the Petrine readers would benefit very little from these regulations given that most found themselves among the lower strata of society (see Ch. 4). Even if the only qualification was citizenship, this position would be little affected due to the fact that few would have possessed even this privilege.

¹²⁹ Jean-Jacques Aubert, "A Double Standard in Roman Criminal Law? The Death Penalty and Social Structure in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome," in *Speculum Iuris: Roman Law as a Reflection of Social and Economic Life in Antiquity* (eds. J.-J. Aubert and A. J. B. Sirks; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002) 94-133, shows that there was a three-tiered (rather than two-tiered) system of punishment during the Principate. Not only was a person's social class (*honestiores* vs. *humiliores*) used in determining the nature of punishment, one's legal standing (free vs. slave) also played a crucial part (cf. Rolf Rilinger, *Humiliores-Honestiores: zu einer sozialen Dichotomie im Strafrecht der römischen Kaiserzeit* [Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988]).

¹³⁰ For instance, a criminal could not be sent to the beasts if the time for the games had already ended (see *Mart. Pol.* 12.2).

¹³¹ Fergus Millar, "Condemnation to Hard Labour in the Roman Empire, from the Julio-Claudians to Constantine," *PBSR* 52 (1984) 124-47. In later periods, condemnation to the mines became a common punishment for Christians, see J. G. Davies, "Condemnation to the Mines: A Neglected Chapter in the History of the Persecutions," *UBHJ* 6 (1957-58) 99-107; Mark Gustafson, "Condemnation to the Mines in the Later Roman Empire," *HTR* 87 (1994) 421-33.

¹³² On the various means of capital punishment in the Roman penal system, see Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht*, 911-44. The assortment of punishments faced by Christians is described by Tertullian: crucifixion, beatings and lacerations, decapitation, casting to wild beasts, setting on fire, condemnation to the mines and quarries, and exile (*Apol.* 12.3-5; cf. 30.7; 39.6; Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 4.51).

Conclusion

The primary goal of this chapter was to facilitate a better understanding of the various conflict management strategies employed by an aggrieved or offended party in first-century CE Asia Minor. Our examination focused on two types of tactics: separate action and third-party. With regard to the latter, we noted that one of the major obstacles that often impedes reconstructions of the situation in 1 Peter is the fact that there are innumerable informal measures which a disputant could have taken, and rarely are these of the sort that are recorded in our extant source material. For this reason, we attempted to survey a few of the more prominent options: physical violence, economic oppression, spiritual affliction.

Along with separate actions, we also sought to delineate as specifically as possible the third-party measures used in conflict situations. Therefore, a significant portion of this chapter was devoted to the legal systems of first-century CE Asia Minor. Given that the courts were readily appealed as a way of managing conflict in the Greco-Roman world, we ventured to explore the parties that were involved in the process and the procedures by which the system worked. The Anatolian legal system was accusatorial by nature. Similarly, the small police force that was operative within civic communities functioned primarily on a reactionary (rather than preventative) basis. Therefore, one's appearance before the local or provincial magistrates was dependent upon private accusation.

On the local level, the highest source of judicial authority were the appointed civic officials. In most cases, the jurisdiction of city leaders was sufficient to try civil suits and minor criminal violations. When more serious matters arose, however, the case was forwarded to the court of the provincial governor. It was there that litigants could seek final justice from the highest court in the province. Cases that reached the provincial tribunal were normally tried through the process of *cognitio*, wherein the formal procedure of the trial, the rendering of a verdict, and the dispensing of appropriate punishments were all dependent upon the personal discretion of the governor.

This survey of conflict management strategies in Roman Anatolia is a particularly important means of informing our perspective on the situation described in 1 Peter. Not only does the review of informal procedures afford us with more precision in the way we think about general forms of local harassment, the examination of formal, legal measures

helps to shape the way we conceive the judicial threats facing the letter's recipients. Related to the latter consideration, there are two points in particular that need to be brought to bear on any historical reconstruction of 1 Peter. First, contrary to the opinions of many interpreters, local police forces would not have been the primary source of anxiety for the Anatolian congregations. Given the limited number of policing officials, and due to the fact that law enforcement ordinarily sought out *known* criminals (i.e., those who had been accused of or condemned for a specific crime), it is unlikely that Christians would have been prone to extensive police interference without prior accusations from another private party. Second, we must recognize the important role of the accusatorial process in facilitating, but also impeding, the trials of Christians. Because the Anatolian judicial system was set in motion by the private accusations of local inhabitants, the general hostility and harassment faced by Christian assemblies could have turned into legal accusations at any moment and with relative ease. Therefore, even without the explicit mention of legal trials in 1 Peter, one would still need to account for this sobering possibility. What must not go unnoticed, however, is that this system also had a number of built-in deterrents which undoubtedly would have shielded Christians from many ill-founded and frivolous accusations and their related court appearances (see Ch. 6).

Chapter 6 – The Legal Status of Christians in the Roman World

It has been the assumption of many Petrine commentators—whether implicit or explicit—that there was a categorical distinction between the persecutions described in 1 Peter and those that took place during the second and third centuries CE. The latter, it is assumed, mark a period of further escalated tensions between the Christian Church and the Roman State wherein the mere confession of one’s faith was sufficient to secure the punishment of Roman authorities. The former, by contrast, are thought to depict a somewhat less contentious relationship prior to the time at which Christianity was branded as a punishable offense. Much like the (false) dichotomy between “official” and “unofficial” persecution described above, this distinction has allowed interpreters to draw (unnecessary) lines of separation regarding the nature of persecution in 1 Peter. The problem is that those who adopt such a view fail to provide any evidence that might suggest when or how the status of Christians experienced such a negative downturn.

In what follows, we will attempt to clarify the legal the situation in which Christians found themselves during the first three centuries CE. In opposition to the more commonly held proposal sketched above, we will seek to show that the detrimental downturn in the legal status of Christians took place during the time of Nero (rather than during the second/third centuries), and that after this point, all Christians (from the first century CE until the third century CE) shared the same perilous legal status: the profession of Christianity came to be seen as effectively illegal in that it was treated as a punishable offense if one was so charged before the governor’s tribunal.¹ Rather than using this condition as a way of focusing on the escalation of Christian conflict, however, we will attempt to provide a more balanced approach to the subject by exploring how the legal status of Christians can be reconciled with their actual experience of persecution. Therefore, after sketching the criminalized situation in which early Christians found themselves, we will seek to explain why destructive, escalated conflict was more often sporadic and episodic rather than permanent and decisive, and why the religion was not swiftly and summarily exterminated by prosecution. What we will demonstrate is that

¹ The use of the designation “effectively illegal” as a means of describing the legal status of early Christians is adopted from Horrell, *1 Peter*, 57.

Christianity could be effectively illegal and still only produce destructive conflict on sporadic occasions.

A. The Christian Church and the Roman State

We will begin our investigation into the legal status of Christians with the persecution of Decius (ca. 249-251 CE) and work our way back to the Petrine conflict. This will allow us to better appreciate the continuity that existed between the Christian persecutions which took place in the second and third centuries CE and those which were taking place among the Anatolian congregations of the first century CE.

1. Christian Persecution under Decius

The persecution of Decius (249-251 CE) is commonly regarded as the first empire-wide persecution of Christians that was officially sanctioned by the Roman State. This event is particularly important for Petrine commentators, for it often serves as the *terminus a quo* for “official” persecution.² Due to the fact that 1 Peter is far removed from this later proscription of Christianity, it is assumed that “unofficial” popular hostility—however it is defined—must account for the suffering of the letter’s recipients. This understanding of the Decian persecution has thus allowed for the further perpetuation of the false dichotomy between “official” and “unofficial” persecution, and it has prevented Petrine interpreters from critically engaging with the legal status of Christians during the first three centuries. In what follows, therefore, we will attempt to clarify the nature of this event and draw out its implications for the legal status of Christians at this time.

The manner in which Decius ascended to the position of emperor is considerably muffled within the ancient source record.³ Two facts remain clear, however. First, by October 16, 249 CE, Decius had gained control of the Empire, as evidenced by his issuing

² See the discussions in the following commentaries: Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 33 n. 333; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 98; Senior, *1 Peter*, 7-8; Prigent, *La première épître de Pierre*, 132; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 215.

³ On the career and reign of Decius, see F. S. Salisbury and Harold Mattingly, “The Reign of Trajan Decius,” *JRS* 14 (1924) 1-23; Laura Fronza, “Studi sull’imperatore Decio I: L’*adventus Augusti*,” *AnnTriest* 21 (1951) 227-45; idem, “Studi sull’imperatore Decio II: Problemi di politica interna,” *AnnTriest* 23 (1953) 311-33; Xavier Lorient, “Un sénateur illyrien élevé à la pourpre: Trajan Dèce,” in *Les Empereurs illyriens: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (11-13 Octobre 1990)* (eds. E. Frézouls and H. Jouffroy; CTS 8; Strasbourg: Association pour l’étude de la civilisation romaine, 1998) 43-55. For an attempt at reconciling the confusion created by the sources, see Hans A. Pohlsander, “Did Decius Kill the Philippi?,” *Historia* 31 (1982) 214-22.

of rescripts (*Cod. justin.* 10.16.3; cf. 4.16.2).⁴ Second, the “persecution” of Christians began soon after Decius’ accession.⁵ As a way of reconciling the early pogroms with the various references to “double-trials” undergone by many Christians and the late date of the Egyptian *libelli*, many have proposed two different waves (or stages) in which this “persecution” was carried out.⁶ At a very early stage in Decius’ reign (end of 249 CE–beginning of 250 CE), the leaders of the Christian church are said to have been singled out and killed, with the reverberations being felt even in the provinces. Stage two is then thought to have been marked by the official publication of Decius’ edict sometime in the early part of 250 CE.

The problem with this scheme is that the description provided by Dionysius of Alexandria seems to suggest that the Decian edict was received in Egypt soon after news of Philip’s death and Decius’ rise to power.⁷ He states, “But suddenly the change from that more favorable reign was announced to us, and great fear of what was threatening seized us. And what is more (καὶ δὴ καί), the edict arrived, almost exactly as it was predicted by the Lord in his terrifying words” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.9-10).⁸ Since

⁴ It is probable that Decius received recognition from the Senate by September 249 CE (see Michael Peachin, *Roman Imperial Titulature and Chronology, A.D. 235-284* [StudAmst 29; Amsterdam: Gieben, 1990] 30-32).

⁵ For further discussion on the Decian persecution, see John A. F. Gregg, *The Decian Persecution* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1897); Gustav Schoenaich, *Die Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Decius* (Jauer: Hellmann, 1907); Andreas Alföldi, “Zu den Christenverfolgungen in der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts,” *Klio* 31 (1938) 323-43; G. W. Clarke, “Some Observations on the Persecution of Decius,” *Antichthon* 3 (1969) 63-77; Joachim Molthagen, *Der römische Staat und die Christen im zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 61-84; Paul Keresztes, “The Decian *libelli* and Contemporary Literature,” *Latomus* 34 (1975) 761-81; Hans A. Pohlsander, “The Religious Policy of Decius,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 16.3; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986) 1826-42; Reinhard Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002) 27-82.

⁶ E.g., W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 406-407; Marta Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (trans. A. Bedini; London: Routledge, 1994) 102-105. Cf. also Andreas Alföldi, “The Crisis of the Empire (A.D. 249-270),” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume XII: *The Imperial Crisis and Recovery, A.D. 193-324* (eds. S. A. Cook, et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939) 165-231 (202).

⁷ See Salisbury and Mattingly, “The Reign of Trajan Decius,” 8; Molthagen, *Der römische Staat und die Christen*, 66; David S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (OCM; Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 261.

⁸ The interpretive key is the transition from verses 9 to 10. Here the connection is made through the construction καὶ δὴ καί. Where this construction appears, it often denotes a further addition to or extension of the preceding statement. In this way, it adds supplemental details to the description. For example, in Philo, *Mos.* 1.239, we read, πρὸς δὲ ταῖς εἰσβολαῖς ὄκουν ἕτεροί τε καὶ δὴ καὶ συγγενεῖς αὐτῶν (“And at the entrance [to this country] there dwelt other tribes and even their relatives”). It is obvious that the “relatives”

Decius' accession was known in Egypt no later than November 27, 249 CE,⁹ we can assume that its publication may have taken place sometime during the Autumn of 249 CE.¹⁰ This date fits well with the earliest martyrdoms listed in the Christian sources: Fabian in Rome (January 20 or 21, 250 CE), Babylas in Antioch (January 24, 250 CE), Nestor in Pamphylia (February 28, 250 CE), and Pionius in Smyrna (March 12, 250 CE).¹¹ Furthermore, it spares us from having to explain why Decius would wait six months to officially implement a plan which he had been seemingly carrying out—although “unofficially”—since his accession.

If we are correct in assuming that the edict of Decius was issued soon after his rise to power, then it could suggest at least some premeditation on his part, possibly even an attempt to rectify what he considered to be the failings of Philip (cf. *Sib. Or.* 13.87-88; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.39.1). As such, it would seem to offer some substantiation for the ideology prevalent in many of the Christians sources, *viz.*, that the Decian edict was written with one intention in mind: the complete extermination of the Christian faith.¹² However, we cannot say for sure if that was his intention, since we do not know if other groups were similarly affected by his reforms, and since the majority of the literary evidence describes the persecution from a Christian perspective. In fact, other evidence lends support to the idea that rather being a direct attack on Christians, Decius' edict was

would be included among those who dwelt at the entrance to the country, yet their habitation in this location is considered to be worthy of receiving special mention (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.201; 7.392; 10.145; *Sib. Or.* 12.28). It is best then to read the words of Dionysius in the same manner, seeing the arrival of the Decian edict as closely connected—both thematically and chronologically—to the fear arising out of the transition in emperors.

⁹ P.Oxy. 1636, ll. 39-41. Arthur Stein, “Zur Chronologie der römischen Kaiser von Decius bis Diocletian,” *APF* 7 (1924) 30-51 (40), incorrectly lists this date as September 27, 249 CE.

¹⁰ Pace Marta Sordi, “La data dell’editto di Decio e il significato della persecuzione anticristiana,” *RSCI* 34 (1980) 451-61, who places the date just prior to Easter (March/April) of 250 CE. Of course, some questions about this date could be raised by the extant Egyptian *libelli*, whose dates all range from a later period (June 12 to July 14, 250 CE). This chronological discrepancy, however, can be explained in a number of ways. It may be attributable to the chance of the archaeological record: the copies of earlier *libelli* simply may not have survived. Or, it may be that the commissions visited areas in some type of chronological fashion, and the particular towns at which these extant *libelli* were recorded were merely further down the list of their itinerary. But regardless of how the discrepancy is justified, the important point to remember is that while the extant *libelli* provide us with a *terminus ad quem* for the edict (June 12, 250 CE), they do not rule out the possibility that it could have been issued months earlier (see Keresztes, “The Decian *libelli*,” 763-64).

¹¹ For the dates of these martyrdoms, see Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 406; John R. Knipfing, “The Libelli of the Decian Persecution,” *HTR* 16 (1923) 345-90 (353).

¹² Dionysius of Alexandria (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.40.2) describes the situation thus: τοῦ κατὰ Δέκιον προτεθέντος διωγμοῦ (“when the Decian persecution was *commanded*”). In this same vein, Cyprian (*Laps.* 3) depicts this time as *dies negantibus praestitutus* (“the period appointed for apostatizing”).

simply an attempt to turn the Empire back to the traditions of its forefathers through a renewed dedication to the gods.

A closer look at the evidence provided by the so-called *libelli* from the Egyptian desert affords us a somewhat clearer picture of the situation.¹³ Although the edict has not been preserved, its basic contents can be deduced from these “certificates” of pagan sacrifice, which present a uniform testimony to the nature of the process. A *libellus* from the village of Alexandru Nesus is illustrative of the situation:

- 1st Hand.* To the commission of the villages of Alexandru Nesus, chosen to superintend the sacrifices. From Aurelius Diogenes, son of Satabous, of the village of Alexandru Nesus, aged 72 years, with a scar on the right eyebrow. I have always and without interruption sacrificed to the gods, and now in your presence in accordance with the edict’s decree (κατὰ τὰ προστετατ[γμέ]να) I have made sacrifice, and poured a libation, and partaken of the sacred victims. I request you to certify this below. Farewell. I, Aurelius Diogenes, have presented this petition.
- 2nd Hand.* I, Aurelius Syrus, saw you and your son sacrificing.
- 3rd Hand.* . . . onos . . .
- 4th Hand.* The year of the Emperor Caesar Gaius Messius Quintus Trajanus Decius Pius Felix Augustus, Epeiph 2 (June 26, 250).¹⁴

This particular *libellus*, similar to the other extant copies, lists three requirements given to all participants.¹⁵ All were expected to (a) sacrifice to the traditional gods, (b) pour out libations, and (c) partake of the sacrificial meat (cf. *Acta Pionii* 3.1; Cyprian, *Ep.* 31.7.1; *Laps.* 2, 28). Once their duties had been completed, participants could then request a *libellus* from the commissioning officials. This was simply “a petition (βιβλίδιον) of an inhabitant of the empire addressed to local authorities requesting that these countersign his [or her] declaration of pagan religious loyalty, and give written testimony of the pagan sacrifice performed by him [or her] in their presence, by adding their official attestation of loyalty and sacrifice.”¹⁶ In order to oversee this process, special commissions were appointed in various cities around the Empire, including local

¹³ On the Decian *libelli*, see Gustav Schoenaich, *Die Libelli und ihre Bedeutung für die Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Decius* (Wissenschaftliche Beilage zu Jahresbericht des Königlichen Friedrichs-Gymnasiums zu Breslau für 1910; Breslau: R. Nischkowsky, 1910); August Bludau, *Die ägyptischen Libelli und die Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Decius* (RQASup 27; Freiburg: Herder & Co, 1931).

¹⁴ P. Wilcken 124; trans. Knipfing.

¹⁵ A text and translation of the majority of the Decian *libelli* is provided by Knipfing, “The Libelli of the Decian Persecution,” 363-90. Subsequently discovered *libelli* include: PSI 778; P.Oxy. 2990, 3929; and Jacques Schwartz, “Une déclaration de sacrifice du temps de Dèce,” *RB* 54 (1947) 365-69.

¹⁶ Knipfing, “The Libelli of the Decian Persecution,” 345.

magistrates or those appointed by them. Lest one attempt to shirk his or her religious responsibilities, census records were used to monitor participation.¹⁷ Those who refused to comply with the decree were turned over to higher authorities where they faced exile, confiscation of property, torture, or even death.¹⁸

What is illuminating about these texts is that there is no indication of a direct attack on Christianity. All inhabitants—both pagans and Christians—were required to demonstrate their allegiance to the gods through traditional sacrifice.¹⁹ The commissions did not discriminate between age, sex, or socio-economic status.²⁰ In fact, even Aurelia Ammonus, a priestess of the crocodile-god Petesouchos, was compelled to prove her devotion.²¹ While it is possible that the dissolution of the Christian religion may have been a secondary motive for these regulations, one wonders why the entire population would have needed to be involved in order to accomplish such a task. A much easier solution would have been to publish an edict specifically directed at Christians, one revealing their illegality and demanding their execution. As it stands, this decree is much more understandable in light of the religious reforms attempted under Decius' reign.²² Fortunately for the Christians, however, he was not completely successful in his efforts.²³

¹⁷ This is at least suggested from Dionysius' description of the situation in Alexandria. Here named individuals were called before the commission to demonstrate their allegiance through sacrifice (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.11).

¹⁸ This explains the “double-trials” referred to in the source material (see G. W. Clarke, “Double-Trials in the Persecution of Decius,” *Historia* 22 [1973] 650-63). On the punishments meted out in such cases, see G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* (ACW 43-44, 46-47; New York: Newman, 1984-1989) 1:35-36.

¹⁹ Aside from the evidence listed above, the universality of the sacrificial commissions is further demonstrated by the fact that copies of these *libelli* were kept on file in the official archives of the community. This is seen in a description written on the backside, lower portion of P.Oxy. 3929: ἀπογρ(αφή) Ἀμοῦτᾶ μητρ(ρός) Τααμόιτ(ος) (“Registration of Amoitās, mother Taamoīs”). Such a label was presumably used in the archival process.

²⁰ Both the elderly (P. Wilckens 124) as well as young children (Paul M. Meyer, *Griechische texte aus Ägypten* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1916] 77, no. 15, ll. 10-11 [σὺν τοῖς ἀφήλιξι μου τέκνοις, “with my children who are minors”]) were required to participate, even if only through their parents (cf. P.Oxy. 1464, Aurelius Gaion claims that his wife and children act “through me” [δι’ ἐμοῦ]). Furthermore, neither eminent members of the community nor public office holders were exempt from this process (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.11; Paul M. Meyer, *Die Libelli aus der Decianischen Christenverfolgung* [Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910] 14-15, no. 16).

²¹ P. Wilcken 125. In this particular *libellus*, Aurelia Ammonus makes her statement somewhat more emphatic than most: Ἀεὶ [μ]ὲν θύ<ο>υσ[α] τοῖς θεοῖς δι[ε]τέλεσα τὸν βίον (“I have made sacrifice to the gods all my life without interruption”).

²² In an inscription from the Italian town of Cosa (*AE* [1973] no. 235; cf. *CIL* III no. 12351 = *ILS* no. 8922, where he is described as *reparator disciplinae militaris, fundator sacr(orum) urbis, firmator spei*), one of the titles used for the emperor is *restitutor sacrorum*, “the restorer of the cults” (see further Charles L. Babcock, “An Inscription of Trajan Decius from Cosa,” *AJP* 83 [1962] 147-58; Ugo Marelli,

What we can conclude from this survey is that the persecution of Decius was notably different from what many define as “official” persecution. It is true that Decius’ monitoring and enforcement of *individual* compliance to standard religious acts was an innovation, for prior to this point individuals were expected, but not required, to participate in traditional cultic practices.²⁴ But this innovation was not specifically targeted at Christians. Despite the fact that the Decian edict sometimes resulted in inquisitorial practices by Roman officials, these actions were categorically distinct from the searching out of Christians simply on the basis of their outlawed status. In this particular case, the Christians merely failed to comply with imperial regulations directed at the entire Empire, and as a result, they suffered the consequences.²⁵

“L’epigrafe di Decio a Cosa e l’epiteto di *restitutor sacrorum*,” *Aevum* 58 [1984] 52-56). Again, this does not point to a direct attack on Christianity, for, as we see in the letters of Pliny, traditional cults could and did fall into disuse. After the initial punishment of Christians, and on the eve of anonymous accusations, Pliny notes, “there is no doubt that people have begun to throng the temples which had been almost entirely deserted for a long time; the sacred rites which had been allowed to lapse are being performed again, and flesh of sacrificial victims is on sale everywhere, though up till recently scarcely anyone could be found to buy it” (*Ep.* 10.96.10; trans. Radice [LCL]). Certainly, the import of Christianity was not the sole cause of this dissolution (*pace* Hart, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” 20, 32). This is simply evidence that both in the time of Pliny and later during the reign of Decius the traditional cultus was frequently prone to religious lethargy.

²³ A number of factors contributed to Decius’ lack of success. One major factor was the lack of administration and pursuit. In many cases, there was no organized follow up against those who avoided the process of commission (W. H. C. Frend, *The Early Church: From the Beginnings to 461* [3rd ed.; London: SCM, 1991] 99). Aside from this, Decius also faced serious distractions in the form of the Goths. In fact, it was in a battle with the Goths (in Lower Moesia) that he was later killed, only a little over a year into his reign (July, 251 CE). And although V. Trebonianus Gallus (Decius’ successor) seemed to share Decius’ views, he was also faced with much more pressing issues than the implementation of traditional reform (see Christopher J. Haas, “Imperial Religious Policy and Valerian’s Persecution of the Church, A.D. 257-260,” *CH* 52 [1983] 133-44 [133-34]).

²⁴ Jörg Rüpke, *Religion of the Romans* (trans. R. Gordon; Cambridge: Polity, 2007) 7-8. On the nature of the Decian edict and its corresponding effects on religious life in the Roman Empire, see James B. Rives, “The Decree of Decius and the Religion of the Empire,” *JRS* 89 (1999) 135-54.

²⁵ To anticipate later discussion somewhat, the reason why the Decian edict was so troublesome for Christians was because it removed the slower, less productive legal channels through which believers were brought to justice. Prior to this time, the profession of Christianity had become a punishable offense if one were so charged in a Roman court of law. As a result, believers were, at times, forced to demonstrate or repudiate their Christian identity through participation in pagan sacrifice. The problem, at least for Christian opponents, was that this test was forced upon the Christians only when formal accusations were brought through the ordinary channels of the Roman judicial system, a process which contained a number of obstacles that served to impede Christian accusations (see below). During the time of Decius, however, these channels were removed, and accusations were unnecessary. All Christians, along with the rest of the Empire, were required to demonstrate their allegiance to the gods on an individual basis. Or, as Sordi (*The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 101) describes it, “Decius in effect put the entire empire on trial.” The faithful were in a position in which their beliefs could not comply with the laws of the Empire. As a result, many were killed. Thus, during this “persecution,” nothing about the legal status of Christians was altered. What changed was the *means* by which their effectively illegal existence could be punished.

2. Christian Persecution during the Second and Third Centuries CE

So if there was no real alteration to the legal status of Christians during the persecution of Decius, when did this significant change occur? When did it become possible for an inhabitant of the Roman Empire to bring charges against a Christian in a court of law simply on the basis of his or her adherence to the Christian religion? The answer to this question is brought within our reach as we move our investigation back into the second and third centuries CE, for even though no significant change can be detected during this period, a much greater clarity is brought to the subject through the extant source material. Not only does this data make it clear that the “criminalized” legal status of Christians took shape prior to the second century CE, it also provides further insight into the nature of this legal situation. Our efforts to resolve this question will be facilitated by the use of two types of source materials: imperial rescripts and Christian martyrdom accounts (with further confirmatory support being added throughout by the Christian Apologists).

a. Christian Martyrdom Accounts

The first group of sources from which we can draw information about the legal status of Christians during the second and third centuries CE are the early Christian martyrdom accounts (*Acta martyrum*).²⁶ These stories, which might appear in the form of a letter, a court record, a homily, or simply an edifying tale, recount the trials and martyrdom of Christians at the hands of local and provincial authorities. From a number of these narratives, it becomes clear that during the second and third centuries, Christianity was considered to be a punishable offense in a Roman court of law. One might note, for example, texts such as the *Acts of Justin and his Companions*,²⁷ the martyrdom of

²⁶ On the reliability of Christian martyrdom accounts, we have followed Timothy D. Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” *JTS* 19 (1968) 509-31, whose conclusions on the subject have been generally accepted within modern scholarship. Therefore, we will only draw from those works whose accuracy is widely acknowledged.

²⁷ In the *Acts of Justin and his Companions*, a group of Christians are brought before P. Iunius Rusticus, the urban prefect of Rome, and are condemned simply on the basis of their Christian confession (although sacrifice is mentioned in a few inferior MSS, see Pio Franchi de’Cavalieri, *Note agiografiche 6* [Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920] 5-17, cited in Robert M. Grant, “Sacrifices and Oaths as Required of Early Christians,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* [eds. P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann; Münster: Aschendorff, 1970] 12-17 [14]). While the text itself never mentions a private accuser (*delator*), this does not mean that the group was simply sought out by Roman officials (see Jakob Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto: Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50-250 AD* [trans. G. Carter; ECCA 2; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007] 250-51). First, the primary focus of the work is the dialogue

Ptolemaeus and Lucius,²⁸ the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*,²⁹ and the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*.³⁰ As a way of further explicating the effectively illegal status of Christians during this period, two of these accounts will be examined in detail: the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* and the *Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne*.

The first Christian martyrdom account that provides significant insight into the legal situation of Christians during the second century CE is the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. This document, whose form is that of a letter from the church at Smyrna to the church at Philomelium,³¹ purports to have been written soon after the death of Polycarp (ca. 155-

between the accused Christians and the Roman authorities. Therefore, it represents a period *after* which the accusations would have already been made. Secondly, there were some viable candidates who could have very easily played the role of *delator* against Justin and his students. In fact, Justin himself seems to have suspected that this day would come. In *2 Apol.* 3.1, he states: “I too, therefore, expect to be plotted against (ἐπιβουλευθῆναι) and fixed to the stake (ξύλῳ ἐμπαγῆναι), by some of those I have named, or perhaps by Crescens, that lover of bravado and boasting” (trans. Dods; cf. Tatian, *Or.* 19).

²⁸ Justin, *2 Apol.* 2. The purported dialogue between Lucius (a Christian) and Q. Lollius Urbicus (consul and prefect of Rome under Antoninus Pius) is particularly enlightening on the effectively illegal status of Christians during the second century. After Urbicus sentences Ptolemaeus to execution for confessing Christianity, Lucius (an innocent bystander) asks, “What is the reason for this sentence? Why have you brought a conviction against this man who is not an adulterer or a fornicator or a murderer or a thief or a robber, nor has performed any misdeed at all, but only confesses to bear the name Christian?” (Justin, *2 Apol.* 2.16). In response, Urbicus inquires as to whether Lucius might be a Christian as well. When Lucius responds positively, he too is led away for execution. The important point to notice is that there was no crime for which either man was being charged other than for simply being a Christian.

²⁹ When questioned before the proconsul Vigellius Saturnis, the accused confess to being Christians. Even when they are awarded time to reconsider their decision, they refuse and proclaim their faith even more strongly. As a result, the decree of the governor is set forth in writing: “Whereas Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Vestia, Secunda, and the others have confessed that they have been living in accordance with the rites of the Christians, and whereas though given the opportunity to return to the usage of the Romans they have persevered in their obstinacy, they are hereby condemned to be executed by the sword” (*Scill. Mart.* 14; trans. Musurillo).

³⁰ While Perpetua, along with the other accused, stood trial before Hilarian, the procurator who had received capital jurisdiction after the death of Minucius Timinian (the proconsul), the question asked of each of them was, “Are you a Christian?” Their positive responses were enough to have them condemned to the wild beasts (*Pass. Perp.* 6). Interestingly enough, however, as this group was being placed on trial and sentenced to death, other Christians were seemingly unaffected by the conflict. There were two deacons, for instance, who were allowed to minister to Perpetua while she was in prison (*Pass. Perp.* 3). For more on the martyrdom of Perpetua, see Brent D. Shaw, “The Passion of Perpetua,” *P&P* 139 (1993) 3-45.

³¹ Amidst the influential interpolation theories of scholars such as Hans von Campenhausen, “Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarp Martyriums,” *SHAW* 3 (1957) 5-48, and Hans Conzelmann, “Bemerkungen zum Martyrium Polykarps,” *NAWG* 2 (1978) 42-58, the work of interpreters like Boudewijn Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi: Een literair-kritische Studie* (BETL 52; Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1979), have begun to direct scholarship back towards the epistolary nature of the document (see Victor Saxer, “L’authenticité du ‘Martyre de Polycarpe’: bilan de 25 ans de critique,” *MEFRA* 94 [1982] 979-1001).

157 CE) by those who witnessed the event firsthand (*Mart. Pol.* 15.1; 20.1).³² The epistle recounts the details of the arrest, trial, and execution of the aged bishop of Smyrna.³³

The story begins in Smyrna, where a group of Christians were tried before the governor's tribunal and subsequently tortured and killed for refusing to sacrifice and to swear by the *genius* of the emperor (*Mart. Pol.* 2). But even after watching their affliction, the angry stadium crowd was still unsatisfied; therefore, they cried for the leader of the Christians, the aged bishop Polycarp (3.2), the one whom they labeled: "the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teaches many not to sacrifice nor worship" (12.2). With this, the hunt for Polycarp began. The local

³² In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, Eusebius notes that Polycarp suffered under Marcus Aurelius (4.15.1), locating his death more precisely in connection with the martyrs at Lugdunum and Vienna, which he places at 167 CE (*Chron.* 287 F). Many have been content to follow Eusebius in dating Polycarp's death around 167-168 CE (so, e.g., W. Telfer, "The Date of the Martyrdom of Polycarp," *JTS* 3 [1952] 79-83; H. I. Marrou, "La date du martyre de S. Polycarpe," *AnBoll* 71 [1953] 5-20; P. Brind'Amour, "La date du martyre de saint Polycarpe (le 23 février 167)," *AnBoll* 98 [1980] 456-62). Others have tried to push the date back even further (e.g., Henri B. Grégoire and Paul Orgels, "La véritable date du martyre de S. Polycarpe (23 Février 177) et la 'Corpus Polycarpianum'," *AnBoll* 69 [1951] 1-38; J. Schwartz, "Note sur le martyre de Polycarpe de Smyrne," *RHPR* 52 [1972] 331-35). It seems best, however, to date this event approximately a century earlier in ca. 155-157 CE (with J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, II.1: *S. Ignatius. S. Polycarp* [2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1889] 629-702; cf. Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and Its Allusions to New Testament Literature* [WUNT 2/134; Tübingen: Mohr, 2002] 24-32, who presents a compelling case for February 23, 161 CE). This position finds support from the chronological information provided in the final chapters of the work. L. Staius Quadratus, who is said to have been the proconsul during Polycarp's death (*Mart. Pol.* 21), most naturally fits into a time around 155-157 CE (see W. H. Waddington, "Mémoire sur la chronologie de la vie du rhéteur Aelius Aristide," *MIF* 26 [1867] 203-68; Timothy D. Barnes, "A Note on Polycarp," *JTS* 18 [1967] 433-37). (It is true that *Mart. Pol.* 21 is most likely a later interpolation and should thus be used cautiously, but this does not negate the possibility that it could provide some chronological insight into the dating of these events.) It also corresponds with the fact that Polycarp met with Anicetus, who became bishop of Rome between 154 and 156 CE (see Richard A. Lipsius, *Chronologie der römischen Bischöfe bis zur Mitte des vierten Jahrhunderts* [Kiel: Schwer, 1869] 263), sometime prior to his death (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.14.1; 5.24.16-17; cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.4). A meeting to discuss the date of Easter would have certainly been natural upon Anicetus' accession. Furthermore, it makes Irenaeus' claim that Polycarp was instructed by the apostles (*Haer.* 3.3.4) much more feasible chronologically. On the issue of date, see Boudewijn Dehandschutter, "The Martyrium Polycarpi: A Century of Research," in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 27.1; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993) 485-522 (497-503).

³³ Some have remained unconvinced by the historicity of the details found within the document. They have instead chosen to view the story simply as a work of pious fiction (so, e.g., Silvia Ronchey, *Indagine sul martirio di San Policarp* [NSS 6; Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1990]). Most recently, Gerd Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi—Eine formkritische Studie. Eine Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung der Gattung Märtyrerakte* (BZNV 70; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), has argued that any attempt to uncover historical events that underlie the trial scene is an exercise in futility. Rather, according to Buschmann, the trial of Polycarp is simply one of many literary genres that the author has adopted—similar to the martyrologies in late Jewish, biblical, and apocryphal sources—to depict the circumstances of his contemporary readership. Yet, even if the text is read in this light, it still provides insight into the legal situation of Christians during the second century CE. The effective illegality of the Christian religion is nonetheless demonstrated, only from a slightly later period.

eirenarch and his police force (*διωγμίται*) were commissioned to search for the bishop and bring him to justice.

When news of this danger reached him, Polycarp was intent upon remaining at his present location. Nevertheless, the faithful soon convinced him to withdraw to a nearby farm just a short distance outside the city (*Mart. Pol.* 5.1). His time over the next few days was spent in constant prayer from which he came to realize his future destiny: martyrdom by fire. As the search persisted, the police forces were able to extract Polycarp's whereabouts through the torture of two slaves (6.1). Upon his capture, the *διωγμίται* escorted him back to the city where he was met by Herod, the police captain, and his father, Nicetes (8.2). After their attempt to convince the aged bishop to swear allegiance to Caesar was unsuccessful, he was led into the stadium and placed before the governor (9.2).

It was before the governor's tribunal that Polycarp received further opportunity to sacrifice and to swear by the *genius* of the emperor. Yet he remained unswerving in his commitment to Christ. In fact, the proconsul's naïve attempts to gain compliance were preempted by Polycarp's straightforward confession. Once the governor realized that the threat of wild beasts and consummation by fire was to no avail, he set forth his condemnatory ruling to the crowd through his herald: "Three times Polycarp has confessed to being a Christian" (12.1). Although the angry mob sought to have the bishop thrown to the lions, they were forced to settle for an execution by fire (12.2-3). But even this did not end his life. Finally, upon realizing that Polycarp's body was not consumed by the flames, the executioner was commanded to stab the aged bishop with a dagger in order to complete the capital sentence (16.1).

The abnormalities of the legal proceedings in Polycarp's case have been noted on a number of occasions by various interpreters. The comment of Sara Parvis is representative of how these judicial procedures are often understood:

The most difficult part of the narrative to explain is not in fact any of the miraculous details, but the Roman legal proceedings. It is astonishing to find Polycarp apparently on trial for his life before one of the leading magistrates of the Empire on a public holiday in the middle of a sports stadium, with no use of the tribunal, no formal accusation, and, strangest of all, no sentence.³⁴

³⁴ Sara Parvis, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp," *ExpTim* 118 (2006) 105-12 (109).

In fact, it is claimed that Polycarp himself recognized the illegitimacy of these proceedings and spoke against it. In the translation of Michael W. Holmes, Polycarp's response to the proconsul's questioning is recounted in the follow manner: "If you vainly suppose that I will swear by the genius of Caesar, as you request, and pretend not to know who I am, listen carefully: I am a Christian. Now if you want to learn the doctrine of Christianity, name a day and give me a hearing (εἰ δὲ θέλεις τὸν τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ μαθεῖν λόγον, δὸς ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκουσον)" (*Mart. Pol.* 10.1). The translation of this final sentence, however, could be somewhat misleading. Rather than asking for a proper hearing (as assumed by Parvis), the bishop is simply noting his refusal to carry forth with the frivolous game-playing of the governor; instead, Polycarp is demanding that the magistrate proceed with the judicial condemnation that the confession of Christianity would naturally entail.

The means by which Polycarp puts an end to the frivolity is by forcing the proconsul to reveal his true intentions. If he is genuinely concerned with the matters at hand and honestly desires to know the reason why Polycarp cannot swear to the *genius* of the emperor, then he asks to be provided with an opportunity to clearly articulate the Christian faith. If, on the other hand, the governor is only concerned with administering justice, then Polycarp affords him with the only evidence necessary for condemnation: his Christian confession. The second option then is not a plea for an appropriate hearing, but an attempt to end the hollow inquiry of the governor.³⁵ As a result, it is best to translate the sentence, "but if you desire to learn the doctrine of Christianity, provide me an opportunity and listen."³⁶

In reality, there is nothing extremely unusual about Polycarp's trial. There are few instances in which it departs from the "conventional" procedure, but overall it accords

³⁵ Cf. Gerd Buschmann, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp* (KAV 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 193: "Die Erwartungshaltung des Prokonsuls . . . erweist sich als trügerisch und hohl (εἰ κενοδοξεῖς). Das standhafte Bekenntnis Χριστιανός εἰμι stellt Polykarps endgültige Antwort auf das dreimalige ὄμοσον des Prokonsuls dar und bietet zugleich den Grund zur Verurteilung."

³⁶ Compare the response of Aelius Aristides when the emperor Marcus Aurelius asked to hear him declaim: τῆμερον εἶπεν πρόβαλε καὶ αὔριον ἀκροῶ· οὐ γὰρ ἐσμέν τῶν ἐμούνητων, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀκριβοῦνητων ("Propose the theme today," he replied "and tomorrow come and listen, for we are not of those who vomit up their speeches but of those who devote careful attention to them" [Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 583]). See further, Charles E. Hill, *From the Lost Teaching of Polycarp: Identifying Irenaeus' Apostolic Presbyter and the Author of Ad Diognetum* (WUNT 186; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 129.

well with the vast freedom possessed by the governor in his administration of justice.³⁷ The arrest, it seems, was the result of popular accusation rather than imperial edict. This is demonstrated by the letter's description of Quintus, the Phrygian. He, along with others, turned himself in to the authorities voluntarily, seeking out a martyr's death (*Mart. Pol.* 4). Although the author reproaches Quintus for succumbing to the fear of punishment and eventually swearing an oath before the governor, it is his eagerness to turn himself in that receives the brunt of the criticism. By failing to wait for betrayal, in line with the examples of Jesus and Polycarp, Quintus attempted to undertake a martyrdom that was not in accord with the gospel (cf. 1.1). This is a strong indicator that the trial of Polycarp—whose death the author is intent on showing was in accord with the gospel—was the result of accusations being raised by a personal informant. Even though the identity of the *delator* is not mentioned, we can be sure that his arrest and prosecution were thought to be in relative conformity to the formal trial procedure.³⁸

Moreover, the trial itself is not marked by anything out of the ordinary. The fact that the proconsul set up his tribunal (*βῆμα*) in the stadium is not an otherwise unattested practice.³⁹ Pontius Pilate did the same at Caesarea Maritima (Josephus, *War* 2.169-174;

³⁷ This is not to deny that Christian trials may have, at times, departed from conventional procedure. The combination of popular animosity and gubernatorial freedom could have, and probably did, lead to alternative courses of action. In fact, the emperor's need to regulate the actions of the governor, which is stressed in the few Roman sources that we possess (e.g., Pliny, *Ep.* 10.97; Justin, *1 Apol.* 68.6-10), suggests that things were not always handled "by the book." The point is that (a) some (or many?) Christian trials probably did follow these general procedures due to established precedents, and (b) the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, in particular, despite a few seeming irregularities, does provide evidence of a standard procedure.

³⁸ Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto*, 236-37, denies that Polycarp was informed upon and charged in the more "conventional" manner; instead, he sees this as another example of Christians being hunted down by the authorities. Yet these police efforts are not prompted from above (i.e., from a desire of the authorities to bring Christians to justice) but from below (i.e., from the accusations of the general populace). What drove them to pursue Polycarp in the first place was the rowdy petitions of the angry crowd (*Mart. Pol.* 3.2). And, of course, within such a large group numerous individuals could have served as an informant. In fact, when Polycarp was finally captured, it is evident that the officers did not really know much about him, other than the fact that they were to arrest him. For once they met him, they were taken back by his old age (7.2). It is not unreasonable then to assume that an informant may have placed accusations before the governor, and the police were subsequently commissioned to bring him to trial, or that the *delator* went directly to the police in an attempt to avoid the dangers of personal litigation. In the latter case, the eirenarch would question the suspect and present a formal written petition to the governor (cf. Xenophon of Ephesus, 2.13). Furthermore, the eirenarch would then attend the hearing in order to give an account of his report (*Dig.* 48.3.6.1). (This may explain why the slave boy was taken by the police: his testimony would further confirm the accusations of the eirenarch.)

³⁹ It is furthermore unnecessary to deny the accuracy of the author's claim that the trial took place in the stadium rather than the amphitheater, based simply on the fact that the stadium "is an improbable place for games (*ludi*) that involved death and/or animals," or that "its structure would not have well accommodated such activities" (Gary A. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii* [HDR 22;

Ant. 18.57). Likewise, the fact that Philip the Asiarch refuses the crowd’s request to release the lions on Polycarp is no indication that he is “signalling a certain disapproval of the casual attitude to legal form shown by the Proconsul, and washing his hands of the affair.”⁴⁰ His response indicates nothing more than a desire to maintain proper segmentation within the order of the games: the morning was devoted to animal hunts (*venationes*), midday was reserved for the punishment of criminals, and the afternoon was given to the gladiatorial contests.⁴¹ Therefore, rather than revealing a divergence from standard legal procedures, the narrative actually reveals a Christian trial which was fairly consistent with normal judiciary practices, a fact that is especially important to remember when examining the charges brought against them.

Polycarp was keenly aware of the primary “crime” for which he and his fellow martyrs were being condemned: their adherence to the Christian religion.⁴² It is with the proclamation “Χριστιανός εἰμι” (*Mart. Pol.* 10.1) that Polycarp forces the governor to extend his ultimate ruling. Moreover, this was the apparent basis upon which the governor’s capital judgment was rendered. Once he recognizes the bishop’s unwavering commitment to Christ, he sends his herald into the middle of the stadium to announce what appears to be his unwritten sentence of condemnation: τρίς Πολύκαρπος ὠμολόγησεν ἑαυτὸν Χριστιανὸν εἶναι (“Three times Polycarp has confessed to being a Christian,” 12.1).⁴³ Thus, in the same way that Vigellius Saturnis, the governor of Africa, sentenced

Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 122). What is overlooked in such claims is the fact that stadiums regularly served this purpose in the eastern provinces (cf. Leonard L. Thompson, “The Martyrdom of Polycarp: Death in the Roman Games,” *JR* 82 [2002] 27-52 [33-34 n. 36]).

⁴⁰ Parvis, “The Martyrdom of Polycarp,” 110.

⁴¹ See Thompson, “The Martyrdom of Polycarp,” 31-34.

⁴² Buschmann, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp*, 195-97. The “tests” set up by the governor (*viz.*, swearing by the *genius* of the emperor and making sacrifice) were not the *basis* of Polycarp’s condemnation (*pace* Best, *1 Peter*, 37). This is obviously demonstrated by the fact he was faced with these options only after having been accused and brought before the governor’s tribunal. Instead, they served as the ultimate *confirmation* of his Christian identity: if he is not truly a Christian, he will sacrifice; if he is truly Christian, he will not.

⁴³ There is some ambiguity as to the proper punctuation of this sentence. The question is whether τρίς modifies κηρῦξαι (thus indicating a three-fold proclamation by the herald), or ὠμολόγησεν (thus indicating a three-fold confession by Polycarp). Grammatically, neither choice presents a stronger case than the other. Furthermore, the understanding of early interpreters is also indecisive. While Rufinus’ Latin translation of Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.15.25—which happens to be an exact parallel of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* at this point—seems to support the latter (“*missio igitur curione ad populum iubet uoce maxima protestari Polycarpum tertio confessum Christianum se esse*”), the former receives support from the Syrian translation (see Eberhard Nestle, “Eine kleine Interpunktionsverschiedenheit im Martyrium des Polykarp,” *ZNW* 4 [1903] 345-46). But given that a three-fold proclamation of Polycarp’s Christian identity would

the Christians of Scillium (cf. *Scill. Mart.* 14), so also the Asian proconsul renders a similar judgment before the people of Smyrna.

Yet even though Christianity was clearly a punishable offense at this time, the faithful were not hunted down *en masse* and summarily executed. It is true that Polycarp was tried and condemned, but not all Christians were equally affected by this conflict. With Polycarp's death, the persecutions are said to have ended (*Mart. Pol.* 1.1). So despite the fact that some Christian lives had been lost, there were others within these same churches who had not been afflicted (19.1). What makes this somewhat surprising is the prevailing awareness of Christian existence within the wider civic community. Once Polycarp's death had been confirmed, an attempt was made by a group of Christians to remove the body from the fire and provide it with a proper burial. But they were prevented from doing so by the Jews, who incited Nicetes, the father of Herod the eirenarch, to request that the body be cremated, lest the Christians begin to worship it (17.2). Therefore, not only were the Jews aware of a continuing Christian presence in the area, the Romans were conscious of this state of affairs as well. This situation demonstrates the complexity of the Christian legal status during the second century: while some Christians might be charged and condemned before Roman magistrates simply on the basis of their confession, others, whose Christian identity was equally known, could remain essentially unaffected. In other words, the Christian faith remained *effectively* illegal.

A second Christian martyrdom account that serves to further elucidate the legal status of Christians during the second century CE is the *Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne*. The story, which was recounted in a letter from the churches of Lugdunum and Vienna to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia and later preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.1-4), concerns the persecution and martyrdom experienced by Christians of ancient Gaul in 177 CE.⁴⁴ Traditionally, the number of believers thought to have lost their lives during this horrific event is approximately 48.⁴⁵

have been unnecessary coming from the governor's herald (*pace* Gerhard Delling, "τρεῖς, τρίς, τρίτος," in *TDNT* [ed. G. Friedrich; vol. 8; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972] 216-25 [225], who claims that it established the fact more firmly), it seems best to understand this as a reference to Polycarp's three-fold proclamation (Jan Den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, "Notiunculæ Martyrologicae III. Some Observations on the Martyria of Polycarp and Pionius," *VC* 39 [1985] 110-30 [111-13]). Such an approach would have been perfectly consistent with the method employed by Pliny some years earlier (*Ep.* 10.96.3).

⁴⁴ Few have questioned the letter's authenticity. The most sustained critique of the account's validity came from J. W. Thompson, "The Alleged Persecution of the Christians at Lyons in 177," *AJT* 16 (1912)

Our first glimpse at the nature of these troubles comes at a time when the conflict was already considerably aggravated. The letter begins by recording the general disdain and resentment expressed by the local populace against the members of the Christian faith. This hostility had effectively driven the Christians from their homes and barred them from public areas (such as the baths, market, etc.) against the threat of serious repercussions (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.5-6). As the conflict escalated, believers were subject to considerable physical abuse at the hands of the angry mob. Eventually, they were dragged before the city authorities to whom they confessed their Christian identity and were subsequently thrown into prison to await a proper sentence from the governor (5.1.7-8). When the Christians were paraded before the governor's tribunal, they were treated with contemptuous cruelty. The severity of the situation, in fact, led one of the brethren to speak out. Vettius Epagathus, a noteworthy citizen of the community, interceded on their behalf, requesting from the governor the opportunity to bring a proper defense. His plea was refused, and the question of his own Christian identity was posed. After professing to be a Christian, he was led away (along with the rest of the group) to execution (5.1.9-11).

On the basis of forced testimony from the slaves of Christian owners (presumably concerning their alleged participation in Thyestean banquets, Oedipodean intercourse, and other unmentioned crimes), the governor ordered that all Christians be sought out and brought before him (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.14). Torture was employed in an effort to compel the believers to disclose their heinous activities (5.1.15-32). Although the

358-84, and Jean Colin, *L'empire des Antonins et les martyrs gaulois de 177* (AAG 10; Bonn: Habelt, 1964); cf. also some of the source and redactional questions raised by Winrich A. Löhr, "Der Brief der Gemeinden von Lyon und Vienne (Eusebius, h.e. V,1-2(4))," in *Oecumenica et patristica: Festschrift für Wilhelm Schneemelcher zum 75. Geburtstag* (eds. W. A. Bienert and K. Schäferdiek; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1989) 135-49. The critical theories of these scholars, however, have gained little acceptance. The tendency among modern scholarship has been to view Eusebius' account as an adequate representation of the original letter. A few recent studies who have adopted this view include: Denis M. Farkasfalvy, "Christological Content and Its Biblical Basis in the Letter of the Martyrs of Gaul," *SecCent* 9 (1992) 5-25; Elizabeth A. Goodine and Matthew W. Mitchell, "The Persuasiveness of a Woman: The Mistranslation and Misinterpretation of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.1.41," *J ECS* 13 (2005) 1-19; Andrei-Dragos Giulea, "Heavenly Images and Invisible Wars: Seven Categories of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Imagery and Terminology in the *Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne*," *Archaelus* 10 (2006) 147-65.

⁴⁵ See Otto Hirschfeld, "Zur Geschichte des Christentums in Lugdunum vor Constantin," *SPAW* (1895) 381-409 (389-90); Dom H. Quentin, "La liste des martyrs de Lyon de l'an 177," *AnBoll* 39 (1921) 113-38. Eusebius only lists the names of ten martyrs in his *Historia ecclesiastica*. Yet we must remember that this story is an abbreviated version of a fuller account that was recorded in his *Collection of Martyrdoms*, which is no longer extant (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.3; cf. introduction to book 5).

detractors were unsuccessful in connecting actual Christian practice with the crimes of which the group was regularly accused, the profession of the Christian faith was sufficient to condemn many to a martyr's death in the local amphitheater (5.1.36-44).

Sometime later, an imperial rescript arrived in response to questions from the governor (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.47). On orders from the emperor Marcus Aurelius, all prisoners who had confessed to being Christians were to be put to death. Those who denied were to be set free. During the annual celebration of the cult of Augustus and Roma, all of the accused who remained in prison—both those who confessed and those who denied—were brought once again before the governor's tribunal in an attempt to provide the crowds with a pleasing spectacle. Over a period of some days, those who professed faith in Christ were thrown to the beasts or subjected to other types of cruel, torturous deaths (5.1.47-58).

When assessing the nature of this persecution, the first place to begin is with the legal grounds on which the Christians were charged. On what basis were the Christians of Lugdunum and Vienna accused, condemned, and then punished? A review of the story will reveal that the primary basis upon which Christians were condemned was simply their Christian confession.⁴⁶ Quickly dismissing the defense of Vettius Epagathus, the governor replied with a simple yet perilous question: Are you a Christian? Vettius' positive response resulted in his own condemnation (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.9-10).⁴⁷ The investigation undertaken by the governor points in this direction as well. During the examination, ten of the accused are said to have turned away (ἐξέτρωσαν)⁴⁸ and denied the faith. Such a remark indicates that the question posed to the defendants was related solely to their Christianity identity. This is confirmed by the rescript from Marcus

⁴⁶ It is true that other charges were brought against the Christians (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.14). But given that the testimony was provided under threats from the soldiers, it is questionable whether the allegations were actually taken serious by the governor or simply used to further incite the crowds. (Note that torture was not used [cf. *Dig.* 48.18.1.1], but its threat still remained.) Furthermore, these claims appeared after Christians had already been tortured simply for confessing the Name. Moreover, it seems inconceivable that the accused would have been simply acquitted and released if they were charged with any other major crime(s).

⁴⁷ Pace Charles Saumagne and Michel Meslin, "De la légalité du Procès de Lyon de l'année 177," in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 23.1; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979) 316-39, who argues that the sentence, ἦν γὰρ καὶ ἔστιν γνήσιος Χριστοῦ μαθητῆς (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.10) can only mean one thing: "il est encore en vie et n'a donc pas été martyrisé" (334).

⁴⁸ Although there is some textual variation at this point, ἐξέτρωσαν appears to have the strongest pedigree of authenticity. For the textual evidence, see Eduard Schwartz, et al., eds., *Eusebius Werke*, Teil 1, Band 2: *Die Kirchengeschichte* (2nd ed.; GCS 6.1; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999) 406.

Aurelius. According to the emperor, those who confessed were to be put to death, and those who denied were to be released (5.1.47). If the charges were anything other than simply being a Christian, a basic denial of the accusation would not be sufficient for acquittal.

The story itself provides us with a clear example of how popular hostility could gradually build to a point at which the legal authorities are brought into the process through private accusations. The conflict did not stem from imperial orders. It appears rather to have originated from a kind of social prejudice that had been festering among the local inhabitants.⁴⁹ As the matter escalated, turning from discrimination to mob violence, the Christians were finally taken before the authorities. Even when the governor became involved, there was no indication that he was doing anything more than conducting ordinary judicial hearings. Although there were some instances in which he went against the previous rescripts of Trajan and Hadrian, the trials were conducted according to the normal *cognitio* procedure, wherein the governor was free to dictate how the questioning would be conducted and how the guilty would be punished.⁵⁰ Given that few of the accused possessed prominent socio-economic or socio-political status,⁵¹ the opportunity for acquittal was limited from the start. Even among those who did enjoy a somewhat more privileged standing, no special treatment was afforded.⁵² Individuals

⁴⁹ See Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 50-53.

⁵⁰ Ulrich Kahrstedt, "Die Märtyrerakten von Lugudunum 177 (Eusebius, h.e. V,1ff)," *RhM* 68 (1913) 395-412 (397-98). Because of the great power and judicial freedom possessed by the provincial governor, it is unnecessary to claim that the *καινοίς . . . δόγμασιν* mentioned by Melito (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.5) afforded governors the ability to seek out criminals (as does Marta Sordi, "La ricerca d'ufficio nel processo del 177," in *Les Martyrs de Lyon (177)* [eds. J. Rougé and R. Turcan; CICNRS 575; Paris: Éditions de CNRS, 1978] 179-86), or that deviations from the rescripts of Trajan and Hadrian suggest that the governor was ignorant of the previous rulings on Christian trials (as proposed by Saumagne and Meslin, "De la légalité du Procès de Lyon," 320). In this particular case, what danger would have been posed to a governor who went beyond imperial guidelines in rounding-up and punishing recognized deviants?

⁵¹ Garth Thomas, "La condition sociale de l'Église de Lyon en 177," in *Les Martyrs de Lyon (177)* (eds. J. Rougé and R. Turcan; CICNRS 575; Paris: Éditions de CNRS, 1978) 93-106; cf. Paul Keresztes, "The Massacre at Lugdunum in 177 A.D.," *Historia* 16 (1967) 75-86 (78-79).

⁵² E.g., Attalus was a Roman citizen, yet was nonetheless thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheater in order to please the crowds (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.44, 50; cf. *Pass. Perp.* 2 [Perpetua was "nobly born" but still thrown to the beasts]). Here again we find another instance in which accused Christians were not treated the same before the governor's tribunal. Even though some Christians were charged before the local and provincial authorities and later put to death, not all of those who confessed were likewise sentenced to capital punishment. In reference to those who were persecuted at this time, Eusebius asks, "What need is there to transcribe the list of the martyrs in the above mentioned document, some consecrated by beheading, some cast out to be eaten by wild beasts, others who fell asleep in the jail, and the number of the confessors (*ὁμολογητῶν*) which still survived at that time?" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.4.3; trans. Lake [LCL]; see

were simply questioned with regard to their Christian identity, and those who confessed their faith were condemned on that basis alone.

A second and somewhat more crucial issue to be resolved is *why* these events took place. Why were Christians charged and then condemned simply for being Christians? Some have responded to this question by assuming the publication of an official edict from the emperor Marcus Aurelius whereby Christianity was outlawed.⁵³ This, no doubt, would be a natural assumption given the statements found in a few early Christian documents. In *Vita Abercii* 1, for instance, the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus are said to have published an edict demanding public sacrifice and libations to be made across all of the Roman Empire. Elsewhere we hear of a plea from Melito of Sardis directed to Marcus Aurelius concerning the “new decrees” (*καινοῖς . . . δόγμασιν*) that had led to persecution for the Christians of Asia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.5-6). However, even if the Christians’ problems can be traced back to an imperial edict, the nature of the decree need not be considered explicitly anti-Christian in character. If the record of such an edict is in fact accurate (which seems unlikely), it can more easily be explained as a general order to sacrifice to the gods in light of serious dangers threatening the Empire.⁵⁴ In this case, the troubles caused for the Christians were only a secondary side effect.

A much more natural way of understanding this situation is through the model suggested above: during this time Christianity was effectively illegal in that it was a punishable offense in the court of the Roman provincial governor. When an impetus was

further, Juan de Churruca, “Confesseurs non condamnés à mort dans le procès contre les chrétiens de Lyon l’année 177,” *VC* 38 [1984] 257-70, who proposes that they may have been sent to the mines). It is a curious fact that not all who were accused of and then confessed to being Christians were punished in the same manner or to the same extent.

⁵³ E.g., C. B. Phipps, “Persecution under Marcus Aurelius,” *Hermathena* 47 (1932) 167-201; Marta Sordi, “I ‘nuovi decreti’ di Marco Aurelio contro i cristiani,” *StudRom* 9 (1961) 365-78; *et al.*

⁵⁴ See Paul Keresztes, “Marcus Aurelius a Persecutor?,” *HTR* 61 (1968) 321-41 (esp. 327-32). Keresztes captures the state of affairs in modern literature well when he notes, “Later writers have erred because, it seems, they have made no distinction between events of popular violence and the actions of some provincial governors and other officials, and of the relevant decisions of the Emperor himself; because they have not given the gubernatorial power its proper weight in provincial government; and because the legal situation of the Christians in this era has often not been understood. Thus blame has been placed at the wrong door” (321-22). This statement is true not only of the persecutions under the reign of Marcus Aurelius but of all Christian persecution prior to the imperial-initiated pogroms. The solution Keresztes offers in response, however, is also unacceptable. His claim that the persecutions resulted from the *senatusconsultum de pretiis gladiatorum minuendis* from 177 CE, which was designed to provide gladiators at a cheap price, has little to commend it (cf. Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto*, 252 n. 560). It is particularly inapplicable to the situation in Gaul, where the conflict first originated at the level of popular hostility and only reached the governor’s assize when the popular violence got out of hand.

afforded to an already existing hostility (whether in the form of an imperial decree to worship the traditional gods or simply through the informal escalation of current tensions), the Christians were brought to trial and punished accordingly. This was not a result of any Roman edict outlawing Christianity; instead it was simply due to the stigma created by the prior vilification of believers (e.g., the persecution of Nero) combined with the freedom of the governor to define and punish criminal offenses according to his own personal discretion.

b. Imperial Rescripts

In the ancient world, a considerable amount of legal documentation was available for the Christian historian. For instance, we know that the imperial rescripts concerning the punishment of Christians were collected in the seventh book of Ulpian's *De Officio Proconsulis* (see Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 5.11.19). But, as one might expect, very few of the anti-Christian ordinances have actually been preserved by Christian authors. In fact, of all the ancient material that has come down to us, only two imperial rescripts on the trials of Christians have been transmitted verbatim: the letter of Trajan to Pliny and the letter of Hadrian to Minicius Fundanus.⁵⁵

Although it was written during the early-second century (ca. 111-112 CE), the official correspondence between Pliny and the emperor Trajan (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96-97) stands out as one of the most important pieces of evidence on the legal status of Christians in both the second and first centuries CE.⁵⁶ The letters not only provide a contemporary commentary on the nature of the legal processes by which Christians were tried,⁵⁷ they also serve as a

⁵⁵ The alleged rescript of Antoninus Pius to the *κοινόν* of Asia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.13) is another possible source that could be discussed in this context. But, in contrast to the rescripts mentioned above, most interpreters downplay the value of this document, considering it to be either heavily interpolated if not a complete forgery. On the rescript of Antoninus Pius, see Adolf von Harnack, *Das Edict des Antoninus Pius* (TUGAL 13/4; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1895); Rudolf Freudenberger, "Christenreskript. Ein umstrittenes Reskript des Antoninus Pius," *ZKG* 78 (1967) 1-14.

⁵⁶ Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 59, captures the true nature of its importance when she notes, "Trajan's rescript (Pliny, *Ep.* x. 97), is the acid test to which all questions concerning the legal basis of the persecution of the Christians must be put."

⁵⁷ Another possible source from which the legal status of Christians during the second century CE could be drawn are the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. But due to the fact that the legal nature of Ignatius' trial is somewhat unclear, and that, despite the efforts of Theodor Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1873), and J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part 2: *S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp* (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1889), there are still some lingering questions surrounding the authenticity and date of

crucial link between the beginning of documented conflict between the Church and Roman authorities in the mid-first century (i.e., the Neronian persecution) and the somewhat later second-century sources wherein the legal status of Christians is much more easily recognizable. Therefore, while our discussion will seek to clarify the legal status of Christians during the second century CE, we will do so with an eye toward the past. Although our attention will be focused on the nature of the legal procedure by which the Christians of Pontus-Bithynia were tried and put to death, our ultimate aim will be to determine how closely this situation compares with the circumstances in late-first-century CE Anatolia. In this way, we will attempt to bridge the gap in the literary record through the legal procedures described in Pliny.

This strategy, of course, is slightly different from the one adopted by most Petrine interpreters. It has been much more common within Petrine scholarship to ask how closely the situation described in 1 Peter resembles the events represented in the Pliny-Trajan exchange. But this may be to seek more from 1 Peter than the author intended (or needed) to convey. It is certainly not out of the question to think that the epistle reveals something of value concerning the legal status of Christians (see Ch. 7). But building one's case primarily, or even solely, from the letter itself cannot produce definitive conclusions.⁵⁸ Assuming that 1 Peter is a mid- to late-first century document, a better question might be to ask, how does the judicial procedure described in Pliny compare with the legal processes that were in place in during the mid- to late-first century CE?

This is a particularly important question to ask given the common assumption shared by most interpreters, *viz.*, that at some point between the composition of 1 Peter and the trials described in Pliny, the legal status of Christians began to deteriorate, as evidenced by the increasing tensions between the Church and State.⁵⁹ If we are able to show that the means by which the second-century Bithynian Christians were tried and punished were

these letters (see Timothy D. Barnes, "The Date of Ignatius," *ExpTim* 120 [2008] 119-30), we have refrained from employing them as part of our legal reconstruction.

⁵⁸ The problem is evident in the considerably mixed results which the methodology has produced. While someone like Beare (*The First Epistle of Peter*, 32-35) has been able to claim that the situations were one and the same, others like Elliott have argued that the correspondence of Pliny "bears no substantive resemblance" to that of 1 Peter and thus provides little help in understanding the nature of suffering (*1 Peter*, 792-94 [quote 792]).

⁵⁹ See Jobes, *1 Peter*, 9: "the situation in 1 Peter appears to reflect a time when the threat had not yet escalated to that point [i.e., times of martyrdom], which indicates an earlier time in Asia Minor than that indicated in Pliny's letters." Cf. Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxiii-lxvi; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 50-52.

the same as those in place a few decades earlier, then it will not only aid in determining the specific legal status of Christians during the second century, it will also serve to clarify the situation described in 1 Peter by removing a major tenet upon which many situational reconstructions have been built.

In the early part of the second century CE, the province of Bithynia-Pontus was marred by serious economic turbulence. With few means to check the expenditures of civic elites, many communities had undertaken excessive and wasteful spending as a result of intense, inter-city rivalry. To remedy this situation, the emperor Trajan transferred the province from under the auspices of the People (or Senate) to his own administration, and commissioned a certain C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus as his special appointee (*legatus Augusti pro praetore consulari potestate*),⁶⁰ responsible not only for the traditional gubernatorial administration but also for the complete overhaul of provincial finances (ca. 110 CE).⁶¹

It was not until the second year of Pliny's administration that he was faced with the problem of Christians being brought to trial before his tribunal. During his assize tour of the cities of Pontus (Amastris being the most likely setting for this event), Pliny was confronted by a number of cases in which Christians were being charged as Christians by private *delatores*. In response to these accusations, the governor provided a hearing for the cases and questioned the accused concerning their religious identity. After the defendants refused to deny their faith, Pliny condemned the non-Roman citizens to execution, while the citizens were sent to Rome for trial. Once the local populace learned that the governor was willing to punish confessing Christians, the charges began to multiply. An anonymous pamphlet was circulated which contained numerous names of accused Christians. Further accusations were made by personal informants. To validate

⁶⁰ *CIL* V no. 5262 = *ILS* no. 2927. Note that Pliny's successor, Cornutus Tertullus, did not carry this same title (*ILS* no. 1024). On Pliny's office and responsibilities, see further, Rudolf Freudenberger, *Das Verhalten der römischen Behörden gegen die Christen im 2. Jahrhundert. Dargestellt am Brief des Plinius an Trajan und den Reskripten Trajans und Hadrians* (2nd ed.; MBPF 52; Munich: Beck, 1969) 17-59. Cf. also Sherwin-White, *Letters of Pliny*, 80-82.

⁶¹ A popular trend among interpreters has been to date Pliny's arrival in the province (September 17 [Pliny, *Ep.* 10.17A-B]) to 111 CE (e.g., Theodor Mommsen, "Zur Lebensgeschichte des Jüngeren Plinius," *Hermes* 3 [1869] 31-139; Ulrich Wilcken, "Plinius' Reisen in Bithynien und Pontus," *Hermes* 49 [1914] 120-36). But, following the work of Werner Eck ("Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der senatorischen Statthalter von 69/70 bis 138/139," *Chiron* 12 [1982] 281-362 [349-50]), we have pushed this date back by one year.

the identity of those who denied that they were or ever had been Christians, Pliny introduced a “test” whereby the defendant was required to invoke the gods through a repeated formula, to make a sacrifice before the statue of the emperor, and to revile the name of Christ. Those who undertook this procedure were released.

The most difficult question that arose in dealing with Christians was the legal status of one specific group: those who had formerly practiced Christianity but had since renounced it. Despite the fact that these “apostates” had confessed that the summation of their guilt was nothing more than the worship of Christ and the daily gathering for a common meal, Pliny remained unsatisfied. To obtain the truth, he seized two of the slave women whom they called *ministrae* and interrogated them under torture. Through these efforts, he claimed, “I found nothing but a depraved and excessive superstition (*superstitionem pravam et immodicam*)” (*Ep.* 10.96.8). The question that remained then was whether or not these renegades should be granted release on the basis of their denial, or if their former participation demanded swift punishment. It was on this basis that Pliny sought the advice of the emperor. In response, Trajan fundamentally confirmed the governor’s procedure. While he forbade the hunting down of Christians and the acceptance of anonymous accusations, he noted that anyone who was brought to trial according to the traditional accusatory procedure and proven to be a Christian was to be summarily punished. Those who presently denied being Christians and who confirmed their confession through prayers to the gods, were to be pardoned despite any previous affiliations.

The first question to explore with regard to this reconstruction is whether the correspondence of Pliny reveals any type of established legal precedent against Christians during the early-second century CE. It would appear both from the description of Pliny as well as the response of Trajan that Christianity was not a proscribed practice wherein membership had been officially prohibited through a *senatusconsultum* or an imperial decree. The uncertainty of Pliny would seem to point in this direction, and the response of Trajan appears to provide further confirmation. Contrary to his usual practice, Pliny does not refer to any official ruling which might be applicable to this particular situation (cf. *Ep.* 10.56, 58, 65, 72). Instead, working from a common precedent (*viz.*, those who confess are executed, while those who deny are released), he happens across an

anomalous case that needs further consideration: those who confessed to formerly being Christians but who had since repented. Likewise, the emperor fails to refer the governor to any prior regulation (contrast with *Ep.* 10.66), noting that, “no universal rule, which would have a definitive form, can be laid down” (*Ep.* 10.97.1; trans. Radice [LCL]). If either had been working from, or were attempting to supplement, an existing law, their failure to mention the regulation is difficult to explain. Thus, in one sense, the legal status of Christians seems to have remained unchanged from the time of Nero all the way to the persecution of Decius: there is no indication of an official law proscribing Christianity.

Are we to conclude, then, that the procedure of Pliny (or the rescript of Trajan) breaks new ground in the relationship between the Christian Church and the Roman State within the provinces? Was there no established precedent by which provincial authorities dealt with Christians? Although some have recently attempted to paint Pliny as a great innovator in the treatment of Christians,⁶² his actions reveal another story. In the first place, Pliny’s feigned ignorance is not a denial that trials against Christians had previously taken place. Pliny himself reveals this much when he admits that he had never been present at such a hearing: *Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui numquam* (*Ep.* 10.96.2). Instead, the very opposite would appear to be the case, as his absence from (and therefore ignorance of) the proceedings assumes their prior undertaking.⁶³ Furthermore, while the “ignorance” of the governor might seem to suggest some level of uncertainty, his understanding of the matter was much greater than many commentators have

⁶² E.g., Angelika Reichert, “Durchdachte Konfusion. Plinius, Trajan und das Christentum,” *ZNW* 93 (2002) 227-50, who argues that during the early-second century there was neither an official Roman law nor a common precedent by which Christians were dealt with in the provinces of Rome (cf. Downing, “Pliny’s Prosecution of Christians,” 110-13). Instead, she proposes that through his skillful literary presentation, Pliny convinces the emperor of the proper procedure for handling Christians (pardon/punishment), a process that becomes the model for other Roman authorities. For a refutation of Reichert’s proposal, see Joachim Molthagen, “‘Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui numquam.’ Das Nichtwissen des Plinius und die Anfänge der Christenprozesse,” *ZTG* 9 (2004) 112-40.

⁶³ Klaus Thraede, “Noch einmal: Plinius d. J. und die Christen,” *ZNW* 95 (2004) 102-28 (113-14), is skeptical about whether the statement “*cognitionibus de Christianis interfui numquam*” can be taken as evidence for the existence of Christian trials prior to this point. Nevertheless, this conclusion seems to be demanded by the fact that Pliny’s dilemma was not caused by the *novelty* of the relationship between the Church and the Roman State—as if Christian trials were altogether unusual or non-existent—but by his own *inexperience* in provincial administration (cf. Sherwin-White, *Letters of Pliny*, 695; Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 60). Had he wished to express the non-existence of Christian trials, the blame would have been laid not upon his own shoulders but upon the nature of the circumstances (e.g., “Because there is no precedent for this type of case, I am consequently ignorant of . . .”).

acknowledged.⁶⁴ There are six issues on which Pliny claims “ignorance”: (a) the nature or extent of punishment for Christians; (b) the grounds for starting an investigation; (c) the extent to which the investigation should be taken; (d) whether a distinction should be made on the basis of age; (e) whether former Christians should be pardoned; and (f) whether the Name alone, without the associated crimes, is a punishable offense (*Ep.* 10.96.1-2). A brief examination of how each of these matters of uncertainty was handled by the governor reveals that he was not as “ignorant” as he claimed.⁶⁵

First, as the provincials brought their cases before the governor, the allegations which were submitted against the Christians and upon which Pliny granted hearings was simply their Christian identity: “this is the approach I have taken with those who were brought before me on the charge of being Christians (*[in] iis qui ad me tamquam Christiani deferebantur, hunc sum secutus modum*)” (*Ep.* 10.96.2-3). Therefore, it would seem that the grounds for beginning an investigation (b) were not as questionable as he made them out to be. Second, with those he examined, his actions reveal some understanding of the extent to which the investigation should be taken (c). Those who were persistent in the affirmation of their faith were repeatedly questioned until they were eventually condemned, and those who denied the charges were given an opportunity to demonstrate their allegiance to the emperor (10.96.3, 5). Finally, after examining the defendants with regard to their Christian confession (and before investigating the validity of the *flagitia*), Pliny summarily executed the non-citizens who were persistent in their confession, while the citizens were sent to Rome. This reveals that the governor had some idea as to the nature and extent of their punishment (a), whether distinction should be made for age (d), and whether the Name alone was sufficient for punishment (f).⁶⁶ The only genuine

⁶⁴ Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 44 n. 22, astutely points out, “We must be careful here not to be taken in by Pliny’s rhetoric. His pretended ignorance is in part at least the kind of self-demeaning doubt emperors expected from their governors and which Pliny, author of the groveling Panegyricus, was only happy to display.”

⁶⁵ Of course, one could argue that the actions of Pliny prior to the arrival of Trajan’s rescript were merely hasty decisions performed in thoughtless ignorance. The bulk of his correspondence to the emperor weighs heavily against this, however. The extreme caution he shows in administering his province—in some cases, to the annoyance of Trajan—would suggest that he had full confidence in the validity of his actions. Therefore, as E. G. Hardy, *Studies in Roman History: First Series* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906) 83, has appropriately noted, “To suppose that Pliny took this perfectly definite and decided course without precedent is quite impossible.”

⁶⁶ Cf. Paul Keresztes, “The Imperial Roman Government and the Christian Church, I: From Nero to the Severi,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 23.1; Berlin/New York: Walter de

problem posed for Pliny was the procedure by which to deal with the third group of defendants (former Christians), and this question only arose after he had put to death those who confessed the faith. It was his uncertainty regarding this group that stands out as the primary purpose behind the correspondence.⁶⁷ It would be inaccurate, therefore, to claim on the basis of Pliny's "ignorance" that the legal status of Christians was uncertain during this time or that there was no established precedent.⁶⁸

What we find as we delve deeper into the legal basis of these trials is a situation that closely resembles later second- and third-century Christian accounts of persecution and martyrdom. It is clear that the judicial proceedings of Pliny arose not from the initiative of the governor but from the animosity of local inhabitants.⁶⁹ Formal accusations were initially brought before the provincial tribunal through the prosecution of a private *delator* (*Ep.* 10.96.2; 10.97.1). The "crime" for which these Christians were accused was simply adherence to the Christian religion; that is, for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*).⁷⁰ It was this charge that Pliny investigated through the *cognitio* process, limiting his

Gruyter, 1979) 247-315 (277): "By his treatment of the people of the first category, the confessors, Pliny makes it clear that he knows that the name without crimes was punishable. The same is made clear by the fact that he does not release the renegades despite the fact that he found them all innocent of any of the *flagitia*. Pliny's treatment of the confessors and the renegades thus clearly shows that he regarded the name alone as criminally punishable."

⁶⁷ See Wynne Williams, "Commentary," in *Pliny, Correspondence with Trajan from Bithynia (Epistles X)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990) 140.

⁶⁸ As does, e.g., Horrell, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 89 (although this judgment has been corrected in later works); Elliott, *1 Peter*, 792; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 29, 226.

⁶⁹ Sherwin-White, *Letters of Pliny*, 694, 697. Pace Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 10, who describes these as "official imperial persecutions," and Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 189, who labels it as "organized persecution."

⁷⁰ Considerable debate surrounds the legal basis of the Christians' condemnation. According to some, their capital sentence was the result of obstinacy before the governor (so, e.g., A. N. Sherwin-White, "The Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again," *JTS* 3 [1952] 199-213 [210-11]; Jacques Moreau, *La persécution du christianisme dans l'empire romain* [Mythes et religions 32; Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1956] 43). But while their rigidity may have further exacerbated the problem, it certainly did not cause it. Not only did this charge arise *after* they had been accused and put on trial, there was still a third group (former Christians) who were not obstinate, yet who were detained on the possibility that even apostate Christians should be punished. Others have claimed that they were charged with violating the Trajanian edict against *collegia* (so, e.g., Elmer T. Merrill, *Essays in Early Christian History* [London: Macmillan, 1924] 174-201). But this too is an inadequate explanation. The Christians, Pliny plainly indicates (*Ep.* 10.96.7), had ended their evening meetings once the edict had been issued. The best solution that can be deduced from the existing evidence is that these Christians were condemned and punished simply on the basis of their Christian confession. This was apparently the charge for which they were on trial (*Ep.* 10.96.2), and it was the only question with which they are posed during the hearing. If there were any other crimes for which they were accused, those who denied the charges would not have been released simply on the basis of their denial. Furthermore, the third group (former Christians) was detained even after the *flagitia* had been disproven. The only reason for their confinement was thus their former practice of Christianity.

examination to one question and one question alone: *Christianus es?* For those who responded positively, the sentence was either execution by sword (for non-citizens) or transference to Rome (for citizens). So although no formal legislation had been passed against Christianity, it was nonetheless effectively illegal in that it was a punishable offense in a Roman court of law.⁷¹ Despite these considerations, though, Christians were not to be hunted down. Their punishment was only to be meted out if and when a private *delator* brought formal charges before the governor (*Ep.* 10.97).⁷²

How then do these events compare to the circumstances in the late-first century CE? Could the legal proceedings undertaken by Pliny have been reproduced at an even earlier period? On the one hand, there would have been no difference in the *nature* of the trial itself. In both instances, the Roman governor would have presided over the provincial tribunal, adjudicating cases for private individuals through the *cognitio* process. With the extent of his judicial authority being almost limitless, he would have been free to summarily punish the guilty party as he saw fit. The question then boils down to whether Christianity was perceived in the same way over this extended period (i.e., late-first century CE to early-second century CE). But on this point as well, we would have to say that there is no perceived change in the way Christians were viewed or treated from the late-first century CE to the early-second century CE. To propose such a change, one would need to provide evidence for these escalated tensions as well as a reason for their onset. Yet with the limited amount of extant data, this simply cannot be done.

Even if one were willing to argue that the trials of Pliny mark a turning point in the treatment of Christians, we are still left with the task of overcoming a sizeable historical improbability. Such a proposal would necessarily assume: (a) that the *delatores* were offering a revolutionary charge by being the first to accuse Christians as Christians; (b) that Pliny is revolutionary in that he is the first to accept charges against Christians as Christians (and then going even further in executing them for their Christian confession); and (c) that by some miracle of history we happen to possess the very first instance in

⁷¹ Pace Perkins, *First and Second Peter*, 72-73, who argues, “The correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (c.100 C.E.) established that the mere name ‘Christian’ was not criminal.”

⁷² In an attempt to point out the utter contradiction of this ruling, Tertullian summarizes the policy as follows: “they [Christians] must not be sought out, implying they are innocent; and he orders them to be punished, implying they are guilty (*negat inquirendos ut innocentes, et mandat puniendos ut nocentes*). He spares them and rages against them, he pretends not to see and punishes” (*Apol.* 2.8; trans. Glover [LCL]).

which this change took place (and that not from a Christian but a Roman source!). Against such staggering improbabilities, it is much more plausible to think that Pliny's actions simply follow a precedent that had been established prior to his Bithynian campaign. In condemning these second-century Christians, Pliny did little more than act on a previously established pattern. Christianity had been and still was a punishable offense if it reached the governor's tribunal through the proper channels of litigation.⁷³

A second imperial rescript of some importance in assessing the legal status of Christians during the second century is the correspondence between the emperor Hadrian and the proconsul of Asia, C. Minicius Fundanus (ca. 122/123 CE).⁷⁴ The problem first arose during the administration of Fundanus' gubernatorial predecessor, Q. Licinius Silvanus Granianus. At this time, the governor sought the advice of Hadrian concerning a dilemma created by popular prejudice against Christians. Unfortunately, we only possess the response of Hadrian and not the actual request itself. Therefore, our task of reconstructing remains difficult, though not impossible.⁷⁵ The rescript, as recorded in Justin's *I Apology* (and then copied by Eusebius), reads as follows:

I received a letter written to me by your predecessor Serenius Granianus, a most illustrious man. It does not seem best for me to leave the matter without enquiry lest people be harassed and a means of evil be supplied to false accusers. If, therefore, the inhabitants of the province are able to firmly maintain this claim against the Christians so as to have the case heard before your tribunal (Ἄν οὖν σαφῶς εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἀξίωσιν οἱ ἐπαρχιώται δύνωνται δι᾽σχυρίζεσθαι κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ὡς καὶ πρὸ βήματος ἀποκρίνεσθαι), let them turn to this course of action alone and not to mere claims and shouts. For if anyone would like to make an accusation, it is much more proper for you to decide the case. If, therefore, anyone makes an accusation and shows that they are practicing anything against the laws, then render judgment according to the seriousness of the transgression (οὕτως δίδριξε κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἀμαρτήματος). But by Hercules, give heed to this: if anyone makes false accusations, arrest him on the basis of his wretchedness, and make sure that he is punished. (Justin, *I Apol.* 68.6-10 = Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9)

There has been general agreement among commentators regarding the overall purpose of this document: the rescript was intended to relieve a possibly volatile legal

⁷³ Pace Lepelley, "Le Contexte historique de la première lettre de Pierre," 49, 56-58.

⁷⁴ On the dating of the proconsulship of C. Minicius Fundanus, see Werner Eck, "Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der senatorischen Statthalter von 69/70 bis 138/139," *Chiron* 13 (1983) 147-237 (155-57).

⁷⁵ Though serious doubt was cast upon the authenticity of the rescript by early German scholarship (especially by T. Keim, "Bedenken gegen die Aechtheit des Hadrianischen Christen-Rescripts," *ThJ* 15 [1859] 387-401), it is now generally accepted as authentic (although, see Herbert Nesselhauf, "Hadrians Reskript an Minicius Fundanus," *Hermes* 104 [1976] 348-61). On the authenticity of the rescript, see Bernard Capelle, "Le Rescrit d'Hadrien et S. Justin," *RBén* 39 (1927) 365-68.

situation caused by popular hostility against Christians.⁷⁶ The means by which it was designed to accomplish this task is much less clear, however. Some interpreters have been inclined to read the Hadrian rescript as a reversal of the otherwise precarious legal situation to which Christians had previously been assigned. They contend that with this ruling Christians were granted freedom from all legal prosecution resulting from the mere confession of the Name and were assured that the only charges for which they could be tried were those arising from a transgression of the common criminal laws.⁷⁷ But even though the ambiguity of the text would allow such an interpretation to be reached, one need not view this as a ruling of tolerance on the part of the emperor. Aside from the fact that there is no other independent evidence to support such an imperial effort,⁷⁸ the primary ground for this interpretation—varying degrees of punishment according to the severity of the crime—can be explained in an alternative and completely satisfactory manner.⁷⁹

In reality, this document was not intended to affect the legal status of Christians in any way. While it may have provided Christians with some level of protection by forcing accusers to undertake the somewhat risky endeavor of formal litigation, this was not Hadrian's intention. The rescript was rather designed to maintain order in the Asian

⁷⁶ More specifically, the issue seems to be a grievance submitted by the Asian *κοινόν* to the provincial governor, whereby the proconsul was petitioned to take action against the Christians of the province (Elias J. Bickerman, "Trajan, Hadrian and the Christians," *RFIC* 96 [1968] 290-315 [298-300]). The governor then consulted Hadrian on the matter, and we now possess merely the emperor's response.

⁷⁷ E.g., Fritz Pringsheim, "The Legal Policy and Reform of Hadrian," *JRS* 24 (1934) 141-53 (144); Bernard D'Orgeval, *L'empereur Hadrien: oeuvre législative et administrative* (Paris: Domat Montchrestien, 1950) 302-307; Henri B. Grégoire, *Les persécutions dans l'empire romain* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1951) 138-39; Marta Sordi, "I rescritti di Traiano e Adriano sui cristiani," *RSCI* 14 (1960) 359-70 (esp. 359-69).

⁷⁸ Proof of further toleration and properly conducted trials during the time of Hadrian is provided by Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 67 n. 15 (citing Justin, *1 Apol.* 7 and Lucian, *Peregr.* 14 [incorrectly listed as *Peregr.* 16]). But the evidence she submits does little more than to demonstrate the arbitrary nature of trials conducted at the discretion of a Roman governor.

⁷⁹ The statement in question is the initial apodosis of Justin, *1 Apol.* 68.10: οὕτως διόριζε κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἁμαρτήματος. This clause is often taken to mean that the emperor has in mind personal crimes for which Christians are accused and not simply the confession of the Name (" . . . then render judgment according to the severity of the crime"). Such an understanding results from what is presumed to be a description of varying levels of punishment. Thus, as Sordi (*The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 66-67) notes, "if the only punishable crime were, as in Trajan's time, that of practising the Christian faith, the crime and punishment would have been the same for everyone." But such an interpretation is not required by the text. One could just as easily understand this directive as a declaration to punish Christians as Christians due to the severity of such an offense. In this case, Hadrian's command to render judgment "according to the seriousness of the transgression" would mean nothing more than simply punishing Christianity for what it was—a capital crime.

province by ensuring that proper procedural steps be taken regardless of the nature of the accusation.⁸⁰ Christianity thus remained a punishable offense that could be prosecuted through the normal accusatorial channels.

While this conclusion is important for gaining a proper understanding of the Christian situation during the early-second century CE, it is equally critical to recognize the level of agreement which all scholars seem to share with regard to this passage. Whether the Hadrian rescript reversed the effectively illegal status of Christians or simply confirmed their precarious state through a preservation of common procedure (which seems more likely), everyone consents to the fact that prior to this ruling Christians could be punished for the Name alone. So only a decade removed from the famous correspondence of Pliny and Trajan, we receive further confirmation from an entirely different Anatolian province of the seriousness of the Christian legal predicament.

3. Christian Persecution during the First Century CE

a. Christian Persecution during the Reign of Domitian

Unlike the pogrom of Nero, Christian persecution during the reign of Domitian is somewhat uncertain. This is evident from the way previous interpreters have strenuously debated the extent of the emperor's role in the process. Throughout the annals of history, many Christians have considered Domitian to be the second great persecutor of the Church, following closely in the villainous train of Nero.⁸¹ But while there are some who would still posit a considerably prominent part for the emperor, most tend to absolve him

⁸⁰ Cf. C. Callewaert, "Le Rescrit d'Hadrien à Minucius Fundanus," *RHPR* 8 (1903) 152-89; Bernard W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 76-138* (London: Methuen, 1923) 224-26; Wolfgang Schmid, "The Christian Re-Interpretation of the Rescript of Hadrian," *Maia* 7 (1955) 5-13; Paul Keresztes, "Hadrian's Rescript to Minucius Fundanus," *Latomus* 26 (1967) 54-66 [essentially reproduced in, idem, "The Emperor Hadrian's Rescript to Minucius Fundanus," *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 120-29]; Eberhard Heck, "Zu Hadrians Christenrescript an Minucius Fundanus (Euseb. hist. eccl. 4,9,1-3)," in *Prinzipat und Kultur im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert: Wissenschaftliche Tagung der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena und der Iwane-Dshawachischwili-Universität Tbilissi, 27.-30. Oktober 1992 in Jena* (eds. B. Kühnert, et al.; Bonn: Habelt, 1995) 103-17.

⁸¹ This view was first introduced by Melito of Sardis in his *Apology Addressed to Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* [in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26] and then picked up and disseminated in the works of later Christian authors (e.g., Tertullian, *Apol.* 5; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.17-18; Lactantius, *Mort.* 3; Orosius, *Hist.* 7.10).

of any “official” role in Christian persecution.⁸² Therefore, our examination will only be concerned with individual descriptions of suffering which could provide some indication of the legal status of Christians at this time.

As we survey the evidence from this period, there are two groups of source material from which we will draw. The first group is the episodic accounts of persecution recorded by later authors and purported to have taken place during Domitian’s reign. Of these stories, the one of most interest to us is the account of Flavia Domitilla.⁸³ Eusebius records that in the fifteenth year of Domitian (96 CE), Flavia Domitilla, the niece of Flavius Clemens, a consul of Rome, was exiled to the island of Pontia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.5; *Chron.* 274 F). If this account is accurate, it could serve as an important piece of evidence for the effectively illegal status of Christians during the late-first century CE. For although the specifics of Domitilla’s exile are not recorded, Eusebius describes the cause (ἐνεκεν) of her punishment as being her “testimony given on behalf of Christ” (τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν μαρτυρίας).⁸⁴ As such, it may imply that Christianity was a punishable offense at this time.

But while this episode would serve as an important piece of evidence for the legality theory posed here, we must be cautious about drawing too much from the Eusebian account. This hesitation is fueled by the significant disparity between the evidence recorded in Eusebius and that found in other ancient literature. Elsewhere, Flavia

⁸² See, e.g., Jacques Moreau, “A propos de la persécution de Domitien,” *NClío* 5 (1953) 121-29; P. Duane Warden, “Imperial Persecution and the Dating of 1 Peter and Revelation,” *JETS* 34 (1991) 203-12 (205-208); Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992) 114-17; *et al.*

⁸³ Two other Christian persecution accounts from the time of Domitian could also be discussed. The first is the accusation of the grandsons of Jude, recorded in Hegesippus and cited by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.20-21). According to an ancient tradition, Eusebius notes that Domitian passed a decree to the effect that the descendants of David should be put to death. In response, some “heretics” purportedly accused the relatives of Jude on the basis of their family lineage. When they were brought before the emperor, they were questioned and then released. After this point an edict was issued which put an end to the persecution of the Church. While an interesting anecdote, some of the details in this story are highly questionable. Furthermore, the basis of their accusation was family lineage not Christianity. Therefore, the account is not applicable to the question of legal status. The second persecution story is that of Flavius Clemens, consul of 95 CE, and his wife Flavia Domitilla (Dio Cassius, 67.14.1-2; cf. Suetonius, *Dom.* 15.1). In Dio’s account, the charge brought against these prominent members of Roman society was “atheism” (ἀθεότης), “a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish practices (τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη) were also condemned” (67.14.2). Many modern scholars have taken this to be an indication of their Christianity and thus as evidence for Christian persecution. Such an interpretation, however, is completely unwarranted (see Paul Keresztes, “The Jews, the Christians, and Emperor Domitian,” *VC* 27 [1973] 1-18 [7-15]).

⁸⁴ Cf. also Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.1, which states that the apostle John was exiled to Patmos “because of his testimony to the divine word (τῆς εἰς τὸν θεῖον λόγον ἐνεκεν μαρτυρίας).”

Domitilla is said to have been the *wife* of Flavius Clemens, a fact that is attested in a number of ancient sources (e.g., Dio Cassius, 67.14.1-2; Suetonius, *Dom.* 17.1; *CIL* VI no. 8942 [= *ILS* no. 1839]; *CIL* VI no. 10098 [= *ILS* no. 5172]). Conversely, the only other attestation of a *niece* of Flavius Clemens by the name of Flavia Domitilla comes from later Christian documents, which were presumably dependent upon the testimony of Eusebius (e.g., Jerome, *Ep.* 108.7; *Acta Nerei* 9). Furthermore, whereas the Eusebian Domitilla was exiled to Pontia, Dio Cassius records that she was sent to Pandateria. It thus appears that Eusebius inaccurately reproduced his source material concerning both the relationship of Flavius Clemens and Flavia Domitilla as well as the punishment of the latter.⁸⁵ As a result, serious doubt is cast on the notion that Domitilla suffered “because her testimony given on behalf of Christ.” It appears that this is simply Eusebius’ interpretation of the situation based on the incorrect assumption that the “atheism” (*ἀθεότης*) with which Domitilla was charged referred to Christianity rather than to Jewish practices.⁸⁶

Given that these later accounts fail to disclose any substantial evidence regarding the legal status of Christians, we are forced to turn to the second group of source material: early Christian literature composed during the reign of Domitian. The first source of inquiry within this general corpus is the Synoptic Gospels. These texts, which were written some time during the latter part of the first century CE (and probably during the reign of Domitian), explicitly describe Christians being brought to trial before Roman authorities. In Luke 21.12-17, for instance, Jesus warns his disciples, “they will arrest you

⁸⁵ If so, he would not be alone in this error. Philostratus also seems to have confused the situation, as he refers to the wife Flavius Clemens as Domitian’s sister (*Vit. Apoll.* 8.25). The cause of the Eusebian error, however, can quite possibly be traced back to his (lack of) familiarity with the relevant source material. It is apparent from his *Chronicon* that Eusebius adduces a certain Bruttius (an otherwise unknown pagan author) as his authority on the “persecution” of Domitilla (*Chron.* 274 F; cf. *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.4). Yet the method by which he employs this source is significantly different from his usual practice. Eusebius’ normal procedure is to first cite his authority and then to provide an extended quotation of its exact wording (see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* [Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1981] 131). The fact that he deviates from this habit at such a crucial point in his argument and at a time when such importance is ascribed to his source led Merrill (*Essays in Early Christian History*, 166) to (correctly) conclude that, “he had probably never seen the actual text of Bruttius, but relied joyfully on some welcome report of it derived from some now unknown and probably Christian source.”

⁸⁶ Over the years, the number of those who have denied the existence of the Eusebian Flavia Domitilla, the niece of Flavius Clemens has far outweighed those who have accepted it (see Leon H. Canfield, *The Early Persecutions of the Christians* [SHEL 55/2; New York: Columbia University Press, 1913; repr., New York: AMS, 1968] 82-83; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 229-30 n. 41).

and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. . . . You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name” (NRSV; cf. Matt 10.16-23; 24.9).

The fact that some were being put to death is, of course, an indication of the seriousness of the situation. But even before the time of Nero, there is evidence of Christian martyrdom (Acts 7.54-60; 12.1-2). Moreover, Jesus’ prediction that this persecution would take place “because of me” (ἐνεκεν ἐμοῦ) and “because of my name” (διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου) leaves the legal basis undeclared. Absent is the terminology of later Christian persecution (e.g., Χριστιανός; the “Name”). But the numerous factors that are involved in this conflict (Roman authorities, accusations, death) would certainly suggest an escalated situation wherein Christianity had become effectively illegal. Otherwise, this combination would be difficult to explain. Therefore, the legal status of Christians that is established in later sources appears to be evident in the late-first century as well. Nevertheless, it is unsafe to draw any definitive conclusions from these texts alone due to the fact that the specific cause of persecution is not explicit.

A second Christian source that may also have been composed during the reign of Domitian is the epistle of *I Clement*. This letter, which was dispatched from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth in response to an inter-congregational dispute, has traditionally been dated to ca. 95-96 CE.⁸⁷ In fact, this date has been described as the

⁸⁷ The long list of those who have posited this date include: J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part 1: *S. Clement of Rome, A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations* (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1890) 346-58; Adolf von Harnack, “Der erste Klemensbrief: eine Studie zur Bestimmung des Charakters des ältesten Heidenchristentums,” *SPAW* (1909) 38-63; Otto Knoch, *Eigenart und Bedeutung der Eschatologie im theologischen Aufriss des ersten Clemensbriefes: eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Theophaneia 17; Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums; Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1964) 31; Paul Mikat, *Die Bedeutung der Begriffe Stasis und Aponia für das Verständnis des 1. Clemensbriefes* (AFLNW 155; Köln: Westdeutscher, 1969) 11-12; Annie Jaubert, *Clément de Rome. Épître aux Corinthiens: Introduction, Texte, Traduction, Notes et Index* (SC 167; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971) 19-20; Hagner, *Clement of Rome*, 4-6; John Fuellenbach, *Ecclesiastical Office and the Primacy of Rome: An Evaluation of Recent Theological Discussion of First Clement* (SCA 20; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1980) 1-3; Andreas Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (HNT 17; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) 12; David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) 239-41; Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief* (KAV 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 75-78; *et al.*

“common-sense conclusion,” which “can be fixed with practical certainty.”⁸⁸ If such an assumption is correct, it may provide evidence for some type of persecution at the end of Domitian’s reign, because the epistle is said to have been delayed due to the sudden and repeated “misfortunes” (συμφοράς) and “calamities” (περιπτώσεις) that had recently befallen the church (*I Clem.* 1.1), an indication of some form of external conflict experienced by the Roman congregation.⁸⁹ The problem, however, is that there is no explicit identification of the nature of these troubles. We are therefore only left to surmise the cause of conflict.

An even more serious dilemma arises when we look closer at the time of the letter’s composition. There is nothing about the conflict mentioned in *I Clement* which would indicate persecution resulting from an imperial order.⁹⁰ For this reason, the epistle cannot be dated based on alleged pogroms of Domitian, a point on which virtually all modern scholars now agree. With this crucial piece of evidence removed, we are left to determine the date from a meager amount of inconclusive data. In fact, this lack of substantial evidence has resulted in a number of widely divergent opinions, some locating the epistle

⁸⁸ W. K. Lowther Clarke, ed., *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* (TED; London: SPCK, 1937) 11.

⁸⁹ It is becoming somewhat commonplace for interpreters to understand the *συμφοράς* and *περιπτώσεις* not as an indication of external conflict but of internal sedition (so, e.g., Merrill, *Essays in Early Christian History*, 159-60, 239-40; R. L. P. Milburn, “The Persecution of Domitian,” *CQR* 278 [1945] 154-64; Gerbert Brunner, *Die theologische Mitte des ersten Klemensbriefes: ein Beitrag zur Hermeneutik frühchristlicher Texte* [FTS 11; Frankfurt am Main: J. Knecht, 1972] 102; Laurence L. Welborn, “On the Date of First Clement,” *BR* 29 [1984] 35-54; Kurt Erlemann, “Die Datierung des ersten Klemenbriefes—Anfragen an eine Communis Opinio,” *NTS* 44 [1998] 591-607 [596-97]; Odd M. Bakke, “*Concord and Peace*”: *A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Language of Unity and Sedition* [WUNT 2/143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001]; Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* [LCL; Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2003] 24, 35). But one wonders whether this might be an over-reaction against the earlier erroneous tendency to date the epistle according to a proposed Domitianic persecution. Certainly the church at Rome would be in no position to offer counsel on concord and unity if they themselves were experiencing internal sedition (cf. Leslie W. Barnard, “Clement of Rome and the Persecution of Domitian,” *NTS* 10 [1964] 251-60 [256]). Furthermore, the epistle’s subsequent line of argumentation tends to suggest that the senders’ have experienced some form of outside conflict: chapter four describes OT examples of persecution resulting from jealousy; then in chapters five and six the author moves on to discuss the same type of persecution that affected “those who lived nearest to our time” (ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητάς, *I Clem.* 5.1). Once this foundation has been laid, the letter turns to the present situation, comparing their current suffering with that of saints past: “We write these things, dear friends, not only to admonish you, but also to remind ourselves. For we are in the same arena, and the same contest awaits us” (7.1; trans. Holmes). Therefore, it is quite probable that the *συμφοράς* and *περιπτώσεις* are persecutions from the hands of outsiders.

⁹⁰ Pace Edgar J. Goodspeed, “First Clement called forth by Hebrews,” *JBL* 30 (1911) 157-60; Donald W. Riddle, “Hebrews, First Clement, and the Persecution of Domitian,” *JBL* 43 (1924) 329-48.

much earlier than the traditional position⁹¹ and some dating it much later.⁹² In the end, we would have to agree with the recent assessment of Andrew Gregory, that “there is no specific evidence on which to date *1 Clement*, and we can be no more confident than to conclude that it was probably written at some point in the period 70-140 [CE].”⁹³ As a result, *1 Clement* is of little value in establishing the legal status of Christian during the late-first century CE.

A final source that could provide clues to the legal status of Christians during the time of Domitian is the book of Revelation.⁹⁴ What makes the Apocalypse so valuable for this subject is that it provides us with both a late-first-century date and a reference to

⁹¹ Proponents of this view include: George Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century: An Examination of Various Controverted Questions Relating to Its History, Chronology, Literature and Traditions* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1913) 187-202 (70 CE); A. E. Wilhelm-Hooijbergh, “A Different View of Clemens Romanus,” *HeyJ* 16 (1975) 266-88 (69 CE); John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976) 327-35 (70 CE); Thomas J. Herron, “The Most Probable Date of the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 21: *Papers Presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies. Part 3: Second Century, Tertullian to Nicea in the West, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Athanasius* (ed. E. A. Livingstone; Leuven: Peeters, 1989) 106-21 (70 CE); Erlemann, “Die Datierung des ersten Klemenbriefes,” 591-607 (70s-80s CE).

⁹² Proponents of this view include: Merrill, *Essays in Early Christian History*, 217-41 (ca. 140 CE); Christian Eggenberger, *Die Quellen der politischen Ethik des 1. Klemenbriefes* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1951) 182 (118-125 CE); Welborn, “On the Date of First Clement,” 35-54 (80-140 CE); H. Benedict Green, “Matthew, Clement and Luke: Their Sequence and Relationship,” *JTS* 40 (1989) 1-25 (a few years into the second century CE); Bakke, *A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement*, 8-11 (first decade of the second century CE); Andrew Gregory, “Disturbing Trajectories: *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the Development of Early Roman Christianity,” in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (ed. P. Oakes; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002) 142-66 (144-49) (70-140 CE).

⁹³ Gregory, “Disturbing Trajectories,” 149. Cf. also Andrew Gregory, “*1 Clement*: An Introduction,” *ExpTim* 117 (2006) 223-30 (227-28). The *terminus a quo* of the epistle is set at approximately 68 CE by the reference to the death of Peter and Paul (*1 Clem.* 5.1). The *terminus ad quem* (140 CE), on the other hand, is established by the fact that it was known to Hegesippus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.16; 4.22.1) and to Dionysius of Corinth shortly thereafter (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.11). Within this broad spectrum, the evidence for a more specific date remains inconclusive. There are a few indicators that point to an earlier date: (1) the death of apostles is said to be nearest (ἐγγιστα; superlative adjective) to the writer’s/readers’ own generation (*1 Clem.* 5.1), and (2) the letter does not show any awareness of monoepiscopate (cf. 44.4-5). Sometimes literary parallels are also used to establish an earlier date (e.g., *Ign. Rom.* 3.1; *Pol. Phil*), although these “similarities” are not altogether convincing. On the other side, there is evidence that would tend to push the date back somewhat further: (1) the Corinthian church is described as “ancient” (ἀρχαῖος, 47.6); (2) the leaders appointed by the apostles have died (44.2) and possibly their successors (44.3); and (3) the emissaries sent by Rome are said to have lived blamelessly from their youth to old age (ἀπὸ νεότητος . . . ἕως γήρους, 63.3).

⁹⁴ Another text that could shed some light on the nature of Christian persecution during the time of Domitian is the epistle to the Hebrews. The readers of this letter are said to have been exposed to *δνειδισμοῖς* (“abuses”) and *θλίψεσιν* (“persecutions”) (Heb 10.33). Some had been thrown into prison (awaiting trial), and others had their property confiscated (10.34). The problem is that there is no agreement on the precise dating of the letter (see Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989] 6-9).

Christian suffering.⁹⁵ Throughout the work there are allusions to Christian martyrdom (Rev 6.9-10; 7.14; 12.11; 17.6; 20.4), which may or may not be representative of the actual situation in Asia Minor.⁹⁶ What cannot be denied, however, is the explicit reference to the death of one particular Christian named Antipas. He is described by Christ as “my faithful witness who was killed among you, where Satan lives” (Rev 2.13).

The question then is, what does this text reveal about the nature of Antipas’ death? According to later hagiographic tradition, Antipas was cast into a brazen bull and then roasted to death.⁹⁷ Such a reconstruction is, of course, based more on Christian imagination than on historical reality. From the passage itself, very few details can be gleaned. What is clear is that the death of Antipas was in some way related to his Christian faith. Not only is he extolled as a “faithful witness/martyr,” the wider congregation is commended for holding fast to the name of Christ and not denying their faith during this difficult time (Rev 2.13). So it would seem that this conflict threatened not just one member, but the whole Christian assembly.

⁹⁵ Despite the fact that over the years some interpreters have pushed for a much earlier date (so, e.g., Jan Stolt, “Om dateringen af Apokalypsen,” *DTT* 40 [1977] 202-207; Albert A. Bell, Jr., “The Date of John’s Apocalypse: The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered,” *NTS* 25 [1978] 93-102; J. Christian Wilson, “The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation,” *NTS* 39 [1993] 587-605; Ian Boxall, *Revelation: Vision and Insight. An Introduction to the Apocalypse* [London: SPCK, 2002] 86-104; Thomas B. Slater, “Dating the Apocalypse to John,” *Bib* 84 [2003] 252-58; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* [London: SPCK, 2005] 2-3), there is considerable agreement among modern commentators that the work was written during time of Domitian. The earliest attestation of a Domitianic date for Revelation comes from Irenaeus (*Haer.* 5.30.3; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.3; 5.30.3). This view became widely accepted in the ancient church (for the evidence, see David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5* [WBC 52A; Dallas: Word, 1997] lviii-lx).

⁹⁶ Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) esp. 95-167, tries to downplay any notion that actual persecution underlies the Apocalypse (cf. also Jonathan Knight, *Revelation* [Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999] 21-28). Instead, he tends to focus on the “perceived crisis” created by the author. Thompson’s work is important in that it captures an important aspect of apocalyptic material, thus enabling him to more clearly expose the “true” character of Domitian and to account for the minimizing affect of Christian assimilation on persecution. Nevertheless, the situation was somewhat more nuanced than his study acknowledges. Most importantly, he overlooks the danger created by the criminalized legal status of Christians in association with the accusatory legal system of Asia Minor. For this reason, he fails to recognize that in late-first-century Anatolia, Christians could be accused as Christians at any time and by anyone. Moreover, Thompson is wrong to equate the lack of known conflict with peace and tranquility. As Holloway (*Coping with Prejudice*) has shown, even in times of “tranquility” there can be a destructive undercurrent of social prejudice (cf. Craig S. de Vos, “Popular Graeco-Roman Responses to Christianity,” in *The Early Christian World* [ed. P. F. Esler; New York: Routledge, 2000] 869-89 [869-70]). Furthermore, not all Christian conflict has been recorded in the pages of history (see p. 224 n. 139). Consequently, to question its existence on the basis of its meager attestation is to demand too much from the ancient data.

⁹⁷ See Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (3rd ed.; London/New York: Macmillan, 1909) 35; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 97.

The most that could be concluded from this passage is that Antipas was killed for his Christian faith.⁹⁸ We are only left to conjecture how he was killed and by whom. But amidst this uncertainty, there is still a further problem with using this text to reconstruct the Christian legal status during the late-first century CE. The phrase ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς (“in the days of Antipas”) indicates that the event took place prior to the writing of the Apocalypse and possibly even at a time that pre-dated Domitian. As a result, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding the legal status of Christians from the book of Revelation.

Where then does this leave us with respect to the legal status of Christians during the late-first century CE? In the previous section, we argued that the second-century persecution under Pliny was simply the outworking of an established precedent. In trying and then condemning the Bithynian Christians on the basis of the Name alone, the governor was merely following an earlier practice of treating Christianity as a punishable offense. Our attempt to substantiate this precarious legal status from the late-first-century material, however, has been impeded by a serious roadblock: there are no late-first-century sources (apart from 1 Peter) which provide an *explicit* indication of the legal status of Christians at the time of composition. While some texts provide evidence for the *existence* of conflict between the Church and the State during this period, and while some hint at the criminalization of the faith, none reveal the true nature of Christian persecution in that they fail to explicitly disclose whether the mere confession of Christianity was a punishable offense. Nevertheless, what is important to recognize is that the evidence from the reign of Domitian does not provide any indication that the legal status of Christians had been altered from an earlier period. So, barring the discovering of new evidence, we must conclude that the precedent which was followed by Pliny was already in place during the time of Domitian. Our search for the event(s) surrounding the criminalization of Christianity, therefore, must work back even further into the first century CE.

⁹⁸ The reference to “the throne of Satan” (ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ) and “the place where Satan lives” (ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ) may well be an allusion to the imperial temple located in Pergamum. But no connection is drawn between the dwelling place of Satan and the death of Antipas, a connection which would be expected if his martyrdom was in any way related to the imperial cult. For this reason, the suggestion that Antipas was killed because he refused to sacrifice at the statue of the emperor (as proposed by Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* [HNT 16a; Tübingen: Mohr, 1974] 65) must be rejected.

b. Christian Persecution during the Reign of Nero

The great fire of Rome and the ensuing persecution of Christians by the emperor Nero is a topic that has been frequently discussed by ancient and modern authors alike. In fact, the modern literature on the subject is legion. As a result, not every issue can be addressed here. There are certain questions, however, which must be discussed if we are going to understand the legal status of Christians during the late-first century CE. Before we begin this discussion, though, it is important to detail exactly what took place.

On July 19, 64 CE, a fire broke out in one of the shops located around the Circus Maximus (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38). Impelled by the wind and aided by the close proximity of the city's wooden architecture, the conflagration swept across Rome. The blaze burned for six days and seven nights until it was put out at the foot of the Esquiline (Suetonius, *Nero* 38; cf. *Ep. Paul Sen.* 11), only to be ignited again on the Aemilian property of Tigellinus, where it destroyed numerous monumental structures before finally being extinguished (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.40). The fire did extensive damage to the city, and it claimed a considerable amount of human lives. According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.40; cf. Dio Cassius, 62.18.2), only four of the fourteen districts in Rome remained intact.

Within the earliest surviving source record, blame for the fire is almost unanimously placed on the shoulders of the emperor Nero,⁹⁹ and given the extent to which this opinion was held among the populace, one would assume that the emperor would have been quick to disassociate himself from the tragedy. What is interesting, however, is that Tacitus (and Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2.29, who follows him) is the only one of the early sources to connect Nero's persecution of Christians with his attempt to pass-off the blame for the fire. All other authors (aside from Sulpicius Severus) separate the two events. Furthermore, no Christian apologist defends the faith against claims of arson, nor does any anti-Christian literature accuse them of such.¹⁰⁰ This evidence has led some to

⁹⁹ See Pliny, *Nat.* 17.1.5; Suetonius, *Nero* 38; Dio Cassius, 62.16-18. The only writer who entertains the possibility of an accidental origin is Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.38), who notes, "whether [the disaster was] due to chance or to the malice of the sovereign is uncertain—for each version has its sponsors" (trans. Jackson [LCL]). But even Tacitus appears to be decidedly convinced of the emperor's involvement (as shown by Paul Murgatroyd, "Tacitus on the Great Fire of Rome," *Eranos* 103 [2005] 48-54).

¹⁰⁰ While this fact may denote simply that everyone—including the opponents of Christianity—acknowledged the Christians' innocence, it is peculiar that apologists would not use this event as further ammunition in their arsenal. By connecting persecution to evil Roman emperors like Nero, Christian apologists sought to exonerate the faith through negative association. If they could have also shown that the

be skeptical of the connection, whether on the basis of the text or the testimony itself.¹⁰¹ If this assessment is correct (and it is difficult to provide a definitive answer either way), it would further strengthen the primary thesis of this chapter, for the Neronian persecution would presumably be even more closely associated with the Christians' *identity*, rather than with false allegations of incendiarism.

Nevertheless, assuming that there was a connection between the fire and the persecution, how should we understand the situation and its subsequent affect on Christians? Following the events of the fire, reports quickly began to spread that Nero was ultimately behind the conflagration. In an attempt to dispel these rumors, the emperor sought out an appropriate scapegoat to whom the blame could be shifted, and the Christians seemed to be a natural choice.¹⁰² Tacitus describes the situation as follows,

Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled as Christians. . . . First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers were convicted (*convicti*),¹⁰³ not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race (*odio humani generis*). (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; trans. Jackson [LCL])

The Neronian persecution clearly distinguished Christianity from Judaism and marked the Christians out as recognized deviants by the Roman authorities. But one question that often arises is whether this persecution was further incited by official legislation against the religion itself. From later Christian sources, it sounds as though

first imperial persecution arose out of a Neronian attempt to quell rumors of his alleged involvement in the fire, then their case would have been significantly strengthened.

¹⁰¹ So, e.g., Canfield, *The Early Persecutions*, 43-69; Charles Saumagne, "Tacite et Saint Paul," *RH* 232 (1964) 67-110; Erich Koestermann, "Ein folgenschwerer Irrtum des Tacitus (Ann. 15,44,2ff.)," *Historia* 16 (1967) 456-69; Jean Rougé, "L'incendie de Rome en 64 et l'incendie de Nicomédie en 303," in *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston* (ed. J. Tréheux; Publications de la Sorbonne, Série 'Études' 9; Paris: Boccard, 1974) 433-41; Paul Keresztes, "Nero, the Christians and the Jews in Tacitus and Clement of Rome," *Latomus* 43 (1979) 404-13.

¹⁰² On the circumstances which led Nero to choose the Christians as the group to blame for the fire, see Michael J. G. Gray-Fow, "Why the Christians?: Nero and the Great Fire," *Latomus* 57 (1998) 595-616.

¹⁰³ There is some textual diversity at this point in the MSS evidence. While some sources read *convicti*, "to convict," others contain the verb *coniuncti*, "to join together" (for the textual evidence, see Franz Römer, ed., *P. Cornelii Taciti Annalium libri XV-XVI: Einleitung, Text und vollständiger kritischer Apparat aller bekannten Handschriften* [WS 6; Wien: H. Böhlau, 1976] 67). The latter would certainly provide a perfectly adequate sense: "Therefore, first, those who confessed and, then, on their information, a vast number of them were prosecuted, and they were both joined together not so much in the crime of arson as in their being hated by the human race" (so, e.g., Keresztes, "The Imperial Roman Government and the Christian Church," 254-55). There is nevertheless much more substantial evidence to defend the traditional reading (*convicti*) at this point (see Harald Fuchs, "Tacitus über die Christen," *VC* 4 [1950] 65-93 [74-82]).

some type of imperial edict or *senatusconsultum* was passed which outlawed Christianity.¹⁰⁴ Sulpicius Severus, for instance, claims that the Neronian incident was the beginning of troubles for Christians, as the “religion was prohibited by laws (*legibus*) which were enacted; and by edicts (*edictis*) openly set forth it was proclaimed unlawful to be a Christian (*Christianum esse non licebat*)” (*Chron.* 2.29; trans. Schaff). Another source to which appeal is often made in this context is Tertullian’s *Ad nationes*. It is in this work that many have found what they consider to be a Neronian law or decree against the Christian faith: “Now, although every other institution which existed under Nero (*institutum Neronianum*) has been destroyed, yet this of ours has firmly remained” (*Nat.* 1.7.9; trans. Holmes).

When we look more closely at the textual evidence for this view, however, we discover that there is no real basis for positing the existence of official legislation against Christianity. In describing these alleged regulations, Sulpicius Severus employs the plural (“laws” and “edicts”), showing that he has no awareness of any specific decrees. And later in this same work, Severus misrepresents the persecution of Christians which took place under Trajan (*Chron.* 2.31). Both of these facts cast considerable doubt on the accuracy of his testimony. Furthermore, the *institutum Neroniarum* mentioned by Tertullian must be considered something other than an official regulation. This phrase, as Timothy D. Barnes notes, “in its context can denote only persecution or the habit or

¹⁰⁴ The *Acts of Paul* may be one of the earliest references to a Neronian edict. After being miraculously revived to life by the apostle Paul, Patroclus (the emperor’s cupbearer) confessed his Christian faith to Nero and revealed that he was now fighting for a new king. Upon hearing of Patroclus’ conversion, as well as that of other chief men, Nero is said to have issued an edict (*διάταγμα/edictum*) to the effect that all Christians were to be put to death (*Acts Paul* 11.2). The work is contemporary with, if not antecedent to, the time of Tertullian. In fact, Tertullian himself cites it and claims to know of its origin (*Bapt.* 17; cf. also Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 3.29). It has become common for scholarship to date the *Acts of Paul* at some point during the late-second century CE, ca. 180-195 CE (adherents to this date include: Carl Schmidt and Wilhelm Schubart, *ΠΑΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ: Acta Pauli: Nach dem Papyrus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek* [VHB 2; Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1936] 127-28; Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* [2nd ed.; trans. R. M. Wilson; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991-1992] 2:235; J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1993] 357). This is based in large part on the work’s presumed dependence upon the *Acts of Peter*. But given the manner in which this basic assumption has been questioned within modern scholarship (see Dennis R. MacDonald, “*The Acts of Paul and The Acts of Peter: Which Came First?*,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1992 Seminar Papers* [vol. 31; ed. E. H. Lovering; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992] 214-24), one could argue that this date lacks a substantial basis. Most recently, Peter W. Dunn, “*The Acts of Paul and the Pauline Legacy in the Second Century*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1996) esp. 8-11, 199, has suggested that the range should be pushed back to the first half of the second century. If he is correct, the *Acts of Paul* would hold out significantly early testimony—its apocryphal nature notwithstanding—to a Neronian edict outlawing Christianity.

practice of persecution, not its judicial basis.”¹⁰⁵ That is, “Tertullian meant only that the persecution of Christians began with Nero and, alone among his practices, seems to have survived him.”¹⁰⁶ When this evidence is combined with the fact that later in the second century, Pliny was completely ignorant of any laws proscribing Christianity, and that when the question arose, Trajan never referred him to one, we must conclude that no official decrees were set down in connection with the Neronian persecution.¹⁰⁷

Are we to assume then that the actions of Nero had no impact on the subsequent relationship between Christians and popular society or between Christians and the Roman government? Very few would draw such a conclusion. In fact, most recognize that the Neronian persecution served as a way of effectively criminalizing the Christian faith across the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁸ Following this event, the confession of Christianity came to be treated as a punishable offense in a Roman court of law.

There are a number of key pieces of evidence that serve to establish this pogrom as the turning point in the legal treatment of Christians. First, an important point to consider

¹⁰⁵ Timothy D. Barnes, “Legislation against the Christians,” *JRS* 58 (1968) 32-50 (35). For more on the *Institutum Neronianum*, see Abel Bourgery, “Le problème de l’Institutum Neronianum,” *Latomus* 2 (1938) 106-11; Jan W. P. Borleffs, “Institutum Neronianum,” *VC* 6 (1952) 129-45; Charles Saumagne, “Tertullian et l’Institutum Neronianum,” *TZ* 17 (1961) 334-35.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) 9.

¹⁰⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 98, contends that the Neronian persecution “set no official precedent for any policy of Rome toward the Christian movement in general.” Yet one wonders how “official” a precedent must be in order to be followed? This persecution certainly did not establish “official” laws or edicts against Christianity. But we cannot say that this event had no *effect* on the public perception or legal treatment of Christians. Insofar as precedents (as opposed to edicts) can be “official,” Nero’s actions seem to provide a basis on which Roman governors (e.g., Pliny) acted negatively towards Christians. Thus, it appears that the precedent set down by Nero was “official” enough.

¹⁰⁸ This is the consensus opinion among classical scholars and church historians (see, e.g., G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” *P&P* 26 [1963] 6-31 [8]; Friedrich Vittinghoff, “‘Christianus sum’ - Das ‘Verbrechen’ von Aussenseitern der römischen Gesellschaft,” *Historia* 33 [1984] 331-57 [esp. 355]; W. H. C. Frend, “Martyrdom and Political Oppression,” in *The Early Christian World* [ed. P. F. Esler; London/New York: Routledge, 2000] 815-39 [821, 835]; *et al*). In fact, as a way of explaining the criminalized status of Christians, many have even posited the existence of an imperial edict or *senatusconsultum*, which originated during the time of Nero and which outlawed the Christian faith (so, e.g., Camillus Callewaert, “Les Premiers chrétiens furent-ils persécutés par édits généraux ou par mesure de police? Observations sur la théorie de Mommsen principalement d’après les écrits de Tertullien,” *RHE* 2 [1901] 771-97; 3 [1902] 5-15, 324-48, 601-14; J. Zeiller, “Legalité et arbitraire dans les persécutions contre les chrétiens,” *AnBoll* 67 [1949] 49-54; *idem*, “Institutum Neronianum. Loi fantôme ou réalité?,” *RHE* 50 [1955] 393-99; Paul Keresztes, “Law and Arbitrariness in the Persecution of the Christians and Justin’s First Apology,” *VC* 18 [1964] 204-14; J. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* [Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1967] 279; Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 17-20, 31-32, 63; Adalberto Giovannini, “L’interdit contre les chrétiens: raison d’état ou mesure de police?,” *CCG* 7 [1996] 103-34 [esp. 122-24]). For further bibliography on those who have held to the notion of a “special” law, see Keresztes, “The Imperial Roman Government and the Christian Church,” 279-80 n. 182.

with regard to the effect of the Neronian persecution is the line of demarcation that separates the legal treatment of Christians prior to this event from that experienced by believers after the event. Fortunately for the ancient historian, there are recorded instances of Christians being brought to trial before Roman governors both prior to and subsequent to this official pogrom. For this reason, a comparison of their experiences during the two periods reveals the significant impact of Nero's actions.

During the second and third centuries CE, as we have demonstrated, adherence to the Christian faith was considered to be a punishable offense. But prior to the Neronian persecution, there is no evidence of Christians being tried and condemned in a Roman court of law simply on the basis of their adherence to the Christian faith.¹⁰⁹ On more than one occasion, the apostle Paul and his missionary associates were dragged before the local civic magistrates and accused of advocating customs which were unlawful according to Roman standards (cf. Acts 16.16-40; 17.1-9). There were also a number of instances where the apostle was forced to stand trial before the tribunal of the provincial governor (Acts 18.12-16; 23.25-30; 24-26; cf. 13.6-12). Without exception, however, all of these proceedings served to exonerate the defendants and their religion. There is no evidence that Paul's confession of Christianity was ever brought under review, as though membership in the group was considered a criminal act. Moreover, when provincial authorities became involved, Christianity was considered to be nothing more than an alternative perspective within Judaism. There are some instances, in fact, where pre-Neronian Christianity was actually benefited by the Roman judicial system.¹¹⁰

Therefore, sometime between the ministry of Paul (as described in Acts) and the early-second-century CE persecution reflected in the letters of Pliny, the legal treatment of Christians underwent an important transformation. Whereas, in the eyes of the Romans, the confession of Christianity was once viewed as a tolerable alternative within Judaism, it later served as sufficient grounds for accusation and condemnation within a

¹⁰⁹ Orosius, *Hist.* 7.6.15-16, discusses the Jewish expulsion by Claudius (cf. Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4), suggesting the possibility that Claudius was attempting to rid himself of both Jews and Christians. But there is still some doubt concerning the *Chrestus* mentioned by Suetonius (see Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, 25), and aside from this interpretation of Orosius, there is no other indication that Christians were being targeted in this instance.

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., Acts 19.23-40; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200. If in fact the apostle Paul was placed on trial and then acquitted at Rome in 62 CE (as some contend), this would serve as further evidence that the Name alone was not yet sufficient to warrant condemnation.

Roman court. Given that there is no evidence for such a change during the respective reigns of Vespasian, Titus, or Domitian, the event which would have most naturally established such a precedent is the persecution of Nero.

A second consideration for assessing the impact of the Neronian persecution is that the situation under review contains all of the necessary ingredients that would allow us to assume the establishment of some type of precedent for provincial governors as well as for private accusers. To begin with, the Christians were a group that was generally loathed in the ancient world. This was due, in large part, to the fact that their manner of life was opposed to the values of Greco-Roman society (see Ch. 7). The detestability of Christians was confirmed when members of the group were officially sought out for punishment by the emperor himself.¹¹¹ These actions would have undoubtedly played an influential role in the way Christians were subsequently perceived by Roman authorities.¹¹² Upon entering their provinces, governors—who were sent out from Rome and therefore who may have possessed a personal knowledge of the Neronian persecution—would have wielded complete judicial freedom to try and condemn Christians at their own discretion. With each of these pieces in place, it is hardly surprising that Christians began to be brought to trial by members of the local populace and condemned by the Roman governor according to the standard that was set by the emperor some years earlier.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Even though their separation as a distinct group within society may have already been recognized prior to this point, an act of this magnitude instigated by the highest power in the empire would have drawn a line of final demarcation and derision. To understand the impact of this event, we might draw upon the insights of *social categorization* and *social identity theory* (see Ch. 2). Already, the mere existence of Christians as a distinct group within Greco-Roman society was enough to establish intergroup bias. Now the discrimination and prejudice that may have remained latent was given an authoritative stimulus in the form of an imperial stamp of disapproval. Consequently, the differences of the Christians would have been accentuated, and the group as a whole would have been derogated.

¹¹² Hiebert, *First Peter*, 27, acknowledges this possibility and correctly recognizes that such a view “assumes that Roman officials in the Asian provinces would readily have followed the action of the emperor in the capital.” The problem is that he misunderstands both the nature of the Neronian persecution and the means by which the precedent would have been perpetuated in the provinces, for he goes on to state, “However, there is no firm evidence that the Neronian edict resulted in systematic persecution of Christians outside of Rome.” If we recognize that (a) Nero’s actions were perpetuated not through official laws or edicts but through mere influence, and therefore that (b) all Christian persecution in the provinces would have originated from the private accusations of a hostile populace rather than through the initiation of Roman officials, then Hiebert’s objection becomes baseless.

¹¹³ Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 30, is technically incorrect when he claims, “In none of our authorities . . . is there any suggestion that this persecution extended to the provinces.” Even though it is not one of the earliest sources on the situation, the fifth-century Christian historian Paulus Orosius (*Hist.*

The final piece of evidence that should be noted is the manner in which early Christians described their legal situation. As we have already pointed out, some Christian authors claimed that the persecutions were fueled by official legislation which outlawed Christianity (cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* 2.29). While such claims are technically inaccurate in that there is no evidence to prove that the religion was *officially* proscribed, they are nonetheless an important representation of how Christians were actually treated. By depicting their legal status as “criminal,” Christians simply sought to portray a situation in which they were prone to legal accusation (and subsequent condemnation) before Roman authorities simply on the basis of their Christian confession. One wonders how else the situation might have been described (possibly “*effectively* illegal”?). Even later in the third century CE, Christians remained at a loss as to how to truly understand this legal situation (see Tertullian, *Apol.* 2.8).

The idea that the simple confession of Christianity was a punishable offense following the persecution of Nero (and continuing on into the third century CE) is not a new theory that is being proposed for the first time here. Classical scholars and church historians alike have recognized this fact for years. In fact, this appears to be the modern consensus opinion in each of these respective fields. The reason why we have made such a concentrated effort to provide a thorough demonstration of this point is because so few commentators have allowed it to inform their reading of 1 Peter. As a result, due consideration has not been given to the serious legal situation that threatened the readers of the epistle. Our examination has thus sought to construct an adequate legal backdrop against which the letter might be read. In doing so, however, there is still one further aspect of this effectively illegal status that requires additional explanation: the sporadic nature of Christian persecution.

7.7.10) does in fact claim that the Neronian persecution extended into the provinces. Yet even beyond this simple technicality, Beare’s claim—like those of many other commentators—needs further refinement. It would be incorrect to say that, in his efforts to seek out Christians following the events of the fire, Nero moved his search outside of the city limits of Rome and into other parts of the Empire. On the other hand, this fact does not negate the possibility that Christians living in the provinces were negatively affected in some way by these circumstances—whether resulting in informal harassment from neighbors or in formal legal accusations by private *delatores*.

B. Reconciling Legal Status and Christian Persecution

Given the legal diagnosis sketched above, it might be surprising to find that the lives of many Christians were firmly integrated into the fabric of Greco-Roman society. In fact, it would appear that the practice of the Christian faith was not something carried out in secret. The identity of Christians was unquestionably known among the inhabitants of civic communities. For instance, a third-century CE gravestone marks the burial of Markos Demetrianos, a Christian who served as chief archon, general administrator, and ἀγωνοθέτης in the city of Klaudiopolis (*I.KPolis* no. 44). Although the epitaph dates to a period following the decree of Decius,¹¹⁴ there does not seem to be any hint of secrecy about his faith. He and his fellow dedicatee, Aurelia Pannychas, are described as τοῖς ἀγνοτάτοις καὶ Θεῷ πιστεύουσαι (“the purest ones who had faith in God”).

In a similar fashion, we learn of Markos Ioulios Eugenios, a Christian who was the son of a βουλῆ member and married to the daughter of a Roman senator (*MAMA* I no. 170). Upon a decree from the emperor Maximinos Daia, which ordered all Christians to sacrifice to the traditional gods, Markos gained his release from his position as a soldier in the *officium* of the governor of Pisidia and became a Christian bishop in Laodicea. One would have to imagine that his father-in-law certainly must have known that he was a Christian, as presumably did the military officials who discharged him.¹¹⁵ What is more, there are even instances in which the general populace seems to have known about the Christian identity of those against whom there was some animosity (e.g., Dionysius of Alexander, Polycarp).

These circumstances raise a very important question for the primary thesis of this chapter: if Christianity was effectively illegal, and if its punishment simply required a local inhabitant to bring formal charges before the governor, why was destructive,

¹¹⁴ There is some disagreement about the dating of this particular epitaph. Friedrich Becker-Bertau (*Die Inschriften von Klaudiu polis* [IGSK 31; Bonn: Habelt, 1986] 54) places it at the end of the third century CE, sometime prior to the persecution of Diocletian. On the other hand, Gary J. Johnson (*Early-Christian Epitaphs from Anatolia* [SBLTT 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995] 80 n. 3) proposes that it “may have been dedicated before C.E. 250.” Adding further confusion, the style of the letting has been said to resemble that of the mid/late-second century (see Friedrich K. Dörner, *Bericht über eine Reise in Bithynien* [DenksrWien 75.1; Vienna: R. M. Rohrer, 1952] 59-60).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.49, which describes a certain Alexander, a Christian who was charged before the governor’s tribunal, as follows: “a Phrygian by race and a physician by profession, who had lived in Gaul for many years and was known to almost every one (γνωστὸς σχεδὸν πᾶσι) for his love toward God and boldness of speech” (trans. Lake [LCL]).

escalated conflict more often sporadic and episodic rather than permanent and decisive? Why was Christianity not swiftly and summarily exterminated by prosecution? How did the Christian religion spread after its criminalization? These, of course, are crucial questions to ask. For if we are going to pose a kind of “questionable” legality for Christians of the first three centuries, then we must be able to reconcile this dubious status with their actual experience of persecution. In fact, the inability to reconcile these two ideas has forced some Petrine commentators to rule out any possibility that the confession of Christianity was a punishable offense at the time when 1 Peter was composed.¹¹⁶

What we will seek to demonstrate is that Christianity could be effectively illegal and still only produce destructive conflict on sporadic occasions. This consideration is based on two key factors: the nature of Anatolian judicial processes and the nature of the relationship between Christians and society.¹¹⁷

1. The Nature of the Anatolian Judicial Processes

In our discussion of the judicial processes of first-century Anatolia, we attempted to highlight a few of the major problems which, at times, inhibited the administration of justice for provincial inhabitants (see Ch. 5). Inherent in this system were a number of factors that likely served to impede legal action against Christians in particular. In many ways, the court processes themselves served as deterrents against Christian prosecution.¹¹⁸

The first major deterrent in this respect was the requirement of an official accuser (*delator*) who would be willing to submit formal allegations against a Christian and thus risk the penalties for false accusation. Although one might expect the willing and eager participation of local citizens, accusers were not always forthcoming. This is evident in

¹¹⁶ See, e.g., Michaels, *1 Peter*, 268-69.

¹¹⁷ This is not to say that these were the only factors which would have mitigated against Christian persecution (and especially legal prosecution). In some cases, the Christians themselves undertook intentional means of avoiding or abrogating legal prosecution. For instance, Tertullian (*Fug.*) describes some Christians who fled from place to place trying to escape their enemies and others—including entire congregations—who sought to bribe their detractors.

¹¹⁸ For this reason, Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 5 n. 14, is incorrect when he states, “Christians were hauled to court by their prejudiced neighbors where they faced judges who like their accusers were similarly prejudiced against them, and where *there was little if any procedural justice to protect them*” (emphasis added).

the personal correspondence of Dionysius of Alexandria. In a letter to Germanus, Dionysius notes that the very hour the edict of Decius was received, Sabinus, the prefect of Egypt, sent a *frumentarius* to search for him in order to bring him to justice (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.40.2). From this, it would appear that Dionysius' Christian identity was no secret in Alexandria, and given Sabinus' quick response, we might even assume that it was looked upon quite negatively. Yet despite the way Dionysius was viewed by the governor, punishment of his effectively illegal confession was still facilitated through the traditional accusatorial process; hence the reason why the governor could not punish Dionysius prior to this point.¹¹⁹

But why were formal accusers so difficult to find? What might have prevented someone from serving in this capacity? There are two reasons that seem to stand out. To begin with, there were serious risks involved in personal litigation. The *senatusconsultum Turpillianum* of 61 CE instituted three procedural offenses to deter would-be informants: *calumnia*, *praevaricatio*, and *tergiversatio* (*Dig.* 48.16). Each of these transgressions carried with it serious penalty (see Ch. 5). What makes these penalties somewhat disheartening is the second point: the fact that the mere recantation of one's Christian faith is all that was required for acquittal (cf. Justin, *I Apol.* 4.6; 8.1). Therefore, one could quickly be transformed from the accuser to the accused, if the defendant chose to renounce his or her Christian faith. And if the persecution of Decius is any indication of how Christians responded to legal accusations, pagan accusers may have been rightly hesitant. For when faced with the decision of life and death, many chose to deny the faith rather than to die for it (see *Acta Pionii* 15.2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.12; Cyprian, *Laps.* 7-8).

Another possible deterrent in the prosecution of Christians was the arbitrary wielding of judicial powers by the Roman governor.¹²⁰ The judicial authority of a provincial

¹¹⁹ This is especially enlightening given the fact that the Christian community of Alexandria faced extensive local persecution the year prior to the Decian edict (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.1-9). Dionysius' ability to survive this pogrom reveals that prior to the time of Decius, Christians were able to persist despite bearing a Name that was in and of itself a punishable offense in the eyes of the Roman authorities.

¹²⁰ This fact weighs heavily against the thesis of Warden, "Alienation and Community" (and Steenberg, "Reversal of Roles," 76-89, who follows him). Dismissing any ideas of persecution arising out of official legislation, Warden advances the notion that the greatest source of conflict for the readers were the local authorities and the Roman governor, who aggressively pursued them: "With more or less consistency, governors and local city officials violently suppressed the church soon after its arrival in Asia" (iv). And further, "1 Peter suggests that Roman governors of Asia and Pontus-Bithynia had learned of

governor is well documented. “The influence of the Roman governor on the lives of the Christians in his province was enormous. Not only did he alone conduct the trials at which they could be condemned to death, but in conducting them he enjoyed a practically unfettered freedom. His choice determined whether they were to live or die.”¹²¹ The problem for would-be accusers was that they could not be entirely sure of whether a particular magistrate would be willing to exercise his authority to punish Christians,¹²² and with proconsular governors only remaining in office for one year, this uncertainty would have remained an ever-present cause of legal trepidation.¹²³

The trial of a young Christian during the Decian persecution is a case in point. At this time, a fifteen-year-old boy by the name of Dioscorus was delivered over to the authorities for trial and execution. Although the judge tried to persuade him through pleas and then tortures, Dioscorus remained steady in his confession. Consequently, the judge dismissed him (unlike his fellow Christians, Heron, Ater, and Isidorus, who were tortured and killed), noting that he needed time for repentance (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.19-20).¹²⁴ Ultimately, he was free to act in such ways because “neither the statutes of the *leges Corneliae* nor of the *leges Juliae*, nor a special *senatusconsultum*, nor an imperial

Christianity, disapproved of it, and brought the powers of their office against it” (236-37). The problem is that there is no evidence from the first three centuries that governors took an *active* role in seeking out Christians prior to the submission of private accusations. For this reason, direct gubernatorial intervention remained only sporadic and occasional. Furthermore, when Christians were brought before the governor’s tribunal, there are known instances where they received a favorable ruling (see below). Also problematic for Warden’s proposal is the fact that governors—despite wielding virtually unlimited power within their provinces—rarely possessed adequate resources to carry out large-scaled, sustained initiatives (cf., e.g., the inability to deal with the threat of brigands due to a lack of adequate resources, Ch. 5). Therefore, a concentrated attack on a group as insignificant as Christians would be highly unlikely, and, in fact, this hypothesis is easily disproven by an examination of early Christian sources.

¹²¹ Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 143.

¹²² Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” 13. Cf. James Rives, “The Piety of a Persecutor,” *J ECS* 4 (1996) 1-25: “The men who conducted the trials of Christians and who determined their outcomes were individuals with varied and sometimes idiosyncratic points of view. . . . Those with a strong interest in religious questions will have had very different opinions on the matter, while others were no doubt largely unconcerned. And these personal differences would have affected the way they handled accusations of Christianity. As a result, the situation of Christians was above all one of great uncertainty. Their safety depended not only on the restraint of popular hostility, but also on the interests and attitudes of the current governor. An indifferent or tolerant governor could assure a period of peace and security, whereas a governor . . . with strong religious interests and a conservative bent, could spell trouble” (25).

¹²³ Note, for example, how the accusations in Pontus-Bithynia multiplied exponentially once the people realized that Pliny would actually prosecute Christians charged before his tribunal (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.4).

¹²⁴ Tertullian describes numerous instances in which African and Asian proconsuls rendered positive rulings on behalf of those accused as Christians (*Scap.* 4.3; 5.1; cf. Lucian, *Peregr.* 14, where Proteus was released by the governor of Syria after being charged as a Christian).

edict had proscribed Christianity.”¹²⁵ Since the governor had the right and responsibility to monitor and punish delinquent activities, even those not listed as “official” crimes under the statutes of the law,¹²⁶ the ultimate fate of Christians was bound up in his own personal discretion.¹²⁷ This fact is particularly important considering that, according to modern conflict theory (see Ch. 2), most disputants seek conflict management procedures that offer them both *decision* control (i.e., power to prescribe and enforce the verdict in an adjudication) and *process* control (i.e., power to oversee the presentation of evidence and arguments). The lack of these variables may have played an important role in keeping Christians out of court.

A final point of consideration is delay in the legal system.¹²⁸ Since capital jurisdiction resided solely in the hands of the governor, it could have taken a significant amount of

¹²⁵ Gerhard Krodel, “Persecution and Toleration of Christianity until Hadrian,” in *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity* (eds. S. Benko and J. J. O’Rourke; Valley Forge: Judson, 1971) 255-67 (261-62).

¹²⁶ On the nature of the *iudicium populi* in Roman legal procedure, Harries notes, “The identification of what was ‘criminal’, that is, an offense against the public good, was nominally a reflection of the public will. As it was up to the community to decide not only on guilt but also on the nature of criminality itself, it was not necessary that a statute should be in place to outlaw wrongdoing” (*Law and Crime in the Roman World*, 15). In this same way, it was the responsibility of the governor to define and punish criminality that was not legislated against under formal law (see Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht*, 193-96).

¹²⁷ A further subsidiary factor contributing to the governor’s propensity to dismiss or convict would have been his willingness to follow the precedents set down by his gubernatorial predecessors (on the abiding nature of such precedents, see Ranon Katzoff, “Precedents in the Courts of Roman Egypt,” *ZRG* 89 [1972] 256-92). For instance, in 68 CE the prefect of Egypt declared in a provincial edict that he would not hear a case that had been dismissed by another prefect. In fact, if it had been dismissed twice, the prosecutor would face severe punishment:

In general I order that whenever a prefect has already decided to dismiss a case brought before him, it is not to be brought again before the [prefect’s] assizes. And if two prefects have been of the same mind, a state accountant who brings up the same matters before the assizes is also to be punished . . . I also establish the same rule for matters brought up under the ‘Special Account,’ so that if any matter has been judged and dismissed, or shall be dismissed, by the [procurator] appointed for the ‘Special Account,’ the [accuser] shall not again be permitted to submit [the same charge] to the prosecutor or to bring it to trial, or else the person so doing will be punished mercilessly; for there will be no end of vexatious denunciations if dismissed matters are brought up till someone decides to condemn. (*IGR* I no. 1263 = *OGIS* no. 669; trans. Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Roman Civilization, Selected Readings: Volume 2, The Empire* [3rd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1990] 297)

On the other hand, a governor might be equally swayed by an angry mob eager to see social deviants like the Christians punished (cf. *Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne; Martyrdom of Polycarp*).

¹²⁸ Another possible deterrent arising out of the Anatolian legal system, although probably not affecting Christian prosecution as much, was the incompetence of governors in carrying out their judicial duties. In the same way that proconsular edicts often went unheeded (see Ch. 5), governors faced the

time for Christians to face justice. A prosecutor either had to travel to a given assize center (which may not have been feasible for all inhabitants given the costs that such a trip would entail, e.g., travel and lodging expenses, cost of time away from employment, threat of robbery along the way), or to wait until the governor made his way around to a nearby city (which could have taken many months).¹²⁹ To put the situation into perspective, during the first century CE there were thirteen assize centers in the province of Asia (the most of any province listed in 1 Pet 1.1). At the most, these *conventus* sites were only visited annually.¹³⁰ Not only did this mean that some litigants would have to travel in order to have their cases heard, it also meant that the administration of justice was dependent to some extent upon the discipline of the governor to complete the entire assize circuit during his brief administration. If a governor was slow in arriving at the province (e.g., due to illness Pliny arrived late to the province of Pontus-Bithynia [Pliny, *Ep.* 10.17A-B]), some stops may have been missed or delegated to a legate.¹³¹ Viewed from the *perceived feasibility perspective* (see Ch. 2), then, legal action posed a number of logistic problems which may have served to preserve the Christians from judicial accusation.

2. The Nature of the Relationship between Christians and Society

The numerous deterrents inherent in the Anatolian judicial system would have served as a serious impediment to anyone seeking private litigation against Christians during the first century CE. But what if one simply chose to by-pass this system altogether? With the role of local police officials becoming more defined, why would members of the general populace not simply inform the local eirenarch against Christians, rather than entering into the dangers of personal litigation? By doing so, members of the community could

problem of enforcing prior judicial decisions. Because proconsular governors only served one-year terms, and because they did not have the resources or the manpower to provide adequate oversight to the entire province (especially in large provinces), rulings were often left unheeded (*FIRA* I no. 59) and sentences were often left unfulfilled (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.31-32, 56-57, 58-60).

¹²⁹ Cf. Feissel and Gascou, “Documents d’archives romains,” 545, where a group of representatives from four villages had been awaiting the Syrian legate’s arrival in Antioch for eight months.

¹³⁰ *Dig.* 1.16.7. Governors may have followed a particular timetable for assize visits (cf. Plutarch, *An. Corp.* 4 [*Mor.* 501E-F]; *SEG* 28 [1978] no. 1566; *I.Ephesos* no. 24 [= *SIG*³ no. 867]).

¹³¹ Due to the fact that there was a tendency among governors to delay their departures, the emperor Tiberius (15 CE) marked June 1 as the date at which all governors were required to leave Rome in order to set out for their provinces (Dio Cassius, 57.14.5). In 42 CE, Claudius pushed this departure date forward by one month to April 1 (60.11.6), although the next year it was changed again to April 15 (60.17.3).

quickly and easily eradicate a group of hated deviants, and they could seemingly do so at no cost to themselves. This, in fact, appears to have been the procedure carried out against Christians in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. After Polycarp is informed against by the rowdy, Smyrnian crowd, the local eirenarch and his forces are sent to capture the bishop and bring him to justice (see above). Therefore, if Christianity was effectively illegal across the Anatolian provinces, how did Christians escape from being summarily exterminated through similar procedures?

The answer to this question lies, to a considerable extent,¹³² in the nature of the relationship between Christians and the wider society. It is true, as Paul A. Holloway has skillfully demonstrated, that there was an underlying current of social prejudice against which Christians had to continually maneuver.¹³³ But while this side of the equation receives due emphasis, we cannot overlook the fact that the level of aggravation caused by Christians was not such that it led to constant, *escalated* conflict with the general populace (i.e., conflict involving formal legal procedures, whether pursued through personal accusation or simply informing the eirenarch). It was only at sporadic intervals that acts of serious violence broke out against believers. Thus, in many ways, the treatment that Christians received was very similar to that of other negatively perceived groups such as rhetoricians, philosophers, and astrologers: extended periods of toleration interrupted periodically with outbursts of serious conflict.¹³⁴

¹³² Although (for the sake of argument) we have portrayed this method as a fairly cut-and-dry process, the situation would have been much more complicated and more difficult than simply using the eirenarch to “do one’s dirty work.” This is due to the fact that the eirenarch was held responsible for those whom he brought to justice, being required to question the suspect and then present a formal, written report to the governor (cf. Xenophon of Ephesus, 2.13). The edict of Antoninus Pius, governor of the province of Asia between ca. 130-135 CE, reveals exactly how this process would have worked: “when someone carries out an examination, the [e]irenarch should be ordered to attend and to go through what he wrote. . . . [I]f [the judge] finds that his interrogation was in any way malicious, or that he reported things that were not said as if they had been said, he should impose an exemplary punishment, to prevent anyone else [from] trying anything of the kind afterward” (*Dig.* 48.3.6.1; trans. Watson). Thus, among police officials, there may have been some hesitancy about bringing formal accusations against Christians, especially given the ease with which the charge could have been denied. If so, this would be another example of the important preventative role which the Roman legal system played in the preservation of Christians.

¹³³ Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*.

¹³⁴ See Olivia F. Robinson, *Penal Practice and Penal Policy in Ancient Rome* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007) 101-102. The treatment of astrologers in Rome provides a very close parallel to the persecution of Christians. During the reign of Tiberius (ca. 17 CE), a *senatusconsultum* was passed which expelled all astrologers from Italy (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.32). Despite the fact that the emperor himself was quite proficient in the art of divination (Dio Cassius, 57.15.7), he put to death all foreigners who continued to practice astrology or magic or any other form of divination and banished all citizens who participated in the

Although there may have been numerous factors that contributed to this intermittence, there are three in particular that could go a long way in explaining this situation. The first is the social integration practiced by some Christians.¹³⁵ For those believers whose lifestyles were not far removed from the cultural norms of the day, it is difficult to imagine a huge backlash arising from the local populace. Therefore, when we read the epitaph of Aurelios Eutyches, a Christian and a champion athlete from Eumeneia who participated in games honoring the emperor and his cult (Johnson, *Epitaphs*, no. 3.4), it is unlikely that we are reading the epitaph of one who was held in disdain by the civic community. It is difficult to determine the levels and extent of Christian social integration,¹³⁶ but for some Christians it must have served as a deterrent against private informers (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.1.1-6).

Along with the strong social ties maintained by some Christians, the bonds within families would have also played a role in shielding believers from the dangers of the Roman courts. In the same way that there would have been protection in conformity, one's family ties offered important security. The story of Perpetua offers a good illustration. Despite the fact that Perpetua's father was not a Christian and, in fact, had gone to great lengths to convince Perpetua to apostatize, he did everything in his power to keep her from being put to death by the Roman authorities (*Pass. Perp.* 3, 5). In the same way, Justin (*2 Apol.* 2) recounts the story of a woman who converted to Christianity and then tried to persuade her husband to do the same. Although the husband was unreceptive to her entreaty, he accused his wife before the authorities only *after* she presented him with a bill of divorce (*ῥεπούδιον*) and separated from him. What we can conclude from these examples is that a person's Christian faith could have easily been overlooked by those of close familial relation.

same activities (57.15.8). In the case of those who repented and promised to give up their art, however, Tiberius offered release and pardon (Suetonius, *Tib.* 36).

¹³⁵ Cf. Craig S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with their Wider Civic Communities* (SBLDS 168; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) 297, who, after a close examination of three Pauline congregations, concludes that “*where there is a pattern of ethnic integration or assimilation there will be a lower incidence of conflict*” (original emphasis).

¹³⁶ Similar integration is evidenced by the numerous examples of Christians who were members of civic βουλή (Johnson, *Epitaphs*, nos. 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6; 3.7).

A third factor that may well have contributed to the sporadic nature of destructive, escalated conflict during the first three centuries was the nature of the complaints leveled against the religion. One of the primary grievances voiced by the local populace against the Christian community was their failure to worship or show respect to the traditional gods (i.e., “atheism”). Yet one wonders how often such a complaint would have resulted in punitive action. This is not to deny the ancients’ genuine concern for proper relations between mankind and the gods. It is simply to point out that this concern would have only become pronounced when a major calamity took place (e.g., famine, earthquake, etc.), and there was a need for someone to blame.¹³⁷ If the reaction of the community was largely limited to such occasions, then the intermittence of Christian persecution becomes all the more understandable.¹³⁸

Conclusion

As we bring this chapter to a close, it is important to summarize the salient features and to draw out the important implications for the overall thesis of the present work. The goal of this chapter was to reconstruct the legal status of Christians during the first three centuries CE. We argued that, contrary to the opinions of many Petrine commentators, the detrimental downturn in the legal status of Christians took place during the time of Nero rather than during the second or third centuries CE. After a chronological assessment of various texts from the first through third centuries, we proposed that all Christians shared the same perilous legal status following the Neronian persecution: the profession of Christianity came to be seen as effectively illegal in that it was treated as a punishable offense if one was so charged before the governor’s tribunal. In order to further validate our claim regarding the dubious legal status of Christians, we sought to explain how Christianity could be effectively illegal and still only be exposed to destructive, escalated

¹³⁷ See Tertullian, *Apol.* 40.2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.13; Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 24.9.

¹³⁸ This section also answers another perplexing question that arises from the Christian sources: if Christians could be put to death simply on the basis of the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*), and if their punishment merely awaited the accusation from a *delator*, followed by a hearing before the governor in which they would have to confess or deny Christ, why was the right to a proper trial something so highly sought after by Christian apologists (cf. Justin, *I Apol.* 68 = Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8-9)? A major part of the answer, it would seem, is that given the various deterrents against going to court and making a formal accusation, a proper trial afforded the Christians at least some level of protection from capital punishment (cf. Bickerman, “Trajan, Hadrian and the Christians,” 312-13).

conflict on sporadic occasions. Our efforts showed that there were certain factors which would have worked to preserve Christians even amidst legal peril. Two, in particular, stood out as important mitigating influences: the nature of Anatolian judicial processes and the nature of the relationship between Christians and society.

The evidence from the present chapter plays an important role in shaping how we approach the topic of persecution in 1 Peter. Taking into account the accusatorial nature of the Anatolian legal system (as discussed in Ch. 5), a criminalized legal status would have created significant risks for Christians in the latter half of the first century CE. If 1 Peter was composed after the Neronian persecution (64 CE), then our historical reconstruction must account for the ever-present danger of legal trials, which could arise simply for adherence to the Christian faith. On the other hand, however, this chapter also serves as an important cautionary notice against overzealously constructing the nature of persecution experienced by most Christians. Rather than approaching 1 Peter with the notion that all of its recipients were equally prone to and necessarily expectant of Christian martyrdom, we should be careful in drawing too grim a portrait of Christian circumstances simply on the basis of how they were viewed in the eyes of Roman authorities. Although it is true that on the surface Christians of the first three centuries found themselves in an extremely dangerous legal situation, relatively few ever suffered capital punishment on this basis.¹³⁹ Thus, consistent with our effort to provide a more balanced approach toward suffering (one which takes into account the various forms of persecution experienced by diverse Christian assemblies), we must keep the threat of martyrdom in proper perspective. While martyrdom was always and everywhere a threat

¹³⁹ Olivia F. Robinson, “The Repression of Christians in the Pre-Decian Period: A Legal Problem Still,” *IrJur* 25-27 (1990-92) 269-92 (286), postulates only “one or two hundred deaths over a 200-year period.” While this figure might be a little too low (cf. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 413, who approximates the death toll from the Decian persecution alone to be somewhere in the hundreds), it is probably more representative of the situation than the reconstruction offered by Ste. Croix: “the total number of victims [between 64 CE and 250 CE] was quite considerable” (“Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” 7). Nevertheless, we must avoid the temptation to quantify the data too precisely. In many cases, the names of early Christian martyrs may have gone unrecorded or may have simply been lost during the process of preservation. A case in point is the story of the Bithynian martyrs in the epistles of Pliny. Had this correspondence not been preserved by a *Roman governor*, Christian history may have never known of their sacrifice. This, in fact, seems to have happened to those who died after the Pliny correspondence. Eusebius notes, “By this means [i.e., Trajan’s guidelines] the imminent threat of persecution was extinguished to some extent, but none the less opportunities remained to those who wished to harm us. Sometimes the populace, sometimes even the local authorities contrived plots against us, so that with no open persecution (προφανῶν διωγμῶν) partial attacks (μερικῶς) broke out in various provinces and many of the faithful endured martyrdom in various way” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.33.2; trans. Lake [LCL]).

for Christians in first-century Roman Anatolia, it was not a danger that was often experienced within Christian communities.

Section Three: The Nature of Conflict in 1 Peter

To this point, all of our efforts have been driven by and leading toward one purpose: to uncover the nature of conflict in 1 Peter. In this third and final section, we will now take up the question directly. Using the historically-informed perspective that was achieved in the preceding chapters, we will offer a fresh reading of the conflict situation, one which contextualizes and differentiates the audience's present troubles. Our investigation will explore two aspects of the readers' current circumstances. We will seek to first diagnose the specific cause(s) behind their detractors' present opposition. This will consist of an examination of the behavioral factors which gave rise to hostility as well as the legal issues that contributed to the audience's plight. Once a better understanding of the cause(s) of conflict has been attained, we will attempt to clearly delineate the various forms which this conflict might have taken. With a view towards individualizing the problems, we will explore how different social groups may have been affected by the conflict situation. Although we will not be able to provide an exhaustive list, we will conclude by discussing the kinds of afflictions that the readers were currently facing and the types of threats to which they may have been prone.

Chapter 7 – The Cause(s) of Conflict in 1 Peter

Understanding the nature of persecution in 1 Peter begins with a clear diagnosis of the specific cause(s) behind the conflict. Why had the Petrine audience suddenly begun to experience hostility from their Anatolian neighbors? Generally, the problems have been attributed to two factors. Commentators are in agreement that one of the reasons why the readers faced local enmity was because of the behavioral changes that had been implemented in their lives as a result of their Christian conversion. Once these Gentiles became Christians, many sought to disassociate themselves from friends and neighbors as well as from many of the activities in which they were formerly involved. In many cases, the situation was further exacerbated by the new Christian practices in which members of the group had begun to partake. When the subject is discussed, however, rarely do interpreters actually flesh out the specific behaviors that had been altered and the problems that these changes would have created within Anatolian society. Therefore, the conflict situation often remains somewhat undefined.

Regarding the second cause behind the present hostility, there has been somewhat more division among commentators. Within the history of research, most interpreters have tended to downplay any legal issues involved in the present conflict. In fact, it has become customary for scholars to deny any association between the legal problems faced by Christians of later centuries and the conflict which took place among the first-century CE communities in 1 Peter. Recently, however, a small constituency has arisen which acknowledges the involvement of local and provincial authorities due to the criminalized legal status of late-first-century Christians. Nevertheless, what is lacking in the modern discussion is a detailed treatment of 1 Peter in light of the legal context of first-century Asia Minor.

In what follows, we will seek to bring further clarity to the conflict situation of 1 Peter by addressing each of these issues in turn. What we hope to achieve in this chapter is a greater degree of specificity with regard to the cause(s) of persecution.

A. Behavioral Cause(s) of Conflict in 1 Peter

Scholarship has regularly acknowledged that part of the conflict facing the Petrine readers stemmed from the social reorientation which took place upon their conversion. In

the following section, we will explore the two behavioral causes of conflict listed in the epistle: the suffering that resulted from social withdrawal and the suffering that resulted from the practice of “good works.” Our goal in treating these issues will be to move beyond the generalized (and often coded) descriptions that are found in 1 Peter in order to offer a more specific, contextualized understanding of the situation. Using the limited amount of evidence provided by the letter itself, we will seek to fill out the picture somewhat further by drawing on alternative sources which offer insight into the complexities of Anatolian society along with those which elucidate the Christian conflict in other parts of the Greco-Roman world.

1. Suffering from Social Withdrawal

a. The Problem according to 1 Peter

According to 1 Pet 4.3-4, one of the primary reasons why the Anatolian readers were experiencing conflict with those outside of the Church was because they had withdrawn from the social activities in which they had formerly been involved: “The time that has passed was sufficient to do what the Gentiles like to do, having lived in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revelry, carousing, and lawless idolatry. Because of this, they are surprised when you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme¹ you.” But how much this passage reveals about the recipients’ former lifestyle is a matter of debate. Bechtler argues that 1 Pet 4.3 “should not be taken as evidence—even as correlative evidence—for former involvement in guilds and associations.” Instead, he contends that this passage simply “reflects the stereotyped vice list of Jewish, Christian, and Hellenistic moral exhortation.”² However, while it is true that little can be deduced about the readers’ former lives simply on the basis of this stock

¹ Some commentators interpret βλασφημοῦντες as a substantive which carries the force of an explanatory (or exclamatory) pronouncement, “Blasphemers!” (so, e.g., Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 181; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 233-34). The participle is thus connected with v. 5, providing a further description of the character of Christian opponents. However, most understand βλασφημοῦντες as a participle of result (cf. NRSV, NASB, NIV, TNIV, CEV, ESV, HCSB, NET, NKJV), describing how the opponents’ negative response was carried out (note the smoothing out of the grammar in later MSS: καὶ βλασφημοῦσιν [B* C* 81. 323. 945. 1241. 1739 *al*]). Although neither view is able to completely eradicate the awkwardness of the sentence, the latter seems preferable.

² Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 69.

list of pagan indulgences,³ the text does provide some insight into the audience's situation. This list of previous vices is not introduced simply for the sake of demarcating proper behavior from improper behavior. The reason why the author brings up this issue is because the readers had stopped participating in certain activities and as a result had begun to face the social repercussions. This is evident from the fact that he offers them comfort in knowing that they made the correct decision (4.5-6).

The question that we should be asking then is not, does this verse reveal anything about the readers' present situation? Certainly it does. It reveals that prior to their conversion some members of the audience had been involved in certain social activities or institutions, and upon conversion they were no longer able to continue in these practices. In response, some of their former associates who had not converted to Christianity and who were still participating in these activities had begun to vilify them. Thus, given this particular context, the more appropriate question that should be asked is, in what types of activities might the recipients have been involved, and why would their lack of participation have caused such a backlash?

Unfortunately, 1 Peter does not give any specific details concerning the types of activities from which the audience may have withdrawn. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the situation, therefore, our focus must be placed on the letter's Anatolian context. We must explore both the types of social activities/institutions that existed in Roman Anatolia and the kinds of activities from which other Christians disassociated themselves in the first few centuries.

b. Social Institutions of Roman Anatolia and Christian Non-Participation

It is difficult to pin down one particular social activity from which the readers may have withdrawn. As we have already mentioned, 1 Peter provides no specific clues with regard to which activities are in view, and within the average city context of Roman Asia Minor there were a variety of institutions which could have given rise to this problem. With this in mind, we will attempt to provide a tentative reconstruction by exploring some of the

³ This type of vice list was common in Jewish and Christian literature as a way of enumerating the type of conduct that was inappropriate for the people of God (cf. Wis 14.25-27; Sir 7.1-21; Rom 1.29-31; 13.13; 1 Cor 5.10-11; 6.9-10; 2 Cor 12.20-21; Gal 5.19-20; Col 3.5-9; 1 Tim 1.9-10; 6.4-5; 2 Tim 3.2-5).

more popular societal pursuits and by examining how early Christians responded to these activities.

(1) Voluntary Associations

One of the more popular means of social interaction in Roman Anatolia was the meeting of local voluntary associations. Voluntary associations—which might variously be referred to as *κοινά*, *σύνοδοι*, *θίασοι*, *μύσται*, *φράτορες*, *συνεργασίαι*, or *collegia*—were organized and contractual groups who “gathered together regularly to socialize, share communal meals, and honor both their earthly and their divine benefactors.”⁴ Each member of the guild contributed his or her time and resources for the overall benefit of the group. These associations ranged from the members of the same profession (e.g., bakers of Ephesus [*I.Ephesos* no. 215]) to fellow initiates of a particular cult (e.g., initiates of Kore [*I.Smyrna* no. 726]) to those associated with a certain household (e.g., household of Dionysius [*SIG*³ no. 985]) and even to those who lived in the same neighborhood (e.g., neighborhood association in Prusa ad Olymum [*I.Prusa* no. 50]). The variegated nature of these groups along with the diversity of social strata represented in their internal make-up reflects the importance and prevalence of these clubs within Greco-Roman society.⁵ Voluntary associations abounded, in particular, within the civic communities of Roman Anatolia.⁶ For this reason, it would only be natural to assume that

⁴ Harland, *Associations*, 2.

⁵ In the past, voluntary associations were often depicted as socially and economically homogeneous groups made up of the poorest strata of society who met together primarily in order to guarantee that each member would receive a proper burial (as maintained, e.g., by Jean-Pierre Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains: Depuis les origines jusqu'à la chute de l'Empire d'Occident* [MARB 50; Brüssel: Hayez, 1895-1900; repr., Hildesheim/New York: Georg Olms, 1970]; Ernst Kornemann, “Collegium,” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* [eds. A. F. von Pauly, et al.; vol. 4; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1901] 380-480). More recently, this purpose-based profile has been seriously challenged and is now being replaced with a type of social-network approach. Since many guilds shared the same functions, scholars have moved toward classifying these groups according to the profile of their memberships (e.g., household connections, occupational connections, cultic connections, etc.). See further Kloppenborg, “Collegia and Thiasoi,”; Harland, *Associations*, 28-52.

⁶ E.g., Amastris: *I.BithMendel* II no. 184 (ship owners). Ancyra: *I.Ankara* no. 46 (*collegium veteranorum*). Apamea (Myrleia): *I.Apamea* nos. 33 (*thiasitai* of Asclepius), 34 (*thiasitai* of Medeos). Cius (Prusias ad Mare): *I.Kios* nos. 21-22 (*thiasitai*). Ephesus: *I.Ephesos* nos. 20 (fishermen), 213 (worshippers of Demeter), 547 (silversmiths). Hierapolis: *I.Hierapolis* nos. 133B, 227 (purple-dyers); *I.Pennacchiotti* no. 23 (purple-dyers). Nicea: *I.Nikaia* nos. 2 (builders/carpenters), 73 (coppersmiths), 197 (vegetable handlers). Nicomedia: *TAM* IV no. 22 = *IGR* III no. 4 (shippers). Pergamum: *I.Pergamon* no. 374 (hymn singers). Pessinus: *I.Pessinous* nos. 17-18 (*Attabokai*, initiates of mysteries), 19 (guild of Dionysiac artists), 22

some (or many?) of the readers to whom 1 Peter is addressed would have been members of these local guilds prior to their Christian conversion.⁷ The question that remains is, would first-century Christians have been likely to abandon these groups once they became a followers of Christ?

On the basis of what would seem to be very strong literary evidence (e.g., Livy, 39.8-19; Suetonius, *Aug.* 32.1-2; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.33-34; *Dig.* 47.22.1), voluntary associations are often viewed as politically subversive groups who were a constant threat to the stability of Roman society.⁸ Viewed from a Judaeo-Christian perspective, these clubs were also thought to be breeding grounds for the worst revelry and debauchery. Philo describes fellowship of the associations (*θλασσι*) in Alexandria as “founded on nothing sound, but instead, (united) by strong wine, drunkenness, drunken behavior, and the offspring of these, insolence” (*Flacc.* 136; cf. *Legat.* 311-312).⁹ From these strongly negative appraisals, it is tempting to draw some type of connection between the vices listed in 1 Pet 4.3 and the activities of local *collegia*.¹⁰

Unfortunately, few specific conclusions can be drawn about the situation merely on the basis of the proscribed vices. Not only does 1 Pet 4.3 represent a fairly stereotypical denunciation of pagan culture, this particularly negative approach toward voluntary associations is a misrepresentation of the ancient evidence. Local guilds were often well regulated groups with structured membership and prescribed codes of conduct,¹¹ and in

(guild of gardeners), 35 (guild of Dionysiac artists). Philadelphia: *IGR* IV no. 1632 (wool workers). Prusa ad Olympum: *I.Prusa* nos. 50 (“neighborhood” association), 1036 (sack weavers of Ariston), *I.BithMendel* I nos. 2 (initiates of Sarapis and Isis), 3 (initiates of Hermes). Prusias ad Hypium (Cierus): *I.Prusias* nos. 63-64 (“neighborhood” association). Smyrna: *I.Smyrna* nos. 622 (initiates of Dionysos Breseus), 715 (fishermen). Thyatira: *IGR* IV nos. 1209 (merchants), 1244 (bakers).

⁷ Given the economic diversity within each club and the variegated social relationships among practitioners, it is difficult to predict which members or what percentage of the Petrine communities may have been involved in these groups based simply on the readers’ “social profile.” On the other hand, such diversity does allow for the possibility that a large portion of the Christian congregations were former participants.

⁸ See, e.g., Jean-Claude Margot, *Les Épîtres de Pierre: Commentaire* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960) 69; Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, 117-18; Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 65-80; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 25-26.

⁹ For more on Philo’s view of voluntary associations, see Torrey Seland, “Philo and the Clubs and Associations of Alexandria,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson; London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 110-27.

¹⁰ Some commentators have noted the possibility of this connection (e.g., Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 151; Bénétreau, *La Première Épître de Pierre*, 220; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 724-25).

¹¹ Compare the regulations of the following groups: guild of Zeus Hypsistos (P.Lond. 2710); *Iobakchoi* (*IG* II² no. 1368); and the mysteries of Andania (*IG* V.1 no. 1390). In many ways, the organizational

many cases, they exerted an extremely positive influence within Greco-Roman society.¹² Therefore, what must be determined is whether there was anything (else) about these associations that might have made Christian converts abandon such fellowship.

Probably the greatest reason why a Christian might have withdrawn from participation in a voluntary association was the close relationship between the social and religious aspects of the club. Contrary to the opinions of some scholars,¹³ the meetings of local guilds were more than opportunities to experience conviviality; the religious dimension of the meeting—if it is even possible to drive a wedge between different aspects—played a prominent role in the overall group dynamic. This is evident in a monument from the city of Panormos (near Kyzikos in the province of Asia), which contains a relief of an actual meeting of a local association (*GIBM* IV.2 no. 1007; cf. *I.Apameia* no. 35). The relief contains a three-part design: the gods honored by the club (Zeus, Artemis, and Apollo) stand above the members holding libation bowls for sacrifice; reclining below are the members of the association; and beneath the members is the group's entertainment (flute player, woman dancing, percussionist, wine mixing). Such a depiction reveals that the club understood its activities as integrally connected to the realm of the gods. Even among those associations which did not have an immediate cultic and temple connection, there were nevertheless strong ties to the worship of a particular deity. As a way of emphasizing the centrality of cultic worship in one professional guild, the members of the group specifically referred to themselves as [οἱ] θύοντες τῷ προπάτορι Ἀσκληπιῷ καὶ τοῖς Σεβαστοῖς ἰατροὶ, “the physicians who sacrifice to ancestor Asclepius and to the *Sebastoi*” (*I.Ephesos* no. 719).

With such strong ties to the worship of Greco-Roman gods (and, as the previous reference shows, of the emperor as well), it is understandable that some (or many?)

structures and penal codes of Greco-Roman associations were very similar to those at Qumran (see Hans Bardtke, “Die Rechtsstellung der Qumran-Gemeinde,” *TLZ* 86 [1961] 93-104; Moshe Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period* [NTOA 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986]).

¹² For a more balanced perspective on both the positive and negative impact of voluntary associations, see Harland, *Associations*, 137-73.

¹³ As proposed by Nicholas R. E. Fisher, “Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs,” in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* (eds. M. Grant and R. Kitzinger; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1988) 1199-225 (1222-23), who claims that, “although the *collegia* had religious functions, they were above all concerned with status, solidarity, sociability, and aspects of social security.” Cf. also Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund: Gleerup, 1957) 64.

Christians might have wanted to end their affiliations with these groups. But given the nature of voluntary associations, this could have created serious problem for Christians. If, for example, a new Christian convert was formerly a member of an association whose internal make-up consisted primarily of those related to a particular household (and therefore a wealthy patron), any type of withdrawal would have affected more than just the regular meeting of the group. The ties that were broken would have stretched across not only social but also familial relations. Similarly, if one were to refuse participation in a club made up primarily of members of one's profession, tensions would have been felt not just on the monthly occasion of the group's meeting, but on a daily basis in the carrying out of one's occupation.

(2) Imperial Cult

A second institution which was prevalent in Roman Anatolia and which could have created some difficulty for early Christians was the imperial cult.¹⁴ The problem is that in the opinion of many interpreters emperor worship played a very small role in the early persecution of Christians.¹⁵ Within Petrine studies in particular there has been considerable hesitancy to view emperor worship as an/the underlying cause of the readers' persecution. For some, these reservations stem from the fact that the epistle never addresses the issue directly.¹⁶ Others have argued that since the central and eastern portions of Asia Minor were untouched by the affects of Romanization (see Ch. 3 for a

¹⁴ On the imperial cult in Asia Minor, see Pierre Prigent, "Au temps de l'Apocalypse. II. Le culte impérial au 1er siècle en Asie Mineure," *RHPR* 55 (1975) 215-35; I. S. Sventitskaya, "Polis and Empire: The Imperial Cult in the Cities of Asia Minor in the First and Second Centuries," *VDI* 4 (1981) 33-51 (Russian); Price, *Rituals and Power*; Süß, "Kaiserkult und Urbanistik,"; Benjamin B. Rubin, "(Re)Presenting Empire: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor, 31 BC-AD 68," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2008).

¹⁵ It is often pointed out that the failure to sacrifice to the emperor is rarely mentioned as a source of conflict in the early Christian martyrdom accounts. Rather, it is the lack of reverence shown to the gods that caused the greatest problems (so, e.g., Ste. Croix, "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?," 10; Fergus Millar, "The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions," in *Le culte des souverains dans l'Empire romain: sept exposés suivis de discussions, Vandoeuvres – Genève, 28 août – 2 septembre 1972* [ed. W. den Boer and E. Bickerman; EAC 19; Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1973] 143-75 [151]; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 221). It is true that the worship of the traditional gods was problematic for early Christians, but this in no way takes away from the threat caused by the imperial cult.

¹⁶ So, e.g., Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 86, 138; Peter Lampe and Ulrich Luz, "Post-Pauline Christianity and Pagan Society," in *Christian Beginnings: Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times* (ed. J. Becker; trans. A. S. Kidder and R. Krauss; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 243-80 (258-59); Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxvi; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 501.

critique of this opinion), the imperial cult would have played little to no part in the conflict situation.¹⁷ But despite these reservations, what must be recognized is the pervasiveness of the imperial cult across Asia Minor and the impactful role it played in the lives of the inhabitants of Anatolia.

By the end of the first century CE, the emperor cult had made significant inroads into the provinces of Asia Minor. The initial step within the process was the establishment of imperial temples, which were sponsored by the entire province. The first two of these provincial cults were organized in 29 BCE during the reign of Augustus. Dio Cassius recounts their origin:

Caesar, meanwhile, besides attending to the general business, gave permission for the dedication of sacred precincts in Ephesus and in Nicaea to Rome and to Caesar, his father, whom he named the hero Julius. These cities had at that time attained chief place in Asia and in Bithynia respectively. He commanded that the Romans resident in these cities should pay honour to these two divinities; but he permitted the aliens, whom he styled Hellenes, to consecrate precincts to himself, the Asians to have theirs in Pergamum and the Bithynians theirs in Nicomedia. (Dio Cassius, 51.20.6-7; trans. Cary [LCL])¹⁸

The establishment of a cult for Augustus marked the beginning of an immensely important social/religious/political institution in Asia Minor. It also set the precedent for how the cult of the emperor was administered at the provincial level. The formal procedures which were required to found a provincial cult (*viz.*, official approval from the Roman Senate and the emperor) limited the frequency with which they could be established. Thus, during the reigns of subsequent emperors, only a small number of provincial cults followed.¹⁹ Under Tiberius, provincial temples were dedicated in the

¹⁷ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 62: "The direct confrontation with the imperial cult in the cities of Asia . . . can by no means be assumed as the situation underlying the social problems of the Christians in the hinterlands of Bithynia, Pontus, Galatia and Cappadocia."

¹⁸ The dedication of the temple at Pergamum to Roma is omitted in the account of Dio (cf. *OGIS* no. 456 = *IGR* IV no. 39, which also fails to mention Roma). However, it is included in the rendition of Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.37; cf. *OGIS* no. 470 = *IGR* IV no. 1611).

¹⁹ In some cases, it is difficult to determine whether or not a particular imperial temple housed the provincial or municipal cult. The imperial temple in Pisidian Antioch is one such example. Within the history of discussion, the nature of the temple has been subject to a number of different interpretations. One of the earlier opinions was that it belonged to the Hellenistic period (ca. 189-140 BCE) and was built for the prominent deity Mên (as argued by William M. Ramsay, "Studies in the Roman Province Galatia, VII: Pisidia," *JRS* 16 [1926] 102-19 [111]). This association with the god Mên continued to be perpetuated in later works (e.g., Klaus Tuchelt, "Bermerkungen zum Tempelbezirk von Antiochia ad Pisidiam," in *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde Kleinasiens. Festschrift für Kurt Bittel* [eds. R. M. Boehmer and H. Hauptmann; Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1983] 501-22; cf. David M. Robinson, "Roman Sculptures from Colonia Caesarea (Pisidian Antioch)," *ABull* 9 [1926] 5-69 [11-20], who argued for an

cities of Smyrna, Ancyra, and Pessius.²⁰ Within the brief reign of Gaius, a provincial cult was established in Miletos.²¹ In the time of Domitian, the city of Ephesus also received permission to construct a provincial temple.²²

If this small number of provincial cults were the extent to which emperor worship pervaded first-century CE Anatolia, one would be justified in questioning its influence on the readers of 1 Peter. The relative scarcity of provincial temples combined with the fact that the administration of the cult (at the provincial level) was solely in the hands of elite provincial citizens would seem to rule out extensive participation by the types of socio-economic groups to which the addressees of 1 Peter mostly belonged (see Ch. 4).²³ Nevertheless, the emperor cult of Asia Minor extended well beyond the provincial level to municipal and even household contexts.

Unlike the provincial cult, which required approval from Rome, local municipal (or civic) cults were not subject to any types of procedural restrictions. For this reason, municipal cults dedicated to the emperor were much more prevalent across urban centers of first-century Asia Minor. In fact, as Friesen has noted, “We should expect that most—if not all—small cities and towns had imperial temples, some more modest than others, that complemented the array of religious institutions of each community.”²⁴ Despite the dearth of architectural evidence from these sites, what little material evidence we possess

Augustan date and claimed that the temple was dedicated to both Augustus and the god Mên). Most recently, Marc Waelkens and Stephen Mitchell, “The Augustan Imperial Sactuary,” in *Pisidian Antioch: The Site and its Monuments* (eds. S. Mitchell and M. Waelkens; London: Duckworth, 1998) 113-73, have refuted any notion that the cult was associated with Mên and have clearly established that the temple was dedicated to Augustus. But despite the fact that the temple’s date has been adequately delineated (late Augustan–early Tiberian), questions of function (provincial or municipal) still remain.

²⁰ On the provincial temple in Smyrna, see Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.15.55-56 (cf. *RPC* I no. 2469). On the provincial temples in Ancyra and Pessinus, see Ch. 3.

²¹ Dio Cassius, 59.28.1. For further documentation of the provincial cult in Miletus, see Robert, “Le culte de Caligula à Milet et la province d’Asie.”

²² For full documentation of the provincial cult in Ephesus, see Steven J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family* (RGRW 116; Leiden: Brill, 1993).

²³ Despite the relative scarcity of provincial temples, there is still considerable evidence for participation in the provincial *κοινόν*, even among cities which did not house the provincial cult, e.g., Sebastopolis: *IGR* III nos. 115-116 (Pontarch). Cius (Prusias ad Mare): *I.Kios* nos. 4 (*sebastophant*), 12 (Bithyniarch). Prusias ad Hypium (Cierus): *I.Prusias* nos. 17 (Bithyniarch/Pontarch), 19, 46 (*sebastophants*), 47 [= *IGR* III no. 63] (*agnothetes*). Claudiopolis (Bithynium): *I.KPolis* nos. 16 (Bithyniarch), 144 (*agonhetes*). Prusa ad Olympum: *I.Prusa* nos. 13 (Pontarch), 16 (*sebastophant*). Sinope: *I.Sinope* no. 103 (Pontarch). Tavium: *SEG* 14 (1964) no. 663 (hosting *κοινόν* games).

²⁴ Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 61.

depicts widespread participation in the cult across the provinces of Asia,²⁵ Pontus-Bithynia,²⁶ and Galatia-Cappadocia.²⁷ In Ephesus, for instance, before the establishment of the provincial cult (ca. 89/90 CE), the city housed at least one imperial temple (*I.Ephesos* no. 902; possibly two: *I.Ephesos* no. 1522 = *ILS* no. 97, temple of Augustus at Artemision?) along with numerous statues of and dedications to various emperors and the imperial family (*I.Ephesos* nos. 251-262). By the end of the first century CE, the imperial cult was widely disseminated across the urban centers of Anatolia. Even though the number of provincial cults had not yet reached its zenith, at the local level, emperor worship was a mainstay within most—if not all—municipal communities.

The pervasiveness of the imperial cult *across* the civic landscape of Asia Minor is an important consideration toward understanding the threat facing the Petrine readers. Along with this, however, we must also recognize the pervasiveness of the cult *within* civic communities. Rather than simply being a matter of “worship” (or better yet, a religio-political litmus test for Christians who were on trial before the governor), the imperial cult was an inescapable part of everyday life in Roman Asia Minor. Through an important process of transformation, emperor worship quickly became part of the very fabric of Anatolian society during the first century CE.²⁸

²⁵ Aphrodisias: *CIG* no. 2839 = *I.Aph2007* no. 12.107 (Sebasteion). Calymnus: *IGR* IV no. 1022 (statue of Caligula). Cos: *NSRC* no. 680 (temple of Claudius). Cyzicus: Dio Cassius, 57.24.6; Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.36 (temple of Augustus). Ephesus: *CIL* III 7118 = *ILS* no. 97 (temple of Augustus at Artemision); *I.Ephesos* no. 902 (temple of Augustus in the city itself). Eresus: *IG* XII Supp. no. 124 (temple of Augustus). Hierapolis: *RPC* I no. 2973 (imperial temple). Laodicea: *RPC* II nos. 1281, 1284, 1286, 1290, 1291 (imperial temple). Miletus: Gerhard Kleiner, *Das römische Milet: Bilder aus der griechischen Stadt in römischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1970) 122-23 (temple of Augustus). Mylasa: *CIG* no. 2696 (priest of Augustus). Mytilene: *OGIS* no. 456 = *IGR* IV no. 39 (temple of Augustus). Panamara: *I.Stratonikeia* no. 227 (Sebasteion). Priene: *I.Priene* nos. 157-159 (altar, steps, architrave dedicated to Augustus). Samos: *IGR* IV no. 975 (temple of Augustus). Sardis: *I.Sardis* VII no. 8 = *IGR* IV no. 1756 (temple of Augustus). Teos: *IGR* IV no. 1581 + *RPC* I no. 2511 (temple of Sebastoi). Thyatira: *IGR* IV no. 1226 (priest of Caesar). Tralles: *I.Tralleis* no. 74 (priest of Caesar).

²⁶ Byzantium: *I.Byzantion* no. 34 (priest of Tiberius). Chalcedon: *I.Kalchedon* no. 19 (priest of Augustus). Prusias ad Hypium (Cierus): *I.Prusias* nos. 20 (priest of Augustus), 31 (priest of Tiberius). Sinope: *I.Sinope* nos. 100 [= *ILS* no. 2824] (priest of Augustus), 102 (priest of the Sebastoi).

²⁷ Cibyra Minor: *AE* (1972) no. 631 (Claudian Kaisareion). Isaura: *IGR* III no. 292 (priest of Caesar). Pisidian Antioch: Waelkens and Mitchell, “The Augustan Imperial Sactuary,” (temple of Augustus). Sagalassos: Peter Talloen and Marc Waelkens, “Apollo and the Emperors (I): The Material Evidence for the Imperial Cult at Sagalassos,” *AncSoc* 34 (2004) 171-216 (temple of Augustus). Termessos: *IGR* III nos. 445, 448 (priest of Caesar). Pompeiopolis: *I.Pompeiopolis* no. 2 [= *IGR* III no. 134] (priest of Augustus).

²⁸ To show just how quickly these changes could take place, we might note some of the evidence from the eastern portions of Anatolia. In 20 CE, only three years after being annexed by Rome, there is evidence of a Cappadocian *κοινόν* sponsoring games for an imperial festival (*IAG* no. 62).

The transformation of urban centers in Roman Anatolia began with the architectural design of city structures. Imperial ideology was fundamentally perpetuated within local communities through the alteration of civic space.²⁹ In most cities, the imperial temple was located in a place of prominence. The central layout of cities like Ancyra, Pessinus, and Pisidian Antioch reveals how topography was used to ensure that the cult occupied a dominant position in the life of the community. The physical proximity of the temple with other adjacent structures resulted in a merging of social and religious activities.³⁰

But aside from the prominence afforded to the imperial temple, there were also numerous other ways in which the emperor was honored in the urban environments of Anatolia. Public institutions such as the agora, the bouleuterion, the gymnasium, and the baths could also be associated with the municipal imperial cult.³¹ Furthermore, an almost limitless amount of public structures could be dedicated to the ruler: arched gateways, stadiums, *macella*, etc. Inscriptional honors would thus be scattered across the city. Imperial statues of either the emperor or members of the imperial family also pervaded each civic community, serving both as a place of asylum and as a stylistic model for provincials to imitate.³² In fact, few areas of public space were untouched by imperial ideology. As a result, there were certain aspects of the cult which would have been impossible to avoid.

A second means by which imperial ideology was perpetuated within the civic communities was through the transformation of social entertainment and leisure. One of the most important events in the life of Anatolian communities was the honoring of the emperor through festivals and games.³³ In some cases, emperor worship was incorporated

²⁹ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 136-46.

³⁰ For example, in Pessinus the theater which was joined to the temple by a monumental staircase offered citizens an opportunity to attend ritual processions, performances, and spectacles such as gladiatorial games and wild animal fights/hunts (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51, ll. 59-76), events which played an important part of the imperial cult (cf. the situation at Ancyra, where a *panegyris* and horse race were likely held in close proximity to the temple).

³¹ See Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 65-75.

³² On the imperial image as a place of asylum, see Dio Cassius, 51.15.5; Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.36.1; 3.63.3; 4.67.6; Suetonius, *Aug.* 17.5; *Tib.* 53.2; 58. On the imperial image as a model for local dress and hairstyles, see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988) 302.

³³ One of the most detailed, and therefore most important, descriptions of a civic festival in Roman Asia Minor comes from the city of Oenoanda (Lycia). In this very lengthy inscription (originally 117 lines), we learn of the establishment of a quadrennial festival, which was endowed by a prominent citizen, C. Iulius Demosthenes, during the time of Hadrian. The information contained in the text includes everything

into traditional celebrations of local deities (e.g., *I.Ephesos* no. 27, ll. 48-56, 202-14, 554-60). This adaptation afforded the emperor a place of prominence within the community as he was brought in close relationship to and sometimes even identified with the traditional gods.

Imperial celebrations also included regular festivals and games dedicated solely to the emperor. The agonistic festivals, with their associated athletic and musical competitions, were some of the most prominent types of celebrations in Asia Minor. These events, which were usually held every four years,³⁴ were simply a carry-over from the competitions of organized Hellenistic society. However, during the first century CE, Roman emperors introduced a number of new sacred games into the Anatolian provinces,³⁵ and “[a]lthough they did not eclipse or replace several important agonistic festivals that had existed in the Hellenistic period, most of the prestigious *agones* of the first century AD were directly linked to emperor worship.”³⁶

Imperial ceremonies were not limited to these biennial or quadrennial competitions, however. There were also more frequent celebrations. The calendars of Anatolian cities were filled with various festivals associated with the emperor and his cult.³⁷ One event that took place on an annual basis was the celebration of the provincial *κοινόν* (cf. *I.Asclepius* no. 165 [Asia]; *IGR* III no. 603 [Lycia]). Furthermore, along with these major

from how and when the festival was established to the roles and responsibilities of civic officials which were involved in the event to the prize money which was to be awarded to the winners of various competitions. For the text and commentary, see Michael Wörrle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien: Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oinoanda* (Vestigia 39; Munich: Beck, 1988), although note the corrections and further discussion in Stephen Mitchell, “Festivals, Games, and Civic Life in Roman Asia Minor,” *JRS* 80 (1990) 183-93, and Guy M. Rogers, “Demosthenes of Oenoanda and Models of Euergetism,” *JRS* 81 (1991) 91-100.

³⁴ See *IGR* III no. 382 (Selge); *IGR* IV nos. 579, 584 (Aezani), 654 (Acmonia). However, two-year cycles are also attested (e.g., *I.Laod.Lyk.* no. 60 = *IGR* IV no. 850).

³⁵ Augustus: *IGR* IV nos. 1432, 1442, 1519 (Pergamum); *I.Xanthos* no. 18 (Xanthos). Claudius: *I.Magnesia* no. 163 (Magnesia); *I.Aph2007* no. 12.711 (Laodicea); *IGR* IV no. 556 (Aezani?). Vespasian: *IGR* III no. 487 (Oenoanda).

³⁶ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 219.

³⁷ The majority of extant civic calendars derive from the West. Yet they are still helpful for our purposes. The calendar from Cumae (Italy) attests celebrations of the social and political accomplishments of the emperor, the anniversaries of military achievements, and birthdays of the imperial family (*CIL* X no. 8375 = *ILS* no. 108). Since many of these same celebrations are attested in Asia Minor, a comparison could give us a reasonable idea of how Anatolian communities structured their holidays and special events. Furthermore, we do possess some evidence concerning the calendaric systems of Roman Anatolia. In the province of Asia, the calendar was reconfigured in order to align the New Year with the birthday of Augustus (for the inscriptional evidence, see Umberto Laffi, “Le iscrizioni relative all’ introduzione nel 9 a.C. del nuovo calendario della provincia d’Asia,” *SCO* 16 [1967] 5-98).

events, more small-scale, local ceremonies are also attested. For example, each year the inhabitants of Sardis commemorated Gaius' assumption of the *toga virilis* (*I.Sardis* VII no. 8, ll. 6-22 = *IGR* IV no. 1756, ll. 6-22). And in some communities, there were monthly or even daily celebrations for the emperor.³⁸ Moreover, it was not just on regularly scheduled occasions that provincial inhabitants paused to honor their ruler. There were also more sporadic ceremonies of which inhabitants partook, such as the accession of a new emperor (P.Oxy. 1021), the celebration of the emperor's safety, or the commemoration of his victory in battle (*IG* XII Supp. no. 124). In fact, these unplanned festivities were so common that they sometimes led to abuses which had to be regulated by the governor (cf. *I.Ephesos* no. 18b, ll. 11-17).

The frequency of these festivals and celebrations was matched by their duration. In many cases, the events ranged anywhere from a few days to an entire week, and in some instances, the shows associated with the festivals lasted even longer.³⁹ These festivals were often marked by public processions in which various members of the community—often dressed in ritual clothing—would march through the city along with garlanded sacrificial animals and bearers of imperial images.⁴⁰ The procession would normally begin at a key point in the city, such as the bouleuterion or the temple of Asclepius and Hygeia. As it wound its way through the prescribed route, sacrifices would sometimes be made by individuals on their household altar.⁴¹ The procession might conclude at either

³⁸ Monthly: In Pergamum, the imperial choir participated in an annual celebration of Augustus' birthday as well as lesser monthly ceremonies (*I.Pergamon* no. 374 = *IGR* IV no. 353); cf. also *I.Ephesos* no. 1393; 2 Macc 6.7. Daily: In Teos, the priest of Tiberius had a daily ritual to perform as part of the cult. It consisted of the burning of incense, the pouring out of libations, and the lighting of lamps on behalf of the emperor (*CIG* no. 3062 = *SEG* 15 [1965] no. 718).

³⁹ E.g., three days in Termessos Minor (Georges Cousin, "Voyage en Carie," *BCH* 24 [1900] 329-47 [339-41]); five days in Ephesus (*I.Ephesos* no. 21); six days in Gytheum (*SEG* 11 [1961] no. 923). On the length of accompanying gladiatorial displays, see Robert, *Les gladiateurs*, 280-81.

⁴⁰ In some cases, participants were clad in white garments (*SEG* 11 [1961] no. 923; *Acts John* 38; cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 98.2), and in others they were instructed to simply wear bright clothing (*IGR* IV nos. 947-948). On the celebratory apparel worn during imperial festivals, see Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (EPRO 108; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1987-2005) II.1.475-81. For some of the few descriptions of ancient processions within the epigraphic record, see *I.Olympia* no. 56 (Naples); *SEG* 11 (1961) no. 923 (Gytheum); *IGR* IV nos. 947-948 (Chios); cf. also Xenophon of Ephesus, 1.2 (procession at the festival of Artemis).

⁴¹ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 112. For the literary and epigraphic evidence for private (or household) participation in the imperial cult, see Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (OCM; Oxford Clarendon, 2002) 198-212. Concerning the paucity of evidence, it is important to recognize, as Gradel points out, that the "absence of evidence cannot be taken as evidence of absence" (199). On the other hand, the fact that other material evidence for individual pietism (e.g., household altars, individual votives) is not

the imperial temple, where further sacrifices would be made by city officials, or at the theater, where competitions would be held. These festivities were often capped off with celebrations that involved the entire community, such as gladiatorial events, horse racing, or public feasts (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51). As one might imagine, then, it would be extremely difficult for provincial inhabitants to completely escape these ritual events.

What can therefore be concluded from this brief survey of the imperial cult in Asia Minor is that the severity of the threat caused by the institution cannot be judged simply on the basis of sacrifice alone. The primary danger which the emperor cult posed to Christians was not merely the requirement to demonstrate one's personal allegiance to the emperor through sacrificial offering.⁴² As we have shown, the issue ran much deeper. The heart of the problem for Christians would have been the fact that the imperial cult was an inevitable part of everyday socio-religious life, and it would have been impossible to escape. The institution pervaded Anatolian society to the extent that non-participation (essentially) meant complete social withdrawal.

When exploring the impact of the imperial cult on the recipients of 1 Peter then two points of consideration should be kept in mind. First, in some Christian groups, it would have been impossible (according to their ideological principles) to walk the line between conformity and resistance on this issue. Due to the fact that certain Christian leaders (including the author of 1 Peter?) strongly opposed this institution, and given the pervasiveness of the cult both across and within Anatolian society, many Christians would have eventually been forced to choose sides. Second, if the audience decided to withdraw from participation in the cult, it would have created a serious rift between the Christian community and Anatolian society. Tertullian later describes the lack of

as rare might suggest that "imperial cults were less important in family and individual piety than was the case with some other religious institutions" (Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 116).

⁴² This is not to say, however, that Christians were unaffected by these "tests of allegiance" (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96; *Mart. Pol.* 9-10; *Acts of Justin and his Companions*, 5; *Acta Pionii*, 8; Tertullian, *Apol.* 10.1; 35.1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.15.2). It is certainly possible that Christians could have found themselves in situations where expectation gave way to demand. The oaths of allegiance that were sworn by the inhabitants of local communities to the reigning emperor may well have been problematic for Christians (e.g., Augustus: *ILS* no. 8781 = *IGR* III no. 137 = *OGIS* no. 532 [Gangra]; *I.Samos* nos. 1-3 [Samos]. Tiberius: Timothy B. Mitford, "A Cypriot Oath of Allegiance to Tiberius," *JRS* 50 [1960] 75-79 [Cyprus]. Gaius: *SIG*³ no. 797 [Assos]; *CIL* II no. 172 = *ILS* no. 190 [Aritium in Lusitania]). On oaths of allegiance to the emperor, see Franz Bömer, "Der Eid beim Genius des Kaisers," *Athenaeum* 44 (1966) 77-133; Peter Herrmann, *Der römische Kaisereid. Untersuchungen zu seiner Herkunft und Entwicklung* (Hypomnemata 20; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); B. F. Harris, "Oaths of Allegiance to Caesar," *Prudentia* 14 (1982) 109-22.

participation in the imperial cult as a primary reason for public hatred: “this is why Christians are public enemies,—because they will not give the Emperors vain, false and rash honours; because, being men of a true religion, they celebrate the Emperors’ festivals more in heart than in frolic” (*Apol.* 35.1; trans. Glover [LCL]; cf. *Idol.* 15).

It is certainly possible that some of the negative reaction described in 1 Peter stems from the audience’s failure to participate in the emperor cult and its related activities. In fact, it is quite probable that 1 Pet 2.13-17 represents a subtle critique of the emperor and his cult.⁴³ As part of the letter’s “polite resistance” against Roman power,⁴⁴ this passage reminds the readers that one’s submission to the emperor is only in accord with a proper response to established institutions, and that Caesar is to be honored by Christians not feared.⁴⁵ So while the Anatolian background provides us with a considerable degree of

⁴³ So also Schneider, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 69; Karl Philipps, *Kirche in der Gesellschaft nach dem I. Petrusbrief* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1971) 31; François Bovon, “Foi chrétienne et religion populaire dans la première Epître de Pierre,” *ETR* 53 (1978) 25-41 (36-37); Marlis Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik: ein Beitrag zur Frage einer christlichen Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen Normen* (BBB 75; Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1990) 420-35; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 180-83; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 86-88.

⁴⁴ See David G. Horrell, “Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate Towards a Postcolonial Reading of 1 Peter,” in *Reading 1 Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter* (eds. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin; LNTS 364; London: T&T Clark, 2007) 111-43 (esp. 141-43). Recently, Warren Carter, “Going All the Way? Honoring the Emperor and Sacrificing Wives and Slaves in 1 Peter 2.13-3.6,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* (ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 14-33, has argued that the letter’s exhortation for the readers to “honor the emperor” (1 Pet 2.17) is a call to fully participate in the imperial cult, including the offering of sacrifice and the eating of idol meat. His treatment of the subject is less than satisfactory, however. What is most problematic about Carter’s proposal is that it is built on the assumption that the author’s strategy is to “overcome negative reports about Christians and rehabilitate them socially” (25). This misunderstanding stems primarily from the fact that the “good works” which the audience is encouraged to perform are seen as actions undertaken on behalf of the larger society and its members. Yet, as we will demonstrate below, such an interpretation cannot be sustained. The Petrine call to “do good” is actually a call to maintain a distinctive Christian commitment not to social conformity. Aside from this, Carter also misconstrues the description of the audience’s withdrawal from certain social interactions. He argues that the purpose of 1 Pet 4.3-4 is to warn against “not engaging in socially disruptive behavior that threatens civic order” (29). What is overlooked in this assessment is the fact that this passage serves as a commendation of the readers’ non-participation and an encouragement to continue in their separation. The activities which are included in the vice list are to be avoided not simply because they are excesses but because they are what the pagans do (τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατεργάσθαι, 4.3). They are activities which will ultimately incur to the condemnation of God (4.5-6). By thus removing themselves from these shameful deeds, the audience will avoid eschatological judgment.

⁴⁵ It is unlikely that *κτίσις* (1 Pet 2.13) represents an attempt to demystify imperial claims concerning the divine (θεῖος) nature of the emperor. The noun can mean an individual or being who has been created (cf. Rom 8.39; Heb 4.13). But in this context such a meaning would be difficult given the extent to which this submission is to be taken. Because the readers are exhorted to submit to “every human *κτίσις*,” it is best to understand the term as denoting an authoritative or governmental body (“institution,” “authority”). On the other hand, the author’s differentiation between fearing God and honoring the emperor (1 Pet 2.17) does imply that imperial power is in some sense relativized.

confidence that the imperial cult would have posed a threat to the Petrine communities, the letter itself tends to confirm this idea with its attempt to relativize imperial power. Therefore, when reconstructing the situation of persecution we must take into account the negative responses that would have arisen from non-participation in the emperor cult and its associated activities.

(3) Worship of the Traditional Gods

A third area of social interaction from which the Anatolian Christians may have withdrawn, and as a result of which they may have faced opposition, is the worship of the traditional gods. Even though provincial inhabitants were not bound to take part in the public rituals and religious cults, it was nonetheless expected. Therefore, among Petrine commentators it is usually recognized that the lack of participation in the traditional cultus would have spurred significant conflict within the local community. One exception, however, is Pierre F. Steenberg. He argues, “It seems doubtful that the general suspicion and prejudice of neighbours regarding a new religion would have resulted in the type of persecution which is addressed by the author. New religions were hardly strange to the cities of Western Anatolia.”⁴⁶ But, of course, the introduction of Christianity onto the religious scene of Asia Minor was not simply a matter of adding a new god to the existing pantheon of deities. Christianity called for the *exclusive* commitment to one God apart from the worship of any other deity.

The lack of regard that Christians showed to the traditional gods resulted in their being viewed as atheistic. But in this case, Christianity went even beyond the philosophic realms in which atheism was practiced in antiquity and into a perspective that was simply unacceptable to Greco-Roman society.⁴⁷ The story of Polycarp reveals exactly why their refusal to acknowledge other deities in sacrifice or in worship was such an affront to ancient sentiments. After being brought before the governor and confessing to be a

⁴⁶ Steenberg, “Reversal of Roles,” 85.

⁴⁷ Atheism was not unheard of in antiquity (see Jan N. Bremmer, “Atheism in Antiquity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* [ed. M. Martin; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007] 11-26). There was nevertheless an important pragmatic difference between the Judaeo-Christian traditions and other groups that might be labeled atheistic: “the Jews and the Christians in practice [were] downright deniers of the pagan gods: they would not worship them; whereas the Greek philosophers as a rule respected worship, however far they went in their criticism of men’s ideas of the gods” (A. B. Drachmann, *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity* [London: Gyldendal, 1922; repr., Chicago: Ares, 1977] 127).

Christian, the bishop Polycarp was reviled and condemned by the people of Smyrna as, ὁ τῶν ἡμετέρων θεῶν καθαιρέτης (“the destroyer of our gods”). Yet the reason why he was given this title was because as “the teacher of Asia” he taught others not to worship or sacrifice to the gods (*Mart. Pol.* 12.2).⁴⁸ Thus, in many cases, the denial of the gods was taken very seriously. Hippolytus (*Comm. Dan.* 1.20) recounts the story of how pagans entered into Christian meetings and attempted to pressure them to recant and to sacrifice to the gods, even threatening to accuse them before the authorities (for being Christians) if they refused. Elsewhere, Justin Martyr notes that in some instances the denial of the gods could even lead to threats of death (*I Apol.* 25.1; cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 10.1).

The reason why the “atheism” of Christianity was looked upon so negatively was because of the serious threats it posed for the wider civic community. First, the abandonment of the gods could have created significant economic loss for local businesses. As was the case with the silversmiths in Ephesus (Acts 19.23-27), the financial stability of certain professions may very well have been tied up in the worship of the gods (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.10). According to the *realistic group conflict theory*, the competition created by this desertion of the traditional deities would naturally lead to conflict and the deterioration of group relations (see Ch. 2). Furthermore, this lack of reverence shown to the gods also posed a *symbolic threat* to Anatolian society. Even apart from the deprivation of concrete material resources, the Christians’ “atheism” was thought to generate a dangerous recompense from the realm of the divine. As a result, the actions of a few Christians could put an entire community at risk.⁴⁹ Therefore, as Tertullian explains, when disaster struck, the blame was often placed upon the shoulders of the Christians who refused to participate in the traditional cult: “If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn’t move or the earth does,

⁴⁸ Cf. *Diogn.* 2.6: διὰ τοῦτο μισεῖτε Χριστιανούς, ὅτι τούτους οὐχ ἡγοῦνται θεούς (“This is why you hate Christians, namely, because they do not regard these objects of worship as gods”).

⁴⁹ Xavier Levieils, *Contra Christianos: La critique sociale et religieuse du christianisme des origines au concile de Nicée (45-325)* (BZNW 146; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007) 368-91. On divine recompense and appeasement of the gods in Asia Minor specifically, see Nicole Belayche, “Rites et ‘croyance’ dans l’épigraphie religieuse de l’Anatolie impériale,” in *Rites et croyances dans religions du monde romain: huit exposés suivis de discussions, Vandœuvre-Genève, 21-25 août 2006* (ed. J. Scheid; EAC 53; Genève: Fondation Hardt, 2007) 73-115; Angelos Chaniotis, “Under the Watchful Eyes of the Gods: Divine Justice in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor,” in *The Greco-Roman East: Politics, Culture, Society* (ed. S. Colvin; YCS 31; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 1-43.

if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: ‘The Christians to the lion!’” (*Apol.* 40.2; trans. Glover [LCL]).⁵⁰

So during the Imperial period it was not simply a case of the traditional gods being replaced with the rising emperor cult.⁵¹ Traditional deities still received significant devotion from the inhabitants of Anatolia. In fact, many have argued that the failure to worship the gods caused a much more serious threat for early Christians than did the refusal to participate in the imperial cult.⁵² Overall, this assessment would seem to be correct. Paying due homage to the gods posed a somewhat more significant threat for Christians because it held out more sobering implications for a much broader group. Since individual participation in the imperial cult was not regulated, the withdrawal of an individual had primarily social effects—although this is not to deny the political message it would communicate. Withdrawal from the emperor cult and its associated activities (essentially) meant social segregation. Nonetheless, an individual’s decision in this regard would have produced only minimal impact on outsiders, if any at all. The ensuing problems would have arisen because of the disdain for the Christian lifestyle. On the other hand, failure to worship the gods bore certain implications for members of the entire community. If one member slighted the gods, it was believed, retribution could have been exacted upon everyone.

In 1 Peter we are supplied with ample evidence to suggest that the Anatolian readers had previously participated in the traditional worship of the gods and that upon conversion they withdrew from these former practices. As we demonstrated above (Ch. 4), the letter appears to have been written to a group of churches composed primarily of Gentile Christians. Therefore, it is natural to assume a prior association with the

⁵⁰ This situation may be further evidenced in the later “confession inscriptions” (*Beichtinschriften*) from southwest Asia Minor. To date, 138 confessional inscriptions have been published (for the complete corpus, see Georg Petzl, ed., *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens* [Bonn: Habelt, 1994] [= “Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens,” *EA* 22 (1994) v-xxi, 1-178]; idem, “Neue Inschriften aus Lydien (II): Addenda und Corrigenda zu ‘Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens’,” *EA* 28 [1997] 69-79; Marijana Riel, “CIG 4142 – A Forgotten Confession-Inscription from North-West Phrygia,” *EA* 29 [1997] 35-43). It has been suggested that the multiplication of these stelae—which were set up to appease the gods as a result of the sins of the people—may have been due to the spread of Christianity in these areas (proposed by Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Divine Tyranny and Public Humiliation: A Suggestion for the Interpretation of the Lydian and Phrygian Confession Inscriptions,” *NovT* 45 [2003] 160-88).

⁵¹ As suggested, e.g., by Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, vol. 1: *The Beginnings of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.; trans. B. L. Woolf; London: Lutterworth, 1961) 168. Cf. also Arthur D. Nock, “The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year,” *HTR* 45 (1952) 187-252 (237-38).

⁵² See p. 233 n. 15.

traditional cultus. Their withdrawal from these activities is presumed in 1 Pet 1.18, where the author describes their conversion to Christianity as being “ransomed from the futile (*ματαιίας*) ways inherited from your ancestors (*πατροπαραδότου*).”⁵³ This thesis receives further support in 4.3. One of reasons why the audience is being attacked by former alliances is because of their refusal to partake in *ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίας* (“lawless idolatries”). Even though this description is found in a fairly standard Christian critique of Greco-Roman lifestyle, it nonetheless presupposes that a withdrawal from pagan worship would result in public backlash. As such, we might assume that this type of conflict was typical among those who converted to Christianity and in particular in 1 Peter.

2. Suffering for “Good Works/Doing Good”

The second behavioral cause from which the persecutions of 1 Peter seem to have arisen (or at least, could have arisen) is the practice of “good works” (1 Pet 2.20; 3.14, 16; 3.6, 17; 4.19).⁵⁴ But unlike the previous cause, this element rarely receives adequate attention. As we will demonstrate, however, it remains crucial for understanding the nature of the readers’ suffering.

On its own, the call to “do good” in 1 Peter is an enigmatic expression that demands clarification. Apart from an explicitly defined standard by which to measure what is “good,” the exhortation remains somewhat vague and unintelligible. Among many older commentators, the “good works” to which the author frequently refers were thought to denote acts associated with the exercise and promulgation of the Christian religion which

⁵³ Here the terms which are chosen to depict the readers’ former way of life (*ἀναστροφή*) confirm their prior participation in pagan worship. “The adjective *mataios* (‘futile’) and its paronyms are regularly used by Israelites and Christians to condemn the idolatrous ways of the pagans as ‘empty,’ ‘useless,’ ‘worthless,’ ‘lacking in honor’ (Jer 2:5; 8:19; Esth 4:17; 3 Macc 6:11; Acts 14:15; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17)” (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370; Cf. Otto Bauernfeind, “*μάταιος*, et al.,” in *TDNT* [ed. G. Kittel; vol. 4; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967] 519-24). Likewise, the term *πατροπαραδότος* is often used by Christian authors to condemn the former influences of paganism and idolatry in the lives of Gentiles (see van Unnik, “The Critique of Paganism in 1 Peter 1:18.”).

⁵⁴ Examples of the “good works/doing good” theme in 1 Peter include: *τὴν ἀναστροφήν . . . καλήν* (2.12); *τῶν καλῶν ἔργων* (2.12); *ἀγαθοποιός* (2.14); *ἀγαθοποιέω* (2.15, 20; 3.6, 17); *ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν* (3.11); *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταί* (3.13); *τὴν ἀγαθὴν . . . ἀναστροφήν* (3.16); *ἀγαθοποιῆα* (4.19).

were regulated solely by the will of God.⁵⁵ This opinion was by no means unanimous, however. During the 19th and early-20th centuries, a number of interpreters began to read this important exhortation in light of its Hellenistic background.⁵⁶ The letter's call to "do good" and to partake in "good works" was thus viewed as an admonition to partake in activities which were consistent with popular standards of conduct and which consequently would have been favorably recognized by the wider civic community.⁵⁷ Over the years, this view has become increasingly accepted within Petrine studies, and it currently reigns as the modern consensus on the issue⁵⁸

What is surprising is that the popularity of this opinion even crosses the divide between those who argue for assimilation to the wider society on the one hand and distinctiveness on the other. So while interpreters such as David L. Balch and John H. Elliott may part ways on the social strategy behind the exhortation to "do good," there is nonetheless some overlap in how this ethic is defined. Both agree that these "good works" would have been regarded as honorable behavior by the members of the wider Anatolian society.⁵⁹ This positive acknowledgement, each would have to admit, was due

⁵⁵ So, e.g., Steiger, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 252-53; Fronmüller, *The Epistles General of Peter*, 39; Fausset, "The First Epistle General of Peter," 505; Barnes, *General Epistles*, 145, 147, 161-62, 168, 173; J. Rawson Lumby, *The Epistles of St. Peter* (The Expositor's Bible; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893) 85-87, 89-90; Kühl, *Die Briefe Petri*, 158-59, 162-63; Bennett, *The General Epistles*, 215-17; Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter," 58-59.

⁵⁶ E.g., J. T. August Wiesinger, *Der erste Brief des Apostels Petrus* (Olhausens Commentar über sämtliche Schriften des Neuen Testaments 6/2; Königsberg: Unzer, 1856) 167-71, 180-81; Schott, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 127-30, 136; Huther, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 125-27, 131; von Soden, *Briefe des Petrus*, 144.

⁵⁷ Even though commonality in ethical standards is regularly posed by commentators, few specify *why* this was the case. Therefore, it is difficult to determine, for instance, whether commentators believe that the author is posing social and ethical conformity despite (what may appear to be) contradictory ideological beliefs, or whether he is merely seeking some kind of common ground in which the behavioral standards of the Christian communities overlapped with those of Hellenistic society.

⁵⁸ So, e.g., S. Légasse, "La Soumission aux Autorités d'après 1 Pierre 2.13-17: Version Spécifique d'une Parénèse Traditionelle," *NTS* 34 (1988) 378-96 (387-88); Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 96-98; Bénéteau, *La Première Épître de Pierre*, 188-90; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 158-62, 177-79; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 113 n. 376; Thurén, *Argument and Theology*, 135, 192-95; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 105-108, 112-14; Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter*, 121-23, 129; Karl O. Sandnes, "Revised Conventions in Early Paraenesis - 'Working Good' in 1 Peter as an Example," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (eds. J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen; BZNW 125; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 373-403; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 174-76; Prigent, *La première épître de Pierre*, 63; J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (WUNT 2/209; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 131-32; Horrell, "Between Conformity and Resistance," 133; Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 174-91.

⁵⁹ John H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4-10 and the Phrase Basileion Hierateuma* (NovTSup 12; Leiden: Brill, 1966) 179-82; idem, *1 Peter*, 466, 469; Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 81-116.

to the fact that the actions accorded with a pre-existing, Hellenistic definition of what was “good” or “noble.”

The validity of this popular opinion has an important bearing on how we reconstruct the conflict situation represented in 1 Peter, for there are a number of places in the epistle where the author draws a close association between “doing good” and the readers’ present suffering. In fact, on a few occasions, a causal link is even established (cf. 1 Pet 2.20; 3.14, 16). Therefore, if the modern consensus is correct, then it would appear that the problem stems, to some extent, from the audience’s attempt to live out a good and noble, Hellenistic lifestyle among Anatolian society. This fact would, of course, demand an explanation. I propose, however, that such a reconstruction is unnecessary due to the fact that the “good works” in 1 Peter have been misunderstood and misconstrued by modern interpreters.

One of the greatest problems with the modern discussion of “good works” in 1 Peter is the fact that interpreters have generally addressed the issue using quite generic, and therefore relatively unhelpful, descriptions of Hellenistic concepts. Despite the fact that scholars regularly posit a Hellenistic background for the “good works” theme, few have been concerned with specifying where this idea can be found in the Greek world. This is a serious problem considering that the concept of what was “good” could have taken on a wide range of different nuances in accordance with the various settings in which the topic may have been employed and with the numerous groups who might have offered a definition. As it stands, the current consensus lacks the kind of precision that is required for understanding this important concept. What is needed is a sharpened focus on the variety and specificity with which this theme was employed in antiquity.

As a first step towards gaining this type of precision, we will examine the most specific Hellenistic referent that has been offered within Petrine studies, *viz.*, the use of “good works” as a reference to civic benefaction. The assessment of this proposal will be used heuristically as a means of exploring the validity of the larger consensus opinion. Our goal, therefore, will not only be to draw attention to some of the major shortcomings of this particular view, we will also seek to expose a few of the more problematic areas within the modern consensus. Once this examination is complete, we will briefly offer an alternative perspective on how this theme might be better understood.

a. Challenging the Modern Consensus

While commentators have generally been guilty of suggesting less-than-precise contexts for 1 Peter's call to "good works," there is one group for which this criticism does not apply. Over the years, there have been a handful of interpreters who have proposed that the "good" which the recipients were expected to perform were exceptional acts of civic responsibility, such as public benefaction (*euergetism*). The foundation for this view was laid sometime during the early-20th century as commentators first began to draw attention to the classical distinction between *καλός* and *ἀγαθός*, noting that the former would have been recognized and respected within society.⁶⁰ It was this fact that led Edward G. Selwyn to propose that the "good" for which the addressees might be praised (1 Pet 2.14) could be a reference to the "recognition of meritorious service as is contained in the Honours Lists [i.e., honorific inscriptions]."⁶¹

Since the time of its introduction, this view has not generated an overwhelming number of supporters.⁶² What is more, those who have argued for such an interpretation have offered little in the way of interpretive defense. One scholar who has sought to rectify this situation, and therefore to provide scholarship with a somewhat more reasoned account of the position is Bruce W. Winter.⁶³ After detailing the specific procedures behind the socio-political convention of *euergetism* (e.g., form, means of

⁶⁰ Attention is drawn to this distinction, for instance, by Hort, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 134-35; Monnier, *La Première Épître de L'Apôtre Pierre*, 111; and Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 74.

⁶¹ Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 170, 173 (quote). Cf. Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 122, who earlier equated those who are praised for doing good (2.14) with those who were "law-abiding, good citizens, who were frequently rewarded with crowns, statues, and inscriptions in their honour, by a grateful community."

⁶² Some of those who have held to this view include: W. C. van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," *NTS* 1 (1954-55) 92-110; repr., in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*, Part Two: *1 Peter, Canon, Corpus Hellenisticum Generalia* (NovTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1980) 83-105 (citations will be from this reprinting); C. Freeman Sleeper, "Political Responsibility according to 1 Peter," *NovT* 10 (1968) 270-86 (282-83); Madelynn Jones-Haldeman, "The Function of Christ's Suffering in First Peter 2:21," (Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1988) 141-76, who argues that the "good" in 1 Pet 2.14-15 refers to exceptional acts of civic responsibility, while the "good" in 2.20 refers to Christian acts; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 84-85; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 166-67; Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 112-14; Chu Luan Eileen Poh, "The Social World of 1 Peter: Socio-Historical and Exegetical Studies," (Ph.D. diss., King's College, London, 1998) 130-34; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 35, 144-45.

⁶³ See Bruce W. Winter, "The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13.3-4 and 1 Peter 2.14-15," *JSNT* 34 (1988) 87-103, the content of which is essentially reproduced and further elaborated on in *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 12-40.

recognition, etc.), Winter applies his discoveries to 1 Pet 2.14-15. On the basis of terminological parallels, he proposes that the “good” for which Christians would be praised and which would ultimately silence their detractors was nothing other than beneficent works that were performed on behalf of the larger citizen body. These benefactions may have included acts such as supplying grain during times of financial crisis, erecting, adorning, or refurbishing public buildings, constructing roads, or even embarking on embassies in order to gain privileges for the city.

In the past few years, scholars have objected to Winter’s proposal for a variety of reasons. In many cases, however, the opposition has lacked substantial basis. For instance, many have ruled out the possibility of civic benefaction in 1 Peter due to the fact that the socio-economic level of most Christians would have prevented them from undertaking such a financial venture.⁶⁴ Yet Winter himself acknowledges this fact, noting, “The cost of a benefaction was very considerable and would be beyond the ability of some, if not most, members of the church.”⁶⁵ What many have failed to realize, though, is that the lack of *individual* wealth would not have prevented Christians (as a group) from participating in civic benefaction. One way around this dilemma would have been for the members of the community to pool their resources together in order to produce a much more sizeable donation, a method that was regularly employed in antiquity.⁶⁶ For this reason, the theory need not be ruled out simply on the unlikelihood that Christians were part of the small minority of wealthy elites who performed beneficent activities.

This fact notwithstanding, the view still remains a less-than-convincing option. One of the major problems with Winter’s reading of the text—which, to my knowledge, has yet to be recognized—is the way he construes the *method* of public recognition. According to Winter, it was the “rulers” who “praised and honoured those who undertook good works which benefited the city.”⁶⁷ Later he identifies this group more specifically as

⁶⁴ So, e.g., Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 89 n. 153; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 491; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 129; Green, *1 Peter*, 75.

⁶⁵ Winter, “The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors,” 94.

⁶⁶ Cf. Poh, “Social World of 1 Peter,” 134. Examples include the fishermen and fish-dealers of Ephesus who each donated varying amounts to build a customs house for fishery toll (*I.Ephesos* no. 20) and the numerous craftsmen who donated to the building of a Jewish soup kitchen (*SEG* 36 [1986] no. 970).

⁶⁷ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 26. Cf. Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 112: “Giving public distinction (ἐπαινος) to benefactors is a role of the Roman ruler” (citing W. C. van Unnik, “A Classical

the civic authorities.⁶⁸ In 1 Pet 2.14, however, the official who is said to “praise those who do good” is the provincial governor (ἡγεμών). This is an important distinction which Winter fails to make,⁶⁹ for ordinarily gubernatorial acclaim was not the normal method by which benefactors were recognized in the Greek world.⁷⁰ The cities—and, in particular, the βουλή and the δῆμος—were the ones who issued praise in the form of monuments and inscriptions, because they were the ones who experienced the benefit. If any type of gubernatorial recognition did take place, it was more often directed *to* the governor *from* the citizens (e.g., *CIL* III no. 6817; *IGR* III no. 125; Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 71). There was some relationship between governors and wealthy citizens, but this resulted more in personal favors than in public praise.⁷¹

A second criticism which could be leveled against this proposal is its failure to account for the range of individuals to whom these instructions are given. Although Winter acknowledges that public benefaction would have been too costly for most Christians, he fails to address the fact that even some of the least affluent members of the congregations were encouraged to “do good.” In 1 Pet 2.20, for instance, the author directs slaves (οἰκέται) to bear up under harsh treatment from their masters. He states, “If you endure when suffering for doing good (ἀγαθοποιούντες), this finds favor with God.” Are we to imagine that the “good” which the author had in mind here was public benefaction? Despite the fact that some οἰκέται may have existed in an economic position

Parallel to I Peter ii 14 and 20,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*, Part Two: *I Peter, Canon, Corpus Hellenisticum Generalia* [NovTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1980] 106-10 [107, 109]).

⁶⁸ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 28, 36.

⁶⁹ Note that in translating ἡγεμών in 1 Pet 2.14, Winter renders the word “ruler” (*Seek the Welfare of the City*, 38; cf. Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 103, who refers to them as “magistrats”). At times, the term can mean “ruler” in a very general sense, denoting one who holds a preeminent position (cf. Matt 2.6). In this case, however, it must refer to the chief administrative official in a Roman province. This is evident from the fact that the ἡγεμών is sent by the emperor (2.14), something that would not be true of local civic authorities.

⁷⁰ Drawing on available literary, epigraphic, and papyrological sources, Drogula, “Office of the Provincial Governor,” 447-93, provides a list of some 1,287 references to gubernatorial activities within the Roman provinces (31 BCE to 235 CE). What is striking is that none of these examples describe a governor praising individual citizens for civic benefaction. The closest parallel is found in *CIL* XIII no. 31662, but even this is related more to personal favors than to public recognition.

⁷¹ This fact would create further difficulty for interpreting the “good works” in 1 Peter as civic benefaction. For although it would be possible for the larger Christian community to pool together their resources in order to provide beneficence to the community, it is unlikely that any one member would be wealthy enough to acquire personal interaction with the governor. Thus, the kind of “praise” that is assumed by advocates of the civic benefaction position is something that was unattainable for virtually every member of the Christian community.

well above that of a destitute pauper (see Ch. 4), very few (if any) would have possessed enough wealth to perform beneficent acts such as grain supply or building construction for local communities.⁷² Furthermore, even if there was substantial evidence to demonstrate the participation of *οἰκέται* in this popular convention, it is difficult to explain why such acts would have angered their masters.

While these considerations weigh heavily against the benefaction position, the most significant problem with Winter's proposal is his assumption that the "good" in 1 Pet 2.14-15 refers to acts which are socially approved. The two fundamental reasons why he draws such a conclusion are (a) the use of conventional Hellenistic terminology and (b) the intended outcome of these acts, *viz.*, the silencing/conversion of detractors. What is important to recognize at this point is the crucial intersection between Winter's proposal and the modern consensus opinion. This evidence not only serves to undergird the benefaction position, it also stands out as the primary basis upon which other commentators have equated the "good works" in 1 Peter with a favorably recognized Hellenistic standard of conduct. In other words, not only does Winter's proposal stand or fall at this point, the validity of the entire consensus opinion rests, in large part, on these two pieces of evidence. The question then is, has this evidence been understood correctly? What we will suggest is that, upon closer examination, the present data can be construed in an alternative and much more satisfactory manner.

Many commentators have pointed out that 1 Peter seems to hold in tension a sense of optimism and pessimism with reference to the outside response to "good works." In some places, "doing good" is thought to be a means of abrogating the hostility of detractors, thus creating a more positive interaction with society (cf. 1 Pet 2.14-15; 3.1). Elsewhere in the epistle, however, it is clear that the author expects opponents to respond negatively to the "good deeds" of Christians, and therefore the ethic only serves to further exacerbate the problem (cf. 2.20; 3.14, 16). Resolving this tension stands out as the key to

⁷² Cf. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175; Green, *1 Peter*, 75. For a glimpse at some specific figures on benefactions in Asia Minor, see Arjan Zuiderhoek, "The Icing on the Cake: Benefactors, Economics, and Public Building in Roman Asia Minor," in *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* (eds. S. Mitchell and C. Katsari; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005) 167-86 (esp. 179), who collects a number of recorded benefactions from ancient Anatolia. The greatest of these (*IGR* III no. 804) totals 2,000,000 denarii (or seven times greater than the minimum senatorial census requirement). The average donation amounted to over 75,000 denarii, with the mode (i.e., value of the donation at the mid-point of the series) being 16,500 denarii.

understanding the nature of “good works” in 1 Peter. Yet an adequate resolution is seldom reached. In most cases, the author’s optimistic expectation of a positive response is something which has been overemphasized by previous commentators, hence the consensus opinion on the meaning of “good works.”

The problem is that the evidence used in the discussion (*viz.*, the use of conventional Hellenistic terminology and the intended outcome of these acts) has been accepted without due consideration of the tension (or contradiction?) created and apart from proper reflection on alternative interpretations. The first piece of evidence in particular is highly suspect. What must be recognized is that in and of itself the presence of Hellenistic terminology—whether *ἀγαθός* or *καλός*—is not sufficient to establish a socially acceptable and praiseworthy ethic. For this assumption simply does not take into account the possibility that an author might employ traditional terminology in an untraditional manner. And in 1 Peter, in fact, this appears to be exactly what has taken place. In many instances, the “good” to which the author calls his readers is that which seems likely to receive a *negative* response from outsiders. In 3.16, for example, he specifically states that the audience’s “good conduct” (*τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἀναστροφὴν*) will be maligned (lit. “those who mistreat your good conduct”). Likewise, in 2.20 slaves are encouraged, “If you endure when suffering for doing good (*εἰ ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε*),⁷³ this finds favor with God” (cf. 3.14, 17).⁷⁴ What seems clear from this is that the merit or value of at least some of these “good deeds” was not something that was agreed upon by everyone in the community.⁷⁵ Such a fact would rule out civic benefaction as a possible

⁷³ Since the two halves of v. 20 are parallel in nature, the causal connection of the participles in v. 20a (*ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι*, “when you are beaten *because* you do wrong”) should be reproduced in v. 20b: *ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες*, “when you suffer *because* you do good” (cf. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 199; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 197 n. 111).

⁷⁴ Another implicit indication that “good works” cause, or at least further exacerbate, persecution rather than deter it may be found in 1 Pet 4.19. If the readers’ are expected to entrust themselves to God “by (*ἐν*) continuing to do good,” this could suggest that rather than fixing the problem, proper Christian conduct will only make it worse. In other words, the “good works” of Christians receive simultaneous positive and negative responses: to God such acts are praiseworthy, but to the non-believers they are a cause of hostility. The exhortation would then be to continue “doing good” despite the persecution that will inevitably ensue, all the while trusting that God’s response is of much greater importance.

⁷⁵ Poh, “Social World of 1 Peter,” 101-109, attempts to circumvent the negative response to “good works” in 1 Peter by drawing comparisons with improper responses shown to Greco-Roman benefactors. The problem is that she overlooks an important difference between the two. While the examples she produces from the Greco-Roman world demonstrate that the “good deeds” of benefactors could be met with

referent (at least in some instances), and it would also remove one of the foundational tenets of the consensus opinion.⁷⁶

The second piece of evidence used to posit a Hellenistic background for the “good” in 1 Peter is the expected outcome of these deeds. According to our author, the “good works” of the Anatolian Christians could result in either the praise/silencing of opponents (1 Pet 2.14-15) or in their outright conversion to Christianity (3.1). On the basis of this testimony, many have assumed that the letter is therefore advocating a kind of honorable behavior which would have been well-received by Hellenistic society. Nevertheless, this is not the only conclusion that could be deduced from the existing evidence. There are alternative means of achieving the positive responses envisioned in the letter which do not require conformity to, or even agreement with, an accepted standard of behavior. Consequently, it is unnecessary to equate the “good works” in 1 Peter with a praiseworthy, Hellenistic code of conduct (or, in particular, with civic benefaction) simply on the basis of their intended outcome.

It is unnecessary, for instance, to claim that the conversion of an unbelieving husband (1 Pet 3.1) could have *only* been attained through the wife’s assimilation to popular values. In fact, this is a prime example of how a positive response could have only been achieved through *non-conformity*. For despite the wife’s best efforts at submission, her entire Christian existence would have been an act of insubordination against her husband’s religious authority (cf. Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 19 [*Mor.* 140D]). The author of 1 Peter recognized the seriousness of the situation when he encourages the women, “You have become children of Sarah, if you do good and *do not give in to fear* (ἀγαθοποιοῦσαι καὶ μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν)” (3.6). This last phrase reveals that it is further difficulty (hence μὴ φοβούμεναι . . . πτόησιν), not acceptance, which these “good deeds”

ingratitude by members of society, they are never said to be responded to with *hostility* and *enmity*, as they are in 1 Peter.

⁷⁶ One way that commentators have maneuvered around this dilemma is by positing different referents for the “good works” in 1 Peter—usually civic benefaction at 2.14-15 and Christianly defined good deeds elsewhere (so, e.g., Jones-Haldeman, “The Function of Christ’s Suffering in First Peter 2:21,” 141-76; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 145 n. 263; cf. Sandnes, “Revised Conventions in Early Paraenesis,” esp. 385-88). But such an alternative is unsatisfactory given that “doing good” is essentially a technical term in 1 Peter (cf. François Refoulé, “Bible et éthique sociale: Lire aujourd’hui 1 Pierre,” *Le Supplément* 131 [1979] 457-82 [469]) and unnecessary because this tension can be adequately resolved without postulating multiple referents (see below).

are expected to produce. But even amidst these tensions, the epistle holds out hope that through this lifestyle, some unbelievers might still come to faith.

In the same way that conversion may have taken place through a lifestyle which was repudiated by society, so also the silencing of detractors (1 Pet 2.14-15) could have been accomplished through acts which were not necessarily viewed as “honorable” according to popular standards.⁷⁷ As we will discuss further below (see Ch. 8), one of the ways in which this positive outcome could have been reached was through the public exoneration of Christians in a Roman court. But while a legal context is certainly a plausible setting for the “silencing” of 1 Pet 2.15, there may be a better way to construe this evidence. The key, in my opinion, is the eschatological theme of vindication which is introduced in 2.11-12 and then briefly touched upon within the remainder of the epistle. In 2.11-12, the Anatolian congregations are encouraged to “abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul, by maintaining honorable conduct (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν . . . καλήν) among the Gentiles.” The purpose of this exhortation is then spelled out in full: “so that in that very matter in which they accuse you as evildoers, they will glorify God on the day of visitation after having seen (your conduct) from your good works (τῶν καλῶν ἔργων).” If, as many have proposed,⁷⁸ ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς (“the day of visitation”) is

⁷⁷ Part of the problem is that many misinterpret 1 Pet 2.12, assuming that the actions for which Christians are slandered are distinct from those that bring glory to God. This misunderstanding is represented in the translation of the NRSV: “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.” Where this interpretation goes astray is in attributing a temporal function to the prepositional phrase ἐν ᾧ (as suggested by Bo Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Peter III.19 and Its Context* [ASNU 13; Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1946] 110-11, and Paul R. Fink, “The Use and Significance of *en hōi* in 1 Peter,” *GTJ* 8 [1967] 33-39 [34]). The problem is that the prepositional phrase—which implies the presence of τούτῳ (see A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [4th ed.; Nashville: Broadman, 1934] 721) with the relative pronoun ᾧ thus being assimilated to the case of the demonstrative (BDF §294[4])—must be construed with both καταλαλοῦσιν and δοξάσωσιν. But since these verbs mark off two distinct time periods (the former denoting the present and the latter denoting the eschatological future), this meaning is difficult to reconcile (cf. Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter*, 136). Instead, “[w]hat it indicates is that they will give glory to God then about the same things for which they slander Christians now” (Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 97 n. 10). This is important because it further illustrates that it is the “good deeds” of Christians that are being maligned.

⁷⁸ E.g., van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” 96-99; Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 72; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 119-120; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 178. This, of course, goes against many others who have argued for a missionary purpose behind 1 Pet 2.11-12 (most recently, Armand Puig i Tàrrach, “The Mission According to the New Testament: Choice or Need?,” in *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament: Dritte europäische orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz in Sankt Petersburg, 24.-31. August 2005* [eds. A. A. Alexeev, et al.; WUNT 218; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008] 231-47 [242-43]; Torrey Seland, “Resident

a reference to the time of God's eschatological judgment wherein those who stood against him will be put to shame,⁷⁹ then it may hold out the clue to properly interpreting the "silencing" of opponents in 2.15.

When 1 Pet 2.15 is read against this eschatological framework, a much more uniform meaning can be attributed to the concept of "good works/doing good," and the tension between the author's optimism and pessimism begins to disappear.⁸⁰ In this context, the "good" which the opponents presently observe is the evidence which will one day lead to their silencing at the last judgment (cf. 3.16). That is, despite the strong opposition to the "good deeds" of Christians, in the end, the slander of pagan detractors will ultimately be stopped as they will be forced to acknowledge what they did not account for during their lifetimes (*viz.*, that the actions of Christians were performed with the approval of God). Given the fact that this event was thought to be near at hand (4.7), these words would have provided the readers with a sense of much-needed hope and comfort in a time of serious distress. In this light, then, the "good deeds" in 1 Peter are not simply an appropriate *response* to the conflict situation; in many cases, they are one of the original *causes*. While "doing good" might occasionally result in a positive outcome such as the conversion of unbelievers (3.1), it normally produced adverse responses and therefore

Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter," *BBR* 19 [2009] 565-89 [575-79]).

⁷⁹ It is true that according to Jewish thought God could visit (*ἐπισκοπή*) his people in order to bring blessing in this life (Gen 50.24-25; Exod 3.16; 13.19; Isa 23.17; *Pss. Sol.* 11.1, 6). But the *ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς* ("day of visitation") cannot be taken to refer to "God's visitation of individual nonbelievers *as an occasion of testing* when they are confronted with the winsome behavior of the believers and are thereby motivated to join the Christians in their glorification of God" (Elliott, *1 Peter*, 471 [original emphasis]; cf. also Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri*, 103-104; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 99). When *ἐπισκοπή* is used with a temporal designation (e.g., *ώρα, ἡμέρα, καιρός*), it refers invariably to a decisive and corporate eschatological event wherein God brings either blessing (Wis 3.7; Sir 18.20; Luke 19.44) or punishment (Isa 10.3; Jer 6.15; 8.12; 10.15). The question is thus whether these detractors will glorify God on the day of judgment because they will be genuinely converted through the lifestyle of the Anatolian believers or because they will be forced to recognize what they did not account for during their lives, *viz.*, that the actions of the Christians were performed with the approval of God. The difficulty is that evidence such as the presence of *δοξάζω* ("to glorify") in this context is of little value in determining a solution, for God is able to receive glory through either salvation or judgment (see van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," 99-100). The only substantial evidence for choosing between the two options is the parallel reference in 1 Pet 3.16. There the accusers are said to be put to shame (*καταισχυνθῶσιν*) for slandering the "good deeds" of the Christians. Therefore, it is best to understand 2.12 as a reference to the accusers' ultimate confession of their error at the day of God's final judgment.

⁸⁰ I say, "*begins to disappear*," because we are still left to explain 1 Pet 3.13-14a: "So who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good (*ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταί*)? But even if you happen to suffer (*πάσχοιτε*) for righteousness [with the fourth-class condition conveying the sense: "and it is not likely that you will"], you are blessed."

only further exacerbated the problems with outsiders (2.20; 3.14, 16, 17). For this reason, it does not seem adequate to describe this behavior as conduct in conformity to socially acceptable norms—whether it be civic benefaction or any other form of social compliance.

At this point, it should be clear that considerable weaknesses prevent the civic benefaction position of Winter (and others) from being a plausible interpretive solution to the question of “good works” in 1 Peter. Yet the reason why we have chosen to focus so closely on this position may still seem unclear, for in the past, numerous commentators have rejected the notion that civic benefaction is the underlying referent behind the letter’s call to “do good.” The fact that we have drawn attention to several problematic points in Winter’s proposal is therefore not an altogether original contribution to the field. The important point to consider, however, is this: when civic benefaction is rejected as the referent behind “good works” in 1 Peter, rarely is a specific alternative offered in its place. This fact—which has seemingly gone unnoticed—is extremely problematic given that the civic context is ‘a’ (if not ‘the’) primary venue in which the concept appears in the Greek world. If civic responsibility is ruled out, therefore, interpreters must produce an adequate (and specific) alternative from the Hellenistic world. Regrettably, up to this point, no such proposal has been made,⁸¹ and given the present critique, I would suggest that any type of similar proposition would be difficult to sustain. A more profitable strategy, in my opinion, would be to move the discussion away from the Hellenistic background and to explore more fully how this concept was understood within the thought world of Second Temple Judaism and how these ideas may have been adopted within early Christianity.

b. A New Perspective on “Good Works” in 1 Peter

In offering a new perspective on “good works” in 1 Peter, we must begin with the earliest, and possibly the most influential, work devoted to the subject: the 1954-55

⁸¹ The possibility of a Stoic influence was suggested in passing by Walter Grundmann, “καλός,” in *TDNT* (ed. G. Kittel; vol. 4; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 536-50 (550), but never developed. In the recent work of Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 105-16, 198-201, the question is never fully addressed.

article of W. C. van Unnik entitled, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter.”⁸² In this study, van Unnik explored the possible sources of reference from which 1 Peter’s idea of “good works” might have been drawn, limiting his consideration to three ancient contexts: (a) the Greco-Roman world; (b) ancient Judaism; and (c) early Christianity. The conclusion which van Unnik reached was that the “good works” theme in 1 Peter, despite a difference in foundation and aim, could be traced back to popular Hellenistic usage. Ultimately, however, the true significance of this work rests not in its overall discoveries but in the interpretive parameters which it served to establish. Within virtually all subsequent discussions, commentators have rarely strayed from the analytical boundaries which van Unnik constructed and within which he himself worked. Such methodological reproduction seems natural given the present question of inquiry. Where troubles arise is in the fact that many have simply conceded van Unnik’s conclusions without considering the *sources* of his investigation.

What few have recognized is that the Jewish and Christian sources from which van Unnik drew are not representative of the ideological conditions during the time leading up to or the time immediately following 1 Peter’s composition.⁸³ In his attempt to discern the “Jewish” perspective, for instance, van Unnik concentrated solely on the evidence from Rabbinic Judaism, arguing that, “it is beyond question that this conception of ‘good works’ [i.e., charitable deeds performed on behalf of the poor and afflicted] existed in the time of the N.T.”⁸⁴ What is glaringly absent, however, is any discussion on how this concept was understood in Second Temple Judaism. Such a lacuna would have certainly been an unfortunate omission during the mid-20th century when van Unnik first published his study, but it is especially troubling now, given the reassessment of Second Temple Judaism within modern scholarship.⁸⁵ Similarly, when providing the basis for the “Christian” view of “good works,” van Unnik’s treatment is far from satisfactory. In order to substantiate his claim that, according to the “Christian” conception, “good works” were deeds measured by the standards of the Church which facilitated a right

⁸² van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter.”

⁸³ One interpreter who has recognized the inadequacy of van Unnik’s treatment is Poh, “Social World of 1 Peter,” 96. Her own discussion, however, does little in the way of bringing resolution to the issue.

⁸⁴ van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” 89.

⁸⁵ Over the years there have been a number of important stimuli that have fueled this reassessment (e.g., growing focus on the OT Pseudepigrapha; the discovery/publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls; the discussion of the New Perspective on Paul).

relationship with God through the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, he briefly cites three Christian writers from the 3rd and 4th centuries: Cyprian, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Jerusalem.⁸⁶ When these facts are taken into consideration, one wonders whether van Unnik’s (and others’) dismissal of these contexts can be considered valid.

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the concept of “good works” in 1 Peter can be much more naturally understood against the backdrop of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. For while the terminology employed in the epistle would have been familiar to a Hellenistic audience, by the time of the letter’s composition, this language had already been assigned a distinctively theological meaning (*viz.*, actions which in some way had a bearing upon one’s relationship with God) within a wide circulation of Jewish and Christian sources.⁸⁷ In the book of Tobit, for instance, Raphael’s final charge to Tobit and his son, Tobias, consists of the exhortation, “do good⁸⁸ and evil will not find you” (Tob 12.7). At Qumran, one of the essential aspects of life in the community is introduced in the Community Rule: “to do that which is good (לעשות הטוב) and right before Him . . . to separate from all evil and to cling to every good work (מעשי טוב)” (1QS i 2, 5). Similarly, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews admonishes his readers, “let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good works (καλῶν ἔργων)” (Heb 10.24). Furthermore, aside from these and numerous other examples,⁸⁹ there was much discussion about a person’s “deeds/works” without specific reference to “good works.”

⁸⁶ van Unnik, “The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter,” 87-88.

⁸⁷ An adequate demonstration of this contention would require a full-length monograph—a task on which I am currently at work. Given the limitation of this brief discussion, the proof which we offer here is simply the accumulation of evidence (see below).

⁸⁸ There is some variation among the Greek recensions at this point: G^I: ἀγαθὸν ποιήσατε; G^{II}: τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιείτε; G^{III}: omit. For the differing Greek recensions along with the rest of the versional support, see Stuart Weeks, et al., eds., *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions, with Synopsis, Concordances, and Annotated Texts in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac* (FoSub 3; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 288-89.

⁸⁹ Similar terminology (“good works/doing good”) was employed throughout Second Temple Judaism (e.g., Tobit 7.6 [G^{III}]; 12.13 [G^I]; *Sib. Or.* 1.25, 126; 2.313; 3.218-220, 312; *Apocr. Ezek.* 2.11; 4 *Macc.* 4.1; *Let. Aris.* 18, 43, 207, 272; 1QS i 2, 5; 1QH^a iv 24; 4Q185 1-2 ii 15; 4Q398 2 ii 7; 4Q521 2 ii 10; 4Q521 7 ii 4; 4Q524 4 2; 4Q524 6 13; *T. Ash.* 1.9; 3.2; *T. Benj.* 4.1-3; 5.2-3; 6.1; 11.1; *T. Reu.* 4.1; *T. Sim.* 3.2; *T. Jos.* 18.2; *T. Naph.* 8.4-5; 4 *Ezra* 8.36; 2 *Bar.* 14.12; 3 *Bar.* 11.9; 15.2). For more on “good works” in Second Temple Judaism, see Eric Ottenheijm, “The Phrase ‘Good Works’ in Early Judaism: A Universal Code for the Jewish Law?,” in *Empsychoi Logoi—Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst* (eds. A. Houtman, et al.; AJEC 73; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 485-506, although his discussion is somewhat too restrictive. There are also numerous examples of this concept in the NT (e.g.,

So while the “good works/doing good” theme may have been familiar to Hellenistic readers (or listeners), the referent behind these acts cannot be determined simply by terminology alone. In order to understand the kinds of activities which the recipients are being encouraged to undertake, we must first ascertain the author’s ideological perspective. And in this case, it would appear that the “good works” to which he continually refers is informed by a distinctively Judaeo-Christian perspective. Such a contention is supported by a variety of evidence: (1) For the author of 1 Peter, “doing good” is a standard of conduct which should be strived for primarily because of its effect on one’s standing before God, both now and at the final judgment.⁹⁰ (2) Much of the author’s view concerning the proper response toward unjust suffering is informed by Psa 33 (LXX), where the text prescribes “doing good” (i.e., a kind of righteous lifestyle which accords with the standards of God) as a remedy for one’s personal distress.⁹¹ (3) The model which the audience is called to emulate is that of Christ (1 Pet 2.21-25), whose sinless life before God freed the readers “to live for righteousness” (i.e., a life whose right conduct is determined by and lived out before God). (4) The negative responses which these “good works” are thought to produce (cf. 1 Pet 2.20; 3.14, 16) are representative of how outsiders responded to the distinctive practices of early Christianity (see below).

What remains to be determined then are the specific activities represented by 1 Peter’s exhortation to “do good.” Some help may be afforded by the accusations found in later Christian literature, e.g., incest, cannibalism, atheism (Justin, *1 Apol.* 26.7; *2 Apol.* 12; Tatian, *Or.* 25; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 9; Tertullian, *Apol.* 4; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*

Matt 5.16; 19.16; Mark 3.4 [// Matt 12.12; Luke 6.9]; 14.6 [// Matt 26.10]; Luke 6.27, 33, 35; 23.50; John 5.29; 10.32-33; Acts 9.36; 11.24; 14.17; Rom 2.7, 10; 7.18-19, 21; 9.11; 13.3; 1 Cor 7.37-38; 2 Cor 5.10; 9.8; 13.7; Gal 6.10; Eph 2.10; 6.8; Col 1.10; 1 Thess 5.15; 1 Tim 2.10; 3.1; 5.10, 25; 6.18; 2 Tim 2.21; 3.17; Tit 1.16; 2.7, 14; 3.1, 8, 14; Phlm 14; Jas 4.17; 3 John 11).

⁹⁰ 1 Pet 2.15 (part of the will of God), 20 (brings God’s approval); 3.6 (makes one a daughter of Sarah), 10-12 (leads to “life”), 14 (results in blessedness). This connection is also evident within other paraenetic sections of 1 Peter, where the primary concern is how one’s behavior is viewed by God and ultimately how it will affect one’s final standing before Him (1.13, 17; 2.2; 3.4, 9; 4.2, 5, 7-8, 13, 17-18; 5.4-5).

⁹¹ Although the influence of Psa 33 (LXX) may not have been as overwhelming as proposed by Wilhelm Bornemann, “Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?,” *ZNW* 19 (1919-20) 143-65, this text was nonetheless very formative on the thought of our author (see Susan A. Woan, “The Use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter, with especial focus on the role of Psalm 34,” [Ph.D. diss., University of Exeter, 2008]; idem, “The Psalms in 1 Peter,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament* [eds. S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004] 213-29 [219-28], although the influence she proposes on the *compositional* level [i.e., the “Janus Behaviour”] is excessive).

5.1.14). From this evidence, specific kinds of behaviors are thought to generate adverse responses from outsiders. We must be careful, however, when employing the standard list of deviancies to provide a diagnosis of the problem, as though each allegation necessarily represents a detestable Christian activity (e.g., cannibalism = Lord's Supper; incest = familial designation used by Christians, etc.), for in many cases these were simply labels which were applied to persons or groups as a way of communicating that they were recognized deviants.⁹²

A better way of understanding the kinds of “good works” which our author expects may simply be to focus closer attention on the letter itself. Given that this designation broadly summarizes all of the Christian paraenesis in the epistle,⁹³ our investigation could be extended to include all of the ethical exhortations found in 1 Peter. When this paraenesis is collected, there are a number of behaviors which could be classified as “good.” The letter is filled with personal virtues or traits which the author expected would be developed and fostered within the Christian communities: self-discipline (1.13; 4.7; 5.8); holiness (1.15); fear of (or reverence for) God (1.17; 2.17); righteousness (2.24; 3.12, 14; 4.18); inner purity (3.2-4); sympathy and tender-heartedness (3.8); and humility (3.8; 5.5-7). Along with the individual aspects of the Christian life, he also encourages his audience to display inter-personal “goodness”: loving one another (1.22; 2.17; 3.8; 4.8); submitting to proper authorities (2.13-14, 18; 3.1; 5.5); showing honor to everyone and in particular the emperor (2.17); endurance under unjust suffering (2.19-20); living with

⁹² See de Vos, “Popular Graeco-Roman Responses to Christianity,” 879-85. While the importance of such references in determining actual behaviors may be debatable, they nonetheless play an important role in establishing the nature of conflict in 1 Peter. What is crucial to recognize in this regard is that even in the second and third centuries CE, when Christianity had clearly become effectively illegal in the Greco-Roman world, Christian authors still continued to place an emphasis on the *behavioral* cause of conflict. Christian apologists such as Justin and Tertullian often focused on society's hostility toward what believers did and did not do (e.g., worshipping the gods; disdain for Christian ethics; etc.). This consideration—which actually serves as an important lead-in to the following section—reveals that one cannot *a priori* rule out the possibility that the Christian faith had been criminalized at the time when 1 Peter was composed simply on the grounds that the epistle describes part of the conflict as arising out of hostility towards Christian behavior. The evidence does not force us into an “either/or” situation. Both problems (i.e., behavioral and legal) could have served as causes of conflict in the first century, just as they did in the second and third centuries.

⁹³ Cf. Sandnes, “Revised Conventions in Early Paraenesis,” 381-82. There are some who (incorrectly) restrict the “good works” of 1 Peter to social interaction with outsiders (so, e.g., Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 177; Poh, “Social World of 1 Peter,” 81-84; James W. Aageson, “1 Peter 2.11-3.7: Slaves, Wives and the Complexities of Interpretation,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* [ed. A.-J. Levine with M. M. Robbins; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2004] 34-49 [44, 46]), but this is unnecessary.

one's wife according to knowledge (3.7); maintaining unity (3.8); non-retaliation (3.9-11); hospitality (4.9); ministering to one another through spiritual gifts (4.10-11); and shepherding the flock of God (5.2). But the "good works" of 1 Peter were not merely pursuits in which Christians *actively* participated. In some cases, the "good" which the author expects is simply abstinence (e.g., 1.14; 2.1, 11; 3.3, 6, 9, 14; 4.1-3, 15). By avoiding the sinful behaviors which previously consumed their lives and which presently tested their faithfulness, they were actually "doing good." As such, it is somewhat difficult to drive a wedge between the two behavioral causes of persecution.

With this understanding of "good works" in mind, we are now in a better position to reconstruct the conflict situation. As we have sought to demonstrate in this chapter, one of the behavioral causes from which the persecutions of 1 Peter seem to have arisen (or at least, could have arisen) is the audience's practice of "good works" (cf. 2.20; 3.14, 16). On the surface, though, it might seem difficult to understand how certain kinds of behaviors represented by this ethic (*viz.*, specific *participatory* behaviors, in contrast to "good works" of abstinence) could have caused the Anatolian Christians to be opposed by society—as though showing hospitality, for instance, would have produced popular resentment. The problem is much easier to comprehend, however, if we seek to understand how the ethical system as a whole would have resulted in a progression of hostility.

Part of the "good" to which the readers were expected to adhere was abstinence from certain "sinful" activities (cf. 1 Pet 1.14; 2.1, 11; 3.3, 6, 9, 14; 4.1-3, 15). Such a withdrawal would have resulted in considerable aggravation and hostility from the local populace (see above). In one sense, then, when the Christians did "good" (i.e., abstained from "sinful" practices), they suffered the consequences. But this withdrawal would have only been the beginning of the Christians' problems. It is likely that even some of the less offensive "good deeds" (e.g., mutual love, hospitality, ministering through spiritual-giftedness, etc.) would have been met with equal misgivings, especially after the group had been marked out as social deviants. For, as we learned from modern conflict theory, something as seemingly insignificant as ingroup promotion and favoritism, even apart from outgroup derogation, is enough to generate intergroup competition and eventually intergroup conflict (see Ch. 2). In many cases, this behavior was viewed as symptomatic

of “a depraved and excessive superstition” (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.8). So rather than focusing on one particular “good work” as the exclusive cause of the hostility, it might be best to view the entire Christian ethical system as a reason for the audience’s present difficulty.

B. Legal Cause(s) of Conflict in 1 Peter

When questions are raised concerning legal cause(s) of conflict in 1 Peter, we arrive at the heart of a debate that has swirled for the past two centuries. Throughout the years, commentators have deliberated on the extent of and legal basis for the involvement of public officials in the audience’s persecution. Undergirded and informed by the legal framework established in Chapters Five and Six, our objective in this section will be to determine whether 1 Peter itself provides any insight into the legal standing of its Christian readers. Depending upon the nature of the results, our findings could serve as an important precursor to reconstructing the various forms of the addressees’ present suffering, shaping both how we understand the protagonists of the persecution as well as the strategies by which the conflict was managed. The question which we will therefore seek to answer is, does 1 Peter represent a situation in which simple adherence to the Christian faith was a punishable offense?

Although a number of texts could serve to shed varying degrees of light on the legal status of the addressees,⁹⁴ the question ultimately boils down to the interpretation of one key passage, 1 Pet 4.15-16: “By all means let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a mischievous meddler. But if anyone suffers as a Christian (ὡς Χριστιανός), let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God because of this name.” In this text, the most crucial and controversial issue to resolve is the meaning of (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός, “to suffer as a Christian” (4.16).⁹⁵ Two possibilities lie before us. On the one hand, the phrase could mean, “to suffer (simply) for being a Christian.” On the other

⁹⁴ Another passage that plays an important role in determining the legal threat facing the Anatolian readers is 1 Pet 3.14b-16. We will deal with this text in much more detail in Chapter Six, where we discuss the form(s) of conflict threatening/experienced by the addressees.

⁹⁵ The verbal form is absent in the protasis of 1 Pet 4.16 and therefore must be supplied. The question is whether one should supply *ὀνειδίζει*, in line with v. 14, or *πάσχει*, in connection with v. 15. Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 313) lists the parallel structure of vv. 14 and 16 as a possible reason for adopting the former. But while this is an interesting possibility, the latter is ultimately demanded by the contrast set up in vv. 15-16 (*μὴ* . . . *δέ*). The author’s aim is to set in opposition both shameful (v. 15) and praiseworthy (v. 16) forms of suffering (cf. Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 212; Senior, *1 Peter*, 130-31).

hand, the author may have in mind something more like, “to suffer because of your Christian lifestyle.”⁹⁶ The latter associates the readers’ suffering with the Christian activities in which they are involved (cf. 4.2-3), but it does not give any indication of their legal status as Christians. The former relates the problem directly to their Christian identity. It assumes that members of these communities could be persecuted (or prosecuted?) simply for adherence to the Christian faith, thus implying that Christianity had become (effectively) criminalized. While historically these two ideas cannot be separated (i.e., the criminalized legal status arose out of Christian practice), the passage’s emphasis on one aspect over another could hold the key to a better understanding of Christian persecution in 1 Peter as well as in the rest of antiquity.⁹⁷

Interestingly enough, the interpretation of this passage within critical scholarship has been divided according to interpretive specialty. For classical scholars and church historians who work primarily outside of the biblical text, this passage is often appealed to as proof of the effective illegality of Christianity during the late-first century CE.⁹⁸ On the other hand, among those whose efforts are focused predominantly on the text of 1 Peter, few have been willing to entertain the idea that this passage describes the profession of Christianity as a punishable offense at the time of the letter’s composition.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ As proposed by Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 194 (“suffering as the result of upholding Christian values”) and Jobes, *1 Peter*, 290 (“[suffering] for living in word and deed consistently with the gospel of Jesus Christ”).

⁹⁷ Pace Sherwin-White, “The Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again,” 213 n. 1, who claims that the passages in 1 Peter which describe the suffering of the readers, “illustrate the facts but not the legal issues of the persecutions.”

⁹⁸ So, e.g., Ernest G. Hardy, *Christianity and the Roman Government: A Study in Imperial Administration* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894) 80; Keresztes, “The Imperial Roman Government and the Christian Church,” 256, 280; Vittinghoff, “Das ‘Verbrechen’ von Aussenseitern der römischen Gesellschaft,” 346 n. 91; Molthagen, “Zum Problem Einer Domitianischen Verfolgung,” 445-51; *et al.* For a church historian who denies that 1 Pet 4.15-16 describes Christianity as a legally prosecutable offense, see Merrill, *Essays in Early Christian History*, 60-63.

⁹⁹ Recent interpreters (post-1970) who specifically argue *against* such an interpretation include: Best, *1 Peter*, 165; Randy Hall, “For to This You Have Been Called: The Cross and Suffering in 1 Peter,” *ResQ* 19 (1976) 137-47 (138-39); Osborne, “Christian Suffering in the First Epistle of Peter,” 218-22; Gerald L. Borchert, “The Conduct of Christians in the Face of the ‘Fiery Ordeal’ (4:12-5:11),” *RevExp* 79 (1982) 451-62 (451-52); Stanley D. Clark, “Persecution and the Christian Faith,” *TE* 13 (1982) 72-82 (76); Michaels, *1 Peter*, 268; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 127; Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 35-36; William J. Dalton, “The First Epistle of Peter,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds. R. E. Brown, et al.; Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990) 903-908 (908); Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 220-21; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313-14; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 92-94; Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 212; Boring, *1 Peter*, 157-58; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 789-94; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 194; Mark Dubis, *Messianic Woes in 1 Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12-19* (SBL 33; New York: Peter Lang, 2002) 137 n. 17; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 226; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 290; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 215; Marius

Unfortunately, there has been very little interaction between the two disciplines. Within Petrine studies, few insights have been gleaned from classical scholars and church historians on the legal status of Christians in the Roman world. Conversely, those outside biblical scholarship have done little more than proof-text without giving adequate thought to the letter's overall interpretation.

In what follows, we will attempt to bring the two disciplines together in an effort to correct the shortcomings of both sides and to situate 1 Peter firmly within its legal context. Using the information gained from the previous chapters, we will seek to accurately diagnose the legal situation of Christians represented by the letter. This will be the final step in contextualizing the various causes of persecution in 1 Peter.

1. Exposing False Assumptions

Through the legal reconstruction provided in the previous chapter, it has become clear that following the Neronian persecution Christians experienced a change in legal status. The religion became effectively illegal (or effectively criminalized), as simple adherence to the faith was considered a capital offense in a Roman court of law. Therefore, if 1 Peter is a post-Neronian document, then this is the legal background against which it must be read.¹⁰⁰ The problem, as we alluded to above, is that very few modern commentators have approached the letter with this understanding. In fact, many have strenuously opposed such a notion. For this reason, it is imperative that we understand why Petrine scholars have so adamantly rejected this view and what evidence they have provided to substantiate their case.

Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (WUNT 2/277; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 95.

¹⁰⁰ In one sense, however, our conclusions concerning the criminalization of Christianity during the first century might best be described as preliminary. Even though all of the evidence points firmly in this direction, we are still without any kind of “smoking gun.” While we possess evidence that links the exploits of Nero to the later established illegality in Pliny, what our discussion lacks is a late-first-century CE source which provides an *explicit* statement concerning the legal basis upon which Christians were being persecuted. So, in one sense, our examination of 1 Peter will be aided by the legal situation sketched above. But, in another way, it is the source from which the theory could receive ultimate confirmation. (The important word here is “confirmation.” Even if 1 Peter does not provide any indication of the effectively illegal status of its readers, this does not *disprove* the fact that Christians had been criminalized following the persecution of Nero. Thus, 1 Peter can only serve to *further confirm* what we have already demonstrated. It cannot *refute* it.)

Very often the idea that 1 Pet 4.16 represents the criminalization of Christianity is rejected for the wrong reasons. As mentioned in the Introduction, modern conceptions of the persecutions in 1 Peter have been significantly influenced by an unfortunate misunderstanding which began in the 19th century. The problem, as we noted, was that the “official” and “median” views of persecution were consistently equated, a trend which has continued until the present. Consequently, as proponents of the “unofficial” theory of persecution have sought to combat opposing alternatives, their efforts have primarily focused on separating the epistle from imperial pogroms. The trouble is that they have failed to constructively interact with some of the more recent theories on Christian persecution (*viz.*, the “median” approach). Much of the argumentation concerning 1 Pet 4.16 is, therefore, outdated and, in many cases, misinformed.¹⁰¹

One argument that is often set forward to refute a “criminalized” interpretation of 1 Pet 4.16 is the lack of any State persecution, wherein Christianity was deemed illegal through an official edict, prior to the time of Decius (249-251 CE).¹⁰² Focus is placed instead on the fact that Christian persecution was sporadic, consisting of hostility from the general public. The problem with this line of argumentation, as we have seen in Chapter Six, is that long before the time of Decius, Christianity was considered to be a punishable offense apart from either imperial or senatorial legislation. During this period, believers were accused by private citizens, brought to trial before the Roman governor, and sentenced to death simply because of their Christian identity (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96; *Mart. Pol.* 12; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.32-35). The beginning of “official” Christian persecution (*i.e.*, inquisitorial persecution), therefore, is of no value for interpreting 1 Pet 4.16. Rather than asking about the proscription of Christianity through official legislation, the question that needs to be raised is, was Christianity a punishable offense (thus, *effectively* illegal) in the court of the Roman governor during the mid- to late-first century CE?¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ A noteworthy observation concerning the interpretation of this text is that very little attention has been devoted to providing *positive* arguments in favor of the view that claims 1 Pet 4.15-16 represents something other than a situation in which Christians could be prosecuted simply for being Christians.

¹⁰² See Michaels, *1 Peter*, 268-69; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 127; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 220; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 789-94; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 221-22, 226; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 215.

¹⁰³ This is nowhere more needed than in the commentary of Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 313-14. He notes, “It is surely true that there were occasions when Roman officials did impose the death penalty on Christians

A second argument that is used against this interpretation is the claim that “there [is not] any indication in our letter that Christians faced a possible death penalty or that our author was preparing them for martyrdom.”¹⁰⁴ This proposed silence is viewed as a crucial problem for a “criminalized” interpretation, but in reality it does little to refute it. First, it is necessary to point out that such an argument arises not out of the passage itself, but out of one’s reading of the letter as a whole. Yet even if this was an appropriate means of interpretation, there is nothing in the rest of 1 Peter which would prevent someone from reading this text as an indication that Christians could have been tried and condemned as Christians. Aside from 1 Pet 4.3-4, there is no other indication that social withdrawal was a cause of persecution. Nevertheless, its mention in this text sheds further light on the overall situation. Of course, some might object to this example, claiming that the type of persecution resulting from social withdrawal is much more compatible with the descriptions of suffering found in the rest of the epistle. This leads to the second point.

If all of the erroneous, preconceived notions about the criminalization of Christianity are removed (*viz.*, that it would require official legislation; that persecution would be perpetual rather than sporadic; that Christians would be hunted down by the authorities; etc.), there is no reason why a “criminalized” reading of 1 Pet 4.15-16 is not compatible with the rest of the epistle. If this is the legal situation in which the readers found themselves, there are numerous passages which could be interpreted in this light: (a) the “suffering” they are experiencing could very easily be compared to that of Jesus, namely, both verbal abuse and physical death (2.21, 23; 3.18; 4.1); (b) although the descriptions of suffering may be rhetorical in nature, they could nonetheless signify the seriousness of the situation (e.g., fiery ordeal [4.12]; judgment [4.17]); (c) references to criminal

simply for being Christians, most notably under Nero and Pliny.” Then he immediately qualifies the statement by saying, “Yet both of those instances were limited in scope and time” (313), although without providing further validation. Strangely enough, he turns back around and states that the two examples “indicate that the threat of confrontation with governmental authorities constantly hung over the Christian communities” (314). Thus, according to Achtemeier’s own admission, Christians from the time of Nero to Pliny were in danger of capital punishment from the hands of Roman authorities apart from imperial legislation. Yet his primary argument against a “criminalized” interpretation of 1 Pet 4.15-16 is the fact that “Christianity was not declared formally illegal until 249 CE under the emperor Decius” (314).

¹⁰⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314. Cf also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 794.

accusations (2.12) and to the governor judging such cases (2.14) would fit naturally into this setting (cf. 3.15-16).

One of the most important things that must be recognized is that unlike many modern commentators who tend to amalgamate all descriptions of suffering into one unified form,¹⁰⁵ the author of 1 Peter composed his words on a more general level, allowing for different types suffering in different situations for different people (cf. 1.6 - ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς). Furthermore, when we step back to consider the wider historical framework, we discover that even though Christianity was effectively illegal for nearly two centuries, martyrdoms were the exception rather than the rule.¹⁰⁶

A final argument that is sometimes used to combat a “criminalized” interpretation of this text is the expected response to Christian suffering, *viz.*, shame (1 Pet 4.16).¹⁰⁷ “If ‘suffering as a Christian’ really does stand for being executed for the faith,” J. N. D. Kelly argues, “it is amazing that a man of his outlook should have used such a weak expression as ‘let him not feel ashamed’ (*mē aischunesthō*).”¹⁰⁸ Where this objection falters, however, is in limiting αἰσχύνω (“to be ashamed”) to merely a subjective feeling of deep regret, for, as Norbert Brox points out, “Diese Instruktion steht offensichtlich in einer stereotyp gewordenen homiletischen Tradition vom ‘Sich-nicht-schämen-Dürfen’ in der Verfolgungssituation, wobei die ‘Scham’ praktisch gleichbedeutend wurde mit

¹⁰⁵ For example, many older commentators tended to see martyrdom around every corner, while some recent interpreters tend to focus on verbal abuse to the exclusion of all other threats.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Angelika Reichert, *Eine urchristliche praeparatio ad martyrium: Studien zur Komposition, Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie des 1. Petrusbriefes* (BBET 22; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), who describes 1 Pet 3.13–4.6 as a *praeparatio ad martyrium*, but notes, “Mit dieser Kennzeichnung der den beiden Rahmenabschnitten zugrundeliegenden Wirkabsicht soll keineswegs behauptet werden, der Verfasser sehe seine Adressaten pauschal und direkt vom Martyrium bedroht, wohl aber dies: Der Verfasser hält die Möglichkeit des Martyriums für seine Adressaten für denkbar (mit welchem Grad von Wahrscheinlichkeit auch immer), und er hält es für nötig, ihnen Orientierungshilfen dafür zu geben, in Anbetracht dieser Möglichkeit als Christen zu leben” (344).

¹⁰⁷ A fourth argument, which has not been quite as popular, was suggested by Selwyn (*First Epistle of St. Peter*, 54 n. 1) and later repeated by Best (*1 Peter*, 38). They point out that “[1 Pet] 4:19 implies that despite their suffering the readers will continue their good works,” a fact that, for them, “does not suggest that the author expects them to die” (Best, *1 Peter*, 38). There are two things which this argument overlooks, however. First, the fact that Christians were taken to court and punished for being Christians does not necessarily mean that all received a death sentence (on the various means of punishment, see Tertullian, *Apol.* 12.3-5; 30.7; 39.6). Secondly, the letter’s call to “do good” does not rule out the possibility that *some* members of the audience could have faced the threat of capital punishment. While it is true that those who were executed as such would not have been able to perform this task, the admonition would have still remained applicable to the rest of the congregation.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 192. Cf. also Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter*, 180; Best, *1 Peter*, 165; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 795.

Glaubensverleugnung.”¹⁰⁹ But what is more, this objection assumes that all Christians who were charged as such necessarily received the death penalty, and this was simply not the case. Not only could a governor refuse to render condemnation (cf. Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3; 5.1; Lucian, *Peregr.* 14), if he did condemn the accused, he was free to choose from a variety of different punishments (see Tertullian, *Apol.* 12.3-5). Finally, this objection fails to consider the public humiliation that was part and parcel to Roman jurisprudence.¹¹⁰

What this brief examination has revealed is that commentators have yet to offer any viable arguments against interpreting 1 Pet 4.16 as a description of Christians suffering for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*). In most cases, the arguments are outdated and misinformed because they were intended to refute a view taken by earlier scholarship, one which has now been abandoned. With these false assumptions removed, we will turn our attention once again to the text itself.

2. The Legal Status of Christians in 1 Peter 4.16

So what can we deduce about (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός in 1 Pet 4.16? What kind of legal situation does this text envision? Does it provide us with any indication that Christianity was effectively illegal? What I would suggest is that 1 Pet 4.16 should be read as an indication that at the time of composition Christianity had become criminalized, and thus the readers of the epistle could have been punished simply for their adherence to the Christian faith. Although this was the opinion of some older commentators¹¹¹ and is still held by a handful of modern interpreters,¹¹² it has yet to receive proper exegetical justification. Therefore, in what follows we will seek to establish its validity.

¹⁰⁹ Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 221-22. Cf. Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 158; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314; Dubis, *Messianic Woes*, 135-39.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 193. On the role of public stigma (or *infamia*) in the Roman judicial system, see A. H. J. Greenidge, *Infamia: Its Place in Roman Public and Private Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894).

¹¹¹ E.g., William M. Ramsay, “The Church and the Empire in the First Century, III: The First Epistle attributed to St. Peter,” *Exp* 4/8 (1893) 282-96; M. F. Sadler, *The General Epistles of SS. James, Peter, John, and Jude* (2nd ed.; London: George Bell & Sons, 1895) 137; Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 119-20; Leaney, *The Letters of Peter*, 64-65; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 32-35, 192-93.

¹¹² E.g., Lampe and Luz, “Post-Pauline Christianity and Pagan Society,” 258; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 38-45, 327-28; Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter*, 2-13, 225-27; Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός,” Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 66-72, 225-27.

Understanding the legal status of Christians represented in 1 Pet 4.16 begins with the establishment of the original text. In this particular instance, the meaning of the passage is dependent upon an important (and difficult) text-critical problem. In NA²⁷ the text of 1 Pet 4.16 reads ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ (“because of this name”). Support for this reading is found in a host of early and important MSS and versions (Ϟ⁷² Ⲛ A B Ψ 33. 81. 323. 614. 1241. 1505. 1739 *al* latt sy co arm geo aeth; Cyr. PsOec).¹¹³ For this reason, it has been adopted by almost all modern interpreters.

Over the years, however, there have been a handful of commentators who have moved away from the majority opinion by accepting the variant reading μέρει (“matter,” “situation”) in place of ὀνόματι (“name”).¹¹⁴ The textual pedigree of this latter reading is essentially Byzantine in character (P 049 ⲙ slav). Strangely enough, though, this option would have to be considered the *lectio difficilior*. Given the theological pregnancy of ὀνόματι and in light of v. 14, it is more plausible to think that a scribe would change μέρει to ὀνόματι rather than vice versa. It is on this basis that proponents have staked their claim for the reading’s authenticity. What is significant about this minor textual emendation is the slight alteration it produces in the focus of v. 16. According to this reading, the verse functions as an attempt to reorient the audience on the proper response to their present suffering. Rather than being shamed by their current circumstances, the readers are instead called to “glorify God in this particular situation.” As such, the mention of the name Χριστιανός is left undeveloped.

In the majority of commentaries, this text-critical issue is very rarely given more than a few passing comments (if any at all). Most simply dismiss the variant μέρει in light of the strong external support and give little thought to the serious problem created by transcriptional probability (i.e., what a scribe was likely to do). When the weight of this evidence is assessed, however, a few points become clear. To begin with, the external evidence is unmistakably and overwhelmingly on the side of ὀνόματι. Yet we must not simply equate a strictly Byzantine reading with a secondary emendation. There are a few

¹¹³ For the full list of textual evidence, see *ECM*, 184.

¹¹⁴ E.g., Steiger, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 399; Bloomfield, “ΠΙΕΤΡΟΥ,” 724-25; Schott, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 293; Hofmann, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 177-78; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 257, 269-70; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 194-95. Surprisingly, this is also the reading adopted in *ECM*, 184.

instances in the NT in which the Byzantine text-type does preserve the original reading over against strong testimony from Alexandrian and Western sources (e.g., Matt 24.36; Phil 1.14).¹¹⁵ So, in and of itself, a strictly Byzantine pedigree does not summarily rule out *μέρει*, although it still must be explained (see below). Likewise, the determination of a plausible reason why a scribe might have changed the text from *δνόματι* to *μέρει* is important for the text-critical process, and admittedly few viable suggestions have been forthcoming.

Nevertheless, in this particular case, the most important and decisive piece of evidence from which a text-critical decision must be made is the uniformity of the textual record. Given the fact that (a) 1 Peter is an encyclical letter which would have been copied across the continent of Asia Minor, and that (b) the reading *δνόματι* is uniformly attested within the earliest and most widespread MS evidence, one must be able to explain how an original *μέρει* could have left no trace in the textual record prior to the solidification of the Byzantine text-type. This is what ultimately shifts the burden of proof onto the shoulders of those who argue for the authenticity of *μέρει*. The problem is that none of the proponents of this view have even raised the issue much less offered a solution to it. Therefore, in light of the strong external attestation, the reading *δνόματι* must be considered the most likely option.

With the reading of the text thus established, we can now turn our attention to its interpretation. What is initially striking about this passage is the presence of the designation *Χριστιανός* in 1 Pet 4.16.¹¹⁶ It is widely recognized that this title is a Latinism (with the Latin ending *-ianus* being rendered by the Greek *-ιανός*),¹¹⁷ which, according to Luke, originated in the city of Syrian Antioch (Acts 11.26). Furthermore, all

¹¹⁵ See Johannes Karavidopoulos, “Μερικες Συντομες Γραφες του Εκκλησιαστικου Κειμενου της Καινης Διαθηκης [Some Short Readings of the Church Text of the New Testament],” *DBM* 13 (1984) 36-40. (I am grateful to Daniel B. Wallace for pointing me to this article.) Cf. also Wei-Ho John Wu, “A Systematic Analysis of the Shorter Readings in the Byzantine Text of the Synoptic Gospels,” (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002).

¹¹⁶ For a fuller treatment on the term *Χριστιανός* in 1 Pet 4.16, see Horrell, “The Label *Χριστιανός*.”

¹¹⁷ So, e.g., J. le Coultre, “De l’*étymologie* du mot ‘chrétien’,” *RTP* 40 (1907) 188-96; Henry J. Cadbury, “Names for Christians and Christianity in Acts,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Part One: *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 5: *Additional Notes to the Commentary* (eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake; London: Macmillan, 1933) 375-92 (esp. 384-85); Ceslas Spicq, “Ce que signifie le titre de Chrétien,” *ST* 15 (1961) 68-78 (esp. 74-75).

acknowledge that during the second and third centuries CE this derogatory label served as an indicator of one's guilt, thus making the bearer liable to judicial condemnation in a Roman court of law.¹¹⁸ Where somewhat less certainty lies is in the time and nature of its origin. Although a certain degree of caution should be exercised given the scarcity of conclusive evidence, the term seems to have arisen within the circles of Roman administrative officials¹¹⁹ sometime around 57-60 CE.¹²⁰ On first glance then the evidence from outside the epistle suggests that *Χριστιανός* in 1 Pet 4.16 might best be understood as a designation that made the bearer liable to judicial punishment. But, as we mentioned above, few Petrine commentators are willing to entertain this interpretive option. Since the only other first-century examples of this label (Acts 11.26; 26.28; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.64) appear outside of the context of persecution, what remains to be seen then is whether *Χριστιανός* was used as an indicator of one's guilt during this early period and, more specifically, in 1 Peter.

Before we begin this examination, it is important to expose a crucial methodological flaw that often appears in treatments of this subject. Many commentators have admitted that the text does describe suffering which was the result of the Name alone. They

¹¹⁸ Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96; *Mart. Pol.* 10.1; 12.1; Justin, *2 Apol.* 2; *Acts of Justin and his Companions*; *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*; *Pass. Pert.* 6.

¹¹⁹ As suggested, e.g., by Roberto Paribeni, "Sull' origine del nome cristiano," *NuovB* 19 (1913) 37-41; Erik Peterson, "Christianus," in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, vol. 1: *Bibbia, Letteratura cristiana antica* (ST 121; Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946) 355-72; repr. in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis: Studien und Untersuchungen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1959) 64-87; Justin Taylor, "Why Were the Disciples First Called 'Christians' at Antioch? (Acts 11, 26)," *RB* 101 (1994) 75-94. There are a few pieces of evidence that seem to point in this direction: (1) The fact that the title is a Latinism suggests that it originated with outsiders (*pace* Elias J. Bickerman, "The Name of Christians," *HTR* 42 [1949] 109-24, and Baruch Lifshitz, "L'origine du nom des chrétiens," *VC* 16 [1962] 65-70, who argue that the name originated within the Christian movement itself) and possibly with higher officials. (2) The verb *χρηματίζω*, which is used in Acts 11.26 to designate Christians, often carries official or judicial connotations. (3) The names "Christ" and "Christian" were regularly associated with public disorder.

¹²⁰ On the basis of Acts 11.26, many assume that the name originated around 39-44 CE. Further support for this thesis is found in the original reading of Codex Bezae: "then [i.e., after Paul came from Tarsus and the church of Antioch was meeting together] the disciples first called (themselves) Christians at Antioch (*καὶ τότε πρῶτον ἐχρημάτισεν ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ οἱ μαθηταί*). Nevertheless, this contention lacks sufficient basis. To begin with, the reading from Codex Bezae is extremely suspect and thus provides no real support. In the original statement from Luke, no chronological claims are made. Rather than being concerned with the *time* of origin, the purpose of the statement is to simply mark off the *place* of origin. Moreover, there is no evidence within the earliest source record (i.e., prior to Nero) that *Χριστιανός* was a designation used by Christians or by outsiders. On the date of the term's origin, see Harold B. Mattingley, "The Origin of the Name *Christiani*," *JTS* 9 (1958) 26-37 (ca. 59-60 CE); Helga Botermann, *Das Judenedikt des Kaisers Claudius: Römischer Staat und Christiani im 1. Jahrhundert* (Hermes Einzelschriften 71; Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996) 171-77 (ca. 57-59 CE).

nevertheless contend that this amounted to nothing more than the types of persecutions predicted in the Gospels and portrayed in the book of Acts. It is assumed that since the cause of all Christian persecution is ultimately the same despite variations in proximate causes, forms, and occasions (*viz.*, one's commitment to Christ), all Christian suffering can therefore be summarily described as occurring "because of the name." As such, they conclude that the persecution depicted in 1 Pet 4.16 can satisfactorily be explained apart from the proposition of legal actions.¹²¹ The problem with this approach is that it completely overlooks a more narrow form of Christian suffering wherein specific terminology (i.e., Χριστιανός; the "Name") was used to describe certain forms of persecution that took place at a given time and as a result of a given cause. Because this more specific terminology appears in 4.16, the lack of categorical distinction is unhelpful.

Our examination of 1 Pet 4.16 must begin by distinguishing between (1) general types of suffering that were experienced by all Christians because of their commitment to Christ and (2) a more narrowly defined type of suffering that was experienced only after the Neronian persecution by believers who faced legal repercussions solely on the basis of their adherence to the Christian faith. In order to determine which of these descriptions best fits 4.16, we must ask two important questions: (a) what is the historical setting of the statement? and (b) what information can be gleaned from the statement itself? As we will demonstrate, both of these questions lead to the conclusion that 1 Peter represents a time when Christianity had become effectively illegal.

Concerning the historical context of 1 Pet 4.16, it is important to recognize the change that took place in the legal status of Christians following the Neronian persecution (64 CE). In Chapter Six, we argued that this pogrom established a precedent whereby Christianity became (effectively) criminalized in that a believer could be accused and condemned in a Roman court simply on the basis of his/her Christian confession. If 1 Peter was composed after this event, then this is the legal situation in which the readers would have found themselves. Furthermore, given that the legal status of Christians during the late-first century CE was the same as that of Christians who lived during the second and early third centuries CE, one might also expect a similar correspondence in

¹²¹ See, e.g., Selwyn, "The Persecutions in I Peter," 43-44; Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 125; Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 169-70.

the way in which suffering was depicted. If later Christians could describe their criminalized status in terms that are almost identical to those found in 1 Pet 4.16, there is no reason not to assume such a meaning in this particular passage. In fact, I would argue that the burden of proof rests on the shoulders of those who would deny such an interpretation. For what remains to be proven is that general types of suffering (apart from legal actions) can be the referent when such terminology is present. As it stands, all of the available evidence points in the opposite direction.

When we turn to the text itself, a similar picture emerges. There are three pieces of evidence that would lead us to conclude that at the time of the letter's composition Christianity had become a punishable offense. The first is the concentrated effort that the author exerts to redefine what it means to bear the name "Christian" and thus to redirect the readers' focus towards praise rather than shame. We have already discussed the circumstances surrounding the origin of the label *Χριστιανός*, and have demonstrated the authenticity of the reading *ὀνόματι* ("name," 1 Pet 4.16). These two points alone lend significant credibility to our contention. But when the prepositional modifier (*ἐν*) in v. 16 is properly understood, the situation becomes even more pronounced.

Commentators have reached widely divergent conclusions with regard to the function of the preposition *ἐν* in 1 Pet 4.16, and as it stands, four interpretive possibilities remain viable options: (a) instrumental ("with," "by," or "through this name");¹²² (b) sphere ("in the sphere of this name," or "by virtue of bearing this name");¹²³ (c) idiomatic ("in this matter");¹²⁴ and (d) causal ("because of this name").¹²⁵ Despite various efforts to defend opposing opinions, the causal sense seems to work best in this particular instance. This is evident from the fact that the parallel phrase in v. 14 (*ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ*) is interpreted causally by virtually every commentator who addresses the issue ("because of the name

¹²² HCSB; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 222; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 328 n. 47; Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 170 n. 17; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 123; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 796-97; Horrell, "The Label *Χριστιανός*," 369.

¹²³ ASV; RSV; NASB; ESV; Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 225-26; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 158-59; Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 122; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 180-81; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 155; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 132; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 314-15; Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 213; Senior, *1 Peter*, 131; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 226.

¹²⁴ Blenkin, *The First Epistle General of Peter*, 108-109; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 190-91; Osborne, "Christian Suffering in the First Epistle of Peter," 220-21.

¹²⁵ NRSV; NIV; TNIV; NET; NAB; Huther, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 223; Thurén, *Argument and Theology*, 72; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 285, 290.

of Christ” or “because of Christ”).¹²⁶ Given the similar structure (suffering/being reviled + ἐν ὀνόματι) and parallel nature of the constructions, it would appear that both are meant to be read in the same manner.

Along with this consideration, one might add that a causal idea fits best with the larger argument of 1 Pet 4.12-19. In this section, the author’s aim is to help his audience re-evaluate their suffering in an effort to redirect their emotions and ultimately to persuade them to undertake the ethic to which he calls them (*viz.*, “good works”) despite the negative consequences. The entire section drives toward v. 19 (ὥστε καί), where they are encouraged to entrust themselves to God “by doing good” (ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ). Such a request would understandably be difficult to accept given that the “good works” which they are called to undertake were the very things that often caused or further exacerbated the conflict (cf. 2.20; 3.14, 16). For this reason, the author spends seven verses reshaping their perspective on their affliction: the persecution they face is neither unexpected (v. 12) nor shameful (v. 16) but should be embraced with joy (v. 13) due to its purgatorial effects (v. 12-13, 17) and the blessing that it brings (v. 14). This is the context within which we must read, “glorify God ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ” (4.16).

The problem with both a sphere (“in the sphere of this name” or “by virtue of bearing this name”) and an instrumental (“by/through this name”) interpretation is that the focus is placed on the *response* to persecution, presumably among outsiders. This interrupts the author’s larger purpose of reshaping the readers’ perception of the suffering. A causal reading more appropriately captures this focus by transforming a possibly negative appraisal into a positive one. Rather than conceiving Christian suffering as something shameful which might even lead to apostasy, they are to thank God for the honor of bearing such a privileged title as “Christian” (thus, “glorify God because of this name” or “glorify God that you bear this name”). It is only after their perception of persecution has been transformed (v. 12-18) that he asks them to properly respond to it (v. 19).

The fact that they are encouraged to glorify God “because of this name” (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ) further suggests that suffering arises as a result of the *name itself* rather

¹²⁶ Cf. Thurén, *Argument and Theology*, 72. Only Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 307-308, argues for a different meaning for ἐν in 1 Pet 4.14 (*viz.*, sphere [“while remaining within the ‘sphere’ within which Christ exercises his authority,” 308 n. 54]), and his argument is unpersuasive.

than as a result of activities in which they do or do not participate: if the readers are encouraged to embrace the name “Christian” by glorifying God for the opportunity to bear it rather than being ashamed of it, then we are left to assume that suffering ὡς Χριστιανός would involve persecution experienced as a result of that stigmatized name. Combined with the other evidence from this verse, one is left to conclude that it is not merely Christian *practice* that causes problems; difficulties for these communities have also arisen out of their Christian *identity*.¹²⁷ Simply bearing the name “Christian” is enough to lead to persecution.

A second point about this passage that seems to suggest that Christianity had been criminalized at the time of the letter’s composition is the association of Χριστιανός with other punishable offenses.¹²⁸ In 1 Pet 4.15-16 the author juxtaposes (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός with suffering as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, and a mischievous meddler. On the surface, such a connection seems to imply that the profession of Christianity made one liable to the same kinds of punishments as these criminal indictments. This view, of course, has been strongly denied by those who reject the idea that the legal status of the Petrine readers was in any way suspect before the Roman authorities. The statement of C. F. D. Moule is representative of this position,

The fact that ὡς Χριστιανός is parallel to ὡς φονεὺς ἢ κλέπτης . . . does not in the least compel the conclusion that to be a Christian was officially a crime in the same category as the indictable offences. Even if all the other words mean indubitable crimes, all the Greek says is, If you have to suffer, suffer as a Christian, not as a criminal. It does not specify the nature of the suffering in the parallel clauses.¹²⁹

But what many interpreters like Moule have failed to recognize is that this passage does provide a fair amount of specificity regarding the nature of the audience’s suffering.

¹²⁷ Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 221, argues that, “in diesem Zusammenhang ist die Formulierung ‘als Christ’ . . . aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach gleichbedeutend mit der Formel vom ‘Tun des Guten’, wie der Grund für unschuldiges, genuines Christenleiden auch heißen kann (3,17).” Therefore, he suggests, “Das ὡς vor χριστιανός ist also, so naheliegend das zu sein scheint, nicht im gleichen direkten Sinn wie das zweimalige ὡς von V 15 zu nehmen.” Yet by assuming that all suffering must have a uniform cause, he overlooks the fact that it is the Name (“because of this name” – v. 16) that has caused the conflict in this instance.

¹²⁸ Cf. Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 119; Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 78; Schneider, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 92.

¹²⁹ C. F. D. Moule, “The Nature and Purpose of I Peter,” *NTS* 3 (1956-57) 1-11 (8). Cf. also Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 154; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 221; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 224.

The most natural setting against which to read v. 15 is the court of the provincial governor.¹³⁰ While it is true that not all of the shameful deeds which are listed are legally defined crimes, the author assumes that each could lead to suffering: “let none of you *suffer* (πασχέτω) as a murder, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a mischievous meddler.” Certainly these types of acts would have been looked down upon by the general public, and some level of contempt would have likely been felt, but the primary form of “suffering” to which murders, thieves, evildoers, and even meddlers were prone would have been judicial sentencing.¹³¹ So despite the concern over whether ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος (“mischievous meddler”) constitutes a legally defined crime,¹³² all of the categories to which Christianity is compared are considered to be offenses for which one could be punished at the governor’s tribunal.¹³³ Understood in this manner, “suffering” in v. 15

¹³⁰ Pace Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 93: “Apart from the references to murderers and thieves, nothing in this passage points explicitly to the realm of legal proceedings.”

¹³¹ Note that 1 Pet 2.14 describes the responsibility of the governor as that of punishing “evildoers” (κακοποιόι), the same term used in 4.15.

¹³² Over the years, considerable debate has surrounded the meaning of ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος. Views have ranged from an “embezzler” (espoused by Johannes B. Bauer, “Aut maleficus aut alieni speculator (1 Petr. 4,15),” *BZ* 22 [1978] 109-15; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 219-20; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 310-13) to a “revolutionary” (argued by Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 158; A. Bischoff, “Ἀλλοτρι(ο)επίσκοπος,” *ZNW* 7 [1906] 271-74) to an “errant bishop” who misappropriated funds (proposed by K. Erbes, “Was bedeutet ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος 1 Pt 4,15?,” *ZNW* 19 [1919-20] 39-44; idem, “Noch etwas zum ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος 1 Petr 4, 15,” *ZNW* 20 [1921] 249). Recent commentators seem to have reached agreement that the term refers to meddling in the affairs of another (so, e.g., Elliott, *1 Peter*, 785-88; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 224-25; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 289, 296-97). So despite the fact that it appears in conjunction with murder and theft, it does not appear to be a legally defined criminal act (pace Bauer, “Aut maleficus,” 111; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 219). Yet this is not to say that it was of a petty nature. As Jeannine K. Brown, “Just a Busybody? A Look at the Greco-Roman Topos of Meddling for Defining ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος in 1 Peter 4:15,” *JBL* 125 (2006) 549-68, has demonstrated, “ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος in 1 Pet 4:15 fits the parameters of the Greco-Roman topos of meddling and likely refers to movement outside of culturally appropriate social boundaries. This type of interference in the social order has political ramifications and as such would be understood as involving insubordination to the polis” (567). As such, a governor would have been well within his rights to punish such an offender.

¹³³ This is a point that Best (*1 Peter*, 165) fails to recognize (cf. also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 788), for he argues, “Since not all the categories of verse 15 are criminal we are not compelled to assume that the suffering referred to here is punishment enforced by a court of law or that it involves the death penalty.” In this case, there are actually two false assumptions upon which his argument is built. First, it is assumed that only defined criminal acts were punishable offenses. But the numerous examples of Christians suffering at the hands of Roman authorities easily disprove this thesis. In fact, the verse itself weighs heavily against it (thus, “if anyone *suffers* . . . as an evildoer or as a mischievous meddler”). A second assumption underlying this argument is that all punishment resulting from persecution of the Name was necessarily capital punishment. This, of course, was certainly not the case. There were other non-capital punishments for the offense, including working the mines and exile (see Tertullian, *Apol.* 12.3-5; 39.6). Furthermore, what Best does not take into account is the fact that not every official accusation against Christians would have been punished. In some cases, Christians were charged as Christians, but the governor refused to render judgment (see Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3; 5.1; Lucian, *Peregr.* 14).

would refer to punishment inflicted upon guilty parties by the administering authority. The fact that the author uses such a distinguishable label (Χριστιανός) in contradistinction to gubernatorially defined punishable offenses which received judicial penalty thus suggests that the title is best understood as a designation that made the bearer liable to judicial condemnation.¹³⁴

A final point that is certainly consistent with a “criminalized” reading 1 Peter 4.16 is the connection between (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός and God’s eschatological judgment (4.17). According to 1 Peter, the suffering of the Anatolian readers is part of the Messianic Woes which served as a precursor to God’s eschatological judgment.¹³⁵ The reason (ὅτι) why Christians should give glory to God in this seemingly terrible situation (v.16) is because their present suffering marks the beginning of God’s pre-ordained end (v. 17). In Jewish and Christian literature, the Messianic Woes were variously defined as the eschatological distress and tribulation that marked the advent of the Messiah. In the early Church, the events associated with this end-time judgment included war, famine, earthquakes, disease, apostasy, inter-personal strife (cf. Mark 13.3-13; Matt 24.3-14; Luke 21.7-19; Rev 6-16), but one of the characteristic features of this period was Christian persecution and martyrdom. In Luke 21.12, Jesus tells his disciples, “they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name” (NRSV). From this identification, one could easily understand (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός as describing an escalated situation wherein believers were being brought before provincial officials and were being put to death simply on the basis of their Christians confession.

¹³⁴ What many have failed to see is that it is the *combined* evidence of parallel criminal offenses and the use of Χριστιανός that provides the strongest support for the criminalization of Christianity. Therefore, to say, “L’usage de ce nom [Χριστιανός] ne peut contribuer à dater l’*épître*” (Monnier, *La Première Épître de L’Apôtre Pierre*, 220) is to overlook the strength of the parallelism. On the other hand, to say, “This must refer to *legal* penalties as much as in the case of the thief or murderer” because “[t]he parallelism of the Greek absolutely demands it,” (Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 119 [original emphasis]), is to place too much emphasis on the contrast.

¹³⁵ On the Messianic Woes in 1 Peter, see Dubis, *Messianic Woes*. Some questions have been raised concerning the validity of Dubis’ position (in particular, by Markus T. Klausli, “The Question of the Messianic Woes in 1 Peter,” [Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2007], who provides what amounts to a detailed book review and critique of Dubis’ work). But while legitimate objections have been raised concerning some of the finer points of exegetical decision-making, his overall thesis has not been overturned.

Before concluding the present section, there is one further argument that needs to be addressed. Due to the fact that we chose not to make a firm determination with regard to the authorship and date of the epistle, there are two fronts at which the primary thesis of this section (*viz.*, that 1 Pet 4.16 represents a time at which Christianity had become effectively illegal) is engaged. On the one hand, many commentators will undoubtedly deny that Peter was the author of the present epistle. As such, they must acknowledge the validity of our primary thesis based on the conclusions reached in Chapter Six, regardless of whether our exegesis of 1 Pet 4.16 is convincing. For if the epistle was written after the Neronian persecution (as these interpreters would all assume), then it would have been composed at a time when Christianity had already been (effectively) criminalized. On the other hand, proponents of Petrine authorship are not forced into this same interpretive pigeonhole. For those who hold to this position, the thesis of this section only holds true to the extent that 1 Pet 4.16 is accurately interpreted.¹³⁶ Within this interpretive framework, however, there is certain evidence—aside from that which has already been discussed—that seems to fit best within the time period following the Neronian persecution and thus during the period when Christianity had become effectively illegal.

Read within the framework of Petrine authorship, further evidence for a “criminalized” reading of the epistle is found in 1 Pet 5.9. Up to this point in the letter, the focus has been on the conflict affecting (or at least threatening) Christian communities spread out thousands of miles across Asia Minor. But in 5.9 we learn that the problem is even greater. In this verse, encouragement and consolation are offered to the readers as they are reminded that other believers around the world are experiencing the same types of conflict in which they now find themselves. With the devil (*διάβολος*) prowling around like a ravenous lion, seeking to devour members of the Christian faith (5.8), these Anatolian believers are given the following exhortation: “Resist him, standing firm in your faith, because you know that¹³⁷ the same sufferings are being accomplished

¹³⁶ Nevertheless, it does not completely rule out the possibility that the readers were facing court actions and legal threats as a result of the present conflict (see Ch. 8).

¹³⁷ It is true that the construction *οἶδα* + infinitive (1 Pet 5.9) normally carries the meaning “know how to” (Gen 25.27; 1 Sam 16.16; 2 Chron 2.6-7, 13; Ecc 4.17 [Eng 5.1]; 6.8; Isa 42.16; 53.3; *Sib. Or.* 2.80; Matt 7.11 [// Luke 11.13]; Luke 12.56*bis*; Phil 4.12*bis*; 1 Thess 4.4; 2 Pet 2.9; see Karl W. Krüger, *Griechische Sprachlehre für Schulen*, Erster Teil: *Über die gewöhnliche, vorzugsweise die attische Prosa*, Zweites Heft: *Syntax* [6th ed.; ed. W. Pökel; Leipzig/Würzburg: Krüger, 1891] 220; Robertson, *Grammar*, 1045, 1103). Nevertheless, Beare is incorrect when he states, quite matter-of-factly, that “*οἶδα* followed by

(ἐπιτελεῖσθαι)¹³⁸ with respect to the fellowship (ἀδελφότητι) throughout the world” (5.9). What becomes clear in this verse is the *universality* of the problem. The struggles facing these Anatolian Christians are also being replicated across the Roman Empire.¹³⁹

In and of itself the fact that Christian communities spread out over such a vast geographic expanse like Asia Minor might simultaneously have been affected (or at least threatened) by conflict arising from outside sources suggests that the problem may have been more serious than the informal popular hostility experienced by the earliest Pauline communities. When we consider that this persecution appears to have a worldwide

the infinitive *cannot* mean ‘know that’” (*The First Epistle of Peter*, 206 [emphasis added]; cf. Johann C. K. von Hofmann, *Der erste Brief Petri* [HSNT 7/1; Nördlingen: Nördlingen Beck, 1875] 196; Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter*, 194). There are a few instances where οἶδα + infinitive is functionally equivalent to οἶδα + ὅτι, denoting indirect discourse, “to know that” (e.g., Luke 4.41; Jas 4.17 [possibly]; *1 Clem.* 62.3; cf. *1 Clem.* 43.6 [πρόοιδα + infinitive]). What seems to tilt the scales slightly in favor of the latter usage in 1 Pet 5.9 is the function of ἀδελφότητι (“fellowship”). If οἶδα + infinitive is taken to mean “know how to” (which would require an active meaning for ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, with τὰ αὐτά being read as its direct object), the dative ἀδελφότητι is left without adequate explanation (Michaels, *1 Peter*, 301). On the other hand, if the construction is taken to mean, “know that,” then ἀδελφότητι could be accounted for as a dative of respect/reference (“knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished with respect to the fellowship around the world”).

¹³⁸ Due to the confusion caused by the sentence structure of 1 Pet 5.9b, there is a considerable amount of textual variation at this point in the MS tradition (see *ECM*, 196). Three readings provide very meager cases for authenticity (ἐπιτελείτε: 621; ἀποτελεῖσθαι: 61; ἐπιμελεισθε: 322 [not found in *ECM* but listed in NA²⁷]. 323. 1241). The reading ἐπιτελείται only finds support in \mathfrak{P}^{72} , yet the prominence and date of this witness demand that it be taken seriously. In fact, it was argued by Jerome D. Quinn, “Notes on the Text of the P72 1 Pt 2,3; 5,14; and 5,9,” *CBQ* 27 (1965) 241-49 (247-49), that \mathfrak{P}^{72} did in fact contain the original reading. Quinn claims, however, that the word should be separated to read ἐπεὶ τελεῖται (“because it [the fellowship] is being perfected”). The theory of Quinn, while innovative, only compounds the existing problem arising from the difficult sentence structure. In his reconstructed text, he is forced to assume the elision of εἶναι, with ἀδελφότητι functioning similar to the object in a double accusative object-complement construction (“realizing that . . . your Christian brotherhood has like sufferings”). The problem is that this is an impossible construal given the dative case of ἀδελφότητι (on double case constructions, see Martin M. Culy, “Double Case Constructions in Koine Greek,” *JGRChJ* 6 [2009] 82-106). A reading that contains much weightier external support is ἐπιτελεῖσθε (\aleph A B* K 0206. 33. 614. 630. 1505 *al*). But despite its external strength, it nonetheless appears to be an attempt to smooth out the difficulty of the present sentence. The infinitival form ἐπιτελεῖσθαι (B² P Ψ 1739 \mathfrak{N} PsOec) is able to make the strongest claim to being original, for it is the *lectio difficilior* and thus able to explain the rise of all other readings.

¹³⁹ There are two senses in which the term κόσμος (“world”) has been understood. Most have taken the word in a geographical sense, meaning the inhabited world. A handful of commentators, though, have argued that κόσμος should be read in a Johannine sense (John 8.23; 13.1; 15.18-19; 16.33; 18.36; cf. also 1 Cor 3.19; Gal 6.14), meaning the sphere which is under the domain of Satan and which is therefore at enmity with God (so, e.g., Blenkin, *The First Epistle General of Peter*, 121; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 206). This is an important point to consider, for as Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 343) notes, “If [the latter] is the meaning here, then the author is reminding his readers of a theological point [*viz.*, that in this world Christian suffering is inevitable], not commenting on the extent of the persecutions.” Ultimately, the latter provides an unsatisfactory link to the preceding exhortation. The *universality* of persecution (rather than the *inevitability*), which is represented by the former option, is a much more natural basis (causal εἰδότες) upon which to encourage resistance to the devil.

extent, then this premise becomes even more plausible. In fact, Hans Windisch asserts that “man möchte *beinahe* ein allgemeines Edikt voraussetzen.”¹⁴⁰ Of course, the key word here is “*beinahe*” (almost), for no formal edicts were passed against Christianity until hundreds of years after its inception. But even if this situation cannot be explained through the establishment of formal Roman laws, it still seems to require a strong outside stimulus.

Informal popular hostility resulting (merely) from social withdrawal (cf. 1 Pet 4.3-4) is not sufficient to account for the *simultaneity* and *universality* of this conflict. It is true that the nature of Christian ethics did rub against the very fabric of Greco-Roman society, and thus problems were inherent at any location where the religion took root. Nevertheless, Christians were generally able to live peaceful lives during the first three centuries. It was only at sporadic intervals that more escalated forms of persecution broke out. It is possible then that a message of consolation like that found in 1 Peter might be appropriate for a single congregation prior to the Neronian persecution. But to think that large numbers of Christian communities across Asia Minor were simultaneously needing this word of exhortation and comfort is an extremely difficult proposition. Therefore, it would be much easier to explain the evidence from 1 Peter if one were to assume that the conflict was part of a larger epidemic wherein the stigma of the recent Neronian persecution overflowed into the provinces¹⁴¹ causing a rise in existing hostilities.¹⁴² While adherence to the Christian faith was never officially outlawed, the faithful were nonetheless continually threatened by legal prosecution. As a result, it was imperative for someone like Peter, whose apostolic status would have been universally recognized, to

¹⁴⁰ Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 80 (emphasis added).

¹⁴¹ Pace von Soden, *Briefe des Petrus*, 122, who argues that “eine Ausdehnung der neronischen Verfolgung in die Provinzen sehr unwahrscheinlich ist, weil den Christen in Rom als Brandstiftern und nicht als Christen der Prozess gemacht war” (cf. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 27).

¹⁴² Clark, “Persecution and the Christian Faith,” 73, notes that, “First Peter reflects the general conditions growing out of the Neronian persecution in Rome in A.D. 64.” Later, he explains exactly how this conflict would have materialized: “It is not difficult to understand how some local officials on their own initiative could have followed the lead of Nero in Rome in persecuting Christians in their jurisdiction without their being a specifically enunciated, official decree that made the practice of the Christian faith illegal” (76). Cf. also Ramsay, “The First Epistle attributed to St. Peter,” 294; Bennett, *The General Epistles*, 45.

address the situation and to strengthen this huge Christian front in a time of perceived crisis.¹⁴³

In conclusion, what we can deduce from this investigation is that there is no viable reason why one could not (or should not) read 1 Pet 4.16 as an indication of Christian persecution for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*).¹⁴⁴ Conversely, there a number of key pieces of evidence in the text which seem to suggest that Christians could have been accused in a Roman court of law and then condemned simply for being Christians.¹⁴⁵ It is on this basis then that we would argue that 1 Pet 4.16 reflects a situation in which the profession of Christianity had been (effectively) criminalized. What this means is that the letter represents a considerably heightened and more volatile legal situation than that faced by believers prior to the Neronian pogroms.¹⁴⁶ It is a situation that is parallel to the tenuous circumstances depicted in later second- and third-century Christian literature. In the same way that Anatolian Christians such as those described in the letters of Pliny were charged and then condemned simply on the basis of their adherence to the Christian faith, the readers of 1 Peter could likewise face the same repercussions if accusations were made by a private *delator*.

¹⁴³ Another argument which is sometimes used to prove that 1 Peter was written after the Neronian persecution and which works within the framework of Petrine authorship is the contention that Peter would not have written to the churches of Asia Minor during the lifetime of the apostle Paul, who was responsible for founding many congregations in that area (as argued, e.g., by Huther, *The General Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 31-32; Masterman, *The First Epistle of S. Peter*, 23-24).

¹⁴⁴ The denial and subsequent demonstration of this fact by Kelly is evidence of the great lengths to which many have gone in trying to confirm “unofficial” persecution in 1 Peter. He begins by undercutting the merit of such a “criminalized” interpretation of 1 Pet 4.16: “It is unwarranted to interpret ‘suffer as a Christian’ as necessarily implying that Christianity as such has become a capital offence.” He nonetheless has to admit, “It probably counted as one, following the precedent set by Nero (Tertullian, *Ad. nat.* i.7.9), from 65 [*sic*] onwards when it was forced on the attention of the authorities.” Furthermore, he acknowledges that, “In so far as court cases are in view, the words are of course consistent with Christianity being the charge” (*Epistles of Peter*, 192). Therefore, according to Kelly, the language 1 Peter uses to describe the readers’ suffering is consistent with a legal setting in which Christians were condemned because of the Name alone, a legal context which was begun even while the apostle Peter was still alive (64 CE). Yet, according to Kelly, interpreting the text in this manner is nonetheless unjustified. Surely, such a claim needs reconsideration.

¹⁴⁵ It would be pushing the evidence too far to claim, “Das Leiden des Christen kann hier (genau so wie das Leiden des Mörders und Diebes) *nur* als gerichtlich verhängt gedacht werden” (Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 78 [emphasis added]).

¹⁴⁶ Pace Jobes, *1 Peter*, 226-27, who claims that when 1 Peter was composed, “[t]he mere fact of being a Christian was apparently not yet widely perceived as evil, much less illegal. . . . Christianity was still new enough that it was effectively on trial by Greco-Roman society to see if and how it would match the cultural and social values of the polytheistic, pluralistic first-century Roman world.”

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to contribute further insight into the nature of the conflict in 1 Peter by adding greater specificity to the various causes. We began by exploring the specific Christian behaviors that gave rise to the present hostility. The epistle lists two behavioral causes of persecution: social withdrawal and the practice of “good works.” With regard to the former, we noted that while the letter attributes some of the readers’ problems to their withdrawal from society, it provides very little evidence concerning the specific activities in which the audience no longer participated. For this reason, we explored some of the most significant social, political, and religious activities within Roman Asia Minor and examined how early Christians responded to each activity/institution. What we discovered was that if the Anatolian congregations had separated themselves from some of the more prominent social institutions (e.g., voluntary association; imperial cult; worship of the gods), it would have required almost complete withdrawal from society. Furthermore, in terms of implications, such a decision would have generated profoundly negative affects—social, political, and economic.

The second behavioral cause which was examined in this chapter was the performance of “good works.” In previous discussion, interpreters have tended to concentrate on “good works” as an appropriate *response* to persecution. This is due in large part to the fact that most regard this behavior as conduct which would have been favorably recognized within the wider Hellenistic society. After pointing out the various flaws in this popular opinion, we showed that “doing good” in 1 Peter actually represents a call to undertake distinctively Christian conduct—the very thing that was *causing* the present conflict. One of the reasons why these Anatolian believers faced opposition was because their Christian ethic simply clashed with popular sensibilities.

Concerning the proposed legal cause(s) of suffering in 1 Peter, we sought to provide a detailed treatment of the situation in light of the legal context of first-century Asia Minor. What we discovered was that the present conflict is best understood when read against the backdrop of the legal developments which were traced in Chapter Six. Following the Neronian persecution, Christianity was deemed effectively illegal across the Roman Empire. What this meant for Christians is that official accusations could be brought by the local populace with the result that sanctioned punishments would be meted out by

Roman authorities merely on the basis of a person's confessed Christian identity. It is this period in Christian history that seems to be reflected 1 Peter.¹⁴⁷ According to 1 Pet 4.16, the faith has been (effectively) criminalized. While believers were not actively sought out by the local or provincial authorities, if official accusations were brought against Christians, they could be convicted and punished simply for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*). Consequently, traditional categories like "legal" and "illegal" are simply insufficient to describe the readers' legal status during this time. Instead, a more appropriate designation is "effectively illegal."

What this means for the interpretation of 1 Peter is that neither the "official" persecution theory nor the "unofficial" persecution theory adequately represents the persecutions depicted in the epistle.¹⁴⁸ The situation was certainly not "official" in that there were no imperial laws driving the hostility, nor were the Roman authorities actively pursuing Christians in an effort to bring them to justice. On the other hand, the escalation of the conflict went somewhat beyond the discrimination and verbal abuse which is postulated by the "unofficial" position. The seriousness of the threat facing these Anatolian congregations would have been extremely volatile given the recently-developed, criminalized legal standing. Therefore, when the topic is discussed, a more appropriate perspective would be that of the "median" approach described above.

Moreover, the conclusions of this chapter also have significant implications with regard to the form(s) of suffering which we will attempt to reconstruct in the following chapter. Despite the strong objections from many Petrine commentators, the possibility of legal accusations and court proceedings must be considered as a possible threat facing the

¹⁴⁷ Therefore, Édouard Cothenet, "Les orientations actuelles de l'exégèse de la première lettre de Pierre," in *Études sur la première lettre de Pierre. Congrès de l'ACFEB, Paris 1979* (ed. C. Perrot; LD 102; Paris: Cerf, 1980) 13-42, is incorrect when he states, "Il faut donc renoncer, sur la base de l'histoire des persecutions, à dater de façon précise 1 P[ierre]" (21). Since we have already established that the criminalization of Christianity took place after Nero's persecution (64 CE), the nature of persecution depicted in the letter is of some importance for establishing the date of composition. By revealing the effective illegality of its readers, the epistle provides a *terminus a quo* of no earlier than mid-64 CE (*pace* those who place date of the letter prior to the Neronian persecution).

¹⁴⁸ Osborne ("Christian Suffering in the First Epistle of Peter," 270) notes the dichotomous approach to persecution that is often present in modern discussions of 1 Peter ("Frequently, the question of persecution of the early Christians is posed in terms either of 'official, state persecutions' or of 'popular hostility'"), and instead he proposes that "the truth lies somewhere between the two." But, ultimately, his treatment ends up heavily slanted towards the latter (see *idem*, 270-91).

addressees of the epistle. Legal threats are one of the numerous forms of persecution to which the audience would have been prone.

Chapter 8 – The Form(s) of Conflict in 1 Peter

Upon approaching the question of suffering in 1 Peter, one writer spelled out the principal concern as follows: “The real question is whether the opposition came from pagan society or from the pagan Roman government.”¹ Such a statement is characteristic of the false dichotomy with which many commentators have treated the topic of persecution. As pointed out by P. Duane Warden, “In the learned discussions of the nature of the persecutions encountered in 1 Peter the reader is often forced to choose between viewpoints which do not represent all the possibilities.” What one finds is that “the choice is often presented that the persecutions were either the result of an Imperial edict directed by some uniform system of Roman courts, consistently enforced by governors throughout the Empire, or they were incidental social pressures applied by non-believing and non-sympathizing contemporaries.”²

What should hopefully be evident at this point in our study is the fact that a dichotomous view of persecution is completely inadequate for describing conflict resolution—and especially Christian conflict resolution—within a first-century CE Anatolian setting. For even though Christian persecution could, and almost always did, arise out of informal hostility, it did not always remain on the popular level. Like any other conflict situation in the Roman world, general animosity often turned to legal accusations. And given the precarious legal status of Christians during the first century, private litigation was a constant threat. In reality, therefore, the various strategies of conflict management—separate actions (e.g., verbal/physical abuse) and third-party decision-making (e.g., courts)—cannot be separated. Both were intimately connected during the first century CE.

It is noteworthy in this regard that the author of 1 Peter declares that his audience may have been grieved “by various kinds (ποικίλοις) of trials” (1 Pet 1.6), for very little concentrated study has been focused on this variety. Too often the conflict is treated as an undifferentiated unity. The goal of this final chapter is to undertake a more holistic examination of the forms of persecution experienced by (or, at least, threatening) the letter’s recipients. Herein we will consider both informal hostilities (e.g., verbal assault,

¹ Floyd V. Filson, “Partakers with Christ: Suffering in 1 Peter,” *Int* 9 (1955) 400-12 (402).

² Warden, “Alienation and Community,” 236.

physical abuse) as well as formal measures which were taken as these tensions escalated (e.g., legal actions). Part of this “holistic” treatment will also include a more focused perspective on how different social groups within the communities were affected by the present conflict. In this way, we will seek to not only *contextualize* the situation but to *differentiate* it as well.

A. Explicit/Implicit Forms of Persecution in 1 Peter

In a number of places in 1 Peter, explicit or implicit reference is made to a particular type of suffering which the readers were currently facing or to which they may have been prone. Each of these forms of conflict will be discussed according to their discernible presence in the epistle.

1. Verbal Assault

All commentators seem to recognize that a primary form of hostility faced by the Anatolian congregations was “persistent slander and verbal abuse from non-believing outsiders aimed at demeaning, shaming, and discrediting the Christians in the court of public opinion.”³ The prevalence of verbal abuse can be seen in a number of passages in 1 Peter. The addressees are said to be “maligned (*καταλαλέω*) as evildoers” (2.12) and “reviled (*ὀνειδίζω*) for the name of Christ” (4.14). Moreover, they are encouraged to “silence (*φιμώω*) the ignorance of foolish people” by doing good (2.15) and to repay “insults” (*λοιδορία*) with blessing rather than cursing (3.9).

Due to the nature of this type of assault, few readers would have been immune to its effects. Slaves could have been berated by their masters. Wives could have been maligned by their unbelieving husbands. Neighbors could have spread rumors. The slander may have even been communicated through mediums other than word of mouth. In Rome, for instance, an inscription (known as the “Alexamenos graffito”) was carved on a wall near the Palatine Hill, mockingly depicting the crucifixion of Jesus.⁴ The

³ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100.

⁴ Maria Antonietta Tomei, *Museo Palatino* (Milan: Electa, 1997) no. 78. It is also possible that the sketch represents Anubis, the jackal-headed god of Egypt (see George M. A. Hanfmann, “The Crucified Donkey Man: Achaïos and Jesus,” in *Studies in Classical Art and Archaeology: A Tribute to Peter Heinrich von Blanckenhagen* [eds. G. Kopcke and M. B. Moore; Locust Valley, NY.: J. J. Augustin, 1979])

picture includes a sketch of Jesus hanging on a cross and possessing the head of a donkey (cf. Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.14.1; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 9.3). Beside him stands another man whose hand is raised toward the figure with a caption reading, “Alexamenos worships (his) god” (Ἀλεξάμενος σέβετε [= -εται] θεόν). Similar types of gestures may have been used in Asia Minor as a way of propagating the same insulting message.⁵

2. Physical Abuse

A second form of persecution which is explicitly mentioned in 1 Peter is physical abuse. Reference to this type of suffering is found in 1 Pet 2.20. After encouraging slaves (οἰκέται) to be obedient to their masters regardless of the personal disposition of the latter (2.18), the author adds the following justification: “What credit is it if you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong? But if you endure when you suffer for doing good, this earns favor with God.” So it is assumed that this particular group within the Anatolian congregations would be subject to the violent treatment of their unbelieving masters.

The abuse and mistreatment of slaves in Greco-Roman society is well-documented both in primary and secondary sources.⁶ “[A]ny Roman slave, as a matter of course, could become the object of physical abuse or injury at any time.”⁷ In fact, the physical chastisement of slaves was considered “the normal prerogative of the slave-owner to which there was practically no limit.”⁸ The various forms of abuse which owners administered to their slaves ranged from sexual assault,⁹ flogging, branding, and even sadistic mutilation. Of course, the nature of the punishment was dependent upon a number of factors.

205-207; cf. G. H. R. Horsley, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Volume 4: *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* [North Ryde: Macquarie University, 1987] 137).

⁵ Cf. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 64.

⁶ E.g., Suetonius, *Aug.* 67.2; *Cal.* 32.1-7; Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.54; 16.19; Dio Cassius, 54.23.1-2; Petronius, *Satyr.* 45, 53; Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 4.15.6. Cf. Keith R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 113-38.

⁷ Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome*, 4.

⁸ *idem*, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*, 118.

⁹ Bauman-Martin, “Feminist Theologies of Suffering,” 69-71, has proposed that some of the hostility faced by the female slaves within the Anatolian congregations was due to their scorning of sexual advances from their unbelieving masters. If she is correct (and this seems to be a highly plausible suggestion given what we know about the master-slave relationship in antiquity), then sexual abuse would be both a *cause* and a *form* of Christian persecution.

The general cruelty of an owner played an important role in how often and to what extent a slave might be punished, but this was not the only factor. The obedience of a slave also dictated (in larger part) how he or she was treated. For those slaves within the Petrine congregations, the conversion to Christianity could have created serious turmoil, especially considering that slaves were expected to adopt the religion of their masters.¹⁰ The author of 1 Peter does not advocate running away or even seeking emancipation, but he does assume that one's Christian allegiance would, in some sense, relativize an owner's authority. No longer could a Christian slave devote full allegiance to an unbelieving master on any and every occasion. There were now certain instances in which the will of God would be placed above the will of man. In such cases, the "good works" of a Christian slave might conflict with popular sentiment. When this occurred, slaves could expect swift retribution from their unbelieving masters.¹¹

If there was a similar approximation between the proportion of slaves to free within Christian communities of Asia Minor as there was within the larger Greco-Roman society,¹² one could assume that these words of exhortation might have affected a large percentage of the Christian congregations. If we were to add to this the fact that women in "mixed" marriages were also prone to domestic violence (see below), we might even

¹⁰ Franz Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom*, Vierter Teil: *Epilegomena* (AbhMainz10; Mainz: Franz Steiner, 1963) 247.

¹¹ One possible deterrent in the abuse of the Christian slave is the fact that those being addressed were "house servants" (*οἰκέται*) who served in an urban environment. In this case, it is possible that a much deeper bond could have been formed between master and slave, for in an urban setting there may have been more opportunities to interact with one's master—as opposed to a rural setting where numerous slaves rendered their services in the fields, (normally) in the absence of their master (see Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981; repr., London/New York: Routledge, 2005] 122).

¹² Which is proposed by William L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (MAPS 40; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955) 150. Slaves accounted for anywhere between ten to twenty percent of the urban population across the Roman Empire (cf. Willem M. Jongman, "Slavery and the Growth of Rome. The Transformation of Italy in the Second and First Centuries BCE," in *Rome the Cosmopolis* [eds. C. Edwards and G. Woolf; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003] 100-22, who points out that while slaves were frequently used in agricultural capacities, there were just as many employed in urban contexts). On the percentage of slaves in urban and rural areas across the Roman Empire, see Walter Scheidel, "The Roman Slave Supply," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 1: *The Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 287-310.

conjecture that physical abuse served as one of the primary threats facing the Petrine readers.¹³

3. Legal Actions

As we discussed in the previous chapter, there is considerable hesitancy within Petrine studies to read the epistle in connection with the court systems of Roman Anatolia. Justification normally lies in the belief that the letter itself never specifically refers to judicial proceedings, but instead simply describes the informal hostility flowing from popular resentment.¹⁴ Yet if the letter was written at a time in which Christianity had been deemed effectively illegal (as argued in Ch. 6), then legal actions would have been an ever-present threat facing these Anatolian communities (see Ch. 7).¹⁵ Below we will look more closely at the letter itself to see whether it reveals anything explicitly or implicitly about the audience's involvement in court proceedings. In doing so, we will also seek to address some of the major objections that have been leveled against such a reading.

a. 1 Peter 2.11-17

There has been some debate over whether the activities of the governor (ἡγεμῶν) mentioned in 1 Pet 2.14 should be read against a juridical backdrop. Most would agree that the “punishment of evildoers” (ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν) refers to a legal setting in which criminals were sentenced for their inappropriate behavior. There is less agreement, however, concerning the “praise of those who do good” (ἔπαινον ἀγαθοποιῶν) and, in particular, whether this action represents the same judicial context. Some connect the governor's praising of “good works” to the context of civic benefaction. But as we have shown above (see Ch. 7), such an interpretation cannot be sustained. Others have come somewhat closer to the mark by linking the praise directly to the exoneration of innocent

¹³ Pace Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100, who states, “The nature of this abuse and insult is primarily verbal, not physical.”

¹⁴ See, e.g., Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103: “Such popular opposition could conceivably lead to hearings and official trials. 1 Peter, however, makes no mention of such trials.” Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 28 n. 26.

¹⁵ Even if 1 Peter was written prior to the Neronian persecution, the Anatolian courts would still need to be a part of a historically-informed reconstruction. In the decades leading up to the Neronian terrors (and consistent with the precedent of conflict resolution in first-century Anatolia), the animosity against Christians was often worked up to such a frenzied pace that opponents turned to the courts (both local and provincial) to placate their fury (cf. Acts 13.50; 14.5; 16.19-21; 17.6-9; 18.12-17; 19.23-41; 23.25-30; 24-26).

defendants in the Roman courts.¹⁶ In this case, the “praise” would be equivalent to the *laudatio* which the governor pronounced when acquitting an accused party. But while this latter proposal is superior to the former, it still may be pushing the wording of the text a little too far.

It is true, as some have previously point out, that the connection of ἐκδίκησιν (“punishment”) and ἔπαινον (“praise”) in a singular purpose clause (εἰς) implies a kind of parallelism between the two activities. But even beyond the parallel nature of the text, there is a more crucial piece of evidence to consider. What we must recognize is that the inhabitants of the provincial cities of Anatolia did not have frequent contact with the governor (especially in the larger provinces). The only time his presence was felt was when he made his way around to the various assize centers on his *conventus* tour. During his stay in these privileged cities, one of his primary duties was the administration of justice via his provincial tribunal (see Ch. 5). Thus, when “punishment” and “praise” are used with respect to a governor, the most natural context in which these words would have been understood by a provincial inhabitant would have been a legal-judicial setting. This need not imply, however, that the “praise” is specifically connected to his acquittal of defendants. The stereotypical nature of the statement (cf. Xenophon, *Oec.* 9.14) suggests a broader referent. With Goppelt, I would suggest that this formulaic declaration simply represents “the legal protection that all who conduct themselves properly can expect.”¹⁷

With this in mind, should we then assume that the author is referring to court proceedings which threaten the Anatolian readers? Before this question can be answered, it is important to begin by dispelling two false assumptions which tend to govern the shape of many discussions on this topic. The first erroneous notion that must be disposed of is the idea that 1 Peter would not encourage submission to governmental authorities if the readers were being persecuted by Rome.¹⁸ For example, according to Elliott, “its neutral stance concerning the emperor and his representatives would be inconceivable if,

¹⁶ So, e.g., Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri*, 107; Best, *1 Peter*, 114 (possible); Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 74; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 16 n. 72.

¹⁷ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 186.

¹⁸ E.g., Weiss, *Katholische Briefe*, 310; Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 59-60; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100, 494; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 10-11; Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxvi; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 28; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 50; Boring, *1 Peter*, 44.

in fact, the Christian community throughout the world (5:9) were the target of official Roman persecution.”¹⁹

Against this proposal, two objections could be made. First, it is important to recognize that a call for Christians to submit to Roman authorities is not an indicator of a document’s date. Even after the Church-State relationship took a negative downturn as a result of the Neronian persecution, Christian writers still continued to expound the same submission ethic (1 Tim 2.1-2; Tit 3.1; *1 Clem.* 60.4-61.2; cf. *Mart. Pol.* 10).²⁰ Second, while 1 Peter’s description of the Roman government is certainly not as negative as the one found in the book of Revelation, this is not to say that it is entirely positive. David G. Horrell has recently demonstrated that the particular strategy adopted by the author is one of “polite resistance,” wherein his readers are called to negotiate their subjugated existence with some degree of conformity to the ruling power while never truly compromising God’s ultimate authority.²¹ It is this type of strategy, in fact, that would be perfectly appropriate in a situation where the audience faced the threat of Roman provincial trials.

A second misconception that dictates much of the modern discussion is that the author’s frequent mention of verbal abuse in 1 Peter indicates that the conflict was primarily (or solely) informal in nature. In this way, special prominence is afforded to the terminology used to describe the situation: because the vocabulary of suffering primarily refers to spoken attacks (e.g., καταλαλέω [2.12; 3.16], λοιδορία [3.9], ἐπηρέάζω [3.16], βλασφημέω [4.4], ὀνειδίω [4.14]), the conflict experienced by these readers is thought to be limited to verbal abuse.²² Adding to this, a second consideration is frequently submitted: the absence of any “technical” terms used to denote more violent oppression (e.g., διώκω, διωγμός).²³ The manner in which most commentators have approached the hostility represented in 1 Pet 2.11-17 is consonant with this focus on the verbal aspect of

¹⁹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 494. Part of Elliott’s error lies in his misunderstanding of Roman involvement in Christian persecution. Because he only conceives of “official,” governmentally initiated persecution, he does not account for the involvement of Roman authorities in the process of litigation undertaken by private citizens, litigation which found its precedent in the persecution of Nero.

²⁰ Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός,” 372.

²¹ idem, “Between Conformity and Resistance.”

²² So, e.g., Elliott, *1 Peter*, 100, 631; Osborne, “Christian Suffering,” 265-67; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 87.

²³ See, e.g., Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 53; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 18; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 10; Holmer and de Boor, *Die Briefe des Petrus*, 17; Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 8.

persecution. Terms like *καταλαλέω* (2.11) and *φιμόω* (2.15) are thought to “indicate that it is primarily verbal abuse to which the believers have been subjected and which has occasioned their suffering.”²⁴

What often goes unnoticed in this approach is that due to the encyclical nature of 1 Peter, the epistle itself does not (and cannot) list every possible threat facing these Anatolian congregations—although it does acknowledge their variegated nature (cf. 1.6). By limiting our examination solely to “what the text focuses on”—which is itself a matter of interpretation—we become guilty of excluding potential risks and impending threats facing the readers. Few interpreters have acknowledged the fact that there were much greater social, economic, and political implications to these accusations than simply the internal injury that one experienced from personal insult. Until the entire context—both historical and textual—is taken into consideration, the full effects of the accusations will never be fully appreciated.

If we acknowledge, as many interpreters do, that legal trials could have and probably did take place, then we are required to pursue the issue somewhat further. The fact that slanderous accusations were being made against believers (1 Pet 2.12) begs the question, to whom were these charges made—to the Christians themselves or to governing officials? If the latter is the case, this leads us to another question: what charges were brought against these Christians in the first place? Was it the standard lists of deviancies that seemed to follow the faith (e.g., atheism, cannibalism, incest)? Was it the crimes delineated in 4.15, or were any members being brought to trial simply for being Christians (4.16)? Furthermore, what happened if and when these legal proceedings did take place? Are we to assume that every charge brought against these believers was dropped? By thus ending the historical inquiry prematurely, these questions are rarely addressed, and commentators have therefore not been able to fully appreciate the letter’s historical context.²⁵

²⁴ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 495.

²⁵ Note the telling admission of Theodor Zahn. After arguing strongly against the escalation of conflict in 1 Peter (“nowhere in the letter is there the slightest hint of bloody martyrdoms, nor even of imprisonment and the confiscation of property. Nor is anything said about judges before whom they are brought, acts of worship which they were commanded to perform, and recantations under the pressure of persecution” [*Introduction*, 2:180]), and after laying heavy stress on the verbal nature of their persecution, he nevertheless has to admit, “[I]t goes without saying that a hostile feeling toward the sect of Christians that

Further historical inquiry reveals the danger in focusing solely on verbal abuse to the neglect of other forms of conflict. The nature of court proceedings, in particular, warn against such a definitive separation between the various forms of conflict management. It is imperative to recognize that all judicial cases in Roman Anatolia (both local and provincial) were initiated by members of the local populace, and in many instances, the trials were the result of bitterness and resentment that began on an inter-personal level (see Chs. 3-4). This fact demands that legal actions be taken into consideration in 1 Peter. The more pertinent question in this instance, therefore, is whether 1 Pet 2.11-17 provides any explicit indication that the readers were being taken before the court of the provincial governor.

One of the strongest clues that legal proceedings may have been part of the historical situation which the author envisioned is the connection between the accusations of opponents and the duties of the governor. In 1 Pet 2.12, we learn that one of the slanderous accusations which opponents were making against Christians was that they were “evildoers” (*κακοποιοί*). On the surface, this charge seems somewhat vague, possibly encompassing a wide range of inappropriate conduct. But we should not mistake generality for triviality, since two verses later we find out that “evildoers” (*κακοποιοί*) are those whom the governor was specifically sent to punish (2.14). Thus, “[t]he charge of ‘doing wrong’ is a serious charge because civil government exists for the express purpose of punishing wrongdoers.”²⁶ Needless to say, then, if the epistle describes a situation in which Christians are continually being maligned and verbally assaulted by opponents, and if the accusations being made against them are of a criminal nature (cf. 4.15-16), ones that would require swift recompense by public authorities, then it is only natural to assume that this abuse would not remain on the level of inter-personal dispute. The step from general harassment to legal prosecution would be easily crossed. As we see from the letters of Pliny (*Ep.* 10.96), all it would require is a hostile populace and a willing administrator.²⁷

had become general would not be limited to insulting words” (2:181). Curiously enough, he never explores the various forms which the conflict might have taken when it escalated beyond verbal abuse.

²⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 126.

²⁷ Cf. Ste. Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?,” 17.

On the surface, then, it would appear that the text implies a conflict situation wherein the natural outcome would be legal actions. This suggestion may find confirmation in the connection between Christian ethics and the silencing of a hostile society. According to 1 Pet 2.15, the reason (ὅτι)²⁸ why the Christians are to submit to the existing governmental authorities is because ultimately the will of God is “to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.”²⁹ Given that this “silencing” of opponents is closely connected to the “good works” of the Christians (“silence . . . by doing good”), one could argue that the “ignorance of foolish people” is eradicated not at the eschaton but in the present life.

The question would thus become, how (specifically) would this “silencing” take place? One possibility is that the Christians would win over their accusers through persistency. Over time and after further interaction with adherents to the Christian religion, even the most obstinate members of society would come to recognize that the negative stereotypes were simply fabrications (cf. 3.1).³⁰ A second possibility—which is more congruent with the observed proclivity towards legal actions—might be that the author envisions someone (or something) acting to cause the detractors’ silence. In such a case, the most natural setting would be in private litigation before the Roman governor. If spurious accusations were brought against the Christians, or if they were simply charged

²⁸ There is some debate and confusion over the structure and function of 1 Pet 2.15. Some have argued that the verse functions parenthetically, explaining the praise of those who “do good” in v. 14 (e.g., Hort, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 142; Monnier, *La Première Épître de L’Apôtre Pierre*, 118; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 127). But given the fact that the implied subject of the infinitive φημῶν is ὑμᾶς (note its insertion in later MSS: C 69. 322. 323. 945. 1241. 1739. 1852. 2298 *pc sa bo^{pl}*), linking it back to v. 13, it is best to understand v. 15 as providing a further reason (ὅτι) for submitting to governing authorities (v. 13).

²⁹ Some interpret the οὕτως of 1 Pet 2.15 retrospectively, indicating that submission to governing institutions is the will of God (so, e.g., Hart, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” 60; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 185; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 130). But, as even the proponents of this view admit, this leaves the infinitive and its participial modifier (ἀγαθοποιούντας) as nothing more than “a loosely attached explanatory afterthought” (Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 110). In actuality, the infinitive would either have to denote purpose or result. The problem with this is that when the simple (or “naked”) infinitive functions in this manner, it is “usually following an (intransitive) verb of motion” (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996] 591, 593; cf. BDF §390[1]), which is not the case in this instance. Elsewhere in the letter, when the infinitive is used to denote purpose/result, a prepositional modifier is employed (εἰς τό + infinitive) to make the usage more explicit (cf. 1 Pet 3.7; 4.2). For this reason, it is much more likely that the demonstrative pronoun is functioning prospectively, with the infinitive φημῶν being placed in apposition (“this is the will of God, namely, silencing the ignorance of the foolish”; see further Robertson, *Grammar*, 400, 700, 1078; G. B. Winer, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* [8th ed.; ed. P. W. Schmiedel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894-1898] 2:217).

³⁰ This was a common view among many earlier commentators (so, e.g., Barnes, *General Epistles*, 147; Lumby, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, 89-90; Erdman, *General Epistles*, 66-67).

for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*), and the governor, after examining the evidence carefully, ruled in favor of the Christians (as occasionally happened, cf. Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3; Lucian, *Peregr.* 14), it is possible that the negative slander would be stopped by public exoneration.³¹ Despite the fact that alternative reconstructions may ultimately serve as better interpretive options,³² such a “legal” reading of the text is certainly plausible.

In conclusion, we must recognize that there is nothing in 1 Peter, or more specifically in 2.11-17, that would rule out the possibility of legal actions being taken against the readers. The optimism expressed toward the governing officials and the stress on verbal abuse cannot be construed to mean that the courts played no part in the conflict situation. On the contrary, when 1 Pet 2.11-17 is read against the backdrop of conflict management strategies in first-century Anatolia, a perfectly natural setting for these accusations against Christians would have been the court of either the local or (more likely) provincial authorities.

b. 1 Peter 3.14b-16

A second text in which legal actions could very well be in view is 1 Pet 3.14b-16. In this particular case, the text “is formulated in so general a way as to be virtually inconceivable that it might not apply to routine judicial procedure just as it does to countless other everyday situations.”³³ But despite the vague manner in which the passage has been composed, when read against a first-century Anatolian backdrop, an implicit reference to judicial proceedings is difficult to dispute.³⁴ Here again, however, this is hardly the opinion of most commentators. When treating this passage, interpreters have been quick to raise numerous objections against such a legal reading of the text. For this reason, we will first address some of the major obstacles for this interpretation, and then, using the

³¹ Cf. Bennett, *The General Epistles*, 217; Hart, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” 60; Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 63; Gene L. Green, “Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1979) 278-79.

³² It is certainly possible to see a close temporal connection between silencing opponents and “doing good.” But it is more probable that the “good” which the opponents presently observe is the evidence which will one day silence them at the eschaton (see Ch. 7).

³³ Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 15.

³⁴ Cf. Holloway, *Coping with Prejudice*, 69-71.

information gleaned from the Anatolian background, we will attempt to show why judicial proceedings must be part of any situational reconstruction.

The first objection that is sometimes raised against a legal reading of 1 Pet 3.14b-16 is the fact that “hope” (ἐλπίς) is said to be the content of one’s defense before detractors (v. 15). It is argued that “the surviving records of trials before Roman magistrates do not indicate that the latter were concerned with such questions [as a Christian’s hope].”³⁵ But, as Beare has correctly stated, “This does not suggest that the presiding official will be interested primarily in the future expectations of the accused, for to him the important matter would certainly be the social consequences of the doctrine and discipline.”³⁶ Moreover, what this objection does not account for is the fact that these words of exhortation were written from a Christian perspective. If Christians were being taken to court and asked to deny their faith, and if they remained persistent in their commitment to Christ even amidst threats of execution, a question that might naturally be raised is why they were willing to die for their religious beliefs. To an outsider like a Roman governor, such a question would be nothing more than an attempt to understand a fanatical religious movement. But from a Christian point of view, it would be nothing less than an opportunity to share their hope.

A second and much more significant objection to reading the present passage against a judicial backdrop is the text’s seemingly universal application: ἀεὶ . . . παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι (“always . . . to everyone who asks”). “The ‘always’ and ‘in relation to everyone’,” as Goppelt puts it, “lead one out of the narrow perspective of the persecution sayings into the breadth of a universal missionary apologetic.”³⁷ Nevertheless, a fact that many interpreters have overlooked is that while terms like ἀεὶ and παντί prevent us from restricting the situation too narrowly,³⁸ they certainly do not preclude us from also envisioning a formal defense before local and provincial courts. (It is strange how “always . . . to everyone” can somehow be thought to include all people and all situations

³⁵ Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 7. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 627.

³⁶ Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 165.

³⁷ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 244.

³⁸ Pace Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 164, who argues that “the phrase παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι λόγον can only apply to a judicial interrogation.” Cf. Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 70: “λόγον αἰτεῖν, gewiß auch vor dem Richter.”

except that of a trial before the governor.)³⁹ It is true that some previous scholars tended to focus so exclusively on legal actions that they overlooked the day-to-day application of these words. But the solution to the problem is not to *restrict* judicial examination from being part of the arena in which these words of exhortation could be applied. Such an interpretive maneuver—of which many commentators have been guilty—is equally fallacious.

Very often the reason why commentators have excluded judicial proceedings from their reconstruction of this text is because of the “either/or” methodology with which they approach the passage. Once it has been established that the language of 1 Pet 3.14b-16 is equally compatible with either a formal or informal setting, the former is quickly dismissed because it is (seemingly) never mentioned as a threat. A case in point is the treatment of Bechtler. He argues,

This is not to say that the exhortations in 3:13-17 could not have applied just as well to legal proceedings—whether in provincial Roman or local civic courts—as to everyday, informal encounters; indeed, in light of 2:12-15, the possibility remains that criminal trials may have been some concern to 1 Peter. It does not appear, however, that such trials were a primary concern.⁴⁰

While Bechtler thus admits that the words are applicable to a legal context, he fails to explore the nature of this context in the Anatolian setting of the epistle. Therefore, we might say that his examination of the passage ends somewhat prematurely. It is precisely because the description of persecution is very general that we are forced to ask not only what the text reveals about the conflict situation but also what can be assumed from the historical background.

Contrary to the opinions of many commentators, there is a small amount of evidence in this passage that could suggest that judicial proceedings are at the forefront of the author’s mind as he composes these words. Support for a “legal” reading of this passage may come from the time and nature of the shaming of the readers’ accusers. The nature of this shaming is rather simple. When we ask how this event will come to pass, we must recognize first that the passive voice of *καταισχυθῶσιν* (“they will be put to shame”)

³⁹ Cf. Ramsay, “The First Epistle attributed to St. Peter,” 287: “the words ‘every one’ must not be taken to exclude the governor.”

⁴⁰ Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 91. Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233.

indicates that the shaming of opponents ultimately derives not from an internal stimulus (i.e., the opponents recognizing their error and feeling remorse) but from an external source (i.e., someone or something causing the opponents' shame).

With regard to the time of this event, we are confronted with an important interpretive dilemma. Depending on when this shaming takes place, a “legal” reading could be afforded varying levels of support. If, as some have claimed, the construction ἐν ᾧ in 1 Pet 3.16 indicates the temporal nature of the shaming (“when,” “whenever”), then the event would have to be closely connected to the slandering of Christians rather than to the eschatological future: “*at the time when* you are maligned, those who slander your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.” As such, the author would be envisioning a situation in which those who slandered the good works of Christians would be put to shame very near to the time that their malicious accusations were made, and in some way, the gentle and respectful defense of the Christian would play some role in this disgracing process. This rendering would be very compatible with a reconstructed judicial setting. For one of the few ways in which the tables could be so quickly turned on opponents would be through official court action. In this case, it would show that the Petrine author is optimistic that once the accusations leveled against these believers were proven to be fabricated, the blame would fall on the accusers, and they would be the ones who were put to shame by the presiding governor.

Ultimately, this evidence is inadmissible, however. Rather than performing a primarily temporal function, the prepositional phrase ἐν ᾧ is used in the same manner as 1 Pet 2.12, where it denotes the correspondence between the cause of their persecution and the cause of God's glorification. In other words, “[w]hat it indicates is that they will give glory to God then about the same things for which they slander Christians now.”⁴¹ Therefore, the construction itself reveals little, if anything, about the time when the slanderers are put to shame. Instead, the temporal location is best assigned from the parallel treatment in 2.12. There we are told that the Christian opponents will “glorify God on the day of visitation [i.e., God's eschatological judgment wherein those who stood against him will be put to shame].” So even though the timeframe of the Christians'

⁴¹ Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 97 n. 10; cf. Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 105. On the use of ἐν ᾧ in 1 Peter 2.12 and 3.16, see p. 254 n. 77.

vindication is not specified in 3.16, it would appear that the false accusations of their detractors will be recompensed on the day of God’s eschatological return.

A firmer basis from which to argue for a legal backdrop to 1 Pet 3.14b-16 is the seriousness of the situation depicted in the passage. The exhortations of this section are begun with the appeal, τὸν . . . φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ παραχθῆτε (“Do not be afraid of them.⁴² Do not be intimidated.”). Such a request seems to be too strong if the conflict was limited merely to discrimination and verbal abuse. A much more natural suggestion might be to suppose that the intimidation and fear which the audience is warned against was the result of the threat of physical violence. On the other hand, it could equally apply to the apprehension created by legal actions, which would have placed the Christian defendants in a life-or-death situation. Neither option can be concluded with any certainty, but the language should force us to properly consider the possible trepidation experienced by the readers.

Along with the encouragement not to fear their opponents, the text also exhorts the readers, “κύριον . . . τὸν Χριστὸν⁴³ ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν” (1 Pet 3.15). Scholarship has been divided over whether κύριον and Χριστὸν function appositionally (i.e., “sanctify the Lord Christ”) or as an object-complement in a double accusative construction (i.e., “set apart Christ as Lord”).⁴⁴ Contextual considerations tend to point

⁴² There is some disagreement over whether αὐτῶν (1 Pet 3.14b) should be understood as a subjective genitive (“do not fear what they fear,”; so, e.g., NRSV; NIV; NAB; HCSB; John T. Demarest, *A Translation and Exposition of the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter* [New York: John Moffet, 1851] 163; W. M. L. de Wette, *Kurze Erklärung der Briefe des Petrus, Judas und Jacobus* [3rd ed.; KEHNT 3/1; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1865] 72-73; Mason, “The First Epistle General of Peter,” 418; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 110) or as an objective genitive (“do not fear of them [i.e., those who are causing the readers’ suffering],”; so, e.g., NASB; TNIV; ESV; NKJV; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 186-87; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 225; Bénétreau, *La Première Épître de Pierre*, 199; Schweizer, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 70; Prigent, *La première épître de Pierre*, 97). While the difference between the two is only minimal, the latter appears to be the most likely option on contextual grounds.

⁴³ The majority of later MSS read θεόν for Χριστόν (see *ECM*, 160), although few have been convinced by the merits of this reading. (One exception is George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 [1977] 63-83, who bases his argument on the supposition that “the Tetragram stood in the original citation,” and thus that “[t]he author would hardly have written Χριστόν since that would have identified Christ with *Yhwh*” [81].) “The reading Χριστόν,” as Metzger (*Textual Commentary*, 621-22) notes, “is strongly supported by early and diversified external evidence (Ϟ⁷² Ⲙ A B C Ψ 33 614 1739 it^{ar} vg syr^{p, h} cop^{sa, bo} arm Clement), as well as by transcriptional probability, the more familiar expression (κύριον τὸν θεόν) replacing the less usual expression (κύριον τὸν Χριστόν).”

⁴⁴ Those who interpret the construction appositionally include: Schneider, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 80; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 130; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 142; Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 100; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 94; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 155; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 625. Those who

toward the latter usage:⁴⁵ amidst temptation to renounce their Christian faith as a result of persecution, the readers are most in need of encouragement concerning their devotion to Christ. In this particular instance, a request for the readers to “honor the Lord Christ as holy” or to “sanctify the Lord Christ” would seem out of place. Once we recognize the meaning of this sentence, questions naturally arise concerning its function and overall impact on the readers. Are we to suppose that there is something (or someone) else vying for their allegiance? Is it possible that the addressees are being put into situations where they are formally tempted to deny Christ’s lordship? The language of the passage would certainly support such a notion.⁴⁶

It appears that one of the arenas in which this fearless allegiance to Christ is tested is through personal confrontation with detractors who demand some type of accounting of Christian actions and beliefs (1 Pet 3.15b). In these situations, believers are told to be ready to offer a proper defense (*ἀπολογία*). Little can be deduced about the situation envisioned in this command simply from the lexical nature of *ἀπολογία*. As many commentators have previously pointed out, although the term is often used for one’s personal “defense” before juridical officials, it can also be employed to describe an unofficial response in less formal disputes (cf. 1 Cor 9.3; 2 Cor 7.11). This is not to say,

interpret the construction as an object-complement include: Schott, *Der erste Brief Petri*, 204; Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 192; Best, *1 Peter*, 133; Hiebert, *First Peter*, 226; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 232; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 173.

⁴⁵ Some have claimed that the appositional nature of the substantives is evident in the present construction. That is, given that the substantives in question are proper names, we would expect an anarthrous κύριον with an articular Χριστόν (as argued by R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1945; repr., *The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008)] 149). But while it is true that this would be the normal construction for appositional proper names (pace Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 232; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 173), neither κύριος nor Χριστός is a proper name, because both can be pluralized (for this definition of proper nouns, see Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 246 n. 77). Others have argued that the Petrine construction is constrained by the text in Isa 8.13 (the text from which 1 Peter quotes) and therefore should be seen as an appositive (so, e.g., Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter*, 158; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 229). In one sense, this claim is accurate, for it finds support in the Hebrew text. Where it goes astray is in assuming that the LXX construction can be taken appositionally. In this particular instance, the construction κύριον αὐτὸν ἀγιάσατε (Isa 8.13 LXX) must be taken as a double accusative object-complement, “sanctify him as Lord” (cf. Daniel B. Wallace, “The Semantics and Exegetical Significance of the Object-Complement Construction in the New Testament,” *GTJ* 6 [1985] 91-112 [96 n. 23]). Given 1 Peter’s dependence on the LXX, we might also conclude that κύριον . . . τὸν Χριστόν ἀγιάσατε in 1 Pet 3.15 functions similarly (“set apart Christ as Lord”).

⁴⁶ Cf. Thomas Kayalaparampil, “Christian Suffering in I Peter,” *BiBh* 3 (1977) 7-19, who proposes, “this may refer to the pressure likely to be put on Christians to join in Emperor-worship or to revert to heathen idolatry” (17).

however, that the presence of the term is without significance in deducing the letter's historical setting.

The close connection between 1 Pet 3.15a and 15b⁴⁷ raises an important question regarding the association between fearless allegiance to Christ (v. 14b-15a) and providing an *ἀπολογία* of one's Christian hope (v. 15b). What kind of situation would have produced both a (possible) fear in the audience and a need to provide a defense to detractors? Elliott describes the situation in this way: "The presupposed situation is an ongoing one always facing the believers. It involves not formal trials and the demands of official magistrates requiring evidence of nonculpability but occasions when outsiders, out of curiosity, ask for explanations of the hope that animates these believers."⁴⁸ But if the *ἀπολογία* which the readers were expected to give arose simply out of the "curiosity" of outsiders, then why would there be any need to dissuade them from fear (v. 14b) and to encourage them to hold firmly to the lordship of Christ (v. 15a)? It would admittedly be wrong to downplay the threat that informal conflict posed. Yet, at the same time, it would be equally erroneous to overlook the seriousness of the situation envisioned by the Petrine author. As he describes them, the risks involved are somewhat more sobering.

When the letter's historical setting is taken into account, the dangers facing these congregations become more pronounced, and a much more natural reconstruction can be suggested. Written at a time when the Christian religion had been rendered effectively illegal in the Roman Empire, the Anatolian believers faced the ever-present threat of being taken to court by private citizens. During this period, Christians were suspected of heinous crimes that often made them liable in the eyes of Roman authorities. But even beyond their questionable activities, Christians could also be accused and condemned simply for the confession of the Christian faith. Such an environment would undoubtedly breed fear among the Anatolian congregations, and it would certainly provide opportunities to present a defense of the faith both in formal and informal settings. In the

⁴⁷ Note the asyndetic (i.e., beginning without a conjunction) nature of 1 Pet 3.15b (on asyndeton in sentence connection, see BDF §462; G. B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek* [3rd ed.; trans. W. F. Moulton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1882] 673-76). In this particular case, vv. 15a and 15b are in paratactic coordination. The adjective *ἔτοιμοι* thus functions imperatively (cf. 1 Pet 3.8), with an unexpressed *ἔστέ* being assumed (*pace* Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 233 n. 54).

⁴⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 628. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 174: "It envisions . . . informal circumstances when believers are asked spontaneously about their faith."

case of the former, a call to respond “with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet 3.16) would indeed be appropriate,⁴⁹ for given the freedom of a governor to either condemn or acquit a Christian defendant according to his own personal discretion, the manner of one’s response could go a long way towards self-preservation.⁵⁰

In summary, it is best to conclude that even though 1 Pet 3.14b-16 cannot be restricted only to judicial proceedings, when the historical context and the various indicators of a more formal conflict situation are taken into consideration, there is no more natural environment in which to envision these events than the Anatolian courts.

c. 1 Peter 4.12-19

In the previous chapter, we established that 1 Peter is addressing a period of time in which its recipients faced the possibility of being accused and condemned in a Roman court of law simply on the basis of their Christian confession (1 Pet 4.16). From this, one can surmise that the Anatolian Christians either had suffered or were being threatened with the possibility of suffering for the Name itself (*nomen ipsum*). This fact alone is

⁴⁹ There is some question regarding the sentence structure of 1 Pet 3.16. With the absence of a main verb, many argue for an imperatival use of the participle ἔχοντες (suggested, e.g., by Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 165; Reichert, *Praeparatio ad martyrium*, 186-89; Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 161 n. 508; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 176). But while there is a concentrated use of this participial function in 1 Peter (on the imperatival participle in 1 Peter, see Travis B. Williams, “Reconsidering the Imperatival Participle in 1 Peter,” *WTJ* [forthcoming]), this is not one of them (cf. Scot Snyder, “Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter: A Re-Examination in the Light of Recent Scholarly Trends,” *FiloNT* 8 [1995] 187-98 [195]). Instead, the participle functions adverbially, denoting purpose and modifying an understood finite form (ἀπολογεῖσθε[?]): “but make your defense with gentleness and reverence so that you may maintain a clear conscience.” Moreover, we must realize that it is not possible to posit both the elision of a finite verbal form in v. 15b and an imperatival function for ἔχοντες in v. 16 (as does Elliott, *1 Peter*, 629), because the presence of the former would rule out the latter (see Robertson, *Grammar*, 1133-34: “In general it may be said that no participle should be explained in this way [i.e., as an imperatival participle] that can properly be connected with a finite verb”).

⁵⁰ This type of response would certainly be the most appropriate kind of defense if one were on trial before the provincial governor. In fact, it was the lack of such a defense that exacerbated the troubles of the Bithynian Christians who were executed by Pliny (see John Knox, “Pliny and I Peter: A Note on I Pet 4:14-16 and 3:15,” *JBL* 72 [1953] 187-89). Achtemeier has objected to such an argument, however, noting that, “[g]iven the total context of Pliny’s letter, and his expressed view of the Christian faith as obnoxious superstition which threatened the Roman way of life and hence its hegemony in Asia Minor, it is not likely that a less obnoxious defense by the Christians of their persistence in holding the faith and refusing to recant would have spared them Pliny’s death sentence” (*1 Peter*, 235). The problem with Achtemeier’s objection is that even though Christianity was effectively illegal, it was ultimately up to the governor to determine whether the Christian(s) on trial would be put to death (see Ch. 6). Achtemeier reads the trial of the Bithynian believers as the pattern for all Christian trials. But as we have shown above, in the first three centuries, there is no uniformity in the treatment of Christians: while some were tried and put to death, others could just as easily have been tried and released.

enough to establish the contention that legal action is one form of conflict facing the readers of 1 Peter, for (πάσχειν) ὡς Χριστιανός implies one's involvement in judicial proceedings.

B. Conjectured Forms of Conflict in 1 Peter

Due to the encyclical nature of 1 Peter, it would be impossible for the author to mention every possible form of suffering which might be facing the Anatolian congregations. For this reason, a historically-informed reconstruction of the conflict situation must take into account possible threats that are not explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the epistle. In order to understand the forms of hostility which could be threatening the readers, we will employ the information that has been gleaned from our examination of conflict in first-century Anatolia as a way of postulating a more holistic representation of the present difficulties.

1. Spousal Tensions

According to the literary sources of the Greco-Roman world—which we must remember, were composed from an elite, androcentric perspective—the ideal marital situation with regard to religious devotion would have been for the wife to worship the gods of her husband. The programmatic statement on this matter is found in Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom*. Plutarch declares that the responsibility of the wife is “to worship and to recognize only the gods that her husband reveres, and to close the door upon strange cults and foreign superstitions” (*Conj. praec.* 19 [*Mor.* 140D]). Of course, sometimes there was a wide chasm between the actual and the ideal.⁵¹ In fact, the situation represented in 1 Peter reveals how easily the idyllic structure of religious authority could be impeded by the stubbornness of reality. The author of the epistle recognizes both the possibility of a woman's conversion to Christianity apart from the consent of her husband and the inherent difficulties that a “mixed” marriage could create (1 Pet 3.1-6). Nevertheless, he does not develop the types of problems that could have arisen as a result of this situation.

⁵¹ Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.32; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.34-35. With the rise of Christianity, there was an acute “problem” of women converting against the will of their husbands (see 1 Cor 7.13-16; Justin, *2 Apol.* 2; Tertullian, *Scap.* 3.4; Origen, *Cels.* 3.44).

One possible outcome that could have developed from a wife's conversion to Christianity would have been divorce. If an unbelieving husband was displeased with his wife's new-found religion, or if she undertook to constantly remind him of his degenerate spiritual condition, the marital relationship could have easily been dissolved, as husbands possessed the freedom of unilateral divorce (cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 3.4; *Ux.* 2.1.1).⁵² The question of the "guilty party" was not always of critical importance in divorce proceedings, and in many cases, the reason for the separation was not declared publically.⁵³ But, in this instance, the woman's conversion could play a significant role. If her "misconduct" was considered to be the cause of the marriage's dissolution, she would not be able to recover her full dowry—assuming she was wealthy enough to supply one (Quintilian, *Inst.* 7.4.11; Ulpian, *Rules* 6.12).⁵⁴ Aside from the financial consequences, divorce held out serious familial repercussions as well. Since any offspring would have been considered part of the husband's "property," a (female) divorcee would have also stood to lose "custody" of her children.⁵⁵

But while divorce would have been a possible outcome of a (married) woman's conversion to Christianity, it is quite possible that even in this situation the marriage relationship would have been kept intact (cf. Justin, *2 Apol.* 2). A fundamental reason why a husband would not seek the dissolution of the marriage was because of the financial loss it would create for him. Despite the fact that a portion of the woman's dowry would have been conceded to the husband for any children produced by the marriage and possibly as a result of the woman's "misconduct," he would have

⁵² See Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 441-46. Roman law provided little in the way of protecting a wife from being divorced on frivolous grounds. This lack of security is illustrated by Plutarch. After referring to a Roman man who had recently divorced a virtuous, wealthy, and beautiful wife, he provides would-be brides with the following warning: "A wife . . . ought not rely on her dowry or birth or beauty, but on things in which she gains the greatest hold on her husband, namely conversation, character, and comradeship, which she must render not perverse or vexatious day by day, but accommodating, inoffensive, and agreeable" (*Conj. praec.* 22 [*Mor.* 141A-B]; trans. Babbitt [LCL]).

⁵³ Beryl Rawson, "The Roman Family," in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives* (ed. B. Rawson; Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1986) 1-57 (32-33).

⁵⁴ There is no indication that dowries were a legal requirement during this period, but the sources do expect that women would provide one. For example, Venuleius claimed that "[a man] would not have married a wife who came without a dowry" (*Dig.* 42.8.25.1; trans. Watson).

⁵⁵ Keith R. Bradley, "Dislocation in the Roman Family," *HR/RH* 14 (1987) 33-62. Cf. Susan Treggiari, "Divorce Roman Style: How Easy and How Frequent was It?," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome* (ed. B. Rawson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 31-46 (39-40).

nonetheless been forced to return a large percentage of the money back to his (ex-)wife.⁵⁶ For this reason, some husbands were willing to endure Christian wives, making their dowries their “wages of silence” (Tertullian, *Ux.* 2.5.4).

The fact that a pagan husband might be willing to endure his wife’s conversion to Christianity does not negate the possibility that significant resistance could have followed. The author of 1 Peter recognized the seriousness of the situation when he encouraged the women of the Anatolian congregations, “You have become children of Sarah, if you do good and do not give in to fear (μη φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν)” (3.6).⁵⁷ The types of hostility which the women in these circumstances may have been threatened to “fear” would have certainly included the verbal abuse mentioned above. But it could have also escalated much further. In some cases, an unbelieving husband may have refused to allow his wife to participate in Christian practices and ceremonies (Tertullian, *Ux.* 2.4). In other instances, he could have even forced her to partake in pagan rituals which contradicted the will of God (*Ux.* 2.6). The possibility of accusations being made to the authorities (on the charges of one’s Christian faith) was another threat that

⁵⁶ The rules for the recovery of a dowry after a divorce are listed in Ulpian, *Rules* 6.9-12:

Retentions out of a dowry are competent either on account of children, on account of immorality, on account of outlays, on account of things donated, or on account of things abstracted. There is retention on account of children when divorce has occurred through the fault of the wife or her *paterfamilias*; in such a case a sixth part is retained on behalf of each child, but not more than three sixths in all. Those sixths, though they may be retained, cannot be recovered by action; for a dowry, once it has fulfilled all its purposes, cannot be further dealt with as such except in another marriage. On account of gross immorality (*mores grauiiores*) there is retention of a sixth; for less serious (*mores leuiiores*) of an eighth. Adultery is the only immorality falling under the head of *mores grauiiores*; any other misconduct is included amongst the *leuiiores*. (trans. Muirhead)

On the recovery of dowry in Roman law, see Richard P. Saller, “Roman Dowry and the Devolution of Property in the Principate,” *CQ* 34 (1984) 195-205; Jane F. Gardner, “The Recovery of Dowry in Roman Law,” *CQ* 35 (1985) 449-53.

⁵⁷ Achtemeier (*1 Peter*, 216) objects to interpreting the participles ἀγαθοποιῶσαι and φοβούμεναι conditionally (“if you do good and if do not give in to fear”). The basis for his objection is the claim that the aorist verb ἐγενήθητε indicates a past action. Such a construction, according to Achtemeier, is untenable due to the fact that “[t]he apodosis of a condition implies future fulfillment” (*1 Peter*, 216 n. 147). What he nevertheless fails to recognize is that the relation of the protasis to the apodosis in a conditional sentence can be construed in more ways than just “cause-effect.” The two halves of a conditional sentence can also relate to each other as “evidence-inference” (cf. Rom 8.17; 1 Cor 15.44). In this case, “the speaker infers something (the apodosis) from some evidence. That is, he [or she] makes an induction about the *implications* that a piece of evidence suggests to him [or her]” (Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 683 [original emphasis]). In 1 Pet 3.6, the “good works” and lack of fear shown by the women (evidence), demonstrate that they have become daughters of Sarah (inference).

some husbands may have used to torment their Christian wives (cf. Justin, *2 Apol.* 2; Tertullian, *Ux.* 2.5.4).

Many commentators have recognized that a final form of spousal tensions which these “mixed” marriages could have produced was domestic violence (i.e., the use of force—whether slapping, hitting, shoving, etc.—to achieve compliance). They argue that a primary cause of fear (πτόησις) for these Christian wives was physical mistreatment from their unbelieving husbands.⁵⁸ Rarely, however, does this consideration have a significant impact on situational reconstructions. In fact, some interpreters have been hesitant about even positing domestic violence as a legitimate threat in 1 Peter. Jobes, for instance, argues that “[t]he nature of the suffering that Peter is addressing is primarily verbal abuse and loss of social standing,” noting that, “even Greco-Roman statutes did not sanction spousal abuse.”⁵⁹

It is true that ancient writers did, on occasion, speak out against physical abuse in the household (e.g., Plutarch, *Cat. Maj.* 20.2),⁶⁰ and it is possible that the right of unilateral divorce—which women had gained by this period—would have abated spousal abuse somewhat.⁶¹ But despite these facts, two points still remain. First, although the legal rights of women (with regard to divorce) were much greater than in previous periods, relatively few of the documented cases of divorce were initiated by women.⁶² This is

⁵⁸ So, e.g., Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 133; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 123; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 132; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 158.

⁵⁹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 206, following David A. de Silva, “1 Peter: Strategies for Counseling Individuals on the Way to a New Heritage,” *ATJ* 32 (2000) 33-52 (39). Cf. Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 91.

⁶⁰ Perspectives on spousal abuse were (seemingly) divided according to geographical location (see Leslie Dossey, “Wife Beating and Manliness in Late Antiquity,” *P&P* 199 [2008] 3-40). Whereas in the West domestic violence was more accepted (cf. Augustine, *Conf.* 9.9.19) and sometimes even praised (cf. Valerius Maximus, 6.3.9-12), in the East there was somewhat more reservation about beating one’s wife. But even though spousal abuse appears much less frequently in Greek literature, it was more than likely a routine occurrence—with husbands undertaking varying degrees of “acceptable” violence against their wives (Nicholas R. E. Fisher, “Violence, Masculinity and the Law in Classical Athens,” in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power & Identity in Classical Antiquity* [eds. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon; London: Routledge, 1998] 68-97 [77]).

⁶¹ Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 430-31.

⁶² There is evidence that women had some legal recourse against the physical abuse of their husbands (pace Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History* [2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998] 47). In BGU IV.1105 (Alexandria, 10 BCE), a woman brings accusations against her husband, Asklepiades. Aside from squandering her dowry, the woman claims, “he abused me and insulted me and laid hands on me as though I were nothing but a purchased slave.” On the other hand, there were cases where women suffered these same types of abuses but did not seek restitution for them. In P.Oxy. 281 (20-50 CE), a woman petitions the ἀρχιδικαστής (“chief justice”) to summons her husband who squandered her dowry and then deserted her. What is important to note about this example is that even

important given the second consideration: even after the marital rights of women increased, spousal abuse continued throughout the Empire. In fact, any time a husband was angered, there was a threat of domestic violence.⁶³ This is due, in large part, to the fact that “[t]he wife appears to have been on the front line of possible conflict between the father and the rest of the internal household, and so bore the brunt of the discipline enforced by the father.”⁶⁴

The perilous situation faced by many Christian wives in “mixed” marriages is portrayed in later Christian literature.⁶⁵ One example is the *Passion of Anastasia*. In this hagiographic novel, the Christian matron, Anastasia, is married to a pagan husband, Publius. Due to her persistence in visiting fellow believers (especially Chrysogonus), Publius imprisons her in their home. He orders his slaves to starve her and to inflict terrors upon her. In response, Chrysogonus encourages Anastasia to patiently endure the abuse.⁶⁶ Another example of a Christian wife enduring physical abuse from her husband is Monica, the mother of Augustine. In his *Confessions*, Augustine describes (rather acceptingly) the harsh treatment that his mother experienced at the hands of his unbelieving father (*Conf.* 9.9.19). In fact, the prevalence of this type of abuse is evident in the fact that “*many matrons . . . carried the marks of blows [from their husbands] on*

though she experienced similar treatment from her husband (“he continually treated me badly and insulted me and laid hands on me and deprived me of the necessities of life”), her primary concern was financial restitution. In fact, one wonders whether either case would have been filed if the dowry had been preserved.

⁶³ Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 37 [*Mor.* 143C]; *Cohib. Ira* 12 [*Mor.* 460F]; Petronius, *Satyr.* 74-75. The extent to which a husband’s anger could be taken is well illustrated in P.Oxy. 903. In this papyrus, a wife registers a complaint about her husband. Aside from verbally abusing her, she claims, “He shut up his own slaves and mine with my foster-daughters and his agent and son for seven whole days in the cellars, having insulted his slaves and my slave Zoë and half killed them with blows, and he applied fire to my foster-daughters, having stripped them quite naked, which is contrary to the laws” (trans. Grenfell and Hunt).

⁶⁴ Brent D. Shaw, “The Family in Late Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine,” *P&P* 115 (1987) 3-51 (28).

⁶⁵ Much of the evidence on spousal abuse derives from Christian sources of the Late Antiquity. This phenomenon is explained by Patricia Clark, “Women, Slaves, and the Hierarchies of Domestic Violence: The Family of St. Augustine,” in *Women & Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture* (eds. S. Murnaghan and S. R. Joshel; London/New York: Routledge, 1998) 112-33 (120): “that domestic violence, while not new, is more visible in late antique sources such as Augustine is readily explicable by the fact that many of our late texts are by the church fathers, who were doing something relatively innovative: responding directly to spiritual and social problems among their dependants, questions and issues that did not simply involve, but very often were raised by, women.”

⁶⁶ Cf. *To Gregoria*, where the same type of patience amidst spousal abuse is encouraged.

their dishonored faces” (*Conf.* 9.9.19 [emphasis added]).⁶⁷ Physical violence, therefore, must be taken into consideration as a legitimate threat facing women of first century Anatolia—especially Christian wives in “mixed” marriages.

2. Economic Oppression

A form of conflict that often gets overlooked in the discussion of suffering in 1 Peter is economic oppression. While the economic aspect of the present hostility is not explicitly addressed in the epistle (and to my knowledge, has never been fully addressed in the secondary literature either), for a large percentage of the Anatolian readers, this would have been one of most problematic consequences of their Christian conversion. As we demonstrated in Chapter Four, the economic conditions in which most of the recipients lived were far from secure. Very few would have experienced the luxury of financial stability. So any type of decline in financial yield would have had an extremely negative impact on a member’s overall welfare.

The Anatolian congregations to whom 1 Peter is addressed were undoubtedly composed of numerous traders, “low-yield” artisans (whether small business owners or those employed by others), and various skilled/unskilled workers who had managed to procure a somewhat meager and unstable economic surplus from their labors. It is impossible to predict exactly how each member of this group would have been affected by their conversion, but it is likely that some would have experienced a radical downturn in their financial situations due to the animosity of former friends and alliances. Any form of cooperation that marked their pre-Christian business associations (possibly through a local guild?), may have been replaced with unavoidable competition (cf. the use of *defixiones* against business competitors). Regular business from previously loyal customers could have turned into boycott. For those who did not own their own business, the situation may have even become worse. If employers became agitated by their new religion, it is possible that their workload (and thus pay) could have been decreased or even terminated. All of these possibilities would have forced those involved into an extremely unstable financial situation. No longer would concerns have been to

⁶⁷ Even among Christian congregants, spousal abuse apparently remained a problem. Note the strong rebuke against domestic violence by John Chrysostom (see Joy A. Schroeder, “John Chrysostom’s Critique of Spousal Violence,” *J ECS* 12 [2004] 413-42).

accumulate a profit; instead, hopes would have been set on procuring enough income to maintain daily existence.

For those individuals who began with even less (i.e., those who had no surplus), the situation could have turned from difficult to life-threatening very quickly. If any of the congregants were dependent on outsiders to provide for some, or even all, of their financial needs (e.g., orphans, unattached widows, disabled), their conversion to Christianity could have meant the complete loss of economic assistance. Those individuals who possessed the ability to work but who had few valuable skills to offer may have been placed in a similar situation. Adherence to this new, much-maligned superstition could have resulted in fewer job opportunities, if any were offered at all. Ultimately, for those in the lowest economic bracket, such a change may have been the difference between life and death. Even the slightest decrease in financial yield could have made procuring basic calorific intake unattainable.

3. Social Ostracism

A third means by which the recipients of 1 Peter may have been mistreated by their pagan neighbors was through social ostracism. Although this form of persecution is not explicitly mentioned in the epistle, many commentators have understood this problem as the primary difficulty facing the Anatolian Christians.⁶⁸ A point that is rarely discussed, though, is what this form of hostility actually looked like within the everyday lives of the Petrine audience. Considerable insight on this matter is gained from Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.5. It is here that Eusebius preserves a letter written by the churches of Lugdunum and Vienna to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia (ca. 177 CE). Aside from depicting the various martyrdoms experienced by Christians in the area, the epistle also recounts the difficult social situation: “For with all his might the adversary attacked us, foreshadowing his coming which is shortly to be, and tried everything, practicing his adherents and training them against the servants of God, so that we were not merely excluded from houses and baths and markets, but we were even forbidden to be seen at all in any place whatever” (trans. Lake [LCL]).

⁶⁸ E.g., Marshall, *1 Peter*, 14; Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, 19; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 172; Senior, *1 Peter*, xi; Green, *1 Peter*, 6.

The situation described by the churches of Lugdunum and Vienna was, of course, part of an escalated conflict situation which involved whole communities and which resulted in numerous deaths. As we have already shown, these situations of escalated tension only occurred on sporadic occasions (see Ch. 6). Therefore, we cannot make this a standard picture of the type of conflict threatening the Anatolian Christians on a daily basis. It nevertheless provides further insight into how social ostracism may have occurred. Depending on the number and influence of those provoked by Christianity, it may have been possible to prevent believers from partaking in certain social activities and/or communal facilities.

One of the facilities from which the Christians of Gaul were said to have been barred was the public baths (*βαλανεῖον*), a phenomenon that may have been repeated in Asia Minor.⁶⁹ While not every Anatolian city possessed a bath-house, by the end of the first century CE, these structures were scattered across the urban landscape.⁷⁰ Due to the social hierarchy that existed in the Greco-Roman world, one might expect that the leisure of these facilities was reserved only for the elite members of society. If so, being excluded from the baths would have exerted a very minor impact on the recipients of the letter. Given their lower socio-economic standing (see Ch. 4), the baths would have been inaccessible to most, although not all, of the readers with or without communal hostility. There is some evidence, however, which suggests that public baths were used by both the upper and lower “classes” of people.⁷¹ For this reason, we must be careful not to rule out the possibility of exclusion altogether.

⁶⁹ On the practice of bathing in the Roman world, see Fikret K. Yegül, *Bathing in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan Press, 1999). On bath-house facilities in Roman Anatolia, see Fikret K. Yegül, “The Bath-Gymnasium Complex in Asia Minor during the Imperial Roman Age,” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1975).

⁷⁰ One of the earliest examples of a bath-house in Roman Anatolia was built at Miletus in 43 CE by Cn. Vergilius Capito, an equestrian procurator of Asia and prefect of Egypt (see A. von Gerkan and F. Krischen, *Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899*, Band 1, Heft 9: *Die Thermen und Palaestren* [Berlin: Schoetz, 1928]). As a result of this precedent, bath-houses became extremely popular across Asia Minor. In fact, as Mitchell (*Anatolia* I, 216) notes, “The example he [Capito] set was infectious. Between AD 70 and 150 a profusion of bath buildings sprang up in every city.”

⁷¹ Garrett G. Fagan, “Interpreting the Evidence: Did Slaves Bathe at the Baths?,” in *Roman Baths and Bathing: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Roman Baths held at Bath, England, 30 March-4 April 1992* (eds. J. DeLaine and D. E. Johnston; JRSup 37; Portsmouth, RI.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999) 25-34. Even if the baths were *accessible* to all members of the public, this does not mean that the readers of the epistle would have possessed the financial *means* to partake of the facilities. While the bath-house fee was not exorbitant (Lucian, *Lex*, 2, describes it as two oboli [or approximately

Since bathing occupied an important position in the social life of local communities, being excluded from participation—assuming this were to take place—could have resulted in somewhat negative consequences for the Christian readers. For those who had been accustomed to the daily social interaction with their peers, being excluded from the activities may have caused emotional difficulties. Certainly there would have been a need to fill this social vacuum. Perhaps more important, however, was the detrimental economic effect which their absence could have produced. In that business was often conducted at the baths, those who were barred from the facilities could have missed out on important financial opportunities.

The letter from the churches in Lugdunum and Vienna also reveals that Christians were shut out of the local market (*ἀγορά*). Because the language is very general, it is difficult to conclude whether this involved disallowing believers to operate their businesses in the marketplace or whether this refers to a refusal by local vendors to sell to them. Both alternatives are certainly possible, and either could have been reproduced in the civic communities of Roman Anatolia. What is most important about this form of social ostracism is that it held out serious implications for those being discriminated against. To be marginalized in this way could have spelled doom for one's business, and given that few possessed a sizeable financial surplus (with many fighting a daily battle to procure enough calories to maintain basic human existence), even a slight alteration to one's income could mean the difference between life and death.

4. Spiritual (or Religious) Affliction

There is currently no extant evidence (as far as I am aware) of pagan society turning to *defixiones* to curse Christians simply on the basis of their religious affiliation. But this is not to say that non-Christians never employed this strategy in their conflict against Christians. We must recognize that prior to their conversion, the readers were (probably) born into and raised in an Anatolian culture where conflict was often moderated through “spiritual” means. It is highly probable, therefore, that some members of the Petrine communities had previously been involved in these types of altercations, whether related

one-third of a day's wage]), for a large percentage of the audience who had little to no economic surplus, the baths would have been rarely (if ever) visited.

to business, love, or some other form of competition. Their newly adopted religious views (i.e., their “atheism”) would have done nothing but fuel these old rivalries. As a result, it is possible that even though 1 Peter does not explicitly mention anything related to spiritual (or religious) affliction, some of the readers may have been affected by this form of conflict.

Conclusion

From beginning to end, the epistle of 1 Peter is concerned with responding to the conflict in which the Anatolian readers have presently become involved. Nevertheless, throughout the history of Petrine scholarship the nature of this problem has generated significant disagreement. Within the most recent discussion, however, a general consensus has been reached. Virtually all commentators now tend to agree that this conflict is a kind of unofficial, local hostility which arose sporadically out of the disdain from the general populace and which was expressed primarily through discrimination and verbal abuse. Ultimately, though, this position rests on a number of undemonstrated contentions which have never been examined through comprehensive and detailed socio-historical inquiry.

The present study was intended to take up the question afresh and to thereby rectify the significant missteps through which the topic has been previously approached. Our purpose has been to determine the nature of suffering in 1 Peter by situating the letter against the backdrop of conflict management in first-century CE Asia Minor. To do so, we sought to understand the different means by which conflict was dealt with in Roman Anatolia and how the persecutions of 1 Peter fit into this larger context. Part of this goal was to examine how conflict affected different social groups in the community as a way of determining the various forms of suffering to which specific members may have been prone. Therefore, our aim was twofold: to *differentiate* the readers' troubling experiences by providing a detailed "social profile" of the letter's recipients and to *contextualize* the conflict situation by locating the various causes and numerous forms within the world of first-century CE Asia Minor.

The method by which we set out to achieve this goal consisted of a three-fold structure. After addressing various introductory issues (Chapter One) and after having our perspective on the subject informed by the social sciences (Chapter Two), the first major section of the work examined the location and identity of the Petrine readers. In Chapter Three, we sought to delineate the specific geographical setting in which the recipients of

the epistle were located. Despite the efforts of some who have attempted to situate the audience primarily in a rural context, we discovered that an urban environment provided the most plausible local setting. After narrowing down the type of environment to which the letter was addressed, we began to explore the nature of these urban communities. In the past, interpreters have tended to downplay the extent to which the cities of Roman Anatolia were urbanized and Hellenized during the late-first century CE. Our investigation endeavored to challenge this notion, arguing that even the urban centers of central and eastern Asia Minor—which are often considered “backwoods” territories—were more heavily influenced by Roman rule than most have acknowledged.

In order to demonstrate the kinds of transforming effects that Roman urbanization produced in local communities, we examined the chronological growth of one particular Anatolian city. We noted that while the processes of Hellenization and urbanization were still in their infancy during the late-first century CE, they were nonetheless present and increasing realities in the lives of urban inhabitants. As a result, there would have been a considerable degree of social, political, economic, and religious uniformity within the urban environment of Roman Asia Minor, and it was these shared experiences that caused Christians the most problems. Thus, when reconstructing the nature of suffering in 1 Peter, we must take into consideration the difficulties that would have arisen from the effort to navigate one’s Christian existence within the context of urbanized centers across first-century Anatolia.

The second step toward attaining a more precise and detailed “social profile” of the Petrine audience consisted of a deeper probe into the lives of the readers themselves. In Chapter Four, we attempted to provide a fuller description of the addressees by more clearly delineating both their ethnic identity as well as their socio-economic condition(s). We began by addressing one of the recent challenges to the modern consensus on the readers’ ethnicity. While the vast majority of commentators agree that 1 Peter was addressed to a primarily Gentile-Christian audience, recently some have begun to question this popular opinion, maintaining that the recipients were in fact of Jewish origin. Yet after examining the matter in some detail, we concluded that such a proposal is actually unfounded. Therefore, we noted that in order to gain a proper perspective on

the present conflict, it would be necessary to explore the problems that Gentile conversion would create within Anatolian society.

Turning our attention to the readers' socio-economic status(es), we were confronted by a somewhat more difficult problem. Modern scholarship had reached considerably less agreement on where the readers were to be located on the ancient economic spectrum. Opinions ranged from wealthy "upper-class" elites to poor tenant farmers just trying to stay above the subsistence level. So we began by addressing some of the shortcomings of prior treatments. Ultimately the most pressing concern was not the way commentators have interpreted the text of 1 Peter; instead, the major problem with most previous studies has been the failure to engage in any meaningful way in ancient economics, or more specifically, to situate the letter within in the economic conditions of first-century CE Asia Minor. Our solution was to construct a time- and region-specific model of the economic conditions in the urban communities of Roman Anatolia. After this economic taxonomy had been developed, we set out to interpret 1 Peter in light of these new discoveries. From this process of comparison, we came to conclude that the addressees consisted of a mixed socio-economic background, with some (although only a small percentage) being able to accumulate a moderate or even a substantial surplus of funds, and others (probably the greater majority) being resigned to an unstable and precarious financial situation. This fact, we noted, would hold out important implications for how we understand the dangers and threats facing the Christian readers.

The second major section of our study was given to the contextualization of Christian conflict within Roman Asia Minor. That is, we wanted to determine the various ways in which conflict was managed in a first-century CE Anatolian setting. In Chapter Five, our goal was explore the various strategies used by aggrieved or offended parties in first-century Asia Minor. In survey format, we examined both separate actions and third-party procedures. Concerning the latter, we indicated two hindrances that often impede attempts to precisely diagnose the specific forms of persecution in 1 Peter, *viz.*, the fact that informal measures (and their limitless variations) could be enumerated indefinitely, and that there is a considerable lack of documentation in the primary source record. But despite these obstacles, we noted that it is still possible to construct a much more specific description than most previous commentators have attempted. As such, we surveyed a

few of the more prominent tactics (e.g., physical violence, economic oppression, spiritual affliction).

Next, our attention turned to the management strategies involving third-party decision-making, and the Anatolian legal system was our primary point of focus. We explored the structures that were in place to deal with legal issues as well as the processes by which judicial disputes were brought to resolution. What we discovered was that on the local level judicial authority rested in the hands of civic magistrates. Varying degrees of jurisdiction were granted to local officials as a way of dealing with civil suits and minor criminal violations. In most Anatolian cities, further assistance was supplied to these legal authorities through the policing responsibilities of local law enforcement officials (e.g., the eirenarch and his small group of *διωγμίται*). When more serious legal matters arose, the case was transferred to the court of the provincial governor. It was there that litigants could seek full and final justice from the highest court in the province. Upon reaching the governor's tribunal, one's case was (normally) tried through the process of *cognitio*, wherein the formal procedure of the trial, the rendering of a verdict, and the dispensing of appropriate punishments were all dependent upon the personal discretion of the governor.

The most important conclusion reached in this chapter was the fact that the Anatolian legal system was accusatorial in nature, and thus one's appearance before the local and provincial magistrates—whether or not facilitated through police action—was dependent upon private accusation from local inhabitants. For this reason, we noted that particular attention needed to be focused on the role of this process in both facilitating and impeding the trials of Christians. On the one hand, it is unlikely that the Petrine readers would have been prone to extensive police interference, given the fact that law enforcement services were primarily rendered on a reactionary (rather than preventative) basis. That is, due to the fact that police officials ordinarily sought out known criminals (i.e., those who had been accused of or condemned for a specific crime), Christian arrests and trials would have only been facilitated through prior accusations. On the other hand, it was pointed out that we must not underestimate the possible threat which governing officials posed to the Anatolian congregations. Because the judicial system of Roman Asia Minor was set in motion by the private accusations of local inhabitants, the general

hostility and harassment faced by Christian assemblies could have turned into legal accusations at any moment and with relative ease. Therefore, even without the explicit mention of legal trials in 1 Peter, one would still need to account for this sobering possibility.

In Chapter Six, our focus was narrowed considerably as we moved from conflict in general to Christian conflict in particular. The goal of this chapter was to reconstruct the legal status of Christians in the Roman Empire during the first three centuries CE. Contrary to the opinions of many Petrine commentators, we demonstrated that the detrimental downturn in the legal status of Christians took place during the time of Nero rather than during the second or third centuries CE. Through a detailed chronological analysis of both Christian and secular sources from the first through third centuries, we proposed that following the Neronian persecution the profession of Christianity came to be seen as effectively illegal in that it was treated as a punishable offense if one was so charged before the governor's tribunal. As a way of further validating this claim, we attempted to explain how Christianity could be effectively illegal and still only be exposed to escalated persecution on sporadic occasions. In order to account for this anomaly, we suggested that there were certain factors which would have worked to preserve Christians even amidst the threat of legal prosecution. There were two, in particular, that stood out as important mitigating influences: the nature of Anatolian judicial processes and the nature of the relationship between Christians and society.

The conclusions that were reached in this chapter were especially important as a correction to the way persecution is both understood and described in 1 Peter. The legal situation that was uncovered during the first three centuries forced us to reconsider the terminology employed in the traditional discussion. We noted that traditional categories such as "legal" and "illegal" were insufficient to depict the readers' legal status during this period. Instead, we suggested that a more accurate designation might be "effectively illegal." This chapter was also important in creating a more balanced assessment of conflict in the epistle. It provided us with a proper perspective on the seriousness of the situation, while at the same time prevented us from overzealously exaggerating the present danger. From the evidence gleaned in Chapter Five (*viz.*, the accusatorial nature of the Anatolian legal system), we realized that an effectively criminalized legal standing

would have created significant risks for the Anatolian Christians. Therefore, all attempts at reconstructing the conflict situation in 1 Peter—presuming that the epistle was composed after the Neronian persecution—must account for the ever-present and always looming danger of legal trials which could arise simply for adherence to the Christian faith. On the other hand, we also noted that 1 Peter should not be approached with the notion that all of its recipients were equally prone to or necessarily expectant of Christian martyrdom. Given that certain factors could mitigate against prosecuting Christians in a court of law, the threat of Christian martyrdom (through legal actions), therefore, must be kept in proper perspective. While martyrdom was always and everywhere a threat for Christians in first-century Roman Anatolia, it was not a danger that was often experienced within Christian communities.

The evidence which was uncovered in sections One and Two was vital in our attempt to contextualize and differentiate the conflict in 1 Peter. It provided us with the necessary historical framework within which to reconstruct the disputatious situation. In the third and final section, we took up the question of persecution more directly. Using the historically-informed perspective that was achieved in the preceding chapters, we sought to more clearly diagnose the nature of the readers' present troubles. Chapter Seven was devoted to uncovering the specific cause(s) behind the detractors' present opposition. This consisted of an examination of both the behavioral factors that gave rise to hostility and the legal issues that contributed to the audience's plight.

Standing out as one of the most important impetuses behind the present conflict was the conduct of the Anatolian Christians. In particular, the epistle lists two behavioral causes of the detractors' hostility: social withdrawal and the practice of "good works." Since the letter provides very little information concerning the specific activities from which the audience withdrew, it was necessary to explore some of the most significant social, political, and religious activities within Roman Anatolia. After examining three of the more prominent activities/institutions (*viz.*, voluntary associations; imperial cult; worship of the gods), we concluded that separation required almost complete social withdrawal. For those who chose to abstain from such activities, a number of negative implications—social, political, and economic—would have followed.

Aside from the problems created by social withdrawal, there was also the hostility caused by the “good works” of Christians. In the past, many commentators have overlooked this factor because of their judgment concerning the nature of “good works.” For most, this behavior represents conduct which would have been favorably recognized within the wider Hellenistic society. Against such a notion, we argued that “doing good” in 1 Peter was actually a reference to distinctively Christian behavior, the standard of which being the will of God and not social approval. The readers were thus facing the contempt of their neighbors on the basis of the activities in which they had ceased participation as well as those in which they had now become involved.

Concerning the proposed legal causes of suffering in 1 Peter, we provided a detailed treatment of the situation in light of the legal context of first-century Asia Minor. Contrary to the opinions of many commentators who have argued strenuously against such a reading of 1 Peter, we demonstrated that one of the contributing factors behind the audience’s troubles was the effective illegality of the Christian religion. According to 1 Pet 4.16, Christianity was considered to be a punishable offense at the time of the letter’s composition. So while believers were not actively sought out by the local or provincial authorities, if official accusations were brought against Christians by members of the local populace, they could be convicted and punished simply for the Name alone (*nomen ipsum*). Given this fact, we concluded that neither the “official” nor the “unofficial” persecution theory adequately represents the persecutions depicted in the epistle. The situation was certainly not “official” in that there were no imperial laws driving the hostility, nor were the Roman authorities actively pursuing Christians in an effort to bring them to justice. On the other hand, the escalation of the conflict went somewhat beyond the discrimination and verbal abuse which is (normally) postulated by the “unofficial” position. The seriousness of the threat facing these Anatolian congregations would have been extremely dangerous given the recently-developed, legal situation. A more appropriate perspective would thus be that of the “median” approach described above.

After clearly delineating the specific causes of persecution in 1 Peter, our final task was to explore the various forms which this conflict may have taken. In an effort to avoid treating the persecutions as an undifferentiated unity, Chapter Eight presented an attempt to undertake a more holistic examination of the various ways in which the Anatolian

Christians were, or may have been, suffering. Part of this “holistic” treatment included a more focused perspective on how different social groups within the communities were affected by the present conflict. Consideration was given to informal hostilities (e.g., verbal assault, physical abuse) as well as the formal measures which were taken as tensions escalated (e.g., legal actions).

In a number of places in 1 Peter, explicit or implicit reference is made to a particular type of suffering which the readers were currently facing or to which they may have been prone. Therefore, each of these forms of persecution was discussed according to their discernible presence in the letter. As commentators regularly point out, one of the primary forms of hostility faced by the Anatolian congregations was verbal assault. Because of the nature of this type of abuse, few members of the community would have been exempt from its focus. Another form which this conflict appears to have taken—especially in the cases of slaves and women—was physical violence. While this type of abuse is acknowledged by interpreters, we suggested that it may have played a more prevalent role within the assemblies than many have acknowledged. The final form of conflict which receives explicit/implicit mention in the epistle is legal action. Despite the denials from many commentators, we argued that court proceedings would provide a perfectly natural referent for a number of texts in 1 Peter (e.g., 2.11-17; 3.14b-16; 4.15-16).

Apart from these specific references to persecution, we also noted that a historically-informed reconstruction of the conflict situation must also take into account possible threats that are not explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the epistle. In an effort to provide a more holistic representation of the present difficulties, therefore, we drew from the information gleaned in our examination of conflict in first-century Anatolia as a way of “filling out” the rest of the picture. One of the possible difficulties that we posited was the trouble created by “mixed” marriages. A wife who went against the authority of her husband by converting to Christianity without his consent would have been prone to a number of threatening situations. These women faced the possibility of divorce, physical abuse, forced compliance to the religious desires of her husband, and even legal action wherein she could be charged on the basis of her Christian confession. Economic oppression was another means by which members of the local populace could strike out

against believers. Whether this involved boycott, employment termination, or simply the lack of cooperation between business associates, even the slightest alteration in the financial yield of many Christians could have resulted in economic peril and possibly even death. Another form of hostility which these Anatolian congregations may have faced was social ostracism from the community at large. Within each of their local communities, it may have been possible to prevent believers from partaking in certain social activities and/or communal facilities. As a result, many personal contacts may have been prevented, and numerous financial opportunities may have been lost. A final means by which hostility might have been demonstrated was through spiritual affliction. Given the prominence of *defixiones* (or “curse tablets”) in antiquity, it is also possible that some Christians were confronted by the religious curses of their neighbors.

Overall, there are a number of important contributions which this work makes to both Petrine studies and the wider field of NT research. First, this study informs our perspective on various issues unrelated to the topic of persecution. One such area is the geographical setting of the letter’s recipients. On this matter, our investigation brings clarity to a variety of misunderstood background issues (e.g., urban rather than rural setting; the nature of the urban environment in Roman Anatolia). Another area where we have sought to make an original contribution is the socio-economic status(es) of the letter’s recipients. By constructing a completely renovated economic taxonomy of urban centers in first-century CE Asia Minor, we have been able to provide scholarship with a much more precise and detailed “social profile” of the Anatolian readers.

A second contribution that this work makes to the study of 1 Peter—which is intended to be its primary contribution—is the clarity it brings to our understanding of the conflict situation described in the epistle. One way this greater clarity is reached is through the correction of numerous misunderstood points related to Christian persecution. This includes disentangling notions of “official” versus “unofficial” persecution, clarifying the role of local and provincial authorities in the judicial process, and explicating the legal status of Christians during the first three centuries CE. Beyond the task of correction, however, we have also contributed the first (comprehensive) contextualized and differentiated treatment of the specific causes of persecution along with the variegated forms which hostility could have taken. In doing so, we have

confirmed the recent trend of those who have sought to make scholarship more cognizant of the serious dangers that threatened the Anatolian congregations (e.g., judicial proceedings before local and provincial officials).

Finally, the present work also makes an important contribution to the study of early Christian persecution. In particular, it reveals the importance of 1 Peter as a piece of source material in the larger discussion. In our examination of the legality of Christianity during the first three centuries, we noted that while we possess evidence which links the Neronian persecution to the later, acknowledged criminalization which is most clearly evident in the second century CE, what is lacking in our source material is late-first-century CE evidence that could provide an *explicit* statement concerning the legal basis upon which Christians were being persecuted. As we have demonstrated, 1 Peter is the only source that fits this description, explicitly referring to the (effectively) criminalized legal status of Christians between the establishment of the precedent (64 CE) and its first acknowledged evidence in the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (ca. 111-112 CE). Therefore, our treatment draws much-needed attention to the fact that this letter serves as the “smoking gun” or the “missing link,” which confirms the commencement of the precarious legal status of Christians following the persecution of Nero.

APPENDIX 1: Suffering and the Unity of 1 Peter

Until the modern era, the unity and genre of 1 Peter were two issues that had faced little scrutiny. Like all letters, it was considered to be a unified composition sent by its designated author to the Christian communities addressed in the prescript. But as the modern critical period dawned and interpreters began to take a closer look into the make-up of the epistle, questions arose concerning apparent discrepancies between the reference to and description of the readers' suffering. The problem, it seemed, was that one half of the letter (1 Pet 1.3–4.11) placed suffering in the realm of the hypothetical, as if it were only a remote possibility; whereas the other half (4.12–5.11) assumed it to be a reality that was already present in the lives of the Anatolian recipients.

A. Precursors to the Partition Debate

Over the years, this problem has forced interpreters into a number of interesting exegetical maneuvers. One such attempt to bring resolution to the dilemma can be found in the work of Ernst Kühl (1897).¹ In his commentary on 1 Peter, Kühl posited two different types of persecution. On the one hand, those descriptions in the first half of the epistle which seem to place suffering in a more theoretical realm were said to be references to persecution from the Gentiles. Concerning this conflict the author had no substantial information. For this reason, the suffering is portrayed much more vaguely. On the other hand, the suffering in the latter half of the letter was that which stemmed from Jewish opposition. It was these circumstances to which the author had much more insight, and he was thus able to provide more specific detail. In the overall discussion of suffering and the unity of 1 Peter, Kühl's proposal remains fairly insignificant in that it gained little recognition and few followers. It does, however, serve as an important example of how diligently interpreters of the late-19th and early-20th centuries worked to offer a feasible solution to the perceived problem. Moreover, it is against this backdrop that we are able to fully understand the development of later partition theories.

Another issue that shaped the direction of subsequent discussions was the matter of the readers' ethnicity. Over the centuries, commentators have been divided over whether

¹ Kühl, *Die Briefe Petri*, 30-32.

the addressees were formerly Jews or Gentiles (see Ch. 4). It was in response to this question that Adolf von Harnack (1897) proposed an innovative solution that would have a significant bearing on the question of the letter's genre and unity. In an attempt to come to grips with the fact that the prescript (1 Pet 1.1) appears to have been directed toward a Jewish-Christian audience, while the body of the letter (1.3–5.11) suggests a Gentile-Christian readership, Harnack argued that 1 Peter was not originally a letter but a homiletic treatise (*homiletischer Aufsatz*).² To this treatise (or sermon), someone later added an introduction (1.1-2) and conclusion (5.12-14); thus, we have the letter of 1 Peter as it is known today. In terms of approval, Harnack's theory met with mixed reviews.³ But in terms of importance, his proposal cannot be overstated. For not only was he the first in modern scholarship to claim that 1 Peter was anything but a genuine epistle, his work also established the foundation for all subsequent baptismal homily and partition theories.⁴

B. Modern Partition Theories

The publication of Harnack's *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* (1897) set the stage for more inventive and elaborate theories regarding the composition and genre of 1 Peter. Within this variety and individual nuance, there are three interpretive streams into which most commentators can be grouped. The first is that found in the commentary of J. H. A. Hart (1910).⁵ It was here that the partitioning of the letter was taken to a whole new level. Building on the epistle's encyclical nature (i.e., that it was intended to address a variety of situations) and the fact that it contains two doxologies (4.11; 5.11), Hart proposed that 1 Peter was actually *a combination of two*

² Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, Teil 2: *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*. Band 1: *Die Chronologie der Litteratur bis Irenäus nebst einleitenden Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897) 451-65.

³ Some of the early critics include: W. Wrede, "Miscellen 3: Bemerkungen zu Harnacks Hypothese über die Adresse des I. Petrusbriefs," *ZNW* 1 (1900) 75-85; Carl Clemen, "Die Einheitlichkeit des I. Petrusbriefes verteidigt," *TSK* 78 (1905) 619-28. Examples of those who followed Harnack's interpretation include: W. Soltau, "Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Petrusbriefes," *TSK* 78 (1905) 302-15; idem, "Nochmals die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Petrusbriefes," *TSK* 79 (1906) 456-60; Gunkel, "Der erste Brief des Petrus," 248; Bornemann, "Der erste Petrusbrief,"; Jean Danielou, *Sacramentum futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (ETH 19; Paris: Beauchesne, 1950) 141.

⁴ For a discussion of various compositional theories, see Ralph P. Martin, "The Composition of 1 Peter in Recent Study," in *Vox Evangelica: Biblical and Historical Essays by Members of the Faculty of the London Bible College* (ed. R. P. Martin; London: Epworth, 1962) 29-42.

⁵ Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter" 3-4, 29-30.

letters written by the same author to separate audiences facing different circumstances. The first letter (1.3–4.11) was for those who were not currently undergoing persecution. The second (4.12–5.11) was meant for those to whom suffering was already a present reality.

This view gained very little acceptance, and even when other interpreters reached similar conclusions, Hart was rarely given due recognition as the position's originator.⁶ A much more widely publicized version of this same proposal can be found in a later article by C. F. D. Moule (1956-57).⁷ Like Hart (although showing no awareness of his work), Moule argued that 1 Peter consisted of two letters which were intended for Christians in varying circumstances. He postulated that, "since some of the communities were actually suffering persecution, while for others it was no more than a possibility, the writer sent two forms of epistle, one for those not yet under actual duress (i. 1–iv. 11) and (v. 12-14), and the other—terser and swifter—for those who were in the refining fire (i. 1–ii. 10, iv. 12–v. 14)." In each case, "[t]he messengers were bidden [to] read the appropriate part to each community according to the situation."⁸ What is unique about this view is that 1 Pet 1.3–2.10 is said to be common to both letters.⁹ Thus, the doxology at 4.12 does not technically serve to divide the letter as it does in all other partition theories.

A significant turning point in the discussion surrounding the unity and genre of 1 Peter came in 1911 with the publication of E. Richard Perdelwitz's *Die Mysterienreligion und das Problem des I. Petrusbriefes*.¹⁰ As the title suggests, the primary purpose of the monograph was to trace the connection between 1 Peter and ancient mystery religions. But while Perdelwitz's notion of the letter's ideological dependency gained little acceptance,¹¹ a more subsidiary portion of his study was picked up and disseminated throughout Petrine scholarship. Being favorably disposed towards Harnack's suggestion that 1 Peter was originally a sermon, and being dissatisfied with the way most interpreters dealt with the two different points of view with regard to suffering, Perdelwitz submitted

⁶ Those who adopted this same view include: Wand, *General Epistles of St. Peter*, 1-3; Moule, "Purpose of I Peter."

⁷ Moule, "Purpose of I Peter."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰ E. Richard Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion und das Problem des I. Petrusbriefes. Ein literarischer und religionsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (RVV 11/3; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1911).

¹¹ For a critique, see Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 305-11.

a new theory on the unity and genre of the epistle. He proposed that 1 Peter actually consists of a *baptismal homily* (1.3–4.11), which was originally addressed to recent converts from the mystery cults, and a *letter* (1.1-2; 4.12–5.14) written to the same communities at a later time when they had begun to experience persecution.¹² In contrast to Hart’s position, then, Perdelwitz proposed a combination of *multiple documents (a baptismal homily and a letter) which were intended for the same audience but written at different times*.

Since its introduction, this view has managed to procure a very wide and significant following.¹³ One of the reasons for its success lies in the fact that it was able to (seemingly) bring resolution to both of the nagging questions that had emerged in Petrine studies: the unity and genre of the epistle. The other reason why it became so popular was the fact that Perdelwitz was able to marshal a number of key arguments that seemed to demand the letter’s division. First, he noted that while suffering is described in the first half of the epistle as merely hypothetical (cf. 1.6; 3.14, 17), the second half seems to assume its reality (4.12, 19). The next indicator of disunity was found in the experience of joy. In 1 Pet 1.6, 8, joy is thought to be something currently possessed by the readers; whereas in 4.12-14 it is that which will be gained in the future. Thirdly, as others before him had noted, the doxology in 4.11 appears a bit intrusive in that it brings the author’s thought to a close only to have it revived again—albeit in a different direction—in 4.12. His final point concerned the length of 1 Peter. For Perdelwitz, the use of *ὀλίγος* (“brief/briefly”) to describe an epistle consisting of approximately 1,675 words was more than an exaggeration. Such a reference would make much more sense if it were only meant to include the second part of the letter (4.12–5.14). When these points were

¹² Perdelwitz, *Mysterienreligion*, 12-16.

¹³ E.g., Hans Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe* (2nd ed.; HNT 15; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1930) 82; Hauck, *Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes*, 36; Cranfield, *I & II Peter*, 11-13; Schneider, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 41; George R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1962) 251-58; Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, 8; Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 25-28; Merrill C. Tenney, “Some Possible Parallels between 1 Peter and John,” in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (eds. R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 370-77 (371), although he does not hold to a baptismal-homily view, he suggests that 4.12-5.14 was a postscript appended to the end of the letter (1.1–4.11) after the author received news that the persecutions had begun; Friedrich Schröger, “Die Verfassung der Germeinde des ersten Petrusbriefes,” in *Kirche im Werden: Studien zum Thema Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament* (ed. J. Hainz; München: Schönningh, 1976) 239-52 (240); Willi Marxsen, “Der Mitälteste und Zeuge der Leiden Christi: Eine martyrologische Begründung des “Romprimats” im 1. Petrus-Brief?,” in *Theologia crucis—Signum crucis: Festschrift für Erich Dinkler zum 70. Geburtstag* (eds. C. Andresen and G. Klein; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1979) 377-93 (382-83).

combined with what Perdelwitz perceived to be a strong focus on baptism (e.g., 1.3, 23; 2.2; 3.21) and the recipients' recent entrance into the faith (e.g., 1.6, 8, 12; 2.2, 10, 25; 3.21) in the first half of the letter, there was no other option but to conclude that 1 Peter consisted of two documents: a baptismal homily and a letter concerning persecution.

The English-speaking world was first introduced to Perdelwitz's theory in the 1928 Hewett Lectures of B. H. Streeter.¹⁴ Although he possessed only a second-hand knowledge of the proposal,¹⁵ Streeter was intrigued by the idea and therefore put it into service in connection with his own historical reconstruction. He contended that the two writings—one a *sermon* written to recent converts (1.3–4.11), the other a *letter* written to those undergoing unexpected persecution (4.12–5.11)—were composed sometime around the year 90 CE by Aristion of Smyrna. Due to the fact that both were copied onto the same papyrus roll, they eventually came to be viewed as a single composition. Years later, after the name of the original author had been lost, an introduction (1.1-2) and conclusion (5.12-14) were added (possibly at Sinope), and the letter was sent out to the designated areas under the pseudonym Peter sometime during the governorship of Pliny.¹⁶

These types of approaches seemed to carry the day during the early part of the 20th century. In fact, the composite theory of Perdelwitz continued to claim adherents even up until the late 1970s. In 1946, however, Petrine scholarship witnessed a significant attempt to stem the tide and bring unity back to the epistle. It was in this year that Edward Gordon Selwyn, in his magisterial commentary on 1 Peter,¹⁷ offered a calculated defense of the letter's compositional unity and epistolary genre. According to Selwyn, 1 Peter was “an encyclical letter addressed to Christians dwelling in five provinces of Asia Minor,” whose purpose was “to exhort and encourage them in a time of trial.”¹⁸ To demonstrate this contention, a significant portion of his introduction was devoted to

¹⁴ These were published one year later as Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry* (London: Macmillan, 1929).

¹⁵ Streeter originally learned of the proposal through the commentary of Hermann Gunkel (see Streeter, *Primitive Church*, 123 n. 1).

¹⁶ Streeter, *The Primitive Church*, 122-33.

¹⁷ Only one year later, another ground-breaking study appeared on the scene: the commentary of Francis W. Beare (1947). Strangely enough, the two works had reached diametrically opposed conclusions regarding the epistle, see Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) 343-44.

¹⁸ Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 1.

reconciling the letter's variegated portrayal of suffering. After discussing each of the principal texts, Selwyn concluded that 1 Peter does in fact present a unified description of the situation. The apparent discrepancies are accounted for by the sporadic nature of the readers' trials. In other words, according to Selwyn, "once we realize that actual persecution was spasmodic rather than general, and fortuitous rather than inevitable, we may decide that St. Peter's language is natural enough."¹⁹ But while these arguments served as an important foundation upon which stronger cases were later built (e.g., Lohse, Nauck), most remained unconvinced. Nevertheless, the importance of Selwyn's work lies not in its incontrovertible argumentation, but in the precedent it set by breaking with popular convention and shining fresh light onto more traditional theories.

On its own, Selwyn's position did little to curb the enthusiasm of partition theorists. In fact, after the publication of his commentary, these theories only seemed to multiply. One example of this propensity towards division was Herbert Preisker's addition to the commentary of Hans Windisch. Unlike most who had divided 1 Peter into two separate documents, Preisker proposed a new twist both to the letter's genre as well as its structure. Moving beyond the theories of Harnack and Perdelwitz, he suggested that 1 Peter was actually a *baptismal liturgy* from the church at Rome.²⁰ As such, Preisker considered it to be "das älteste Dokument eines urchristlichen Gottesdienstes."²¹ He divided the epistle into two sections. The first half was said to be directed specifically to the congregation's baptismal candidates (1.3–4.11), while the second was addressed to the whole community (4.12–5.11).²² In other words, 1 Peter was thought to represent a *unified composition whose separate parts were intended for different groups within the same congregation*. But not being content with a simple two-part structure, Preisker constructed an elaborate scheme whereby each part of the letter represented a different portion of this service.²³ In this way, the various descriptions of suffering were ascribed

¹⁹ Ibid., 54.

²⁰ Herbert Priesker, "Anhang zum ersten Petrusbrief," in Hans Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe* (3rd ed.; HNT 15; Tübingen: Mohr, 1951) 152-62 (156-62).

²¹ Ibid., 157.

²² Years earlier a similar idea was proposed but then rejected by Streeter. He maintained that the abrupt break at 1 Pet 4.12, "might be explained by supposing that the preacher now turns from the group of the newly baptized to address the larger congregation present—including presbyters who have come in from the adjacent villages" (*Primitive Church*, 124).

²³ For the specific divisions, see Priesker, "Anhang zum ersten Petrusbrief," 157-60.

to the different audiences to whom they are addressed. While those who had yet to undergo baptism were free from the threat of persecution (cf. 1.6), once they partook of the initiatory Christian rite (which is said to have taken place between 1.21 and 22), they, along with the rest of the community, found themselves in the midst of the fiery trial (cf. 4.12-19). This view has subsequently been adopted (and adapted) by numerous interpreters.²⁴

C. Towards the Modern Consensus

Shortly after Preisker had set forth his baptismal liturgy theory, two important articles appeared in consecutive volumes of the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*. In 1954, in the wake of conflicting approaches to the interpretation of 1 Peter (e.g., Selwyn, Beare, Preisker), Eduard Lohse set out to discover a proper method whereby the letter could be better understood.²⁵ His solution was a more cautious version of the form-critical (*formgeschichtliche*) approach undertaken by Selwyn.²⁶ Against Preisker, he suggested that, “die Stilunterschiede . . . erklären sich nicht durch die Abfolge eines Gottesdienstes, in dem mehrere Prediger zu Worte kommen, sondern müssen aus der verschiedenen Herkunft des Traditionsgutes hergeleitet werden.”²⁷ Furthermore, pointing out the fact that (presumed) allusions to baptism are generally limited to the first half of the epistle, Lohse called into question the topic’s importance in the overall scheme of 1 Peter. He argued, instead, that 1 Peter was an occasional letter whose purpose was to encourage those who were currently undergoing a time of

²⁴ Frank L. Cross, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (2nd ed.; London: Mowbray, 1957); Marie-Émile Boismard, “Une liturgie baptismale dans la Prima Petri, I: Son influence sur Tit, 1 Jo. et Col,” *RB* 63 (1956) 182-208; idem, “Une liturgie baptismale dans la Prima Petri, II: Son influence sur l’épître de Jacques,” *RB* 64 (1957) 161-83; J. Coutts, “Ephesians I. 3-14 and I Peter I. 3-12,” *NTS* 3 (1956-57) 115-27; Irénée Fransen, “Une homélie chrétienne: La première Épître de Pierre,” *BVC* 31 (1960) 28-38; Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, 74-75; Oscar S. Brooks, “1 Peter 3:21—The Clue to the Literary Structure of the Epistle,” *NovT* 16 (1974) 290-305.

²⁵ Eduard Lohse, “Paränese und Kerygma im 1. Petrusbrief,” *ZNW* 45 (1954) 68-89; repr. as “Parenesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on First Peter* (ed. C. Talbert; trans. J. Steely; NABPRSSS 9; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986) 37-59.

²⁶ Bechtler (*Following in His Steps*, 4) refers to Lohse’s article as “a turning point in Petrine studies.” But this is probably attributing a greater influence to the article than it actually wielded. It was certainly important because of the correctives it made both to partition theories and to traditional approaches (e.g., Selwyn). Yet, despite this fact, baptismal and partition theories continued strong well after the article’s publication. The real “turn-around” was not the result of one particular work but of the concerted effort from a number of fronts—articles, monographs, and commentaries (see below).

²⁷ Lohse, “Paränese und Kerygma,” 72.

suffering. In carrying out this task of encouragement, the author employed the paraenetic material which had been handed down to him for the explication of a common theme—“der Bewährung des Christen im Leiden.”²⁸

With Lohse tackling the problem from a *formgeschichtliche* perspective, Wolfgang Nauck (1955) set out to examine the epistle’s description of suffering using a *traditionsgeschichtliche* approach.²⁹ His primary concern was the idea of “joy in suffering” and its place in the traditions of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. After a comparison of texts in *2 Baruch* (Syriac Apocalypse), James, Matthew, Luke, and 1 Peter, and on the basis of parallels found in Judith and Wisdom of Solomon, Nauck concluded that the “joy in suffering” tradition was very old. He suggested that it likely originated during the period of the Maccabean revolt.³⁰ Once this groundwork had been laid, he then turned to the description of suffering in 1 Peter. The problem with the composite theory of Perdelwitz, according to Nauck, was that it did not take into account the traditional theme of “joy in suffering,” which pervades both halves of the epistle (1.6; 4.13). This is a point that cannot be overlooked, because “[d]ie Vorstellungen dieser Tradition . . . lassen die Unterscheidung eines hypothetisch vorgestellten und eines konkret gemeinten Leidens nicht zu.” The reason for this is that “in diesen traditionellen Vorstellungen die Bereiche des Glaubens und des Erfahrbaren ineinander übergehen.”³¹ So just as one cannot differentiate between hypothetical and concrete faith/experience, it is equally unreasonable, according to Nauck, to draw these same distinctions between the descriptions of suffering in 1 Peter.

At this point in the discussion, while great strides had been made in discrediting the baptismal and partition theories, the primary focus was still on the forms and traditions underlying the epistle. What Petrine scholarship lacked was an adequate explanation of how these pieces fit together into a coherent whole. This lacuna was filled in 1965 with the publication of William J. Dalton’s monumental work, *Christ’s Proclamation to the*

²⁸ Ibid., 73.

²⁹ Wolfgang Nauck, “Freude im Leiden: Zum Problem einer urchristlichen Verfolgungstradition,” *ZNW* 46 (1955) 68-80.

³⁰ Ibid., 79.

³¹ Ibid., 80.

Spirits.³² Not only did Dalton's study set the standard for the interpretation of 1 Pet 3.18–4.6, it also firmly established the epistle as a literary unity. Following a critique of popular theories on the letter's genre and composition, he attempted to set forth "The Plan of 1 Peter."³³ In doing so, he drew particularly on Albert Vanhoye's work in the epistle to the Hebrews.³⁴ Using the six structural indicators developed by Vanhoye and another borrowed from Stanislas Lyonnet,³⁵ Dalton provided a compositional analysis of 1 Peter that consisted of three major sections (apart from the traditional letter opening and closing): the dignity of the Christian vocation and its responsibilities (1.3–2.10); obligations of the Christian life (2.11–3.12); and the Christian and persecution (3.13–5.11).³⁶ Over the years, this method and its resultant structural division have met with mixed reviews. Nevertheless, the case that was set forth in favor of the letter's unity has been widely received within modern scholarship. It stands out as one of the key factors in bringing unity back to 1 Peter.

In the late-1960s and early-1970s, the fresh stimulus offered to the traditional position by Dalton's monograph was further reinforced by the publication of four major commentaries.³⁷ Although they differed in both language and perspective, all were in agreement at two important points: 1 Peter was a genuine letter and a unified composition. For the first time, it appeared that baptismal and partition theories were on their way out.³⁸ One scholar whose work helped to turn this growing trend into an established consensus was David Hill (1976).³⁹ In his article, Hill drew attention to the inevitable link between suffering and baptism which must be proposed if the latter was to serve as a major theme in the epistle. He argued that, "if 1 Peter is so directly concerned with baptism, we should expect to be able to connect the baptismal theme and the theme

³² William J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6* (2nd ed.; AnBib 23; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989 [1965]).

³³ *Ibid.*, 93-108.

³⁴ Albert Vanhoye, "De structura litteraria Epistolae ad Hebraeos," *VD* 40 (1962) 73-80; *idem*, *La Structure littéraire de l'Épître aux Hébreux* (2nd ed.; StudNeot 1; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976).

³⁵ Stanislas Lyonnet, "Note sur le plan de l'épître aux Romains," *RSR* 39-40 (1951-52) 301-16.

³⁶ The structural indicators employed by Dalton include: (1) prior announcement of the theme; (2) inclusion; (3) link-words; (4) repetition of key words; (5) change from statement to exhortation or vice versa; (6) symmetrical division of the matter; and (7) Scriptural citation to conclude an argument or section.

³⁷ Schelkle, *Der Petrusbriefe*, 4-5; Spicq, *Épîtres de Pierre*, 17-26; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, 5-11, 15-26; Best, *1 Peter*, 20-28, 36-42.

³⁸ In 1976, Elliott ("Rehabilitation," 249) could refer to the "growing conviction" within scholarship that 1 Peter was in fact a unified composition.

³⁹ David Hill, "On Suffering and Baptism in 1 Peter," *NovT* 18 (1976) 181-89.

of suffering in such a way as to give unity and cogency to the author's message of encouragement."⁴⁰ What this study demonstrated was that in 1 Peter a link exists between suffering and baptism; however, not on the level many have assumed. According to Hill, "a Christian's suffering and his [or her] baptism are linked because, in accepting baptism, he [or she] is affirming willingness to share in the known experience of baptised persons who were commonly, if not constantly, treated with suspicion and hostility." Thus, the theme of baptism is "quite subsidiary, almost incidental, to the main purpose and meaning of I Peter."⁴¹ With this statement, Hill drove the final nail in the coffin of the baptismal approach.

By the late-1970s, baptismal and partition theories had fallen out of favor, and the traditional unity position only continued to gain further solidity. With the publication of two critically-important commentaries only one year apart, the discussion was well on its way toward resolution. Both Leonhard Goppelt and Norbert Brox adopted the position that in its final form 1 Peter was a genuine and unified piece of correspondence.⁴² And while their influence might have been enough to sway even the toughest of critics, this was not the end of the discussion. The following decade saw a number of significant contributions to more specific issues in the debate.⁴³ In fact, by the mid-1990s, one commentator could announce that "[a]s a result of continuing work on the content and style of 1 Peter, the emerging scholarly consensus is that far from being a composition work, the letter must rather be seen as a literary unity."⁴⁴ But what may have only been "emerging" in the 1990s has blossomed into a full-blown consensus in more recent times.⁴⁵ As it stands, modern interpreters are in agreement that 1 Peter is a genuine letter, composed in a coherent and unified form.⁴⁶ Therefore, Petrine scholarship has come to

⁴⁰ Ibid., 182.

⁴¹ Ibid., 185.

⁴² Leonhard Goppelt, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (KEK 12/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*.

⁴³ E.g., Kazuhito Shimada, "Is 1 Peter a Composite Writing?—A Stylistic Approach to the Two Document Hypothesis," *AJBI* 11 (1985) 95-114; Reichert, *Praeparatio ad martyrium*, 27-72; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 19-84; Troy W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* (SBLDS 131; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

⁴⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 61.

⁴⁵ See Dubis, "Research on 1 Peter," 206.

⁴⁶ More recent proponents include: Frankemölle, *1 Petrusbrief*, 17-20; Grudem, *1 Peter*, 40-41, 176-78; Michaels, *1 Peter*, xxxiv-xl; Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 11-14; Knoch, *Der Erste und Zweite Petrusbrief*, 14-18; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 19-20; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 5-8; Bénétreau, *La Première Épître de*

conclude that there is no need to postulate two different sets of circumstances, as if suffering in one half of the epistle is merely hypothetical, while in the other it is a reality. The suffering described in the letter must be viewed as a whole.

Pierre, 14-22; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 58-62; Horrell, *Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 11-12; Boring, *1 Peter*, 37-38; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 7-12; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter*, 13-16; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter*, 41-45; Senior, *1 Peter*, 10-11; Bony, *La Première épître de Pierre*, 15-20; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 53-55; Prigent, *La première épître de Pierre*, 7-10; Witherington, *1-2 Peter*, 45-51; Feldmeier, *First Epistle of Peter*, 28-32; *et al.*

APPENDIX 2: Roman Annexation of Asia Minor

The process of Roman annexation in Anatolia began with the province of Asia. In 133 BCE, Attalus III, the king of Pergamum, died and bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans.¹ Soon thereafter Aristonicus, the illegitimate son of Eumenes II, gathered a group of followers and led a rebellion against Rome in an effort to seize the throne for himself.² After a few initial successes (e.g., the defeat of the Roman consul Publius Licinius Crassus Mucianus), Aristonicus' revolt was finally quelled in 130 BCE, when he was captured by Roman forces. But in spite of his victory, the triumphant Roman commander, Marcus Perperna, fell ill in Pergamum and died before he was able to return home with his spoils (Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.38; Eutropius, *Brev.* 4.20.2). Fortunately for the Romans, his replacement, Manius Aquilius, arrived on the scene just in time to put down the last of the insurgents. By 129 BCE the rebellion was crushed, and the kingdom of Attalus had been officially annexed and turned into a Roman province.³ The province of Asia thus marked the first step in the process of Roman expansion in Asia Minor.⁴

¹ OGIS no. 338; Livy, *Per.* 58; Sallust, *Hist.* 4.69; Strabo, *Geogr.* 13.4.2; Appian, *Mith.* 62; *Bell. civ.* 5.4; Plutarch, *Tib. Grac.* 14; Eutropius, *Brev.* 4.18. For the events leading up to this bequest, see Magie, *Roman Rule*, 3-33.

² Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.38; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 34.2.26; Livy, *Per.* 59; Eutropius, *Brev.* 4.20.1. The revolt can be dated in the late summer of 133 BCE, around the time of the death of Tiberius Gracchus (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 1.18). This date receives confirmation from the fact that prior to Aristonicus' capture (130 BCE [SEG 36 (1986) no. 555]) Sulla describes four years of warfare (Appian, *Mith.* 62).

³ There is some disagreement over the exact date of the province's founding. Some propose that it was founded upon Attalus' death and subsequent bequest (e.g., Bernhardt Schleussner, "Die Gesandtschaftsreise des P. Scipio Nasica im Jahre 133/132 v. Chr. und die Provinzialisierung des Königreichs Pergamon," *Chiron* 6 [1976] 97-112 [108]; Anthony D. Macro, "The Cities of Asia Minor under the Roman Imperium," in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 658-97 [663]). However, this seems to be ruled out by the fact that Asia was not a province at the time of Aristonicus' rebellion (Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.38). Upon the death of Attalus, Rome had merely discussed accepting the inheritance (Livy, *Per.* 58; Plutarch, *Tib. Grac.* 14). Others claim that it took much more time and so place the founding at 126 BCE (e.g., Victor Chapot, *La province romaine proconsulaire d'Asie depuis ses origines jusqu'à la fin du haut-empire* [Paris: É. Bouillon, 1904] 13). Yet this seems a little too late given the evidence that Manius Aquilius, the Roman consul of 129 BCE, provided Asia with the first *lex provinciae* after Marcus Perpernas, who brought the war to an end, died of disease (*CIL* I².2 nos. 646-651; Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.38). Given that the rebellion of Aristonicus appears to have been put down by 130 BCE (SEG 36 [1986] no. 555), it seems best to place the date of its founding at ca. 129 BCE (with Kent J. Rigsby, "The Era of the Province of Asia," *Phoenix* 33 [1979] 39-47 [39-40]; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168 BC to AD 1* [London: Duckworth, 1962] 9).

⁴ The annexation of the kingdom of Attalus held out enormous benefits for the people of Rome. Not only was there an influx of Italian citizens into the new province (see Jean-Louis Ferrary, "La création de la province d'Asie et la présence italienne en Asie Mineure," in *Les Italiens dans le monde Grec: IIe siècle av. J.-C. – Ier siècle ap. J.-C. Circulation, activités, intégration: Actes de la Table ronde, École Normale*

In 74 BCE, Nicomedes IV, king of Bithynia, died without an heir (Appian, *Mith.* 71) and so bequeathed his kingdom to Rome.⁵ Following these events, the Senate voted to annex the territory and turn it into a Roman province.⁶ The task of organizing the new Bithynian territory was assigned to Marcus Juncus, the governor of Asia (Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.* 2.42.3), along with his quaestor, Q. Pompeius Bithynicus.⁷ The extent of Nicomedes' kingdom is assumed to be that which had been established under Prusias II.⁸ To the North, the kingdom was bounded by the Euxine and to the West, by the Sea of Marmara, from the Bosphorus to the Rhyndacus River. The eastern border was somewhat west of Heracleia Pontica, while the southern boundary appears to have been the Sangarius River.⁹

This event served to further ignite the conflict between the two great powers in Asia Minor: Rome and Pontus. With the Senate rejecting the claims of an alleged heir to the throne of Nicomedes, Mithridates used this as an opportunity to invade Bithynia in the guise of setting up the rightful claimant (cf. the alleged letter of Mithridates in Sallust, *Hist.* 4.69). The Romans were aware of the seriousness of the situation and so assigned Lucius Licinius Lucullus and Marcus Aurelius Cotta, the consuls of 74 BCE, to stand against the threat of Mithridates in Bithynia (Plutarch, *Luc.* 6.1-7.6). The efforts of Cotta were met with little success. He was defeated both on land and on sea and was finally

Supérieure, Paris, 14-16 Mai 1998 [eds. C. Müller and C. Hasenhohr; BCHSup 41; Paris: De Boccard, 2002] 133-46), many *publicani* were drawn in as well. For a history of the province prior to the time of Augustus, see Sviatoslav Dmitriev, "The History and Geography of the Province of Asia during Its First Hundred Years and the Provincialization of Asia Minor," *Athenaeum* 93 (2005) 71-133.

⁵ Livy, *Per.* 93; Appian, *Mith.* 7; *Bell. civ.* 1.111; Eutropius, *Brev.* 6.6; cf. Cicero, *Agr.* 2.40.

⁶ On the history of Pontus and Bithynia, see Mary F. Lewis, "A History of Bithynia under Roman Rule, 74 B.C. - 14 A.D.," (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1973), and Christian Marek, *Pontus et Bithynia: Die römischen Provinzen im Norden Kleinasien* (Mainz: Zabern, 2003).

⁷ In the winter of 75/74 BCE, Julius Caesar set out on a voyage to Rhodes but was captured by pirates (Suetonius, *Jul.* 4; cf. Plutarch, *Caes.* 1.4, who incorrectly dates the event to an earlier year). After paying a ransom for his release, he was eventually able to apprehend his captors and transport them to Pergamum for punishment. It was then that his path crossed with that of Juncus, who failed to punish the pirates (Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.* 2.41.3-4; cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 5.13.6). From this, we can date Juncus' governorship to 75/74 BCE. It is unclear, however, whether his office was prorogued or whether the task of organizing the province was carried out prior to the arrival of his successor in 74 BCE. On Q. Pompeius Bithynicus, see T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (PM 15; New York: American Philological Association, 1951-52) 2:100.

⁸ For the geographical boundaries of Bithynia, see Magie, *Roman Rule*, 302-20; Lewis, "History of Bithynia," 38-44.

⁹ Pliny, *Nat.* 5.43; Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.1, 7; 12.4.1-5. Strabo's account of Bithynian and Pontic geography is not without discrepancies, see J. G. C. Anderson, "Some Questions Bearing on the Date and Composition of Strabo's *Geography*," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Mitchell Ramsay* (eds. W. H. Buckler and W. M. Calder; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1923) 1-13 (esp. 5-10).

pinned in at Chalcedon (Eutropius, *Brev.* 6.6; Memnon, *FGrH* III B no. 434 F 39). With Cotta being rendered inoperative, Mithridates moved south to lay siege to Cyzicus. It was here, however, that he was met by Lucullus, who, with shrewd strategic maneuvering, was able to cut off the king's food supplies. After being worn down by famine during the winter of 74/73 BCE, Mithridates was finally forced to retreat (Appian, *Mith.* 72, 76).

In phase two of the war, the Romans went on the offensive. While Cotta recaptured Heracleia, Lucullus drove Mithridates out of Pontus and into the territory of his son-in-law Tigranes in Armenia (Memnon, *FGrH* III B no. 434 F 43, 47-49; Appian, *Mith.* 79-82). After an interval of time within which all resistance in the kingdom of Pontus was put down, the war was taken up again in 69 BCE when Lucullus moved into Armenia. Although Lucullus experienced great success on the battlefield,¹⁰ envious political scheming in Rome along with key losses by his legates in Pontus would soon cause his downfall. Lucullus was progressively stripped of his provincial authority by the Senate, and to add injury to insult, in the midst of his defeat of Tigranes in Armenia, he learned that Mithridates had secretly set out to capture Pontus. Lucullus returned only to find that Pontus was firmly in the hands of the king and that his governorship of Bithynia had been revoked and reassigned to Manius Acilius Glabrio, consul of 67 BCE (Dio Cassius, 36.14.4; Cicero, *Leg. man.* 26). In the stead of Lucullus, Glabrio did little to win back the territory of Pontus (Dio Cassius, 36.17.1-2). It was not until Pompey's commission under the *lex Manilia* (66 BCE) that the threat of Mithridates was finally put down and the territory of Pontus came under Roman control.¹¹

Despite his military triumphs, the legacy of Pompey is not simply defined by his conquests as a legendary general. His greatness can be equally felt in his reorganization of the provinces. After removing all Roman enemies from the land, Pompey naturally faced the task of reconstruction (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 38.2; Dio Cassius, 37.7a; Appian, *Mith.* 114-115). He distributed parts of Mithridates' former kingdom to local rulers who had fought on his side.¹² The land that remained was divided up into eleven πόλεις and

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Luc.* 24-29; Appian, *Mith.* 84-86; Memnon, *FGrH* III B no. 434 F 56-57; Livy, *Per.* 98; Dio Cassius, 36.1b.2-4.

¹¹ On Pompey's campaign against Mithridates and Tigranes, see Magie, *Roman Rule*, 351-65.

¹² Some have argued that the province extended only to the Halys River, though still including the coastal areas of Sinope and Amisus (e.g., K. Wellesley, "The Extent of the Territory Added to Bithynia by Pompey," *RhM* 96 [1953] 293-318; B. F. Harris, "Bithynia: Roman Sovereignty and the Survival of

combined with the twelve πόλεις of Bithynia, creating one province: Bithynia-Pontus (64/63 BCE).¹³ This arrangement was designed as a way of facilitating administration, as each πόλις was assigned a large portion of land that extended well beyond the city limits into the surrounding villages and countryside. Aside from marking out territorial boundaries, Pompey also standardized the form of government with which each city would be equipped. The regulations of this arrangement were spelled out in the *lex Pompeia*, a law governing the internal organization of each Bithynian and Pontic city.¹⁴ Even though this structure was altered slightly in the time of Augustus,¹⁵ it nonetheless remained intact even into the third century CE (Dio Cassius, 37.20.2).

In Galatia, the pattern of Roman territorial acquisition proved to be much the same as that of other areas. After the death of Amyntas (25 BCE), the kingdom of Galatia was annexed by Augustus and turned into a Roman province.¹⁶ At the time of its annexation, the kingdom of Amyntas consisted of a vast territorial expanse. It included Galatia proper, parts of Pamphylia, Pisidia, eastern Phrygia, Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia

Hellenism,” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 857-901 [869-70]; Eckart Olshausen, “Pontos und Rom (63 v. Chr. - 64 n. Chr.),” in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 903-12 [906 n. 9]). The rest of the former Mithridatic territory is said to have been taken over by Galatian tetrarchs, with Deiotarus holding a territorial plot from western Galatia to the border of Colchis and Armenia Minor, and Brogitarus controlling another large Pontic area connecting his territory (eastern Galatia) to Armenia Minor. Such a view, however, is based on a misreading of the primary sources and a considerable amount of simple conjecture. Pompey’s victory gained the entirety of Mithridates’ former kingdom, which included Armenia Minor (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.1, μέχρι Κολχίδος και τῆς μικρᾶς Ἀρμενίας). While this latter part was given to local rulers, the rest (including the territory up to Armenia Minor) was included in the province Bithynia-Pontus (cf. Christian Marek, *Stadt, Ara und Territorium in Pontus-Bithynia und Nord-Galatia* [IF 39; Tübingen: E. Wasmuth, 1993] 33-41).

¹³ Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.1; Livy, *Per.* 102. The combined province was often referred to simply as “Bithynia” during both the late Republic and early Principate. But in the later Julio-Claudian period (ca. 63 CE) it took on the official designation “Pontus et Bithynia,” which it retained throughout the time period with which we are concerned. It was not until later in the third century CE that the names “Bithynia et Pontus” and “Bithynia” came to be more common (see Gabriele Wesch-Klein, “Bithynia, Pontus et Bithynia, Bithynia et Pontus—ein Provinzname im Wandel der Zeit,” *ZPE* 136 [2001] 251-56).

¹⁴ Dio Cassius, 36.20.2; Pliny, *Ep.* 79-80, 112, 114-115. Some of these regulations included rules for councils and magistrates (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80, 112, 114-5) and regulations for citizenship (10.114).

¹⁵ Dio Cassius, 51.20.6-8; 54.7.5. The changes made by Augustus included lowering the age requirements for minor offices (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79) and granting special privileges for Nicaea (e.g., right to claim the property of a citizen who died intestate [Pliny, *Ep.* 10.84]; right to build temple to Julius Caesar [Dio Cassius, 51.20.6]) and for Nicomedia (e.g., right to build temple to Rome and Augustus [Dio Cassius, 51.20.7]).

¹⁶ Dio Cassius, 53.26.3; Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.1. On the history of Galatia leading up to this point, see Karl Strobel, *Die Galater. Geschichte und Eigenart der keltischen Staatenbildung auf dem Boden des hellenistischen Kleinasien*, Band I: *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und historischen Geographie des hellenistischen und roemischen Kleinasien* (Berlin: Akademie, 1996). Cf. also Felix Stähelin, *Geschichte der Kleinasiatischen Galater* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1907), and Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 13-58.

Tracheia.¹⁷ This organization would not remain for long, however. For in 20 BCE Cilicia Tracheia was detached and given to Archelaus, king of Cappadocia (Dio Cassius, 54.9.2), and significant debate surrounds the fate of Amyntas's holdings in Pamphylia.¹⁸

In 6/5 BCE, the Galatian province experienced the first step in a lengthy process of territorial expansion as the area of inner Paphlagonia was added.¹⁹ This territory stretched to the Halys River on the East. To the South, it was bounded by northern Galatia, and on the West by Bithynia.²⁰ Only a few years later, the size of the ever-growing province was increased once again. Although the specific details are unknown, sometime around 3/2 BCE a large portion of Pontus Galaticus was annexed by Augustus and joined to the province. This territory, which was situated north of Cappadocia, included the cities of

¹⁷ The extent of Amyntas' kingdom is as follows: Amyntas was initially king of the Pisidians, including the cities of Apollonia and Antioch (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.75). In 37/36 BCE, he was assigned more territory by Antony, which consisted of Galatia, Lycaonia, parts of Pamphylia (Dio Cassius, 49.32.3). There is also evidence that he controlled the cities of Cremna and Side (for numismatic evidence, see Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, 38 n. 142). At some point, Amyntas defeated Antipater of Derbe and took his territory (including Laranda) as well (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.6.3). From the Romans, he also received Isaura, which he tore down and rebuilt as his southern capital (*Geogr.* 12.6.3), and Cilicia, which had once belonged to Cleopatra (*Geogr.* 14.6.6).

¹⁸ The question surrounds the interpretation of the last clause in Dio Cassius, 53.26.3: "[the portions of Pamphylia formerly assigned to Amyntas] τῶ ἰδίῳ νομῶ ἀπεδόθη." Some have taken this to mean that Pamphylia was joined with Asia (so, e.g., T. R. S. Broughton, "Some Notes on the War with the Homonadeis," *AJP* 54 [1933] 134-44). However, the discovery of an inscription from Attaleia honoring M. Plautius Silvanus, a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* (*SEG* 6 [1956] no. 646), effectively ruled out this view. For this certainly would not have been the title of a governor from the public province of Asia. From the fact that L. Calpurnius Piso served as consular governor of Pamphylia in 13 BCE (Dio Cassius, 54.34.6; *PIR*² C 289) and that the Lycians were incorporated into the province (*νομόν*) of Pamphylia by Claudius (Dio Cassius, 60.17.3), some have proposed that Pamphylia became a separate province (as suggested by Theodor Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire from Caesar to Diocletian* [trans. W. P. Dickson; London: Macmillan, 1909] 324, 336; Hermann Dessau, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit* [Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1924-1930] 2:612). Yet the small size of such a province and the lack of any corroborating evidence for such a hypothesis seem to weigh heavily against this position. A better solution is simply to assume that Pamphylia was incorporated into the newly formed province of Galatia (see Ronald Syme, "Galatia and Pamphylia under Augustus: The Governorships of Piso, Quirinius and Silvanus," *Klio* 27 [1934] 122-48).

¹⁹ Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.41. The date of inner Paphlagonia's annexation is determined primarily from the epigraphic and numismatic evidence from the cities of Germanicopolis, Neoclaudiopolis, and Pompeiopolis. For a list and discussion of the inscriptions and coins, see W. Ruge and K. Bittel, "Paphlagonia," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (eds. A. F. von Pauly, et al.; vol. 18/4; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1949) 2486-550 (2527-32).

²⁰ Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.9. Although it originally extended north as far as the Euxinus, Paphlagonia had been reduced in size by the restructuring efforts of Pompey. The territory had essentially been divided in half, with the northern coastal area being removed and attached to Bithynia. Thus, the portion that was connected to Galatia was inner Paphlagonia, a portion that had previously been ruled by client kings, the last being Deiotarus Philadelphus (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.41).

Amaseia, Comana, and Sebastopolis.²¹ The temple estates of Comana and Zela, however, remained under the control of priests.²²

The rule of Gaius (37-41 CE) brought with it a new administrative strategy for the frontier provinces in Asia Minor. While the kingdoms of Pontus, Commagene, and Armenia Minor had been annexed under Tiberius, in 38 CE the dynasties were once again restored to client kings under the new emperor. Pontus, along with the Bosporean state in the Crimea, was assigned to Polemo II (grandson of Polemo I), while Antiochus IV and Cotys, Gaius' brother, took control of Commagene and Armenia Minor respectively.²³ Upon the accession of Claudius, little was altered with regard to this client-king system.²⁴ Nevertheless, one procedure that Claudius did revive was the policy of annexation. In 43 CE, after removing Pamphylia from the auspices of Galatia, he united it with the newly annexed territory of Lycia, thus creating a new Roman province in southern Anatolia.²⁵

²¹ Strabo describes the annexation of Caranitis after the death of (presumably) its ruler, Ateporix (*Geogr.* 12.3.37; on the problems with associating Ateporix with Caranitis, see Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1285-86). The former capital of Caranitis (Carana) was enlarged and transformed into a Greek πόλις (ca. 3 BCE). It was then renamed Sebastopolis (*IGR* III nos. 111-113, 115; for era date, see Barclay V. Head, *Historia Numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1911] 499). Only a year later, nearby Amaseia was transferred out of the hands of its ruling dynasts and into Roman control (Head, *Historia Numorum*, 496, for the era date). So within a very short period a large portion of Pontus Galaticus came under direct subjection to Rome.

²² Later these too would be annexed by Rome. Comana, for instance, came under direct Roman control in 34 CE, being transformed from a temple-state to a Greek πόλις (cf. *IGR* III no. 105 and *RPC* I nos. 2157-2161, for the era date).

²³ Dio Cassius, 59.12.2; *SIG*³ no. 798; *IGR* IV no. 147. In 20 BCE, Armenia Minor became part of Cappadocia as the land was given to Archelaus following the death of Aravasdes (Dio Cassius, 54.9.2). A little over a decade later Polemo, king of Pontus, was killed in battle with the Aspurgiani (ca. 8 BCE), leaving his kingdom to Pythodoris his wife (Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.2.11). These two kingdoms were soon consolidated with the marriage of Archelaus and Pythodoris (*Geogr.* 12.3.29). Such a maneuver gave Archelaus control of a large portion of eastern Anatolia. In 17 CE, after Archelaus was lured to Rome, where he later fell ill and died, the territory of Cappadocia was annexed and turned into a Roman province. Pontus, however, remained in the hands of Pythodoris, presumably until her death (*Geogr.* 12.3.29). Little is known about the administration of these kingdoms after the deaths of Archelaus and Pythodoris. But, in line with Roman policy, they were likely annexed.

²⁴ One exception was that the Bosporean state was taken from Polemo and restored to its rightful heir, Mithridates VIII (41 CE). As compensation, Polemo received land in Cilicia (Dio Cassius, 60.8.2). The rule of Cotys in Armenia Minor lasted until ca. 54 CE when he was replaced by Aristobulus (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.7; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.158; *War* 2.252), who controlled the territory until it was annexed by Vespasian in ca. 72 CE. Similarly, in spite of briefly being deposed under Gaius (Dio Cassius, 60.8.1), Antiochus reigned in Commagene until his kingdom was incorporated into the province of Galatia (72/73 CE; Josephus, *War* 7.219-229).

²⁵ See Frank Kolb, "Lykiens Weg in die römische Provinzordnung," in *Widerstand, Anpassung, Integration: Die griechische Staatenwelt und Rom: Festschrift für Jürgen Deininger zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. N. Ehrhardt and L.-M. Günther; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002) 207-21. The creation of the Lycian province can be deduced from a combination of the literary and epigraphic evidence. Dio Cassius (60.17.3) notes that in 43 CE the Lycians were reduced to the same status as the neighboring province of Pamphylia (cf.

The two apparently remained connected until the end of the Julio-Claudian period,²⁶ at which time we find evidence once again for the union of Galatia and Pamphylia and the separate administration of Lycia.²⁷

The reign of Nero brought with it significant changes both in the administration and organization of the eastern provinces. Not only would new provinces be added to the growing Empire, the structure of existing provinces would be altered in a way that would carry lasting effects. The key to understanding these provincial modifications is the perpetual Roman-Parthian conflict over the kingdom of Armenia.²⁸ As early as the late Republic, Rome and Parthia had reached a general agreement about their respective spheres of influence. The Euphrates River would serve as the boundary, marking off the territorial limits of these two major powers (Plutarch, *Sull.* 5.4-6). Standing between the two was the kingdom of Armenia. Since the dawn of the Empire, this kingdom—divided internally between pro-Roman and pro-Parthian sentiment—had been a hotbed for conflict. During the early reign of Augustus, Roman control over the area had been established through direct military force. Throughout the bulk of the Julio-Claudian era,

Suetonius, *Claud.* 25). Furthermore, at the harbor of Patara an inscription dating to 45 CE was discovered (*SEG* 51 [2001] no. 1832 = *AE* [2001] no. 1931) which refers to the annexation of Lycia by Claudius (see Sencer Şahin, “Ein Vorbericht über den Stadiasmus Provinciae Lyciae in Patara,” *Lykia* 1 [1994] 130-37; Christopher P. Jones, “The Claudian Monument at Patara,” *ZPE* 137 [2001] 161-68; Thomas Marksteiner and Michael Wörrle, “Ein Altar für Kaiser Claudius auf dem Bonda tepesi zwischen Myra und Limyra,” *Chiron* 32 [2002] 545-69). Another key piece of evidence is the career of the first governor, Q. Veranius. He fought against the Cietae or Cilices Tracheotae, which were located east of the Pamphylian plain, between 43 and 48 CE (for the inscriptional evidence, see Arthur E. Gordon, “Quintus Veranius, Consul A.D. 49: A Study Based upon His Recently Identified Sepulchral Inscription,” in *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* [vol. 2/5; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952] 231-352). Therefore, he must have controlled both Lycia and Pamphylia. Supplementary evidence is afforded to this thesis from a number of buildings in this area which were dedicated to/by Claudius, presumably as a way of commemorating the occasion (e.g., Cremna: *I.Kremna* no. 1; Baris: *SEG* 19 [1969] no. 761; Olbasa: *RECAM* III. nos. 95; 145.5; Seleukeia Sidera: *I.Sterrett* II no. 466; Xanthos: *I.Xanthos* no. 11).

²⁶ There is some evidence to suggest that the reuniting of Galatia and Pamphylia took place under the reign of Nero. In a poem of Statius (*Silv.* 1.4.76-79), C. Rutilius Gallicus, who was *legatus provinciae Galaticae* under Nero (*I.Ephesos* no. 715 [= *ILS* no. 9499]; *CIL* III no. 4591), is said to have controlled not just Galatia but also the territory of Pamphylia and even Araxes in Armenia. On the problems with the evidence provided by Statius, see Ronald Syme, *Roman Papers* (vol. 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 514-20.

²⁷ In 68 CE, Calpurnius Asprenas was appointed governor of Galatia and Pamphylia by Galba (Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.9; for further inscriptional evidence, see Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 2: *The Rise of the Church* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1993] 153-54). At the same time that Calpurnius Asprenas governed Galatia and Pamphylia, Sextus Marcius Priscus administered the province of Lycia (*TAM* II nos. 131, 275, 396).

²⁸ For a detailed account of the events leading up to the Armenian conflict (from Augustus to Nero), see Marie-Louise Chaumont, “L’Arménie entre Rome et l’Iran: I. De l’avènement de Dioclétien,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 9.1; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976) 71-194 (73-123).

this remained the primary means of containing Parthia and the pro-Parthian influence within the kingdom. But following Parthia's successful deposition of the Roman-appointed king, control of the country fell into the hands of Tiridates, the brother of Vologases (king of Parthia), and Roman influence began to wane.

The conflict in Armenia was dealt with swiftly and effectively upon the accession of Nero. The emperor's solution to the problem was the eastern mobilization of troops under the direction of Cn. Domitius Corbulo.²⁹ In order to carry out his task, Corbulo was granted the office of *legatus Augusti pro praetor* of the combined province of Galatia and Cappadocia (54 CE).³⁰ By 58 CE Corbulo had advanced to Tigranocerta, the southern capital of Armenia. As Tiridates fled the country, Armenia was back in the hands of Rome once again (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.23-26). The subsequent military endeavors of Tiridates were to no avail (60 CE). Corbulo had firmly established his position.

Shortly after Corbulo's triumph, a new phase in the war began. After putting down a revolt that had taken much of his focus away from the affairs of Armenia, king Vologases of Parthia finally turned his attention westward. With Vologases' attack of Armenia (61 CE), Corbulo had no choice but to divide his forces between Armenia to the North and his newly assigned province of Syria to the South (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.26). He petitioned Nero for a special commander to monitor Armenia in the North (*Ann.* 15.3). In response, Nero assigned Caesennius Paetus to be *legatus Augusti pro praetor* of Galatia-Cappadocia and to assist Corbulo in the battle for Armenia (62-63 CE; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.6), but Paetus would prove unsuccessful. He suffered defeat at the hands of Vologases and was recalled to Rome in early 63 CE.

²⁹ On the career of Cn. Domitius Corbulo, see *PIR*² D 142.

³⁰ Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.7-8. Support for the uniting of Galatia and Cappadocia under an imperial legate (Corbulo and later Paetus) can be deduced from the following: (1) During the first phase of the war in Armenia (54-60 CE), Corbulo was not granted *imperium maius* for the carrying out of a specific task such as he possessed after the defeat of Paetus; instead, he appears to be functioning in the sphere of provincial command. This is evidenced by the fact that (a) he worked under the auspices of the emperor (e.g., being assigned a certain number of troops); (b) he did not appear to outrank Ummidius Quadratus, the Syrian governor (e.g., he enters Armenia through Cappadocia; both were in a struggle for superiority; both received the same recognition from Nero); and (c) he recruited further military forces from Galatia and Cappadocia (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.35). (2) From the inscriptional evidence we learn that while Corbulo was fighting in Armenia, C. Rutilius Gallicus was appointed *legatus provinciae Galaticae* by Nero (*I.Ephesos* no. 715 [= *ILS* no. 9499]; *CIL* III no. 4591). This title, which differs from the more natural title held by the Galatian governor (*legatus Augusti pro praetor*), suggests that Gallicus was a legate of Corbulo.

It appeared that more drastic measures needed to be taken if the situation was to be mended and the Armenian conquests were to be salvaged. Nero responded by granting Corbulo *imperium maius* and placed a large number of troops at his disposal. Furthermore, in an attempt to gain a direct supply route to the military activity along the Armenian frontier, Nero deposed Polemo II of his Pontic kingdom (Suetonius, *Nero* 18), and added his territory (which became known as Pontus Polemoniachus) to the province of Galatia-Cappadocia (64 CE; Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.26).³¹ This strategy eventually paid off. By 66 CE Corbulo had forced the Parthians into a truce, and peace was finally regained. Thus, by the end of the Julio-Claudian period, a strong eastern front was being constructed. This move toward greater eastern stability was briefly interrupted during the period 66-69 CE. Following the death of Nero and the ensuing struggle for power (as well as the military emergency caused by the Jewish War), Galatia-Cappadocia was separated and the provinces were returned to their former administrations.³² Despite this great reduction in size, Galatia was supplemented by the addition of Pamphylia (Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.9; *I.Tripolitania* no. 346), as Lycia was turned into an independent province.³³

With the death of Vitellius and the accession of Vespasian (December, 69 CE), the Empire regained much of its former stability. By this time, the Jewish War was all but over, and attention could be turned once again to the fortification of the eastern frontier. Having firsthand knowledge of the situation, it did not take Vespasian long to formulate and then implement a plan for the re-organization of the eastern provinces. His first order of business was the reuniting of Galatia and Cappadocia (late 70-mid 71 CE).³⁴ This was

³¹ Franz Cumont, "L'Annexion du Pont Polémoniaque et de la Petite Arménie," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay* (eds. W. H. Buckler and W. M. Calder; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1929) 109-19. The date of the annexation is determined from the era date used by the cities of Neocaesarea, Cerasus, and Trapezus (see Head, *Historia Numorum*, 497-99).

³² This is evident in an inscription from Lepcis, where L. Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas is said to have formerly (68/69 CE) served as *legatus pro praetore prouinc[ia]e Galatae Paphlagoniae Pamphyliae Pisidiae (I.Tripolitania* no. 346; cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.9). It would thus appear that Galatia and Cappadocia were returned to their pre-Corbulo state after 66 CE.

³³ On the separate administration of Lycia, see *TAM* II nos. 131, 275, 396.

³⁴ The *terminus ad quem* for the establishment of the province of Galatia-Cappadocia is the transport of the *legio XII Fulminata* from Raphanaeae in Syria to Melitene in Cappadocia in September of 70 CE following the destruction of Jerusalem (Josephus, *War* 7.18). It seems fairly safe to conclude that the provinces had been merged by the time of Cn. Pompeius Collega (76 CE), who governed as a *legatus Augusti pro praetor* (*CIL* III no. 303 = *ILS* no. 8904), or, if not, then certainly by the time of M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa in 78/79 CE (*IGR* III nos. 125, 223), thus establishing a *terminus a quo*. But even here the date could be narrowed down further. With the Parthian threat looming in the East and other minor disturbances arising out of a lack of stability (e.g., the Pontic revolt under Anicetus in 69 CE [Tacitus, *Hist.*

followed soon thereafter by the annexation of Armenia Minor, which was also incorporated into the same massive province (71/72 CE).³⁵ By 72 CE much of central and eastern Anatolia was united under the administration of a consular legate³⁶ with the backing of two Roman legions.³⁷ His territory included Galatia, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, Pontus Galaticus, Pontus Polemoniacus, Phrygia (Phrygia Paroreius, with the cities of Antioch, Thymbrium, Philomelium, and Iconium), Pisidia, Isauria, Lycaonia, and Armenia Minor. It was under this arrangement that the province would remain until the time of Trajan (ca. 114 CE), when Galatia and Cappadocia would once again be separated.³⁸

3.47-48]), there was a great need for Vespasian to quickly establish a strong eastern front. Furthermore, the fact that there was a Roman legion permanently stationed in Cappadocia by the end of 70 CE reveals that the pieces were already being put into place. As a result, we suggest that the establishment of the province would have likely come to fruition some time between late-70 and mid-71 CE.

³⁵ This date is based entirely on the numismatic evidence. Aristobulus, who had been appointed client king by Nero in 54 CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.7), is attested on the coins of Armenia Minor in 70/71 CE (*RPC* II no. 1692). However, the coins from Nicopolis contain local era dates of 34 (= 105/106 CE), 42 (= 113/114 CE), and an issue by the *κοινόν* of Armenia contains a local era date of 43 (= 114/115 CE). Therefore, the annexation must have taken place ca. 71/72 CE. For the numismatic evidence, see Wolfgang Leschhorn, *Antike Ären: Zeitrechnung, Politik und Geschichte im Schwarzmeerraum und Kleinasien nördlich des Tauros* (HE 81; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993) 144-49.

³⁶ It has been suggested that the first governor of the newly formed province of Galatia-Cappadocia was M. Ulpius Traianus, father of the future emperor Trajan (first suggested by Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1958] 30-31, and later discussed approvingly by others: Glen W. Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian," *JRS* 63 [1973] 133-40 [134-35]; Robert K. Sherk, "Roman Galatia: The Governors from 25 B.C. to A.D. 114," in *ANRW* [eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 954-1052 [994-95]). Traianus held the suffect consulate in 70 CE (John Morris, "The Consulate of the Elder Trajan," *JRS* 43 [1953] 79-80) and was governor of Syria from 73/74 CE (Louis Robert, "Contribution à la topographie de villes de l'Asie Mineure méridionale," *CRAI* 95 [1951] 254-59 [255]) until ca. 77/78 CE (*BMC (G-C-S)* 180 no. 239 [coin dating to 76/77 CE]). Considering that he was well-known to Vespasian and highly familiar with the events surrounding the eastern provinces, it is certainly possible that he filled the position from 71-73 CE.

³⁷ Suetonius, *Vesp.* 8. One legion is known from the testimony of Josephus (*War* 7.18). After a humiliating defeat at the hands of insurgents in the Jewish War, the *legio XII Fulminata* was transferred from Raphanea in Syria to Melitene in Cappadocia in September of 70 CE. The second legion appears to have been the *legio XVI Flavia Firma*. There is evidence from the early-second century CE that members of the legion were stationed east of Nicopolis at Satala (see Timothy B. Mitford, "Some Inscriptions from the Cappadocian Limes," *JRS* 64 [1974] 160-75 [164-67, no. 3]). Nevertheless, their arrival may not have taken place until sometime after 75 CE. Mitchell (*Anatolia* I, 118) refers to an inscription which demonstrates that at least part of the legion was occupied with digging a ditch near Syrian Antioch in 75 CE. Moreover, a milestone from Melik Sherif in Armenia Minor (*CIL* III no. 306 = *ILS* no. 8904) describes the construction/repair of a road leading toward Satala under the legate Cn. Pompeius Collega (early 76 CE). Since "[t]he Romans did not build roads into the Armenian mountains for anything but military use" (Sherk, "Roman Galatia," 996 n. 114), then we might assume that in ca. 75/76 CE (possibly earlier) Satala became the second legionary fortress in Galatia-Cappadocia.

³⁸ After the administration of C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus (109[?]-112/113 CE; *I.Asclepius* no. 21), there is no further evidence of anyone serving as an imperial legate of the united province (cf. Sherk, "Roman

Galatia,” 1020-23). Furthermore, by 114 CE the kingdom of Armenia had been annexed by Trajan and joined (along with Armenia Minor) with Cappadocia (*CIL* X no. 8291 = *ILS* no. 1041).

APPENDIX 3: Cities of First-Century CE Anatolia

In Chapter Three, we examined the transformation of one particular Anatolian city from the provinces of Galatia: the city of Pessinus. One of the primary reasons why we focused so closely on an urban center from the central portion of Asia Minor was because this is often considered to be the area least affected by Hellenization and urbanization. What we like to do here is to supplement this treatment by tracing the development of two other civic communities, one from the province of Galatia (Ancyra) and the other from the province of Cappadocia (Comana). For as we mentioned above, due to the scarcity of the material evidence, it is the combined voice of all urban communities from which we must construct our portrait of the average Anatolian city.

A. Ancyra

The territory of ancient Ancyra has a long history. Unfortunately, very few archaeological remains from the Hellenistic territory have been preserved. The evidence that has been uncovered consists of a small number of coins (dating from the late-fourth to the early-second century BCE) along with a limited amount of pottery.¹ But from the literary record it is clear that some type of permanent settlement existed even as far back as the time of Alexander the Great (Quintus Curtius, *Alex.* 3.1.22; Arrian, *Anab.* 2.4.1). Apart from a few passing references in the source material,² though, little is known about the territory prior to the first century BCE.

Upon his defeat of Mithridates VI, Pompey handed over control of Galatia to the surviving tetrarchs (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.1). At this time and throughout the following civil wars, Ancyra remained the most important settlement of the Tectosages tribe (cf. Pliny, *Nat.* 5.42). Yet, structurally, it was never more than a military stronghold.³ It

¹ Melih Arslan, "Greek and Greek Imperial Coins Found During the Çankırıkapı Excavations at Ankara," in *Studies in Ancient Coinage from Turkey* (ed. R. Ashton; RNSSP 29; London: Royal Numismatic Society, 1996) 107-14 (108); Daniel M. Krencker and Martin Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1936) 46.

² Cf. Pompeius Trogus, *Prol.* 27; Livy, 38.24.1-25.1; Polybius, 21.39.1-2.

³ It is difficult to determine the extent of Ancyra's urbanization from the testimony of Strabo, for he refers to it both as a πόλις ("city"; *Geogr.* 4.1.13) and a φρούριον ("fort/garrison"; 12.5.2). The presence of the term πόλις might imply a fair degree of progress within this developmental process. Elsewhere the word is used not in a technical sense, but as a way of describing a settlement of substantial size which contains a

would not be until the first century CE that Ancyra would become a thriving metropolis.⁴ With the sudden and unexpected death of king Amyntas (ca. 25 BCE),⁵ the kingdom of Galatia was annexed by Augustus and turned into a Roman province.⁶ Rather than simply maintaining the old tribal boundaries, however, the province of Galatia was divided up according to a new design, with Ancyra experiencing a significant increase in territory and prominence.⁷ The city received its official founding soon after Galatia's annexation (ca. 25 BCE).⁸ In the process, it became both the seat of the governor⁹ as well as the most important city in the province.

During the Imperial era, Ancyra experienced a considerable degree of urbanization.¹⁰ Politically, the city was organized according to a common Hellenistic model. It was

considerable amount of public amenities (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.2.3; cf. Polybius, 21.39.1). However, the absence of public buildings prior to the city's foundation would suggest the settlement was somewhat underdeveloped.

⁴ See Toni M. Cross and Gary Leiser, *A Brief History of Ankara* (Vacaville, CA.: Indian Ford, 2000) 70-77.

⁵ Dio Cassius, 53.26.3; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.5.1. On the basis of an era date on a coin from Tavium (*BMC (G-C-S)* 28, no. 23), William M. Ramsay, "Early History of Province Galatia," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler* (eds. W. M. Calder and J. Keil; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939) 201-25 (201-204), has argued that the province was actually founded in 20 BCE. For a critique of this position, see Sherck, "Roman Galatia," 958 n. 14.

⁶ On the administration of the province during the Imperial period, see William F. Shaffer, "The Administration of the Roman Province of Galatia from 25 B.C. to A.D. 72," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1946), and Sherck, "Roman Galatia."

⁷ Mitchell, *Anatolia I*, 87-88.

⁸ Several inscriptions from Ancyra contain era dates (see Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 133, 188, 211). But there is, nonetheless, disagreement as to whether Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium were founded at the same time (ca. 22-21 BCE; as suggested by Stephen Mitchell, "Galatia under Tiberius," *Chiron* 16 [1986] 17-33) or whether they were established at different dates, with Ancyra and Pessinus being founded sometime around 25 BCE followed by Tavium a few years thereafter (as proposed by Barbara Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1967] 193-94; Wolfgang Leschhorn, "Die Anfänge der Provinz Galatia," *Chiron* 22 [1992] 315-36). The latter seems more feasible. This would provide Marcus Lollius, the first governor (25-22 BCE; Eutropius, *Brev.* 7.10; Festus, *Brev.* 11), time to set up the province, beginning with the capital in Ancyra and to form colonies (Antioch, Cremna, Lystra; see Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 29-41), and to do so in such a commendable fashion as to procure the favor of Augustus and later the Roman consulship of 21 BCE (Dio Cassius, 54.6.1-2). Furthermore, the Romans would have wanted to move quickly to establish some sense of stability within an area that had been marked by turbulence.

⁹ See Rudolf Haensch, *Capita provinciarum: Statthaltersitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (KF 7; Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1997) 277-81, 589-95.

¹⁰ For an archaeological survey of Roman Ancyra, see Julian Bennett, "Ancyra, *Metropolis Provinciae Galatiae*," in *The Archaeology of Roman Towns: Studies in Honour of John S. Wacher* (ed. P. Wilson; Oxford: Oxbow, 2003) 1-12 (esp. 3-9). Not only did the city grow structurally and civically, its population may have experienced a significant increase as well. At the time of Hadrian, the people of Ancyra were divided into twelve *φυλαί* ("tribes") for administrative purposes (*IGR* III no. 208). Based on the names given to these tribes, it has been suggested that there were originally only six, with the remainder added during the reigns of various emperors (see Stephen Mitchell, "R.E.C.A.M. Notes and Studies No. 1: Inscriptions of Ancyra," *AS* 27 [1977] 63-103 [80-81]). If this is an accurate assumption, then it reveals a doubling of the population from its foundation to the time of Hadrian. One must, nevertheless, be careful in

divided between the βουλή and the δῆμος, with the former carrying out the principal administrative duties. Not surprisingly, the government appears to have been firmly in the hands of the wealthy, as prominent individuals were chosen to perform annual magistracies for the benefit of the community.¹¹ Some of these newly elected officials even came from the aristocratic families (e.g., Pylaemenes, son of Amyntas, was chosen as priest of Augustus and Roma [Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51, l. 20]), thus creating a smoother transition into Roman administration. It was this group of leaders that would exert the greatest amount of influence on the local community. Therefore, they would be Rome's most important resource in turning the people of Ancyra toward a more Hellenized and Romanized existence.¹²

The religious landscape of first-century Ancyra, like most Greek cities, was quite diverse. There are a total of twenty-two deities or cults mentioned in the inscriptional evidence.¹³ Although no archaeological remains have been uncovered, there is evidence to suggest the existence of a temple for Zeus and for Asclepius and possibly a shrine for the god Mên.¹⁴ Other known cults include Serapis (Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 184-185) and Isis (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 186). The most important and most famous¹⁵ of the religious temples

drawing too much from this evidence because the imperial titles ascribed to certain tribes may indicate nothing more than their *renaming* at particular points in history.

¹¹ Note the presence of βουλογράφοι (Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 287-289) who censored council membership.

¹² Another significant influence may have been the steady flow of traffic through this travel-hub of the ancient world. Ancyra was the nodal point (or “knot”) of the major road network that canvassed Anatolia (French, *Pilgrim's Road*, 13).

¹³ For a list of named deities along with the inscriptional evidence, see French, *Ankara*, 65-66.

¹⁴ Zeus: The temple is mentioned by Pausanias (*Descr.* 1.4.5; cf. also Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 211, a dedication to Zeus Taenos). Asclepius: There are multiple indications that a temple of Asclepius (and Hygeia) existed some time during the first century CE. First, a number of inscriptions contain dedications to the god (*I.Ankara* nos. 23-25). Second, we have evidence for a priest of Asclepius (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 280 = *IGR* III no. 205). Finally, the later institution of games in honor of the god by emperor Caracalla (ca. 215 CE) suggests that Asclepius was an important deity within the community of Ancyra (Bosch, *Ankara*, nos. 246, 249; *I.Ankara* no. 21; Mitchell, “Inscriptions of Ancyra,” 75, no. 8; for the numismatic evidence, see Head, *Historia Numorum*, 748). Mên: see *I.Ankara* no. 30.

¹⁵ Its ancient importance lies in the fact that it was an official temple of the provincial imperial cult which served as the center for the Galatian κοινόν (Barbara Burrell, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (CCS 9; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 166-74; on the provincial κοινόν in Asia Minor, see Jürgen Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage der römischen Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* [Vestigia 6; München: Beck, 1965] 36-98). Its modern fame is due, in large part, to the fact that the temple contains the fullest surviving version of the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, inscribed in Latin on the interior of the *anta* walls and in Greek on the exterior wall of the *cella* (see Ronald T. Ridley, *The Emperor's Retrospect: Augustus' Res Gestae in Epigraphy, Historiography and Commentary* [Leuven: Peeters, 2003]).

in Ancyra, however, is the temple of Augustus and Roma.¹⁶ Although the dating of the structure has been hotly debated,¹⁷ its establishment and function in the first century CE remains uncontested. Situated on a hill on the west side of the Ankara Çay, the temple and its cult stood out as a focal point of ancient Ancyra, affecting not only the city's scenery but shaping many of its daily activities as well.¹⁸ In that the city was the primary location for the Galatian *κοινόν*, it held a special place of prominence. Headed by the annually elected *ἀρχιερεύς*, the organization served as the cult center of the province, containing all of the associated festivals and athletics events.

Socially, the city of Ancyra was much like any other Greco-Roman *πόλις*. Located on the opposite bank of the Ankara Çay (across from the Augustan temple) stood a theater¹⁹ where the inhabitants were treated to a variety of events: gladiatorial contests, animal hunts and shows, bull fighting, theatrical shows (Bosch, *Ankara*. nos. 51, 101). These gladiatorial games (*munera gladiatoria*) and animal fights (*venationes*) were originally Roman institutions which had been introduced into civic life of the Greek East. In Asia Minor especially these activities are closely associated with the imperial cult.²⁰ Often in connection with these events, the inhabitants of Ancyra were treated to public feasts and celebrations (with the distribution of wheat and olive oil and the slaughtering of oxen;

¹⁶ See Krencker and Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara*; Ender Varinlioğlu, "The Temple at Ankara," in *Actes du 1er Congrès international sur Antioche de Pisidie* (eds. T. Drew-Bear, et al.; CIAHA 5; Paris: Bocard, 2002) 393-99.

¹⁷ Basing their judgments on the numismatic evidence, Krencker and Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara*, concluded that the temple dated to the mid-second century BCE and was originally dedicated to one of the local deities (possibly Mên or Cybele). Although this view has soundly been refuted (see Edmund Wiegand, "Review of Daniel Krencker and Martin Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara*," *Gnomon* 13 [1937] 414-22), it can still be found in some modern literature on the subject (e.g., Ekrem Akurgal, *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey: From Prehistoric Times until the End of the Roman Empire* [5th ed.; trans. J. Whybrow and M. Emre; Istanbul: Haset Kitabevi, 1983] 286-87). Otherwise, there has been a general rejection of a Hellenistic date within recent scholarship. Significant debate, however, has surrounded its placement within the Julio-Claudian period (see H. Hänlein, "Zur Datierung der Augustustempels in Ankara," *AA* [1981] 511-13; Klaus Fittschen, "Zur Datierung des Augustus-Roma-Tempels in Ankara," *AA* [1985] 309-15; Helmut Halfmann, "Zur Datierung und Deutung der Priesterliste am Augustus-Roma-Tempel in Ankara," *Chiron* 16 [1986] 35-42; Mitchell, "Galatia under Tiberius," 27-33).

¹⁸ Mitchell, *Anatolia* I, 105.

¹⁹ Stephen Mitchell, "Archaeology in Asia Minor 1979-84," *AR* 31 (1984-85) 70-105 (98); İnci Bayburtluoğlu, "Ankara Antik Tiyatrosu," *AnadoluYil* (1986) 9-23.

²⁰ On the introduction of gladiatorial contests in the Greek East, see Michael J. D. Carter, "The Presentation of Gladiatorial Spectacles in the Greek East: Roman Culture and Greek Identity," (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1999). On their association with the imperial cult, see Louis Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris: Champion, 1940; repr., Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1971) 267-75; Price, *Rituals and Power*, 89.

Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 51), along with games that were held in honor of the victory at Actium (Bosch, *Ankara*, no. 287). The social, political, and religious dimensions of these activities would have been further replicated in the life of the community in the gathering of local voluntary associations. In the inscriptional record, for example, there is evidence for an association of military veterans (*collegium veteranorum*), which consisted of retired soldiers of varying military ranks (*I.Ankara* no. 46),²¹ presumably one of many such groups scattered across the city. All-in-all first-century Ancyra had moved well beyond the days of simply being a military stronghold. The city had been and would continue to be radically transformed by Roman urbanization.

B. Comana (Hieropolis)

The city of Comana was located in the region of Cataonia, in the southeastern portion of the province of Cappadocia. Strabo describes it as being situated in a deep and narrow glen/valley (αὐλών) of the Antitaurus mountains (*Geogr.* 12.2.3).²² Flowing through the middle of the city and then passing out through the gorges of the Taurus was the Saros River, a feature that shows up in later coinage of the city.²³ According to legend, the city's name was thought to derive from the establishment of the cult of Ma. It was said that Orestes and his sister Iphigeneia exported the rites and statue of Artemis Tauropolus from Tauric Scythia to Comana, where they dedicated their “hair (κόμη) of mourning” (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.2.3; Dio Cassius, 36.11.1-2); hence the name Comana (Κόμανα).

Such an account is obviously an attempt to explain the origins of the popular cult of Ma, for the city of Comana had been the original center for the worship of the great

²¹ Concerning the *collegium veteranorum* at Ancyra, French (*Ankara*, 47) notes: “The functions of this ‘club’ are not known but romanized Ancyra—provincial capital dominated by the presence of the temple dedicated to Augustus and the cult of the emperor, located at the centre of Asia Minor and positioned within an extensive road net-work [*sic*]—would naturally (magnet-like?) have drawn to itself (as a place of residence after completion of military service) not only legionary and non-legionary veterans from the Euphrates units but also serving soldiers (on their passage to or from the East).” For a discussion of *collegia veteranorum* in general, see Michael Ginsburg, “Roman Military Clubs and Their Social Functions,” *TAPhA* 71 (1940) 149-56.

²² Classical Comana was formerly the site of Qumani, the capital of Kizzuwadna (A. H. Sayce, “The Early Geography of South-Eastern Asia Minor,” *JHS* 43 [1923] 44-49 [46-47]).

²³ In the past, scholars have (rightly) rejected all coins attributed to Comana (cf. André Dupont-Sommer and Louis Robert, *La déesse de Hiéropolis Castabala (Cilicie)* [BAHIF 16; Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1964] 19). Recently, however, a new candidate—dating to the second year of Nero—has been discovered, “whose ethnic with the mention of the river Saros leaves no doubt about the attribution to Comana (modern Shar)” (*RPC* I, p. 559). This coin is *RPC* I no. 3661.

goddess (*I.Comana* I nos. 2.06, 2.07). Dating as far back as the time of the Hittites, the temple of Ma was prominent even during the reign of Suppiluliuma I (ca. 1355-1320 BCE).²⁴ Although the cult did not spread widely in Anatolia, it nonetheless can be shown to have exerted a significant influence in some areas. The city of Comana Pontica, which shared the same name, was a copy of the Cappadocian settlement, having been devoted to the goddess and modeled on the original temple (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.32). There is even evidence of the influence of Ma as far west as the city of Sardis.²⁵

The great goddess Ma was associated with war and was at times referred to as ἡ Νικηφόρος Θεά (“the goddess of victory”).²⁶ Strabo (*Geogr.* 12.2.3) identifies her with Enyo, goddess of bloody combat and female counterpart to Eneides (cf. Homer, *Il.* 5.333, 592). Among the Romans, she came to be associated with Bellona and later with Virtus.²⁷ Some of the rituals that were involved in the cult included inspiration and prophecy (Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.123-125) as well as the self-mutilation of the priests (Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.21.16). Her cult exercised tremendous influence on the city. A study of the onomastic evidence reveals the extent of the inhabitants’ religious devotion. Numerous residents of Comana bore the name of the goddess.²⁸ In fact, within the epigraphic evidence there are few other religious officials not connected with the cult.²⁹

²⁴ Richard L. Gordon, “Ma,” in *Brill’s New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (eds. H. Cancik and H. Schneider; vol. 8; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 49-51 (50).

²⁵ Louis Robert, “Une nouvelle inscription grecque de Sardes: Règlement de l’autorité perse relatif à un culte de Zeus,” *CRAI* 119 (1975) 306-30, discusses an inscription (4th century BCE) from Sardis in which Artaxerxes forbids the *neokoroi* of Zeus to participate in the rituals of Ma.

²⁶ *OGIS* no. 364 = *I.Comana* I no. 2.04.

²⁷ *CIL* XIII no. 7281 = *ILS* no. 3805; cf. Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.21.16. It is possible that Plutarch makes this same connection (*Sulla* 9.4), although the “goddess whom the Romans learned to worship from the Cappadocians” could be Cybele (cf. Plutarch, *Them.* 30.1-2).

²⁸ Ma (and its derivatives): *I.Comana* I nos. 2.02; 2.07; 2.08; 2.09; 5.01; 5.02; 5.36; 5.42; 5.43; 6.09; 8.07; *I.Comana* II nos. 5.50; 5.58; *I.Comana* III nos. 5.63; 5.64; 5.66. Asclepius (and its derivatives) does not appear to be too far behind: *I.Comana* I nos. 1.06; 2.02; 5.15; 5.16; 5.17bis; 5.32; 6.34; *I.Comana* III no. 5.67. Another popular name is Mithra (with its derivatives): *I.Comana* I nos. 1.01; 1.06; 2.02; 2.04; 2.05; 2.11; 3.01; 5.09; 5.24; 5.25; 6.10.

²⁹ E.g., *I.Comana* I no. 3.02 (νεωκόρος of Apollo); *I.Comana* III no. 3.10 (νεωκόρος of Mên). This is not to say that other deities had no place at Comana. The religious devotion of the city spread to a multitude of gods and goddess (e.g., Asclepius [*I.Comana* I nos. 3.02; 3.03; 3.04; 3.05]; Hermes [*I.Comana* I no. 3.06]; Ares Eneides [*I.Ramsay* no. 95]; Zeus Megistos [*I.Ramsay* nos. 96-97]; Apollo [*I.Ramsay* no. 103]; Mên [*I.Comana* III no. 3.10]).

Under the turbulent times of the Cappadocian kingdom, the city of Comana remained a semi-autonomous settlement.³⁰ Its structure was that of a temple-state, meaning that it was a religious center with a self-sufficient economy. During this period, the people of the city were subject to the king, though in most matters they followed the rule of the priest of Ma (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.2.3). The priesthood thus wielded considerable influence (cf. *I.Comana* I no. 2.04 = *OGIS* no. 364). In terms of authority, the priest ranked second in the kingdom only behind the king. This was due in large part to the fact that both kings and priests were drawn from same family line. The other reason for his power rested in the massive land holdings and huge economic revenue generated by the temple, both of which the priest controlled.

When Strabo (*Geogr.* 12.2.3) visited the settlement sometime prior to its being founded as a Greek-styled πόλις, Comana was already said to be a “considerable city” (πόλις ἀξιόλογος). Of course, since the settlement had yet to receive its official founding by the Romans, the language likely refers more to its size and population,³¹ for elsewhere he uses the term πόλις in an unofficial manner as a way of describing a settlement of substantial size which contains a considerable amount of public amenities. At the time of his visit, the number of temple-servants (men, women, and children) alone were said to have reached 6,000.

The process by which the temple-state of Comana was transformed into a Greek πόλις was first set in motion by Archelaus I Philopatris’ slight of the emperor Tiberius upon the latter’s visit to Rhodes. In his anger, Tiberius summoned Archelaus (king of Cappadocia) to Rome to face charges of rebellious conduct before the Senate (17 CE).³² Although he was acquitted of the accusations, Archelaus died soon thereafter. His territory was then

³⁰ On the history of Cappadocia leading up to its annexation, see Richard D. Sullivan, “The Dynasty of Cappadocia,” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase; Part II, *Principat* 7.2; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) 1125-68.

³¹ Note that, according to Strabo (*Geogr.* 12.2.7), Cappadocia only contained two πόλεις: Tyana and Mazaca (Caesarea).

³² Dio Cassius, 57.17.3-7; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.42. Even under the rule of a king, Cappadocia was still treated much like a province (see Thérèse Liebmann-Frankfort, “Les Étapes de l’intégration de la Cappadoce dans l’empire romain,” in *Le Monde grec: pensée, littérature, histoire, documents: hommages à Claire Préaux* [ed. J. Bingen; Brussels: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1975] 416-25). In fact, Rome was so involved in the affairs of Cappadocia that Augustus appointed an imperial procurator to the kingdom during Archelaus’ reign (Dio Cassius, 57.17.5). Similar to the treatment of a provincial governor, Archelaus was called to Rome to stand trial on unspecified charges brought against him by his subjects (Suetonius, *Tib.* 8; Dio Cassius, 57.17.3-4).

annexed by Tiberius and turned into a Roman province.³³ It was likely around this time that Comana received its civic make-over.³⁴

The first in a number of changes that would be made to the settlement was a change in name. Comana would now be known as the city of Hieropolis (*I.Comana* I nos. 1.01 [= *IGR* III no. 125]; 1.03 [= *IGR* III no. 121]). Beyond a simple change in name, the city also received a completely renovated civic structure. The power that formerly rested in the hands of the priest was presumably passed to the βουλή (*I.Comana* I nos. 1.01; 1.03-04; 2.13), which oversaw the city's administration.³⁵ How such a change may have occurred is difficult to determine given the present state of the evidence. But if the change that took place in Pessinus is any indication of how a temple-state was transformed into a πόλις, we might assume that the priestly family simply took up the offices of ἄρχοντες. In this way, the transition would be carried out smoothly, and the power would remain in the hands of the wealthy elites.

Due to the scarcity of the monumental evidence from ancient Comana, little is known about the kinds of structures and amenities that decorated the city.³⁶ But from the literary and epigraphic material, a tentative portrait can be reconstructed. With the city being situated by the river, one might assume that the great temple of Ma was somewhat separated, perhaps located on higher ground.³⁷ Such a location would have accentuated its prominent role as the focal point of the city. The sanctuary of Ma was not the only

³³ Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.1.4; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.42; Suetonius, *Tib.* 37.4; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 2.3; Eutropius, *Brev.* 7.11.

³⁴ A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 180, has argued that Comana was founded by Archelaus. This suggestion is based on an inscription dedicated to the king by the δῆμος (*OGIS* no. 358 = *I.Ramsay* no. 85). Such a scenario would certainly be consistent with Archelaus' other city-founding efforts (e.g., the city of Archelais). Ultimately, however, it is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty.

³⁵ The limited inscriptional evidence from the city only lists one other office in Hieropolis: γυμνασιάρχος (*I.Comana* I nos. 2.02; 2.19). But the size of the city demands that others must have been employed as well (e.g., ἀγορανόμος).

³⁶ Richard P. Harper and İnci Bayburtluoğlu, "Preliminary Report on Excavations at Sar, Comana Cappadociae, in 1967," *AS* 18 (1968) 149-58, discuss two structures from their excavation of the site. The first (Kırık Kilise) was a Roman tomb that was converted into a Byzantine church. The second (Ala Kapı) was a Roman temple for which no date is offered.

³⁷ One might surmise a kind of separation from the description of Strabo (*Geogr.* 12.2.3): ἐν δὲ τῶ Ἄντιταύρω τοῦτῳ βαθεῖς καὶ στενοὶ εἰσὶν ἀλῶνες, ἐν οἷς ἴδρυνται τὰ Κόμανα καὶ τὸ τῆς Ἐννοῦς ἱερόν ("In this Antitaurus are deep and narrow valleys, in which are situated Comana and the temple of Enyo"; trans. Jones [LCL]). Cf. William M. Ramsay, *The Social Basis of Roman Power in Asia Minor* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1967) 101.

temple of which the city could boast, however. There is also evidence to suggest the presence of a temple dedicated to Apollo (*I.Comana* I no. 3.02 [νεωκόρος]; *I.Comana* I no. 2.19 [priest?]) and another dedicated to Mên (*I.Comana* III no. 3.10 [νεωκόρος]). Furthermore, given the frequency of dedications to Asclepius in the inscriptional record, one might also assume he possessed a sanctuary here as well.³⁸

As in most Greco-Roman cities of the East, ancient Comana contained a theater³⁹ where gladiatorial fights and *venationes* likely took place along with a gymnasium for education, recreation, and social gatherings. There are multiple attestations of prominent individuals who served the office of *γυμνασίαρχος* (*I.Comana* I no. 2.02; 2.19). In this capacity the *γυμνασίαρχος* would have supervised the education of the ephebes and provided for the financial needs of the gymnasium (e.g., oil). Connected to the gymnasium we also find a prominent social group which was quite common within cities across Asia Minor: the *γερουσία* (*I.Comana* I no. 2.05; 2.16). This was an exclusive club of mature age (mostly wealthy) men of the city that exercised significant influence on the public life of the city.⁴⁰ It was not uncommon for this group to be afforded considerable privileges within the local community (cf. *SEG* 43 [1993] nos. 757-772).⁴¹

Although no traces remain today, the city of Comana would have been filled with various shops and vendors working in an assortment of commercial enterprises. Because of the renowned status of the goddess Ma, its sister-city (Comana Pontica) had become a “popular trade-center” (*ἐμπόριον ἀξιόλογον*) for those from Armenia (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.3.32, 36), and the same would likely have been the case here. It was especially busy

³⁸ Of course, one should be careful not to judge the religious landscape of the city simply from the extant inscriptional and archaeological evidence. As Stephen Mitchell notes with regard to the paucity of evidence from the city of Cremna, “Surviving inscriptions often allude only to a small number of the deities who would have been worshipped in a community, and an archaeological survey, or even an extensive excavation, has little hope of identifying all the sanctuaries of a city, many of which would have been relatively inconspicuous buildings or parts of buildings, rather than imposing temples located in the city centre” (*Cremna in Pisidia: An Ancient City in Peace and in War* [London: Duckworth, 1995] 3). The difficulty created in Comana is that one of the major sources for determining the deities worshipped in a particular city (*viz.*, coins) has produced almost no data.

³⁹ Friedrich Hild and Marcell Restle, *Kappadokia (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)* (TIB 2; Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981) 209.

⁴⁰ On the nature of *γερουσία* (origin, rules, functions), see Johannes A. van Rossum, “De Gerousia in de Griekse steden van het Romeinse Rijk,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden, 1988).

⁴¹ See Dieter Knibbe, et al., “Neue Inschriften aus Ephesos: XII,” *JÖAI* 62 (1993) 113-50 (113-20); Naphtali Lewis, “The New Evidence on the Privileges of the Gerousiasts of Ephesos,” *ZPE* 131 (2000) 99-100.

during the two great religious festivals that were held to the goddess each year.⁴² During these times, people flocked to the area, creating an economic boom for the local economy. Like most cities connected to a prominent religious establishment, Comana's financial status would have flourished during the classical period.⁴³

Being a type of magnet for religious pilgrimage meant attracting a number of different kinds of worshippers and dedicatees. While the mass of people who flocked to the site each year would have had a significant influence on the urban life of the community at large, there were certain visitors that would have left an indelible mark on the social character of the city—Roman soldiers. Soon after their humiliating defeat at the hands of insurgents in the Jewish War (September, 70 CE), the *legio XII Fulminata* was transferred from Raphanea in Syria to Melitene in Cappadocia (Josephus, *War* 7.18). Following this relocation, there are a number of inscriptions that attest to religious visits made by soldiers and veterans (*I.Ramsay* nos. 95, 100 [= *IGR* III no. 120]). Such trips are understandable given the association of Ma (as well as her male counterpart Ares Eualios) with war and victory. The presence of Roman soldiers in the area would have added even further financial stimulus on top of the city's already booming economy⁴⁴ as well as considerable influence towards Romanization.⁴⁵

⁴² Although Strabo does not reveal when these festivals took place, recently Murat Aydas, "A Priest of the Goddess Ma at Komana (An Inscription in the Aksaray Museum)," *EA* 34 (2002) 23-27, has suggested that one must have been held in the Spring. The proposal is based on a funerary inscription which was discovered at the Hittite site of Acemhöyük. The inscription relates the instructions of the deceased to his former freedmen along with a certain method of atonement should they transgress his wishes. This includes the sacrifice of nine white swallows (χελιδόνες λευκαί) to the goddess Ma (presumed by Aydas to be at a major religious festival). Since this type of bird would have only migrated to Anatolia in the Spring, Aydas concludes that one of the two "exoduses" of Ma must have taken place at this time. The problem, however, is that this suggestion does not account for the amount of time the birds stayed in the area. Moreover, nowhere does the inscription mention that the atonement must take place at a major festival. If atonement was only possible twice per year, long gaps of time could theoretically exist between transgression and punishment (cf. *SEG* 52 [2002] no. 1464).

⁴³ Cf. Pierre Debord, *Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie gréco-romaine* (EPRO 88; Leiden: Brill, 1982) esp. 215-43.

⁴⁴ Erik Gren, *Kleinasien und der Ostbalkan in der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1941) 89-155.

⁴⁵ Cf. Liviu Petculescu, "The Roman Army as a Factor of Romanization in the North-Eastern Part of Moesia Inferior," in *Rome and the Black Sea Region: Domination, Romanisation, Resistance* (ed. T. Bekker-Nielsen; BSS 5; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2006) 31-42.

APPENDIX 4: Ancient Economics in Recent Discussion¹

In Chapter Four, we introduced a time- and region-specific economic taxonomy which was designed to measure and more precisely quantify the socio-economic condition(s) of the recipients of 1 Peter. In what follows, we will provide a theoretical justification for the particular economic perspective which is represented therein. Such an explanation will be particularly important in establishing the validity of our model, especially given the fact that some Petrine commentators have reached alternative conclusions.²

A. The “Modernist” Approach of M. I. Rostovtzeff

Although controversies over the nature and complexity of the ancient economy stretched back as far as the late-19th and early-20th centuries,³ the person credited with igniting the modern study of ancient economics is M. I. Rostovtzeff. While the bibliographical list of his publications is legendary,⁴ there are two works for which he will forever be known: *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1926 [1957, 2nd ed.]) and *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (1941).⁵ The former—with which we are concerned here—was not met with universal acceptance; nevertheless, its

¹ In many ways, the NT debate on the socio-economic status(es) of the first urban Christians has followed the same trajectories as the classical discussion. For a summary of the recent socio-economic discussion in NT studies, see Bruce W. Longenecker, “Socio-Economic Profiling of the First Urban Christians,” in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (eds. T. D. Still and D. G. Horrell; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 36-59.

² As we have previously mentioned, one of the major problems with prior discussions of the socio-economic conditions in 1 Peter has been the lack of engagement with ancient economics or with the economic conditions in first-century CE Asia Minor. One of the few who has ventured into the economic realm of antiquity, however, is John H. Elliott. In his seminal attempt to construct a “social profile” of the readers, one aspect of the ancient world which he engages is the economic conditions of Anatolia. Following closely on the heels of those who painted a fairly bleak picture of the ancient economy (e.g., Samuel Dickey, who ultimately builds on the work of Moses I. Finley), Elliott uses the “debilitating economic circumstances in Asia Minor” to construct his model of a group of poor and disenfranchised readers (Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 70-72 [quote 72]).

³ For example, predating the Rostovtzeff-Finley controversy was a prior debate between Eduard Meyer (a “modernist”) and Karl Bücher (a “primitivist”), see Helmuth Schneider, “Die Bücher-Meyer Kontroverse,” in *Eduard Meyer: Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers* (eds. W. M. Calder and A. Demandt; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 417-45. The most significant contributions to the debate have been collected in M. I. Finley, ed., *The Bücher-Meyer Controversy* (New York: Arno, 1979).

⁴ The list of his publications includes some 500 works! For the collection, see C. Bradford Welles, “Bibliography: M. Rostovtzeff,” *Historia* 5 (1956) 358-81; J. Frank Gilliam, “Addenda to the Bibliography of M. I. Rostovtzeff,” *Historia* 36 (1987) 1-8.

⁵ M. I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); idem, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941).

significance cannot be denied. As one reviewer put it, “Today there is probably not one reputable historian who would accept the basic thesis of Rostovtzeff’s book. Few, however, would question the greatness of his work.”⁶

In essence, Rostovtzeff took a very modernistic approach to the Roman economy. The difference, he thought, was one of quantity not quality, of scale not substance. He imagined that a thriving middle-class (*bourgeoisie*) arose during the time of the Augustan reforms. This group steadily gained social and political prominence through their participation in industry and commerce. As capital was accumulated, urbanization was on the rise and cities began to flourish. This situation soon degenerated, however, as creativity and activity were traded for financial security by the *bourgeoisie*. This decline created a serious rift between the middle and lower classes. Being indifferent to the economic progress of the latter, the State protected the city *bourgeoisie*, preventing the lower classes from ever raising themselves out of their poverty. This hostility eventually led to the downfall of the Empire, as the rural proletariat revolted against the urban middle class. The net result was the decay of the city and, along with it, the destruction of urban capitalism. When the cities began to crumble, the Roman Empire, which had been built upon the prosperity of the *bourgeoisie*, soon followed.

Few would question the thoroughness and detail upon which the theory of Rostovtzeff was constructed. The theory itself has, nonetheless, run up against numerous objections.⁷ The greatest and most debilitating of these has been the tendency of Rostovtzeff to read too much of the present into the past. In many respects, his views reflect his own experiences—both as a part of the Russian Revolution and in his struggles with Western society—more than the ancient evidence.⁸ The Roman Empire was not a modern capitalist society. By playing down the role and importance of agriculture, he afforded far too much prominence to commerce and industry. Agriculture (not trade) was still the foundation of economic life. Furthermore, the thriving middle class

⁶ Glen W. Bowersock, “‘The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire’ by Michael Ivanovitch Rostovtzeff,” *Daedalus* 103 (1974) 15-23 (15).

⁷ For a detailed critique, see Meyer Reinhold, “Historian of the Classical World: A Critique of Rostovtzeff,” *SciSoc* 10 (1946) 361-91. Cf. also Huge Last, “Review: *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* by M. Rostovtzeff,” *JRS* 16 (1926) 120-28.

⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, “M. I. Rostovtzeff,” *CambJ* 7 (1954) 334-46; Brent D. Shaw, “Under Russian Eyes,” *JRS* 82 (1992) 216-28.

(*bourgeoisie*), which he so forcefully constructed, actually consisted of senators, wealthy aristocrats, and leading citizens from the provinces.⁹

B. The “Primitivist” Approach of M. I. Finley

While Rostovtzeff may be considered the pioneer of the ancient economic discussion, by far the most influential economic historian has been Moses I. Finley. With the publication of his ground-breaking study *The Ancient Economy* (originally presented as the Sather Classical Lectures of 1972), Finley set the agenda that has shaped all subsequent discussion.¹⁰ Heavily influenced by the work of Karl Polanyi,¹¹ Finley adopted a substantivist approach to the economy, claiming that economic behavior was intricately tied to social and political interaction, with status and civic ideology (not supply and

⁹ The NT discussion is often divided between the “old” and “new” consensuses. The former is most often said to be represented by Adolf Deissmann (*Das Urchristentum und die unteren Schichten* [2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908]; idem, *Licht vom Osten. Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* [4th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923]), who purportedly viewed Christianity as a movement among the proletariat. The latter are those who allow for a much wider strata in the Christian communities, even postulating some members of considerable wealth and affluence (e.g., Heinz Kreissig, “Zur sozialen Zusammensetzung der frühchristlichen Gemeinden im ersten Jahrhundert u. Z.,” *Eirene* 6 [1967] 91-100; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* [trans. J. H. Schütz; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982] 69-119; Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* [2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983]; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* [New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1983]). The problem with this scheme, however, is that it draws a line of demarcation where none existed. In point of fact, “there was no new consensus or old consensus about the social status of Paul’s assemblies” (Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 325). The “new consensus,” which purportedly took shape in the 1960s and early-1970s, was nothing new. For decades, scholars had been making these same claims about the variegated socio-economic status of early Christians (so, e.g., Adolf Hasenclever, “Christliche Proselyten der höheren Stände im 1. Jahrhundert,” *JPT* 8 [1882] 34-78, 230-71; Rudolf Knopf, “Über die soziale Zusammensetzung der ältesten heidenchristlichen Gemeinden,” *ZTK* 10 [1900] 325-47; Rudolf Schumacher, *Die soziale Lage der Christen im apostolischen Zeitalter* [Paderborn: Schöningh, 1924]; Floyd Filson, “The Significance of the Early House Churches,” *JBL* 58 [1939] 105-12 [111]). Furthermore, the “old consensus” was not much of a consensus at all. The views of Deissmann, who is often set forth as the primary representative of this group, have simply been misunderstood by modern scholarship. The position of Deissmann, as Friesen has demonstrated, was much closer to that of Theissen, Malherbe, and Meeks than many have acknowledged. Instead of seeing Christianity as a proletarian movement, he allowed for a much greater diversity in the socio-economic statuses of early Christians. So rather than constructing two opposing views within scholarship, it is more accurate to say that, “all mainstream interpreters in the twentieth century agreed that Paul’s assemblies were comprised of a cross-section of society” (Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 336).

¹⁰ M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (2nd ed.; Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

¹¹ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (2nd ed.; Boston: Beacon, 2001); idem, “The Economy as Instituted Process,” in *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory* (eds. K. Polanyi, et al.; New York: Free, 1957) 243-70.

demand) dictating economic decision-making.¹² Like Polanyi, he criticized Rostovtzeff's "modernist" view of the ancient economy, opting instead for a "primitivist" approach. Herein the Greco-Roman economy was thought to be underdeveloped, with the great majority of the population living at or below the subsistence level.

Finley's approach to the nature of the economy was not the only methodological difference that set him apart from his economic predecessor. The two scholastic giants also differed on the use and precedence of source material. Whereas Rostovtzeff was the first historian to integrate archaeological evidence systematically into the discussion, Finley was skeptical of the material record. His method was to devote far greater attention to the written sources of the social and political elite. This grew out of the notion that to understand ancient economic behavior we must first understand the ancients themselves and in particular their place along what Finley referred to as the "spectrum of statuses." Ultimately, Finley's work was designed as a study of the economic behaviors of various social groups in the Greco-Roman world and the manner in which membership in these groups affected economic decision-making. *The Ancient Economy* thus serves as an anthropological approach to the ancient economy rather than an economic history of antiquity.

But despite its intended purposes, the work came to be drawn upon as the characteristic representation of the "primitivist" approach to the Greco-Roman economy. Though Finley's discussion is not systematized, it does contain a basic model for understanding economic behavior.¹³ According to Finley's approach, agriculture was the foundation of economic life, as the vast majority of the population earned their living from the land. Yet while agriculture was the primary means of wealth, farms were not set up along rational lines (i.e., to produce maximum profit), nor was technology conducive to progress. Furthermore, according to Finley, inter-regional trade did take place, but only on a very small scale. Due to the fact that the Mediterranean region possessed similar

¹² For attempts to trace Finley's intellectual roots and to place him within the traditions of 20th century scholarship, see Brent D. Shaw and Richard P. Saller, "Editors' Introduction," in *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (eds. B. D. Shaw and R. P. Saller; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981) ix-xxvi; C. R. Whittaker, "Moses Finley 1912-1986," *PBA* 94 (1997) 459-72; Ian Morris, "Foreword," in M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California, 1999) ix-xxxvi.

¹³ Finley believed that one could legitimately speak of an ancient economy (rather than economies) because the economic situation was essentially the same both geographically as well as temporally, the principal aim in each place and time being self-sufficiency.

climate and similar crops, long distance trade was unnecessary. Such commercial ventures were further constrained by the high costs of transport. As a result, the only items that were traded over long distances were luxury goods, and even these were not in high demand. The socio-economic status of traders and craftsmen was thus thought to be very low, and there were few (if any) chances for upward mobility. Cities were said to be centers of consumption (i.e., parasitic) rather than centers of manufacturing. They depended solely upon their rural territories, which in turn were economically exploited for the benefit of the city (a notion which he developed from the theory of Max Weber¹⁴). Urbanization was therefore the result of a cultural model not economic growth.¹⁵

The introduction of Finley's "primitivist" approach caused a serious stir within classical scholarship. While many offered strong opposition, Finley's views were disseminated through the works of his former students.¹⁶ In more recent times, however, his influence has begun to wane.¹⁷ As one interpreter put it, "The questions are Finleyan, the methods and ways of thinking bear the stamp of his influence, but the answers are moving farther and farther away from his own."¹⁸ Over the years, many of the tenets upon which his model was built have been called into question. Yet because of its significant role in shaping much of the consequent research, and because of its indirect

¹⁴ Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (5th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1972).

¹⁵ A similar Finleyan approach to the ancient economy has been employed in NT studies by Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*. The purpose of Meggitt's work was to challenge the widely-held view of the Pauline communities which was constructed by proponents of the "new consensus," viz., that the first urban Christians consisted of a range of socio-economic statuses, including the social elite and economically affluent. Against this approach, Meggitt argues that, "those devoid of political power, the non-élite, over 99% of the Empire's population, could expect little more from life than abject poverty" (*Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 50). Thus, according to Meggitt, "Paul and his followers should be located amongst the "poor" of the first century," facing "the same anxieties over subsistence that beset all but the privileged few in that society" (179).

¹⁶ E.g., Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987); Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*.

¹⁷ This same line has been followed in NT studies as well. The binary approach of Meggitt has been called into question on a number of occasions as scholars have attempted to describe the situation of those early Christians who found themselves between imperial preeminence and abject poverty (see, e.g., Dirk Jongkind, "Corinth in the First Century AD: The Search for Another Class," *TynBul* 52 [2001] 139-48). But even though they have attempted to move away from a binary approach, Finleyan forces have prevented some from making a complete break with the past (cf. the recent attempt of Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 53-95). As a result, they have simply created binary models with greater stratification at the top and bottom. The most recent attempt to fill in the specifics of this "middle gap" (Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle.") has been much more promising.

¹⁸ Jean Andreau, "Twenty Years After Moses I. Finley's *The Ancient Economy*," in *The Ancient Economy* (eds. W. Scheidel and S. von Reden; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002) 33-49 (34-35).

influence on some Petrine scholarship (e.g., Elliott's economic analysis in *Home for the Homeless*), we will review a few of the more significant problems in some detail.

Despite the fact that the Greco-Roman world clearly did not possess a modern, industrialized economy, there are a number of features within this system which make it very difficult to adopt a Finleyan approach. One example is in the amount and types of commerce that took place in antiquity. According to Finley, one of the major impediments of economic growth in the ancient world was the difficulty surrounding land transport.¹⁹ The high cost of transporting goods from one location to the next resulted in minimal inter-regional trade. What little trade did take place is said to consist of the importing and exporting of luxury goods, which were normally moved along more efficient waterways. Yet this is simply not born out by the evidence. One thing that is clear is that trading was taking place (cf. Cicero, *Leg. man.* 14; Josephus, *War* 2.372). Even among the social and political elites, commercial ventures became quite common in the Imperial era.²⁰ Amphorae and shipwreck salvages reveal the presence of long-distance trade, with goods being shipped all around ancient world.²¹ In fact, Roman trade

¹⁹ Finley, *Ancient Economy*, 126-27. Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964) 2:841-44; Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, 366-69.

²⁰ While it is true that there was a stigma assigned to commercial activities by the social elite (e.g., Seneca, *Ira* 3.33.4; Cicero, *Off.* 1.42; Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.13), this did not prevent many from participating in such undertakings (John H. D'Arms, "M. I. Rostovtzeff and M. I. Finley: The Status of Traders in the Roman World," in *Ancient and Modern: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Else* [eds. J. H. D'Arms and J. W. Eadie; Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan, 1977] 159-79 [172-79]). Although some participated directly (e.g., brick stamps: Tapio Helen, *Organisation of Roman Brick Production in the First and Second Centuries A.D.: An Interpretation of Roman Brick Stamps* [AASF 5; Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1975] 22-27), most industrial endeavors were undertaken in an indirect manner (see John H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* [Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1981]). This was especially the case in the eastern provinces (e.g., *I.Priene* no. 108 [Moschion was the owner of an estate as well as a merchant of Arabian spices]; cf. H. W. Pleket, "Urban Elites and Business in the Greek Part of the Roman Empire," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy* [eds. P. Garnsey, et al.; London: Chatto & Windus, 1983] 131-44). Furthermore, some amount of commerce was taking place among those of less affluence. Numerous individuals were happy to equate their legacy with their trade, as seen on a variety of tombstones which list the dedicatee's profession (e.g., *I.Hierapolis* no. 156 [dyer of purple]; *I.Ankara* nos. 68 [stone-mason]; 82 [linen-merchant]; *I.Pessinous* nos. 48 [baker]; 95 [nail-smith]; *I.Nikaia* no. 197 [vegetable-handler]). Likewise, a number of stelae depict the deceased in working clothes with the tools of their trade (M. Reddé, "Les scènes de métier dans la sculpture funéraire gallo-romaine," *Gallia* 36 [1978] 43-63; Dimitrios Pandermalis, "Zum römischen Porträt im kaiserzeitlichen Makedonien," *Klio* 65 [1983] 161-67). The question that must be answered, therefore, is what kind of financial impact did this trade have on local economies?

²¹ Alton J. Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks of the Mediterranean and the Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1992); D. P. S. Peacock and D. F. Williams, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy: An Introductory Guide* (London: Longman, 1986) 54-66.

even extended into the far reaches of the east: Arabia, India, and even China (via India).²² This is not to say, however, that inland trade was stagnant. Apameia Cibotus, an inland city of Phrygia, was the second largest trade center (ἐμπόριον) in Asia Minor behind Ephesus, receiving merchandise from Italy and Greece (Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.8.15). This was possible because the cost of overland transport was not as prohibitive as once believed.²³

A further tenet upon which Finley's theory was built was the lack of economic rationalism in the ancient world. He argues, for instance, that farms were not designed for maximum profits; instead, considerations such as aesthetics (e.g., beauty, healthfulness of the estate's location) also played a large role in agricultural management (cf. Cato, *Agr.* 1.1-3; Varro, *Rust.* 1.4).²⁴ But, again, these claims do not hold up under closer scrutiny. Dominic Rathbone has recently challenged this notion, demonstrating from his work on the Appianus estate in Roman Egypt that economically rational behavior did exist in the antiquity.²⁵ These rationalistic tendencies are confirmed by other instances in which individuals were able to make a profit and then use it for capital.²⁶

²² Arabia: Pliny, *Nat.* 6.26; 12.41. India: *Per. Mar. Eryth.* 39, 48-49, 56; P.Vindob G 40822 (cf. M. G. Raschke, "Papyrological Evidence for Ptolemaic and Roman Trade with India," in *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrologists, Oxford, 24-31, July, 1974* [ed. P. J. Parsons; GRM 61; London: British Academy/Egypt Exploration Society, 1975] 241-46). China (via India): *Per. Mar. Eryth.* 39, 48-49, 56.

²³ See Colin Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt: A Study of Economics and Administration in a Roman Province* (OCM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). There are essentially three texts upon which this conclusion is built. The first is Diocletian's *Edict of Maximum Prices* (17.3-5), which lists the high cost of transport over land compared to transport via the sea. The second text is Cato's reference to the price of buying and transporting an olive mill (*Agr.* 22.3). A final piece of evidence that is brought to bear on the discussion is a statement from Pliny the Younger which describes the cost efficiency of transporting material over water (*Ep.* 10.41.2). For a critique of the use of these texts, see Adams, *Land Transport*, 6.

²⁴ M. I. Finley, "Technical Innovation and Economic Progress in the Ancient World," *EcHR* 18 (1965) 29-45, used the Pont du Gard to illustrate the fact that "the Romans in Gaul ranked fresh water and the demonstration of power higher on the value-scale than costs" (31). This, according to Finley, shows that economic rationalism was not a concern in the Greco-Roman world. More recent investigation into the water system of Arles, however, has demonstrated that while great value was placed on aesthetics, agricultural production was just as important (see Guilhem Fabre, et al., *L'aqueduc de Nîmes et le Pont du Gard: archéologie, géosystème, histoire* [2nd ed.; CRA monographies, Hors série; Paris: CNRS éditions, 2000]).

²⁵ Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*. The early civilization and Hellenization of Egypt in no way invalidates Rathbone's claims. Though Egyptian evidence is rarely brought into the discussion because it is considered to be a unique case, the data it provides is pertinent and extremely beneficial to the economic discussion (see Dominic Rathbone, "The Ancient Economy and Graeco-Roman Egypt," in *Egitto e storia antica dall'ellenismo all'età araba: bilancio di un confronto* [eds. L. Criscuolo and G. Geraci; Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice Bologna, 1989] 159-76). This has been recently demonstrated by the discovery of the writing tablets at Vindolanda which bear a similar character to the Egyptian

Recent studies on the production of olive oil in the Mediterranean world have likewise revealed efforts to maximize production and increase profit, all being fostered by an increase in demand.²⁷ This production boom was fueled in some measure by ancient technological advances. The modified designs of lever presses allowed for greater yield per pressing unit, while the extremely large presses at the sites in the Kasserine region would have significantly increased the overall volume of production.²⁸ Furthermore, the expansion of irrigation techniques allowed for greater returns in marginal landscapes.²⁹ The results of such growth would have naturally created corollary

evidence (Alan K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and Its People* [London: British Museum Press, 1994]).

²⁶ Evidence for this can be seen even among “lowly” tenant farmers, see p. 96 n. 27.

²⁷ David J. Mattingly, “First Fruit? The Olive in the Roman World,” in *Human Landscape in Classical Antiquity: Environment and Culture* (eds. G. Shipley and J. Salmon; LNS 6; London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 213-53. In the Sbeitla and Kasserine regions of Tunisia, for instance, the density of olive presses (at minimum) was discovered to be approximately one press every four square kilometers (Robert B. Hitchner, “The Organization of Rural Settlement in the Cillium-Thelepte Region (Kasserine, Central Tunisia),” *AfrRom* 6 [1989] 387-402; David J. Mattingly, “Oil for Export: A Comparative Study of Roman Oil Production in Libya, Spain and Tunisia,” *JRA* 1 [1988] 33-56 [44-49]). In one particular area near Kasserine, a small landscape approximately 3.5 square kilometer is said to have yielded a total of ten presses whose calculated output in an optimum year could have reached a total of 40,000 to 80,000 liters (Robert B. Hitchner, “The Kasserine Archaeological Survey 1987,” *AntAfr* 26 [1990] 231-59 [231-47]). Facilitating these endeavors would require the large-scale production of olive oil amphorae, which is exactly what is found in some of the recent archaeological excavations of the area (see J. Dore and R. Schinke, “First report on the pottery,” in *Leptiminus (Lamta), A Roman Port City in Tunisia: Report No. 1* [eds. N. B. Lazreg and D. J. Mattingly; JRASup 4; Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan, 1992] 115-56 [120-36]).

²⁸ David J. Mattingly, “Megalithic Madness and Measurement, or How Many Olives Could an Olive Press Press?,” *OJA* 7 (1988) 177-95; idem, “Maximum Figures and Maximizing Strategies of Oil Production? Further Thoughts on the Processing Capacity of Roman Olive Presses,” in *La production du vin et de l’huile en Méditerranée: actes du symposium international organisé par le Centre Camille Jullian (Université de Provence - CNRS) et le Centre Archéologique du Var (Ministère de la Culture et Conseil Général du Var), (Aix-en-Provence et Toulon, 20-22 novembre 1991) = Oil and Wine Production in the Mediterranean Area* (eds. M.-C. Amouretti and J.-P. Brun; BCHSup 26; Paris: Boccard, 1993) 483-98; David J. Mattingly and Robert B. Hitchner, “Technical Specifications for Some North African Olive Presses of Roman Date,” in *La production du vin et de l’huile en Méditerranée: actes du symposium international organisé par le Centre Camille Jullian (Université de Provence - CNRS) et le Centre Archéologique du Var (Ministère de la Culture et Conseil Général du Var), (Aix-en-Provence et Toulon, 20-22 novembre 1991) = Oil and Wine Production in the Mediterranean Area* (eds. M.-C. Amouretti and J.-P. Brun; BCHSup 26; Paris: Boccard, 1993) 439-62.

²⁹ Robert B. Hitchner, “Olive Production and the Roman Economy: The Case for Intensive Growth in the Roman Empire,” in *La production du vin et de l’huile en Méditerranée: actes du symposium international organisé par le Centre Camille Jullian (Université de Provence - CNRS) et le Centre Archéologique du Var (Ministère de la Culture et Conseil Général du Var), (Aix-en-Provence et Toulon, 20-22 novembre 1991) = Oil and Wine Production in the Mediterranean Area* (eds. M.-C. Amouretti and J.-P. Brun; BCHSup 26; Paris: Boccard, 1993) 499-503; repr. in Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden, eds., *The Ancient Economy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002) 71-83 (77-78).

expansion in other related sectors of the economy (e.g., increase in amphorae and ship building; swelling of the labor force; etc.).³⁰

Technology is another area that was (wrongly) assailed by Finley's "primitivist" approach. Following on the heels of medieval historians who tended to emphasize the technological progress of the Middle Ages at the expense of earlier periods,³¹ Finley argued that technological progress in the Greco-Roman world was stagnant; thus, for the most part, Roman technology was thought to have remained crude and undeveloped.³² More recent studies, however, have shown this to be an inaccurate assessment.³³ Current investigations have demonstrated that there were considerable technological advances during the Imperial period,³⁴ of which Finley did not take adequate account.³⁵ But what is

³⁰ The evidence from North Africa is further substantiated by the data collected from Monte Testaccio, an artificial hill (some 50 m high and 1 km in circumference) near the warehouses where Roman olive oil was unloaded (Emilio Rodríguez-Almeida, *Il Monte Testaccio: ambiente, storia, materiali* [Rome: Quasar, 1984]). This "mountain" consists of oil amphorae which were broken in order to transfer their contents into larger containers. Its total volume would have consisted of some 6,000,000,000 liters of oil. Not only does this demonstrate Rome's attempt to satisfy its ever-growing need for oil (cf. Caesar, *Bell. Afr.* 97), it also indicates rational economic behavior. While many of these amphorae originated from Tunisia and Libya, the majority are the Dressel type 20 from southern Spain (Jose Remesal-Rodríguez, "Los sellos de Dressel 20. Nuevas aportaciones al estudio," in *Epigrafia della produzione e della distribuzione: actes de la VIIe Rencontre franco-italienne sur l'épigraphie du monde romain* [ed. Università degli studi di Roma "La Sapienza"; CEFR 193; Rome: Università di Roma - La Sapienza, 1994] 93-110), a type of amphora that was designed specifically for an export market along the Guadalquivir River (Mattingly, "Oil for Export.").

³¹ E.g., Marc Bloch, "Avènement et conquête du moulin à eau," *Annales (HES)* 7 (1935) 538-63; Bertrand Gille, "Le moulin à eau. Une révolution technique médiévale," *TechCiv* 3 (1954) 1-15; Lynn T. White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962).

³² Finley, "Technical Innovation." Cf. H. W. Pleket, "Technology in the Greco-Roman World: A General Report," *Talanta* 5 (1973) 6-47; Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 52, 197.

³³ Kevin Greene, "Technological Innovation and Economic Progress in the Ancient World: M. I. Finley Re-Considered," *ECHR* 53 (2000) 29-59. Cf. S. Cuomo, *Technology and Culture in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 3, who claims that the "blocage question" (i.e., the notion that the ancient mind was blocked from connecting technology and economy and thus full economic progress was never allowed) and the "mainstream view" (i.e., the belief that technology was only of marginal importance in ancient society, even being despised and looked down upon by some) have "marred the historiography of ancient technology, and are partly to blame for its current state of relative neglect."

³⁴ E.g., Grain processing and bread-making: Ludwig A. Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958). Farming equipment: Kenneth D. White, *Farm Equipment of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Mechanical water-lifting devices: John P. Oleson, *Greek and Roman Mechanical Water-Lifting Devices: The History of a Technology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). Olive presses: David J. Mattingly, "Olive Presses in Roman Africa: Technical Evolution or Stagnation?," in *L'Africa romana: atti del XI convegno di studio Cartagine, 15-18 dicembre 1994* (eds. C. Vismara, et al.; Ozieri: Il Torchinetto, 1996) 577-95. Water mills: Örjan Wikander, *Exploitation of Water-Power or Technological Stagnation? A Reappraisal of the Productive Forces in the Roman Empire* (Lund: Gleerup, 1984). Mining: Claude Domergue, "Regard sur les techniques minières à l'époque romaine," in *Archeologia delle attività estrattive e metallurgiche: V ciclo di lezioni sulla ricerca applicata in archeologia, Certosa di Pontignano (SI) - Campiglia Marittima (LI), 9-21 settembre 1991* (ed. R. Francovich; Firenze: All'Insegna del Giglio, 1993) 329-53. For a general overview of technology in the

more, this technological progress served as an important stimulus for the Roman economy.³⁶ Ultimately, one cannot deny that important economic growth took place.³⁷

C. The Post-Rostovtzeffian-Finleyan Era

The most recent trend in classical scholarship has been a steady move away from the familiar modernist-primitivist dichotomy which has dominated ancient economic discussion for the past thirty years.³⁸ Many have concluded that “[t]o contrast, term by term, everything pre-industrial with everything modern, and endlessly to scour antiquity for all possible and imaginable signs of archaism, results in a very reductionistic view of history.”³⁹ Likewise, to compare the economy of the Roman Empire with those of the modern, industrial world—claiming that the only difference is quantity rather than quality—is to fail to appreciate the ancient economy for what it was. Instead of approaching the economy of the Greco-Roman world as one giant, undifferentiated

Greco-Roman world, see Kenneth D. White, *Greek and Roman Technology* (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; London: Thames and Hudson, 1984).

³⁵ Attempts to demonstrate technological progress in the Roman world have been further aided by an alternative focus on the nature of technology. When narrowly defined as innovation and invention, Roman technological advance may not appear as impressive as other eras. However, if *utilization* is taken into account, then the picture changes dramatically (see David Edgerton, “De l’innovation aux usages: Dix thèses éclectiques sur l’histoire des techniques,” *Annales (HSS)* 53 [1998] 815-37, who discusses the negative implications of equating innovation and technology). Since technology is primarily concerned with increasing productivity or aiding industry and commerce, technological advance need not consist of new inventions. These objectives can just as easily be reached through changes in organization or modification of current practices and designs. This, in fact, took place quite regularly in the Roman world due to the considerable amount of technology transfer (Kevin Greene, “How was Technology Transferred in the Western Provinces?,” in *Current Research on the Romanization of the Western Provinces* [eds. M. Wood and F. Queiroga; BARIS S575; Oxford: B.A.R., 1992] 101-105; Oliver Stoll, “Der Transfer von Technologie in der römischen Antike,” *MBAH* 12 [1993] 93-118). Furthermore, when the technological advances of the ancient world are judged on their own merit, rather than against those of the modern Industrial Revolution, the perceived stagnation begins to disappear (as pointed out by Kevin Greene, “Perspectives on Roman Technology,” *OJA* 9 [1990] 209-19).

³⁶ Andrew Wilson, “Machines, Power and the Ancient Economy,” *JRS* 92 (2002) 1-32; idem, “The Economic Impact of Technological Advances in the Roman Construction Industry,” in *Innovazione tecnica e progresso economico* (ed. E. Lo Cascio; Bari: Edipuglia, 2006) 225-36.

³⁷ See Morris Silver, “Roman Economic Growth and Living Standards: Perceptions versus Evidence,” *AncSoc* 37 (2007) 191-252.

³⁸ H. W. Pleket, “Wirtschaftsgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit,” in *Handbuch der europäischen Wirtschaft- und Sozialgeschichte, I: Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (ed. F. Vittinghoff; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990) 25-160 (42, 120). For the problems surrounding both sides of the debate, see W. V. Harris, “Between Archaic and Modern: Some Current Problems in the History of the Roman Economy,” in *The Inscribed Economy: Production and Distribution in the Roman Empire in the Light of Instrumentum Domesticum: The Proceedings of a Conference Held at The American Academy in Rome on 10-11 January, 1992* (ed. W. V. Harris; JRSup 6; Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan, 1993) 11-29.

³⁹ Andreau, “Twenty Years After,” 35.

entity, interpreters have begun to devote specific attention to regional differences and temporal variations.⁴⁰ Along with this has come an increased awareness and employment of a variety of different source materials (e.g., inscriptions, papyri, archaeology, coins). As a result of this more nuanced approach, few models of the ancient economy (or economies) have been suggested, but a greater degree of precision has been drawn as interpreters narrow their focus on specific situations in particular periods and locales. Consistent with this recent trend, we have sought to develop an economic taxonomy specific to the Roman provinces of Asia Minor during the early Empire. In doing so, we have moved away from generalizations about the ancient world and into the specific economic situation(s) of first-century CE Anatolia.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., the recent volume on Roman Anatolia: Stephen Mitchell and Constantina Katsari, eds., *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005).

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