

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

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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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