

1 PETER

KAREN H. JOBES



Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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To my husband, Buzz,
who has always exemplified Ephesians 5:25
by his support for my work

Contents

<i>Series Preface</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Author's Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>xvi</i>
<i>Map</i>	<i>xviii</i>
Introduction to 1 Peter	1
I. A Greeting to the Christian Diaspora of Asia Minor (1:1–2)	58
II. The Opening of the Letter: Reassurance for God's People (1:3–2:10)	77
A. Doxology as the Basis for the Christian Life (1:3–12)	79
B. Be What You Are (1:13–2:3)	107
C. The Identity of God's People (2:4–10)	142
III. As God's People, Live Godly Lives (2:11–4:11)	165
A. Commendable Social Behavior as God's People (2:11–3:7)	166
B. The Inner Qualities of Righteous Living (3:8–12)	213
C. Suffering Unjustly for the Name of Christ (3:13–4:11)	225
IV. Consolation for the Suffering Flock (4:12–5:11)	284
A. Two Final Thoughts about Suffering for Christ (4:12–19)	285
B. Final Exhortations to the Community (5:1–11)	298
V. The Letter Closing: Final Words and Greetings (5:12–14)	319
<i>Excursus: The Syntax of 1 Peter: How Good Is the Greek?</i>	325
<i>Works Cited</i>	339
<i>Index of Subjects</i>	352
<i>Index of Authors</i>	353
<i>Index of Greek Words</i>	356
<i>Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Writings</i>	357

Series Preface

The chief concern of the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT) is to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness. We hope thereby to attract the interest of a fairly wide audience, from the scholar who is looking for a thoughtful and independent examination of the text to the motivated lay Christian who craves a solid but accessible exposition.

Nevertheless, a major purpose is to address the needs of pastors and others involved in the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures as the uniquely inspired Word of God. This consideration affects directly the parameters of the series. For example, serious biblical expositors cannot afford to depend on a superficial treatment that avoids the difficult questions, but neither are they interested in encyclopedic commentaries that seek to cover every conceivable issue that may arise. Our aim, therefore, is to focus on those problems that have a direct bearing on the meaning of the text (although selected technical details are treated in the additional notes).

Similarly, a special effort is made to avoid treating exegetical questions for their own sake, that is, in relative isolation from the thrust of the argument as a whole. This effort may involve (at the discretion of the individual contributors) abandoning the verse-by-verse approach in favor of an exposition that focuses on the paragraph as the main unit of thought. In all cases, however, the commentaries will stress the development of the argument and explicitly relate each passage to what precedes and follows it so as to identify its function in context as clearly as possible.

We believe, moreover, that a responsible exegetical commentary must take fully into account the latest scholarly research, regardless of its source. The attempt to do this in the context of a conservative theological tradition presents certain challenges, and in the past the results have not always been commendable. In some cases, evangelicals appear to make use of critical scholarship not for the purpose of genuine interaction but only to dismiss it. In other cases, the interaction glides over into assimilation, theological distinctives are ignored or suppressed, and

the end product cannot be differentiated from works that arise from a fundamentally different starting point.

The contributors to this series attempt to avoid these pitfalls. On the one hand, they do not consider traditional opinions to be sacrosanct, and they are certainly committed to do justice to the biblical text whether or not it supports such opinions. On the other hand, they will not quickly abandon a long-standing view, if there is persuasive evidence in its favor, for the sake of fashionable theories. What is more important, the contributors share a belief in the trustworthiness and essential unity of Scripture. They also consider that the historic formulations of Christian doctrine, such as the ecumenical creeds and many of the documents originating in the sixteenth-century Reformation, arose from a legitimate reading of Scripture, thus providing a proper framework for its further interpretation. No doubt, the use of such a starting point sometimes results in the imposition of a foreign construct on the text, but we deny that it must necessarily do so or that the writers who claim to approach the text without prejudices are invulnerable to the same danger.

Accordingly, we do not consider theological assumptions—from which, in any case, no commentator is free—to be obstacles to biblical interpretation. On the contrary, an exegete who hopes to understand the apostle Paul in a theological vacuum might just as easily try to interpret Aristotle without regard for the philosophical framework of his whole work or without having recourse to those subsequent philosophical categories that make possible a meaningful contextualization of his thought. It must be emphasized, however, that the contributors to the present series come from a variety of theological traditions and that they do not all have identical views with regard to the proper implementation of these general principles. In the end, all that really matters is whether the series succeeds in representing the original text accurately, clearly, and meaningfully to the contemporary reader.

Shading has been used to assist the reader in locating salient sections of the treatment of each passage: introductory comments and concluding summaries. Textual variants in the Greek text are signaled in the author's translation by means of half-brackets around the relevant word or phrase (e.g., "Gerasenes"), thereby alerting the reader to turn to the additional notes at the end of each exegetical unit for a discussion of the textual problem. The documentation uses the author-date method, in which the basic reference consists of author's surname + year + page number(s): Fitzmyer 1992: 58. The only exceptions to this system are well-known reference works (e.g., BDAG, LSJ, *TDNT*). Full publication data and a complete set of indexes can be found at the end of the volume.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Robert H. Stein

Author's Preface

Writing a commentary is a challenging endeavor. First, one is constrained by the flow and content of the biblical text itself. Rather than having the freedom to let one's thoughts be structured as they may, the author of a commentary must follow the structure of the biblical text, even where its meaning is difficult or obscure. Second, after about two thousand years of reflection on the New Testament (NT), it is daunting to say something that is new enough to warrant another commentary but not so innovative as to be heretical. Nevertheless, it is truly a great privilege to present the interpretive heritage of the Christian church in a fresh light to today's serious Bible readers.

In this commentary I hope to offer three distinct contributions to that heritage. First, I present a new theory on the historical background of the book of 1 Peter. Interpretive tradition has assumed that the letter was written to indigenous Christians of Asia Minor converted either by the evangelization of the apostle Peter on his travels between Jerusalem and Rome or by anonymous evangelists from the Pauline churches. This commentary presents the scenario that the Christians to whom Peter writes were converted elsewhere, probably Rome, and then displaced to Asia Minor. Peter, with whom they had some previous association, writes to these "foreigners and resident aliens," using their personal situation to lend power to his spiritual application of the motif.

Second, I attempt to make the role of the Septuagint (LXX) for interpreting 1 Peter more accessible to the reader. It was the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament (OT) that formed the scriptural context in which Peter wrote. Peter does not proof-text when he cites the OT but applies the context of the passage as it occurs in the LXX to his Christian readers in Asia Minor. By interpreting his letter against the context of the passages quoted from the LXX, I seek to utilize an exegetical method that is truer to the historical origin of the letter.

Third, by presenting an analysis of the syntax of 1 Peter based on principles of bilingual interference, this study questions the oft-repeated opinion about the high quality of the Greek of its author. The analysis concludes that the syntax exhibits elements consistent with a Semitic-speaking author for whom Greek was a second language.

I am grateful to Jim Kinney of Baker Academic and to Moisés Silva for the invitation to contribute to this series. Special thanks must go to

Wells Turner and Robert Yarbrough for their oversight and editorial work. Because of their critique, this book is better than it would otherwise have been. I am also grateful to my colleagues Bruce Fisk, Bob Gundry, George Guthrie, Moisés Silva, Frank Thielman, and Diana Trautwein for their time spent reading certain sections of the commentary and for the improvements they suggested. Their timely feedback was a great encouragement to me at just the right moment. Any remaining errors and flaws are of course my own sole responsibility.

Al Pietersma provided the text of the *NETS* quotations before they are available in print, for which I thank him. As we translated 1 Peter together in spring semesters 1999 and 2000, my Greek language students at Westmont College asked many questions that helped me to identify exegetical options for further thought. Classroom discussion with Westmont students in my General Epistles course in spring 2002 allowed me an opportunity to think out loud about the message of 1 Peter. The students in my course on 1 Peter at Regent College in summer 2002 engaged the text with me from the perspective of those long-experienced in church ministry, raising some difficult questions about the significance and relevance of this ancient epistle for the church today. I am grateful to all of these people for their presence in my life, which has helped form this work.

Karin Gluck, the academic secretary for the Religious Studies department at Westmont College, provided much time-saving assistance in tracking down books and journal articles. I appreciate the professional support she has cheerfully provided. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the several Westmont College library staff who offered advice and processed timely interlibrary loans for even obscure titles. Special thanks go to Ruth Angelos, Richard Burnweit, Claudia Scott, and Kristyn Thurman and to their student workers. My faculty colleagues Michael Sommermann and Aleta Anderson provided much-appreciated assistance with some German texts, for which I thank them.

I am grateful to Westmont College for granting the sabbatical time that made completion of this work possible. My dear colleagues in the Religious Studies department covered many tasks in my yearlong absence from departmental responsibilities; I owe them much gratitude. Last, but certainly not least, I express deepest gratitude to my husband for his continual support of my work. It is to him that this commentary is dedicated with heartfelt appreciation for our life together.

Abbreviations

Bibliographic and General

<i>ABD</i>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , edited by D. N. Freedman et al., 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud
<i>BDAG</i>	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , by W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
<i>BDF</i>	<i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , by F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961)
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> , edited by S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, and M. P. Charlesworth, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934)
Eng.	English
ESV	English Standard Version
<i>GELNT</i>	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i> , by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988–89)
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NA ²⁷	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , edited by [E. and E. Nestle], B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, 27th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)
NASB	New American Standard Bible
<i>NETS</i>	<i>New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> , edited by A. Pietersma (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OG	Old Greek
OT	Old Testament
<i>OTP</i>	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , edited by J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85)
REB	Revised English Bible
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
TNIV	Today's New International Version

Hebrew Bible

Gen.	Genesis	2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Dan.	Daniel
Exod.	Exodus	Ezra	Ezra	Hos.	Hosea
Lev.	Leviticus	Neh.	Nehemiah	Joel	Joel
Num.	Numbers	Esth.	Esther	Amos	Amos
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Job	Job	Obad.	Obadiah
Josh.	Joshua	Ps.	Psalms	Jon.	Jonah
Judg.	Judges	Prov.	Proverbs	Mic.	Micah
Ruth	Ruth	Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Nah.	Nahum
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	Song	Song of Songs	Hab.	Habakkuk
2 Sam.	2 Samuel	Isa.	Isaiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah
1 Kings	1 Kings	Jer.	Jeremiah	Hag.	Haggai
2 Kings	2 Kings	Lam.	Lamentations	Zech.	Zechariah
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Ezek.	Ezekiel	Mal.	Malachi

Greek Testament

Matt.	Matthew	Eph.	Ephesians	Heb.	Hebrews
Mark	Mark	Phil.	Philippians	James	James
Luke	Luke	Col.	Colossians	1 Pet.	1 Peter
John	John	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Acts	Acts	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians	1 John	1 John
Rom.	Romans	1 Tim.	1 Timothy	2 John	2 John
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	2 Tim.	2 Timothy	3 John	3 John
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
Gal.	Galatians	Philem.	Philemon	Rev.	Revelation

Other Jewish and Christian Writings

2 Bar.	2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch
1 Clem.	1 Clement
Did.	Didache
1 En.	1 Enoch
2 Esdr.	2 Esdras (4 Ezra)
Ign. <i>Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Ephesians</i>
Ign. <i>Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Magnesians</i>
Ign. <i>Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Philadelphians</i>
Ign. <i>Rom.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Romans</i>
Ign. <i>Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Smyrnaeans</i>
Ign. <i>Trall.</i>	Ignatius, <i>Letter to the Trallians</i>
Jdt.	Judith
Jos. Asen.	Joseph and Aseneth
1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees
Pol. <i>Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>Letter to the Philippians</i>
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
Sir.	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata (Miscellanies)</i>
T. Jud.	Testament of Judah
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Josephus and Philo

- Ag. Ap.* *Against Apion*
Ant. *Jewish Antiquities*
Drunk. *On Drunkenness*
Plant. *On Noah's Work as a Planter*
Virt. *On the Virtues*

Qumran / Dead Sea Scrolls

- 1QH Thanksgiving Hymns/Psalms (*Hôdāyôt*)
 1QS Manual of Discipline (*Serek Hayyahad*, Rule of the Community)

Greek Papyri

- BGU *Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen/Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden* (Berlin, 1895–)
 CPR *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri archeducis Austriae* (Vienna, 1895–)
 P.Cair.Preis. *Griechische Urkunden des Ägyptischen Museums zu Kairo*, edited by F. Preisigke, *Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft zu Strassburg* 8 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1911)
 P.Mich. The University of Michigan Papyrus Collection, University Library, Ann Arbor, MI
 P.Wisc. *The Wisconsin Papyri*, edited by P. J. Sijpesteijn, *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1967–77)

Classical Writers

- Advice* Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom*
Ep. Seneca, *Epistulae morales (Moral Epistles)*

Greek Transliteration

α	a	ζ	z	λ	l	π	p	φ	ph
β	b	η	ē	μ	m	ρ	r	χ	ch
γ	g/n	θ	th	ν	n	σ/ς	s	ψ	ps
δ	d	ι	i	ξ	x	τ	t	ω	ō
ε	e	κ	k	ο	o	υ	y/u	·	h

Notes on the transliteration of Greek

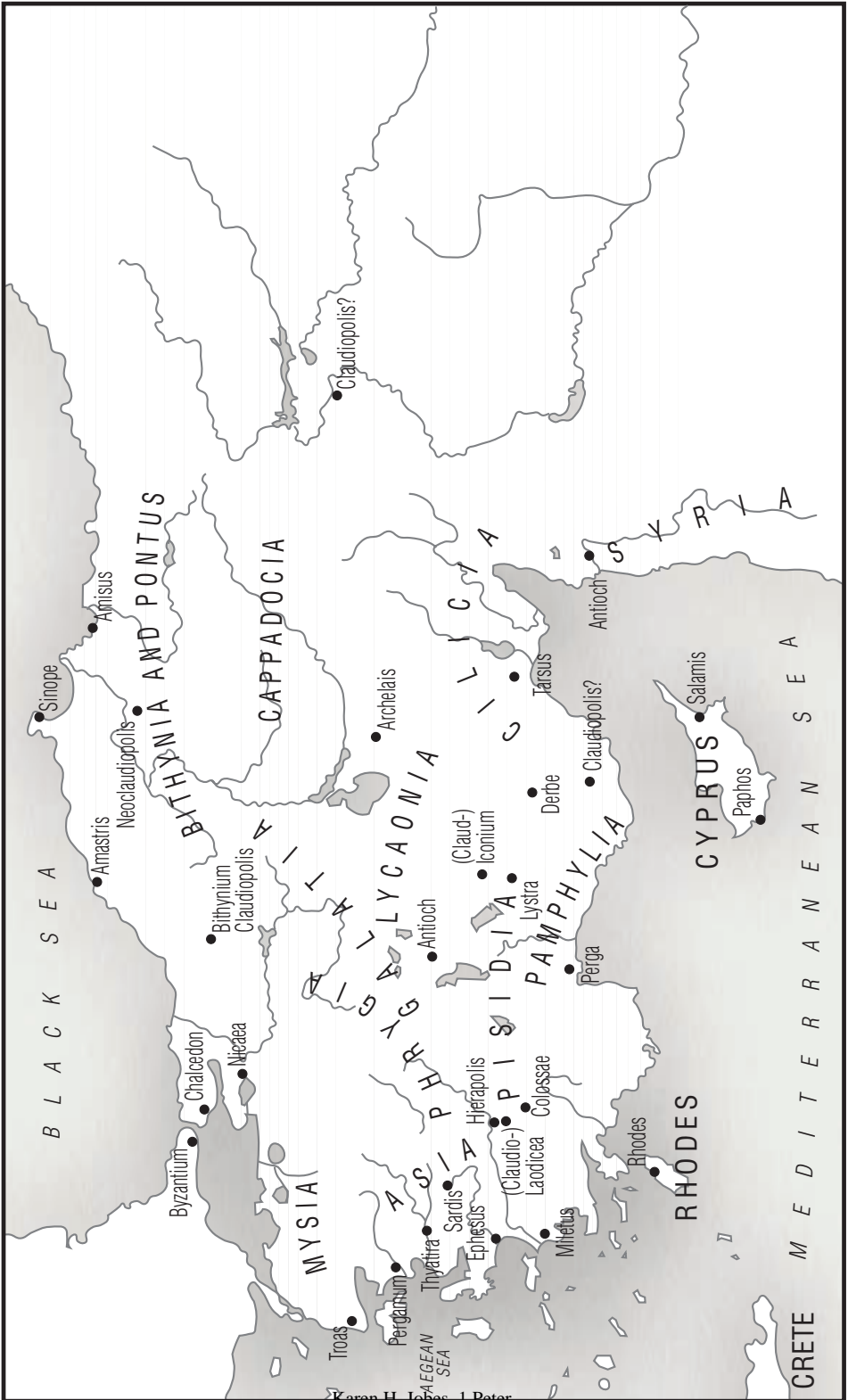
1. Accents, lenis (smooth breathing), and *iota* subscript are not shown in transliteration.
2. The transliteration of asper (rough breathing) precedes a vowel or diphthong (e.g., ἄ = *ha*; αἶ = *hai*) and follows ρ (i.e., ῥ = *rh*).
3. *Gamma* is transliterated *n* only when it precedes γ, κ, ξ, or χ.
4. *Upsilon* is transliterated *u* only when it is part of a diphthong (i.e., αυ, ευ, ου, υι).

Hebrew Transliteration

א	ʾ	א	ā	qāmeṣ
ב	b	ב	a	pataḥ
ג	g	ג	a	furtive pataḥ
ד	d	ד	e	səgôl
ה	h	ה	ē	šērê
ו	w	ו	i	short ḥîreq
ז	z	ז	ī	long ḥîreq written defectively
ח	ḥ	ח	o	qāmeṣ ḥāṭûp
ט	ṭ	ט	ô	ḥôlem written fully
י	y	י	ō	ḥôlem written defectively
כ/כּ	k	כ	û	šûreq
ל	l	ל	u	short qibbûṣ
מ/מּ	m	מ	ū	long qibbûṣ written defectively
נ/נּ	n	נ	â	final qāmeṣ heʾ (נה = āh)
ס	s	ס	ê	səgôl yôd (סּ = êy)
ע	ʿ	ע	ê	šērê yôd (עּ = êy)
פ/פּ	p	פ	î	ḥîreq yôd (פּ = îy)
צ/צּ	ṣ	צ	ă	ḥāṭêp pataḥ
ק	q	ק	ě	ḥāṭêp səgôl
ר	r	ר	ô	ḥāṭêp qāmeṣ
ש	ś	ש	ě	vocal šēwāʾ
שׁ	š	שׁ	-	silent šēwāʾ
ת	t	ת		

Notes on the transliteration of Hebrew

1. Accents are not shown in transliteration.
2. Silent *šēwāʾ* is not indicated in transliteration.
3. The unaspirated forms of א ב ג ד ה ו פ ט ת are not specially indicated in transliteration.
4. *Dāgeš forte* is indicated by doubling the consonant. *Dāgeš present* for euphonious reasons is not indicated in transliteration.
5. *Maqqēp* is represented by a hyphen.



Karon H. Jobes, I Peter

Introduction to 1 Peter

Significance of the Letter

The apostle Peter ends his letter with a statement of its significance, “This is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it” (1 Pet. 5:12 TNIV). For two thousand years, believers around the world have read the letter Peter wrote to the Christians of first-century Asia Minor as God’s word. The apostle explains the significance of Jesus’ suffering and how those who follow him must live out their faith. Some have accurately described 1 Peter as “the most condensed New Testament résumé of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires” (Clowney 1988: 15). Martin Luther describes it as “one of the noblest books in the New Testament” and a “paragon of excellence” on par with even Romans and the Gospel of John (Pelikan 1967: 4, 9; Blevins 1982: 401). Luther believed it contained all that is necessary for a Christian to know (Achtemeier 1996: 64). Perhaps this letter’s universal relevance is due to its presentation of how the gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundational principle by which the Christian life is lived out within the larger unbelieving society.

The life of Jesus and the believer’s life are inseparable in Peter’s thought. In 1 Peter Jesus is not only the object of Christian faith; he is also the pattern of Christian destiny. Jesus’ resurrection is the source of the believer’s new life (1:3). His willingness to suffer unjustly to fulfill God’s purpose is the exemplar to which Christians are called as they live out their lives in faith, following in his footsteps (2:21).

For the original readers to whom Peter wrote, their identity as Christians was not only the source of great joy but ironically also the reason they suffered grief in various kinds of trials (1:6). Because of their Christian faith, they were being marginalized by their society, alienated in their relationships, and threatened with—if not experiencing—a loss of honor and socioeconomic standing (and possibly worse). Many Christians around the world throughout these last two thousand years have experienced a similar negative reaction to their faith by the societies in which they live. Even today there are those who live in peril because of their faith in Christ. For them, the words of the apostle speak directly to their situation, providing consolation, encouragement, and guidance.

But there are also many modern readers of 1 Peter who cannot relate directly to that situation, for we have been fortunate enough to live in

societies where, generally speaking, Christian faith does not lower social standing, jeopardize livelihoods, or threaten life itself. What significance could this ancient letter have for Christians for whom social alienation and suffering for the faith are generally unfamiliar experiences? One Lutheran biblical scholar who has devoted most of his professional career to 1 Peter confesses, “The more I study it, the more alien it seems to the interests and projects of mainstream Christianity” (J. H. Elliott 1998: 179). Classroom discussion of 1 Peter has raised the suggestion that perhaps 1 Peter is for the church in another time and place and that its message of suffering is not necessarily applicable to the church today. The relative neglect of 1 Peter in sermons and Bible studies may attest to the truth of that thought in practice, if not in principle.

However, when viewed from a global perspective, North American Christianity occupies an increasingly receding place in Christendom. Writing about the emergence of large Christian populations around the world, P. Jenkins (2002: 218) observes,

For the average Western audience, New Testament passages about standing firm in the face of pagan persecution have little immediate relevance. . . . Millions of Christians around the world do in fact live in constant danger of persecution or forced conversion, either from governments or local vigilantes. . . . Ordinary believers are forced to understand why they are facing these sufferings, and repeatedly do so in the familiar language of the Bible and of the earliest Christianity.

Wherever Christians are a minority, the message of 1 Peter takes on renewed relevance. For instance, the apostle’s letter became a source of hope and encouragement to Christian students at the University of Halle in Soviet-dominated Germany after World War II (Boring 1999: 143). In former Yugoslavia and Muslim Indonesia, 1 Peter is said to be the most popular book among Christians (McKnight 1996: 35). E. Wendland (2000: 68–78) discusses the contemporary relevance of 1 Peter to the Bantu in Africa. Even within the United States, J. H. Elliott applies Peter’s principles to the sanctuary movement that shelters political refugees (1998).

The social ethos of the first-century Greco-Roman setting of 1 Peter is undoubtedly substantially different from that of those cultures today founded upon the Judeo-Christian ethic. Nevertheless, the principles upon which Peter offers his original readers consolation, encouragement, and guidance in their specific situation are applicable to all Christians at all times. The apostle wants his readers to recognize the sweeping scope of new life in Christ and the implications for how they view themselves now that they have been born again by the mercy of God the Father through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1:3). They must no longer think of themselves and their relationships to family and society in the same

way they did in their former life (4:3). As S. McKnight (1996: 36) puts it, "Peter intends his readers to understand who they are before God so that they can be who they are in society."

However, a Christian self-understanding based on the NT is christocentric and society is not. Herein lies the significance of 1 Peter for modern readers. Christians need to be transformed in their thinking about who they are in Christ and what that implies for relationships with other believers and with society, regardless of one's historical moment or geographical location. First Peter applies principles of Christian conduct to a specific Christian community living out the faith in troubling times, and so this letter has something important to say about the engagement of Christians and culture. These concepts of Christian self-understanding and cultural engagement speak to the heart of the believer, whether babes in Christ or seniors in the faith.

First Peter encourages a transformed understanding of Christian self-identity that redefines how one is to live as a Christian in a world that is hostile to the basic principles of the gospel. Acknowledging that estrangement, Peter writes to those whom he addresses as "foreigners and resident aliens" (2:11) within the society in which they lived. He holds up Jesus Christ as the true outsider, coming into this world but being rejected and executed by it. Reflecting on the message of 1 Peter, M. Volf (1994: 17) writes, "The root of Christian self-understanding as aliens and sojourners lies not so much in the story of Abraham and Sarah and the nation of Israel as it does in the destiny of Jesus Christ, his mission and his rejection which ultimately brought him to the cross." The example of Christ's suffering in 1 Peter is the pattern that explains the experience of Christians who suffer for their faith. The relationship between Christ and the world defines the basic principle of Christian self-understanding and engagement with culture. Therefore, Peter exhorts Christians to engage the world as foreigners and resident aliens, having a healthy respect for the society and culture in which they live while at the same time maintaining an appropriate separation from it. It is as foreigners and resident aliens that Peter's readers are to abstain from carnal desires that, even though perhaps socially acceptable, war against the soul, while at the same time living good lives among the Gentiles (2:11-12).

The relationship between the Christian and culture is an overarching theme of 1 Peter; as relevant now as it was when first penned. Using sociological methodology, J. H. Elliott (1981) argued that the author of 1 Peter was concerned to maintain the identity of the Christian community and to discourage accommodation to the surrounding culture. In the same year Balch (1981) approached the issue of the relationship of the Christian community to culture by considering the household codes in their sociohistorical setting (2:18-3:7). He concluded the opposite of Elliott, that the author of 1 Peter was in fact encouraging a

level of accommodation to society in order to avoid undue alienation from it. Both positions reduce the complexity of 1 Peter on this point, which, as Volf (1994: 22) observes, calls for “the possibility of either rejecting or accommodating to particular aspects of the surrounding culture in a piece-meal fashion.” First Peter offers various examples of accommodating, rejecting, subverting, and transforming culture. A prime example is the so-called household code of 2:18–3:7, which discusses the relationship of members of the first-century household with each other but does so in view of apostolic concern with the relationship of the Christian community to the society in which it has taken root (see comments on 2:18–3:7). The principles of 1 Peter’s differentiated acceptance and rejection of first-century culture offer perhaps the letter’s most significant contribution to contemporary Christian thought of its time. Moreover, Peter’s principles remain significant for the church today, living in times when social values and structures are changing at a rapid pace. The epistle is especially relevant in the Third World, where Christianity is no longer a missionary religion but is becoming indigenous in cultures that were not formed by the Judeo-Christian tradition. First Peter’s emphasis on Christian engagement with society makes it a relevant and thought-provoking book for all times and places.

In addition to thoughtfully reflecting on the Christian’s relationship to society, 1 Peter raises a second related issue by presenting the challenging principle that it is better to suffer than to sin. Christians are to understand themselves as a people who are done with sin (see comments on 4:1), which means that one must be prepared to suffer the consequences of not sinning. The thought that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life (4:12) and within God’s will may be a startling thought, especially for those who became Christians with the idea that “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” It is easy to confuse vicarious atonement with vicarious suffering and think that because Jesus suffered, Christians do not have to. The place of suffering in God’s will was also confusing to Peter’s original readers. The apostle explains their experience in light of the example of Jesus and challenges the Christian to live out the gospel boldly by embracing suffering if it should come. In the face of pressure to conform to social expectations, Peter exhorts his readers to live good, godly lives, to accept consequential suffering, and to continue trusting God.

The Christians to whom Peter wrote were suffering because they were living by different priorities, values, and allegiances than their pagan neighbors. These differences were sufficiently visible to cause unbelievers to take note and in some cases to heap abuse on those living out faith in Christ. Are Christians today willing to suffer alienation from our society out of obedience to Christ? If statistics tell the true story, it would seem that most Christians today, even those who call themselves evangelicals, are in some important ways not very distinguishable from

unbelievers. We divorce at the same rate. We have the same addictions. We seek the same forms of entertainment. We wear the same fashions. And so on. First Peter challenges Christians to reexamine our acceptance of society's norms and to be willing to suffer the alienation of being a visiting foreigner in our own culture wherever its values conflict with those of Christ.

Even those Christians who do not suffer persecution for the faith are called to the suffering of self-denial. Sin is often thought of as being motivated by the temptation for pleasure. But perhaps the real power of sin lies in the avoidance of pain and suffering. It is better to suffer unfulfilled needs and desires than to sin. Is this not what self-denial means? Jesus linked self-denial with following in his footsteps when he said, "Those who would be my disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34 TNIV). For instance, isn't the temptation to lie often an attempt to save face rather than face the consequences of the truth? Isn't the temptation to cheat on an exam an unwillingness to suffer the loss of reputation or other consequences that failure might bring? Isn't sexual sin often the alternative to suffering by living with deep emotional and physical needs unmet? According to Peter, the pain and suffering that self-denial brings is a godly suffering that is better than yielding to sin (1 Pet. 4:1–2).

The "foreignness" of Christians increases as modern society accepts values and legalizes principles that are inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reflecting on tolerance as a highly esteemed modern virtue, S. Gaede (1993: 11) writes, "We live in strange times. Or the times we live in make strangers out of folks like me. I'm not sure which." First Peter presents the Christian community as a colony in a strange land, an island of one culture in the midst of another. The new birth that gives Christians a new identity and a new citizenship in the kingdom of God makes us, in whatever culture we happen to live, visiting foreigners and resident aliens there.

Date and Authorship: Apostolic or Pseudonymous (and Can It Be Both)?

The dual issues of when 1 Peter was written and who wrote it are so intertwined that they must be considered together. The most basic issue, of course, is whether the apostle Peter wrote the letter, since the text indisputably claims it is from him, or whether it was written pseudonymously sometime after his death (composed by an anonymous author who wrote in Peter's name with unknown motives). A prevalent opinion today is that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous work written by someone of the Petrine group in Rome between AD 75 and 95 who was accurately representing the apostle Peter's thoughts (e.g., J. H. Elliott 2000: 127–30). The presumption of a Petrine school is an attempt to preserve some

semblance of Peter's apostolic authority while allowing for a date of writing that places the book well beyond the apostle's lifetime. J. H. Elliott believes the existence of a Petrine group was inevitable from a social and practical point of view. This may be plausible from a sociological viewpoint, but it does not address why such a group would write in the specific form and terms found in 1 Peter.

Are references to Peter, Mark, and Silvanus (1:1; 5:12–13) all part of a pseudonymous fiction? But if Silvanus were the true carrier of the letter, as J. H. Elliott (1980: 265–66) suggests, assuming he was aware that Peter had not in fact written it, how would he have represented the letter to the recipients he actually had to face? Furthermore, apart from the letter itself, there is no extant evidence from the first century that a Petrine group existed that could pseudonymously represent the apostle Peter with authority. Even if the Gospel of Mark is Peter's testimony, its author does not presume to write in Peter's name. Moreover, even if a Petrine group did exist, why would they be writing to the remotest areas of Asia Minor? The explanation J. H. Elliott (1980: 264–65) offers, that the Petrine group's concern for Asia Minor confirms "the universal ethnic and geographical dimensions of the universal grace of which they write" and reflects a first attempt of the hegemony of the Roman church, does not explain their specific connection to the regions of Asia Minor addressed.

On the other hand, the theory that the letter was written by Peter using an amanuensis usually understands it to have been written during Peter's lifetime and under his direction. But an amanuensis merely shades into a pseudonymous author if a close associate composed the letter shortly after Peter's death. On this ground the letter is often claimed to be pseudonymous, yet bearing Peter's apostolic authority.

Challenges to Petrine Authorship

The weightiest evidence that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous work has rested on four points: (1) the Greek of the epistle is just too good for a Galilean fisherman-turned-apostle to have written; (2) the book's content suggests a situation both in church structure and in social hostility that reflects a time decades later than Peter's lifetime; (3) 1 Peter exhibits a dependence on the so-called deuteropauline books and must therefore have been written after them, which would date 1 Peter to the late first century; and (4) Christianity could not have reached these remote areas of Asia Minor and become a target for persecution until a decade or more after Peter had died, at the earliest.

As for the first point, the Greek of 1 Peter does seem to be too good for Peter himself to have written it, in the opinion of scholars on both sides of the authorship question. Even those supporting a date within Peter's lifetime propose that he used an amanuensis more highly skilled

in Greek than himself. However, the quality of the Greek is a somewhat subjective judgment that must be evaluated on several levels. Recent scholarship has concluded that the overall structure of the letter does seem to follow the contours of formal Greek rhetoric (B. Campbell 1998; Thurén 1990; Thurén 1995; Tite 1997). However, even if such a rhetorical structure does organize 1 Peter, does it follow that its author was deliberately following the principles of formal rhetoric? Or was he simply presenting a well-structured argument consistent with general practice of the time? Assigning Latin rhetorical terms to various sections of the epistle does not prove that the author had a high level of formal training in Greek rhetoric. But beyond the overall rhetorical structure, it is argued that features such as its “polished Attic style, Classical vocabulary . . . and rhetorical quality . . . make it one of the more refined writings in the NT” (J. H. Elliott 2000: 120). First Peter does contain series of words with similar sounds, accumulation of synonyms, the use of anaphora, antithetic and synthetic parallelism, coordinate parallel expressions first negative and then positive, rhythmic structure, and the frequent use of conjunctive participles and relative clauses (Achtmeier 1996: 3). However, 1 Peter is not nearly as rhetorically ornamented as is, for instance, the book of Hebrews. And one could probably find examples of well-argued modern English discourse that follow the general contours of formal Greek rhetoric. The question remains, on the one hand, whether the traits displayed by 1 Peter would *require* an author formally trained in Greek rhetoric and, on the other hand, whether someone like the apostle Peter could have ever attained that level of proficiency, with or without formal training.

At the level of syntax, the Greek of 1 Peter arguably exhibits bilingual interference that is consistent with a Semitic author for whom Greek is a second language (see the excursus at the end of the book). This is perhaps the most telling feature of the Greek of 1 Peter, for a letter’s syntax flows almost subconsciously from an author’s proficiency with the language, unlike the deliberate structure, content, and ornamentation of a discourse. Schutter has also observed certain Semitic tendencies in the Greek of 1 Peter (1989: 83). A comparison of 1 Peter with Josephus and Polybius clearly shows that its syntax is not nearly as “good” as the classical writer Polybius, or even as good as the Palestinian Jewish writer Josephus, if “good” is defined as the Greek style and syntax of a native proficient writer. Syntax criticism (see excursus) shows that the author of 1 Peter had not attained the same mastery of Greek that Josephus had in at least four areas: (a) the use of prepositions, which are notoriously difficult to master in any second language; (b) the use of the genitive personal pronoun; (c) the position of attributive adjectives; and (d) the use of the dative case with the preposition ἐν (*en*). And so, regardless of the level of rhetorical achievement, the author of 1 Peter may well have been a Semitic speaker for whom Greek was

a second language. Since Semitic languages were limited to Palestine and adjoining areas in the first century, the author of 1 Peter was probably not a Greek- or Latin-speaking Roman or a Christian elder in Asia Minor, as has sometimes been proposed. The issue of whether Peter wrote the letter himself cannot be so summarily dismissed by appeals to the quality of the epistle's Greek without further critical investigation of several key questions.

The three remaining arguments claim, in general terms, that 1 Peter reflects a *Sitz im Leben* most consistent with a time in the development of the Christian church that is much later than Peter's lifetime.¹ This argument is usually based on three points: (1) the persecution reflected in the book is consistent with that of the last decades of the first century and the opening decades of the second; (2) the church structure reflects developments toward the end of the first century; (3) 1 Peter appears to be dependent on the Pauline writings.

Persecution in 1 Peter. Attempts have been made to date the book to the reign of one of the three Roman emperors known to have persecuted the church: Nero (AD 54–68), Domitian (81–96), or Trajan (98–117). More recently, however, interpreters have concluded that the nature of the persecution in view in 1 Peter is of no help in dating the book.

German scholars of a past generation argued that the "fiery ordeal" of 1 Pet. 4:12 signaled a time of actual persecution that was more serious than the potential persecution the letter had previously referenced (see "Literary Unity and Genre" below). This perceived increase in the severity of the persecution was tied up with a source-critical theory that understood the previous chapters of 1 Peter to have been written at an earlier time and eventually joined to the latter chapters, allowing time for the development of persecution to occur before the book reached its final redaction (Cross 1954; Perdelwitz 1911; Preisker 1951; Windisch 1930). The presumed combination of more than one source reflecting two different settings of lesser followed by greater persecution was then read against the background of Christian persecution in Bithynia during the reign of Trajan (Beare 1970: 32). That situation in Bithynia was reported by Pliny the Younger, a Roman official sent to Bithynia, who wrote about sixty letters in a three-year period (AD 109–11) to the emperor Trajan about many topics, among them how to deal with the persistent problem of Christians (Pliny, *Letters* 10.96–97). This construal of the book's redaction led to the conclusion that the final form of 1 Peter dated from the time of Trajan.

More recently, however, the unity of 1 Peter has been sufficiently demonstrated to persuade most interpreters that it was not written in

1. There is virtual unanimity that the apostle Peter died in Rome in the mid-60s during the reign of Emperor Nero. Only Ramsay (1893: 282–83) upholds both Peter's authorship and a late date for the book by arguing that Peter actually survived until well toward the end of the century.

parts over a long period of time (see “Literary Unity and Genre” below). If so, the character of the persecution referred to throughout the book must then be representative of one period of time when the letter was written. In general, the specific persecution referred to throughout the book seems limited to verbal slander, malicious talk, and false accusations (1:6; 2:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:12, 16). While these problems would also be present in times of martyrdom, the situation in 1 Peter appears to reflect a time when the threat had not yet escalated to that point, which indicates an earlier time in Asia Minor than that indicated in Pliny’s letters. Pliny refers to Christians who had recanted even twenty-some years earlier, which would have been about AD 90 (*Letters* 10.96.6). If the situation in view in 1 Peter is less dire than that in Asia Minor about AD 90, then the letter would have been addressed to Christians living there in an earlier time, whose grief in “various trials” was in hindsight only the precursor of worse things to come.

What then of the “fiery ordeal” in 1 Pet. 4:12? Although the phrase has been read as an allusion to Nero’s horrific persecution against Christians in Rome (e.g., Robinson 1976: 159), it is more likely a thought along the lines of Seneca’s proverb *Ignis aurum probat, miseria fortes viros* (Fire tests gold, affliction tests strong men; *Ep., On Providence* 5.10).² The image of trials as a testing analogous to the smelting of gold is characteristic of 1 Peter. Therefore, the “fiery ordeal” is probably not a reference to physical persecution, such as Nero’s burning of Christians, but to trials faced by Christians that test the mettle of their faith (as also Best 1971: 162; Davids 1990: 164–65).

Since the time of Selwyn (1958), virtually all commentators understand the persecutions referred to in 1 Peter to be sporadic, personal, and unorganized social ostracism of Christians with varying intensity, probably reinforced at the local level by the increasing suspicions of Roman officials at all levels (Achte-meier 1996: 35–36; Best 1971: 42; J. H. Elliott 2000: 103; Kelly 1969: 10; Perkins 1995: 15–16; Richard 1986: 127; Robinson 1976: 153; Selwyn 1958: 55; Sleeper 1968: 271; van Unnik 1980: 113). Peter describes the suffering, and hence the persecution that caused it, as worldwide (5:9), suggesting a type of persecution that potentially threatens all Christians *as Christians*, and not the execution of official Roman policy in any one place. Achtemeier (1996: 35–36) describes the persecution referred to in 1 Peter as

due more to unofficial harassment than to official policy, more local than regional, and more at the initiation of the general populace as the result of a reaction against the lifestyle of the Christians than at the initiation of

2. Proverbs 27:21 is sometimes cited as the referent of the allusion, but although that biblical verse mentions the smelting of silver and gold, in both the Hebrew and the LXX it is *praise*, not trials, that test a person’s character.

Roman officials because of some general policy of seeking out and punishing Christians. That does not rule out the possibility that persecutions occurred over large areas of the empire; they surely did, but they were spasmodic and broke out at different times in different places, the result of the flare-up of local hatreds rather than because Roman officials were engaged in the regular discharge of official policy.

This type of persecution may have started from the moment that the name “Christian” was given (Acts 11:26). There are many similar episodes of such hostilities in the early church: 1 Thess. 1:6 (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13); 1 Thess. 2:14–16 and 3:3 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21); 1 Thess. 3:4–5 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:20); Acts 4:21 and 5:40–41 (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13–14); Matt. 10:16–20 (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15); Gal. 4:29 (cf. 1 Pet. 4:3–4) (Moule 1955–56: 7–9; Robinson 1976: 151). Given the apparent widespread scope, prolonged duration, and relatively mild nature of the persecution, it seems less likely the letter was written during a time of official state-sponsored persecution (Achtmeier 1996: 36; Best 1971: 42; Boring 1999: 33). If so, 1 Peter was written either before Nero’s torture of Christians (Bigg 1956: 33; Hillyer 1992: 5; Hort 1898: 3; Kelly 1969: 30) or during the period of relative peace and stability in Asia Minor before the persecution of Christians that Pliny documents, a persecution that had apparently gone on to some degree for two decades prior to his writing (Pliny, *Letters* 10.96.6). Most interpreters who hold to pseudonymous authorship date it after AD 70 but before the persecutions initiated by Domitian’s reign from 81 to 96 (Achtmeier 1996: 50; Best 1971: 63–64; Boring 1999: 33; Blevins 1982: 411; Brown and Meier 1983: 130; J. H. Elliott 2000: 138; cf. also Ramsay 1893: 282). Goppelt, however, considers 1 Pet. 4:15 to be evidence that Christians were being arrested as criminals simply for bearing the name, something that he argues could not have happened before Nero’s reign, and so he dates the book to between AD 65 and 90 (Goppelt 1993: 39, 43, 45).

In the end, because the situation in the letter cannot be associated with any of the three known officially sponsored persecutions but reflects a situation that pertained throughout the first two hundred years of Christianity, the persecutions are of no help in dating the letter.

Church structure in 1 Peter. The consideration of what period of ecclesiastical development 1 Peter reflects is a complicated issue but is no more conclusive for dating the letter. The use of the term ἐπισκοποῦντες (*episkopountes*, overseeing) in 5:2 has been construed as a reference to the office of the monarchical bishop of the second century. When the letter was being dated to the second century on other grounds, the ambiguity of this word was naturally resolved by its presumed second-century usage. However, the word had a long history of more general usage before it came to be adopted as the official term for a bishop (see comments on 5:2). Moreover, the participle describes the activity of what appears to be the then-highest level of authority, namely, the

πρεσβύτεροι (*presbyteroi*, elders), who in the second century were clearly subordinate to the bishop. Furthermore, since 1 Peter is written not to one local body but to a large area that would have been the territory of probably more than one bishop, the term *episkopountes* is not likely to have had that later sense. In fact, the development of the office of the ἐπίσκοπος (*episkopos*, bishop) probably motivated the variant reading that omits the participle *episkopountes* in 1 Pet. 5:2, for it would then be somewhat redundant in the immediate context (see additional note on 5:2).

The consensus of current interpreters is that if 5:2 reflects the structure of the church in Asia Minor, it is a relatively undeveloped structure, consisting only of *presbyteroi* (elders), and is commensurate with the structure of the early churches of the Pauline missions as found in Acts. Goppelt (1993: 338) argues that “in the Pastorals a further stage of development is already seen,” but he nevertheless dates 1 Peter beyond the lifetime of Peter with the claim that this stage of organization, in which elders functioned as overseers, was “typical for the area from Rome to Asia Minor during the period AD 65–80.” Goppelt (1993: 47) believes that the church structure described in Acts reflects not the actual historical conditions of the church in its earliest decades but the much later time when Acts was written. However, even if Goppelt’s claim were true, it does not preclude this form of church ecclesiology from predating 65 and therefore does not provide a *terminus a quo*.

Achtemeier (1996: 37) agrees that the church order of 1 Pet. 5:2 reflects a time earlier rather than later in the development of church offices, and even Goppelt (1993: 46) considers 1 Peter the only post-Pauline book still recognizing charismatic forms of service, as in 4:10. All of this points to an early stage of development in the Christian church of northern Asia Minor, regardless of when that stage actually happened, for Christianity and its full-orbed ecclesiology did not appear in full form everywhere at the same time. If, however, all the churches in other areas of the empire had a highly developed episcopate at the time 1 Peter was written, it seems likely that the author of 1 Peter would have recommended that structure to his addressees as well. All things considered, the evidence of church structure once cited as supporting a later date for 1 Peter actually points in the opposite direction.

First Peter’s dependence on Paul. An earlier generation of German source critics in the first half of the twentieth century commonly argued that 1 Peter exhibits a distinct dependency on Pauline thought, if not an actual literary dependence, and could not have been written before Romans and Ephesians. Therefore, this dependency probably implies a pseudonymous author, not of the Petrine school but perhaps of the Pauline school.

However, if the content of 1 Peter is in fact so Pauline and if in fact it is also a pseudonymous letter written by a Pauline disciple, it is difficult

to understand why the letter should have been attributed to Peter and not Paul. This tension is great enough to lead one scholar to propose that the apostolic name in 1:1 originally had been abbreviated ΠΣ (*PS*) for *Paulus* in the Greek but was later misread by scribes as *Petros* (cited in Boring 1999: 42). In the complete absence of supporting manuscript evidence and scribal motivation, that speculation has been rightly rejected, and the attribution to Peter remains a problem for this theory. Boring (1999: 43) sees 1 Peter representing an “amalgamation” of the Petrine and Pauline traditions where “much Pauline tradition is now set forth under the name of Peter,” who had come to be viewed as the primary apostle of Rome. Both Peter and Paul were revered by the Roman church, with Peter’s hegemony emerging much later. But this argument must assume that Petrine hegemony developed within twenty years of the apostles’ deaths if 1 Peter is to be dated not later than 80, the *terminus ad quem* of modern scholarship.

Not all scholars perceive a dependency of 1 Peter on Paul’s writings. In an appendix to Selwyn’s commentary, Daube (Selwyn 1958: 488) doubts the literary dependency of 1 Peter on Paul, asking, “Why . . . should I Peter, with its good Greek, have put imperative participles for Paul’s clearer imperatives proper?” Schlatter (1999: 64) finds Peter’s statements “antiquated” in comparison to the more highly developed theological reflection of Paul. First Peter contains no references to Paul or to his letters, and the similarities between the two are based on similarities in terms and themes that can be plausibly explained as both authors drawing on common Christian tradition, perhaps particularly the Christian tradition of Rome (Achte-meier 1996: 15–19; Best 1971: 34; Bigg 1956: 33; Davidson 1981: 318; J. H. Elliott 2000: 37; Goppelt 1993: 28–29; Hillyer, 1992: 8; Kelly 1969: 32; Michaels 1988: xlv; Perkins 1995: 48; Snodgrass 1977–78: 105). (For a detailed comparison of 1 Peter with the Pauline books, see Selwyn 1958: 365–466; Achtemeier 1996: 15–19; and J. H. Elliott 2000: 37–40.)

The affinity between Paul and 1 Peter is greatest in Romans. Brown argues that Christianity in Rome was originally developed by Jewish Christians who took a conservative stance toward Jewish tradition, but later the church in Rome accepted elements of Paul’s more liberal theology (Brown and Meier 1983: 135–36). Brown cites three particular strains of thought that join the two books, not in a literary dependence but in a synthesizing development of Christian thought: (1) the use of Jewish cultic language regarding atonement and sacrifice; (2) a similar submissive stance toward Roman rule; and (3) a similar perspective on the *charismata* as the basis of Christian service and office, in comparison to the perceived further development of church office in the Pastoral Epistles (Brown and Meier 1983: 137–39). While these features are offered as evidence for the synthesis of Pauline and Petrine thought by a pseudonymous writer after Peter’s death, all three of them also fit easily

into the earlier days of the Christian tradition in the 40s and 50s. The alleged contrast between the earlier Paul, who made a sharp break with Judaism as reflected in Galatians, and the later Paul in Romans, who takes a more moderate stance toward the conservative Jewish Christian tradition, is probably overvalued by Brown (Brown and Meier 1983: 134–36). For it is not clear that Galatians and Romans reflect a substantial difference in Paul's thought, especially since the situation in Galatia was quite different from that in Rome and called for a sharp demarcation between the truth of the gospel and the practices of Judaism.

Therefore, the nature of the affinities between 1 Peter and Paul's writings does not compel the conclusion that 1 Peter is dependent on Paul's writings, even if Peter knew of them (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15–16).

Two other considerations. In addition to the question of the quality of the Greek and to the three arguments related to the book's *Sitz im Leben*, two other factors have contributed to a late-first-century date for 1 Peter. Unless Peter himself brought the gospel to Asia Minor (for which there is no compelling historical evidence), it is argued that the spread of the gospel from the Pauline churches to the remotest areas of Asia Minor would have taken decades. The even further time it would have taken for persecution of Christians to develop would place the setting for the letter well beyond Peter's lifetime. Furthermore, it is argued that the code word "Babylon" in 5:13 suggests a date after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The origin of Christianity in Asia Minor. In the absence of any historically grounded tradition associating any known apostle with the churches of remote Asia Minor, it has been assumed that Christianity spread only gradually to these remote areas through indigenous evangelization by unknown persons, probably from the Pauline churches in the south. This assumption has led to the inference that it would have taken a decade or more after the lifetimes of Peter or Paul for Christianity to have become adopted by enough people to attract the kind of social persecution that 1 Peter addresses (Beare 1970: 30; Goppelt 1993: 46).

Because Pliny's correspondence (AD 109–111) to Trajan mentions that persecution of Christians in Bithynia had been going on for about twenty years, it is inferred that 1 Peter could not have been written much before 80. The gradual growth of the church in these regions over decades is usually presented as a conclusive argument for pseudonymous authorship. If, however, Christianity came relatively quickly to these regions through Roman colonization of Asia Minor, then that assumption is removed and an earlier date, even during Peter's lifetime, becomes more plausible (see a detailed discussion of this theory under "Recipients" below).

Babylon in 1 Peter. The reference to Babylon in 5:13 is often read as the code word for Rome that is found in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings such as the NT book of Revelation. If so, this is offered as evi-

dence for dating 1 Peter in that period of time when Rome had become such a threat that subversive writing must use an encoded reference to it, a time generally regarded as after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This would place the letter beyond Peter's lifetime and corroborate the theory of pseudonymous authorship (Brown and Meier 1983: 130). However, 1 Peter is not apocalyptic in genre and portrays Rome as neither a great threat nor a great evil. It could hardly be viewed as politically subversive, since it admonishes submission to the governors (2:13) and honor to the emperor (2:17).

The association of the code word "Babylon" with later apocalyptic literature has been confused with a different purpose for its presence in 1 Peter. The reference to Babylon is motivated by the Diaspora framing of the letter (1:1) and functions as the closing *inclusio* of that motif. Just as the Babylonian exile marginalized the religion of the Jews with respect to the dominant society, Roman society of Peter's day was marginalizing the Christian faith (see comments on 5:13). Thus, Rome could have been referred to as "Babylon" at any time after it gained dominance over Palestine in 63 BC, and the *terminus a quo* of AD 70 is eliminated (Thiede 1986). A more personal reason may have involved Peter's desire to avoid calling attention to his actual location, if Rome was in fact the "other place" to which he fled after being arrested in Jerusalem and narrowly escaping execution (Acts 12:17; see discussion under "Recipients" below).

Evidence for Peter's Authorship

If the evidence traditionally used to point to a late date and pseudonymous authorship is actually inconclusive because it could pertain to any period of the Christian church in the first century, then it becomes more difficult to avoid a more direct association of the letter with the apostle Peter himself. And there is substantial evidence that would point to a very close association of the apostle Peter with the letter.

First, the letter indisputably claims to be from the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1:1). In today's scholarly milieu, this may seem a naive point. But under the assumption that epistolary pseudonymity was frequently practiced and widely accepted in antiquity, the text's own claim is sometimes not given its due in favor of inferred evidence of questionable weight. The insistence that the letter's claim to be from the apostle Peter be given its due weight is not an appeal to inspiration and inerrancy. For those doctrines cannot rule out pseudonymous authorship *a priori*, since any legitimate literary form of the time must be allowed a biblical author when so moved by the Holy Spirit to adopt it. Therefore, the question of pseudonymity becomes a question of genre. What genre is 1 Peter, and was pseudonymity a legitimate characteristic of that genre? Specifically,

was *epistolary* pseudonymity a recognized and accepted literary form at the time the NT was written?

While it is likely true that pseudonymity was an accepted literary trait of certain genres, particularly Wisdom literature (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon) and apocalyptic (e.g., 1 Enoch), it is much more questionable whether it was acceptable in personal correspondence, especially since there is some evidence to the contrary. Proponents of epistolary pseudonymity claim that it need not be troubling, for the “feeling that it is somehow fraudulent is a purely modern prejudice” (Beare 1970: 48).

Even though Schlatter (1999: 356), in his discussion of 2 Peter, rejects pseudonymous authorship for 1 Peter, he puts the best spin on how a writing can nevertheless be understood as apostolic even though pseudonymous:

By writing not in his own name but in the name of Peter, a Christian here indicates that the weight of the apostolic word transcends all that is owned by the present community. No message of a contemporary possesses similar authority. This reveals a certain amount of the community’s despair of its own vigor remaining after the death of the apostles, as well as the realization that nothing the community produces can be compared with the apostolic word. By seeking to remind the community in the name of Peter of what it has received, the writer calls the memory that continually draws on the apostolic word the condition for the church’s existence (2 Pet. 1:13).

Such a spin may be a helpful way for understanding a work attributed to an apostle that otherwise bears all the marks of pseudonymity, but 1 Peter does not (Achte-meier 1996: 43; Marshall 1991: 23–24). Furthermore, the claim that the book, though pseudonymous, preserves authentic apostolic teaching is unverifiable when the direct link to apostolic authority is merely inferred. Moreover, even a motive of honoring the apostolic memory may not have been enough to excuse pseudonymous personal correspondence in the early church. The spurious letters to the Laodiceans and to the Corinthians (3 Corinthians), both attributed to Paul, enjoyed some period of acceptance because Pauline authorship was assumed, but were rejected when their pseudonymous origin was recognized (Guthrie 1970: 675–77). Tertullian notes that love for Paul motivated the production of 3 Corinthians (Metzger 1972: 14). Nevertheless, when a presbyter of Asia Minor was discovered as its author, he was not congratulated for honoring Paul but censured for his action and removed from church office, even though his work apparently contained nothing heretical. Such examples of pseudonymous personal correspondence indicate that epistolary pseudonymity was not clearly a recognized literary device acceptable to the church.

Nor was it only Christian sensibilities that rejected pseudonymity for some genres. The learned second-century physician Galen felt incensed, not honored, to discover that medical works were being published pseudonymously in his name. He therefore was compelled to publish an essay entitled *On His Own Books* to set the record straight (Metzger 1972: 6).

Pseudonymity appears to have been an acceptable literary device when the alleged author had been dead for centuries, as in the case of Enoch and Solomon. However, when generated relatively soon after the alleged author's death (or during his lifetime as in the case of Galen!), it appears to have been viewed as a forgery and rejected when its true origin was discovered. It is therefore difficult to see how the pseudonymity of NT epistles could have been so clearly understood and widely accepted as a literary device in the first century. Moreover, the wide range of words in Greek vocabulary used to condemn forgery and plagiarism, and the practices used to detect them, show that they were moral offenses even in antiquity (Metzger 1972: 12–13). Metzger (1972: 19) points out that literary forgeries in antiquity “were of many kinds, from the amusing hoax to the most barefaced and impudent imposture, and that the moral judgment to be passed on each must vary accordingly.” Therefore, Beare's facile remark that resistance to pseudonymity is a “modern prejudice” must be seriously challenged. The assumption that pseudonymous personal correspondence, such as 1 Peter, was a completely legitimate practice that carried no moral implications must be critically reexamined.

Aland (1961: 41), who argues for the legitimacy of canonical pseudonymous books, seems to appreciate the problem of pseudonymous personal correspondence when he distinguishes “an epistle from a real letter” and defines “the Catholic epistles” as the former, therefore qualifying them for pseudonymous authorship. But Aland gives no reason for distinguishing a real letter from an epistle except that the personality of the writer clearly appears in real letters: Real letters “have to introduce their writers,” who “wanted to utter their own opinion on concrete problems to individual addressees and to answer their questions, just as all letters do any time. Here the person of the writer was exceedingly important.” But is this not exactly what the author of 1 Peter intended to do? Therefore, the question of the pseudonymity of 1 Peter turns on the identification of its genre. Was it actual personal correspondence from the apostle to a target audience he had in mind, or an open rhetorical form that was a literary creation intended to bring the first-century voice of Peter to Christians of another time and place? Given that it bears the Hellenistic form of actual personal correspondence (1:1; 5:12–14) and that the themes of the epistolary framework cohere with those in the body of the letter, the former seems more likely (see discussion under

“Literary Unity and Genre” below). If it is personal correspondence, the claim of legitimate pseudonymity becomes quite suspect.

The reasons for rejecting Peter’s authorship in favor of a pseudonymous author, other than the quality of the Greek, depend on the evidence (discussed above) that dated the letter beyond the apostle’s lifetime. If that evidence is found to be less than compelling, the motivation for accepting pseudonymous authorship is substantially reduced. Furthermore, if there is historical evidence that points to a date before the mid-60s, it would be hard to imagine a pseudonymous author successfully writing in Peter’s name while Peter was still alive. This study has found new evidence that such a historical link may in fact exist (see discussion under “Recipients” below).

A second consideration of evidence for Peter’s authorship of the letter lies in its allusions to the teachings of Jesus. The value of these allusions for the question of authorship is debated (Gundry 1966–67; Gundry 1974; Best 1969–70). Selwyn (1958: 23–24) identifies in 1 Peter at least thirty allusions to words of Jesus, which he believes represent the author’s dependence on Q. He labels these words of Jesus the *verba Christi*, using Latin to denote their ecclesiastical status. Gundry (1966–67) examines fifteen *verba Christi* in 1 Peter that he observes had parallels in the Gospels, including John’s Gospel. The phrases in 1 Peter do not quote the Gospels and so do not indicate a literary dependence. Gundry (1966–67: 345) observes:

The most striking feature about the *verba Christi* in I Peter, however, is that they refer to contexts in the gospels which are specially associated with the Apostle Peter or treat topics that would especially interest the Apostle Peter according to the gospel tradition concerning him. There is, so to speak, a “Petrine pattern” in the *verba Christi* reflected in I Peter.

Gundry (1966–67: 349) further declares that the *verba Christi* are “worked into the context of the epistle far too allusively to be a deliberate fake for the verisimilitude.” Thus, he concludes that the *verba Christi* both point to Peter as the author of the epistle and authenticate the sayings of Jesus as preserved in the Gospels.

Best (1969–70) contradicts Gundry’s conclusions with a number of observations. By way of disagreeing with Gundry on the number of allusions present in 1 Peter, he argues that the contacts between 1 Peter and the gospel tradition lie only in two blocks of material in Luke. If Peter had actually authored 1 Peter, one would expect “a more haphazard distribution of contacts” (Best 1969–70: 111). Moreover, knowledge of the *verba Christi* does not imply a personal presence when Jesus originally spoke the words if those words had subsequently become codified in some form, whether written or oral (Best 1969–70: 113).

In response to Best, Gundry (1974) points out that they disagree first on how to identify an allusion to Jesus' sayings. Furthermore, because the apostles would have played a part in the subsequent codification of the Jesus sayings, the existence and even use of a codified tradition in no way counts as negative evidence against Peter's authorship of the epistle.

The *verba Christi* in 1 Peter as evidence of authorship will no doubt be valued differently by different minds. Intriguing are the echoes of Jesus' teachings that clearly are not dependent on the literary publication of the Gospels but reflect episodes from Jesus' life when the apostle Peter was present. When combined with other evidence that points the epistle to the lifetime of the apostle, they form a striking feature that is consistent with Petrine authorship (as also Hillyer 1992: 1).

A third important consideration for the authorship-date question is that the theology of 1 Peter appears to reflect an earlier stage of development rather than a later one (see "Major Themes and Theology" below). The suffering of Jesus Christ and the single-point eschatology that God will one day judge everyone contrast with the more highly developed Christology and eschatology such as that found in the later writings of John's Gospel and the Revelation of John. Moreover, 1 Peter seems unconcerned with the problem of heresies, such as incipient Gnosticism, that receives so much attention in the last third of the first century, particularly in Asia Minor. Nor is the theology of 1 Peter developed in the direction of later Catholicism. If Schutter (1989: 35) is correct, his conclusion that 1 Peter depends more on oral Christian sources than on written also points in the direction of earlier composition rather than later.

A further historical footnote should be considered in the dating of the book and therefore indirectly in determining the authorship question. The names of the areas listed in 1:1 may suggest that the letter was written before AD 72, when Galatia and Cappadocia were combined into one military command marked by a change of terminology in the inscriptions. Hemer (1977–78: 242) concludes from the separate mention of Galatia in 1:1 that "there is some indication to favour an earlier date [i.e., before AD 72] . . . if one accepts that 'Galatia' here denotes the eastern district without qualification." However, his reluctance to press the point is well taken: the areas of Bithynia and Pontus had been one Roman province since Caesar's conquest of them in 65 BC, yet they are listed separately in 1:1—with one at the head of the list and the other at the end, no less.

This study offers further historical evidence that may link the letter of 1 Peter to circumstances that arose during the apostle's lifetime (see "Recipients" below). If so, the accumulating weight of positive evidence that brings the book into the time of Peter must be reconsidered against the traditional scholarship for late and pseudonymous authorship.

Summary of evidence for date and authorship. The rejection of Peter's authorship of 1 Peter is a relatively recent development in the history of interpretation, dating from work in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by scholars who included von Soden, Gunkel, Knopf, Loisy, Windisch, Renan, and Harnack. Prior to that time Peter's authorship was uncontested in the history of the church, and that position continued to be supported by Weiss, Zahn, Lightfoot, Hort, Hatch, Moffatt, and Schlatter. Although the late date for 1 Peter arose from source-critical assumptions that have subsequently been rejected, the theory that 1 Peter is a pseudonymous work that dates to between AD 70 and 90 has nevertheless largely been retained. This is primarily because the quality of its Greek remains at issue. However, the pseudonymous hypothesis generally ascribes authorship to a native-Greek speaker of the Petrine school in Rome. If syntax criticism has uncovered Semitic interference in the Greek of 1 Peter that is consistent with a native-Semitic speaker for whom Greek is a second language, then the pseudonymous hypothesis must be modified accordingly (see excursus). If, however, a pseudonymous Semitic author in Rome is proposed, then further consideration must be given to Silvanus or Mark, and certainly even to Peter himself.

The number of prominent interpreters who continue to favor pseudonymous authorship may suggest that the issue has been settled (Achtmeier 1996: 43; Best 1971: 63; Beare 1970: 47; Bechtler 1998: 46; Bigg 1956: 33; Boring 1999: 30; Brown and Meier 1983: 130; J. H. Elliott 2000: 118–30; Goppelt 1993: 51; Horrell 1998: 2; R. P. Martin 1994: 94; Perkins 1995: 10; Schutter 1989: 17–18). Although the case against Peter's authorship may at one time have seemed "overwhelming" (Beare 1970: 48), it no longer appears to be so. Because the evidence used against Petrine authorship is not conclusive and because of further evidence that points the letter to the lifetime of Peter, many other prominent interpreters believe that an amanuensis wrote under Peter's personal direction (W. Barclay 1976: 163; Carson, Moo, and Morris 1992: 423; Clowney 1988: 21; Congar 1962: 175; Cranfield 1958: 10; Dalton 1974: 265; Davids 1990: 10; Davidson 1981: 318; Grudem 1988: 37; Gundry 2003: 480; Guthrie 1970: 796; Hillyer 1992: 3; Kelly 1969: 33; Kistemaker 1987: 9; Marshall 1991: 20; McKnight 1996: 29; Michaels 1988: lxvi–lxvii, with hesitation; Reicke 1964: 71; Robinson 1976: 169; Selwyn 1958: 62; Stibbs 1979: 23; Thiede 1988: 177; van Unnik 1954–55: 93; Wendland 2000: 25).

Destination

The letter of 1 Peter is addressed to Christians residing in Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Asia, and Bithynia, a vast area of approximately 129,000 square miles (J. H. Elliott 2000: 84). (As a comparison, the state of California covers about 159,000 square miles.) The regions addressed

in 1 Peter comprised the area of first-century Asia Minor that lay west and north of the Taurus Mountains. Tite (1997: 30) has suggested that the specification of these five provinces is merely metaphorical, but his proposal is unconvincing because he offers no explanation for why these particular provinces would be cited.

Asia Minor, now known as Turkey, is a peninsula bordered on three sides by great seas: to the north the Euxine (now called the Black Sea); on the west the Aegean; and to the south the Mediterranean. Its east-west extent was about 1,000 miles, and north-south about 350 miles. A great salt lake and desert occupied the center of Asia Minor, separating the northern Royal Road (built during the Persian period) from a more southern passage that became the great commercial route of the Greco-Roman period, for it was the shorter and less difficult route to travel. Along this southern route, Roman colonies first appeared, one of which was Antioch in Pisidia, established during Augustus's reign and not long thereafter visited by Paul, as recorded in Acts 13 (Goodman 1997: 238). The outstanding feature of the geographical destination of 1 Peter "is the enormous diversity of the land, peoples, and cultures" (J. H. Elliott 1981: 61).

The westernmost region of Asia Minor was the point of the Asian continent closest to both Greece and Rome—hence its provincial name of Asia. It was the first region of Asia Minor to be annexed as a Roman province in 133 BC. Within a few decades, the first 173-mile segment of the great southern road from Ephesus to the eastern Cilician Gates had been reconstructed to Roman standards (Ramsay 1890: 164). This route would later become the conduit of the gospel.

The westernmost province of Asia was the most populated area of Asia Minor, with at least forty-two cities in the Roman period, and was also the most Hellenized region of the peninsula (Ramsay 1890: 95). Here the great Pauline mission took root in Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea, and other locales where the seven churches of Rev. 2–3 were located. Of all the Roman provinces, Asia most wholeheartedly embraced the Roman imperial cult (Alston 1998: 310; S. Johnson 1975: 93; Magie 1950: 1.544). Because of their indigenous religious tradition, the peoples of western Asia Minor easily accepted the emperor as both a monarch and a god (Momigliano 1934: 28–29). Most of the thirty-four cities in Asia Minor with temples dedicated to Augustus were located in this western province of Asia.

Because of its relative proximity to Greece and Rome, more of the population of the province of Asia was urban and Hellenized than that of the rest of Asia Minor. The educated spoke the Greek language, assimilated the Greco-Roman culture, embraced emperor worship, and traveled freely to the west. It would, however, be a great mistake to assume that the sociopolitical situation of Asia applied 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.

East of the province of Asia lay the region of Galatia, which became an imperial province in 25 BC (Frank 1927: 375). The boundaries of Galatia were redrawn during the first century, making it difficult to know with certainty the exact area to which the name referred at a given time. Roman colonization was concentrated along the major southern route in Galatia, leaving the Celtic tribal lands of the northern interior relatively unaffected. Emperor Augustus planted several Roman colonies, among them Pisidian Antioch in 25 BC, which he colonized with “veterans of the fifth Gallic legion—presumably thinking that they might find congenial company near the Galatian country” (Frank 1927: 376). For the first-century emperors, Galatia was important only for military purposes, and the diverse peoples of the province of Galatia were never unified culturally or linguistically during Roman rule.

The annexation and expansion of the province of Galatia completed the Roman domination of Asia Minor that had begun with the province of Asia. Between the annexations of Asia and later of Galatia, Julius Caesar had conquered northern Asia Minor on the fifth day after his arrival in its major seacoast city Sinope after only four hours of fighting. This battle has been memorialized by his now famous words *Veni, vidi, vici*—“I came, I saw, I conquered” (Suetonius, *Julius* 37; Magie 1950: 1.412). Apart from the narrow riviera along the Euxine coast (the legendary home of the Amazons), the Romans found in the interior of Pontus a region more untouched by Western influence than any in Asia Minor except for the adjacent region of Cappadocia (Magie 1950: 1.179). There were only four towns of any size in the entire province (Jones 1971: 155).

The task of organizing these newly conquered lands was given to the great Roman general Pompey, who established eleven urban administrative centers (*politeiai*), which included the three Greek ports of Amisus, Sinope, and Amastris and the ancient capital, Amaseia, as well as seven new Roman colonies (Magie 1950: 1.369–70). In 65 BC Pompey combined his eleven *politeiai* of western Pontus with the province of Bithynia, which had been annexed to the Roman Empire in 74 BC (Ramsay 1890: 191). “On the whole the kingdom of Bithynia remained isolated from the general development of Asia Minor” (Ramsay 1890: 44). According to Pliny, in his time there were but twelve cities in Bithynia, but among them were the cities that would later figure so prominently in Christian history: Chalcedon, Nicaea, and Byzantium (Jones 1971: 164).

Cappadocia, the region farthest east in Asia Minor, remained sparsely populated and culturally separated from the western provinces, making it a place congenial to the monastic life of the eastern Cappadocian fathers even into the fourth century.

According to Strabo, there were only two cities in Cappadocia, one of which, Caesarea, was the major administrative city in the first century (Jones 1971: 174–79). Evidence from inscriptions indicates it had a long-standing Jewish population (Juster 1914: 193). The isolation of Cappadocia from the dominant Greco-Roman culture is evident in the populace’s use of the Cappadocian language rather than Greek even well into the fourth century AD. Basil observes that “the divine providence had saved his countrymen from a somewhat obscure heresy, since the grammatical structure of their native tongue did not permit the distinction between ‘with’ and ‘and’” (Jones 1971: 175). Jones notes further that in Cappadocia “even high officials still used Aramaic beside Greek in the first century BC.” There were, however, three Roman colonies in Cappadocia: Archelais, founded by Claudius; Arca, probably founded by Hadrian; and Faustianiana, founded by Marcus Aurelius (Jones 1971: 179).

The picture that emerges of the regions to which Peter wrote is one of a vast geographical area with small cities few and far between, of a diversified population of indigenous peoples, Greek settlers, and Roman colonists. The residents practiced many religions, spoke several languages, and were never fully assimilated into the Greco-Roman culture (Frank 1932: 374; S. Johnson 1975: 143; Yakar 2000: 61–65). 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.

And yet this untamed region became the cradle of Christianity. From Asia Minor emerged people whose names are immortalized in Christian history. From Pontus came Aquila, the Jewish tentmaker and husband of Priscilla (Acts 18:2), as well as Marcion, the wealthy shipowner and Christian dissident of the second century who resided in the prominent city of Sinope (S. Johnson 1975: 124). Aquila, the famous translator of a Greek version of the OT, hailed from Sinope as well (Juster 1914: 194n6). From Hierapolis in Phrygia (in Roman Galatia of the first century) came Epictetus, the famous Roman slave and Stoic philosopher (S. Johnson 1975: 91), as well as Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, repeatedly quoted by Eusebius (S. Johnson 1975: 109). In the fourth century came the Cappadocian fathers, such as Basil, bishop of Cappadocia’s capital city, Caesarea; his brother Gregory of Nyssa; and Gregory of Nazianzus, bishop of Constantinople—all three defenders of the Nicene Creed against the heresies of Arius.

To this remote and undeveloped region, the apostle Peter writes his letter to Christians whom he addresses as “visiting foreigners and resident aliens” (1:1; 2:11), scattered across the vast reaches of Asia Minor. We may surmise that, in no small part because of this letter and the faithfulness of those who received it, well-established churches flourished

in all five of these regions by AD 180. Their bishops attended the great councils of the second through fourth centuries, where the doctrines were forged that Christians hold dear yet today.

Recipients

Most discussion about the original recipients of 1 Peter has focused on whether the majority of Christians addressed were of Jewish or of Gentile origin (the consensus is Gentile) and whether Peter's description of them as *παρεπίδημοι* (*parepidēmoi*, foreigners, 1:1) and *πάροικοι* (*paroikoi*, resident aliens, 2:11) should be taken literally or metaphorically (the consensus is metaphorically).

Jewish or Gentile? In contrast to modern interpreters, most ancient exegetes except Augustine and Jerome understood the recipients of the letter to be converts from Judaism. Calvin continued the tradition that this letter was addressed to Jewish converts, and took the phrase *parepidēmois diasporas* (foreigners of [the] scattering) in 1:1 to be a literal reference. This is plausible, since there was a sizable Jewish population in Asia Minor by the time of the first century (Trebilco 1991: 32). The Jewish Diaspora in Asia Minor dates at least from the end of the third century BC, when Antiochus III sent two thousand Jews from Babylon to colonize Lydia and Phrygia (Mitchell 1993: 2.32).³

On the basis of 1:18, most modern commentators disagree that the audience was primarily Jewish Christian; that verse refers to the “the useless way of life you inherited from your ancestors” (for an opposing view see Stewart-Sykes 1997). This understanding is reinforced by the further description in 4:3, “For the time past was [more than] enough to do what the Gentiles like to do, as you went along with acts of abandon, lust, drunkenness, revelry, carousing, and licentious idolatries.” It is argued that Diaspora Jews of the first century could never have been described in such spiritually bankrupt terms and that the ways of Judaism would never have been described as a “useless way of life.” Therefore, most interpreters today conclude that the original recipients must have been Gentile converts.

However, this argument may not be as compelling as it sounds at first. The context is redemption, as 1:19 goes on to say: “Rather, you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a blameless and spotless lamb.” The reference to Christ's blood as “of a blameless and spotless lamb” clearly alludes to the old covenant's sacrificial system, which *was* in fact empty of ultimate redemptive value in comparison with the blood of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul expresses similar thoughts in Eph. 2:3 and Phil. 3:7–9, where he admits that “all of us”—apparently

3. In fact, there may have been Jews in Sardis much earlier, when Obadiah was written, if *Sepharad* in verse 20 may be so understood. There is also a possible reference to Jews in Asia Minor in Herodotus (S. Johnson 1975: 97).

including Jewish people—once lived to gratify the “cravings of our sinful nature.” Paul further describes all of his achievement in Judaism as “garbage” (Phil. 3:8 TNIV).

Calvin (1963: 50) points out that when the NT declares that the true revelation of God is known through the Jews, it is with specific reference to the law, commandments, and temple and does not validate the practices of the contemporaneous Jewish people. Moreover, the possibility that numbers of Diaspora Jews had assimilated pagan values and adopted corrupted lifestyles to a greater or lesser extent is not out of the question. Even synagogues in Galilee were decorated with mosaics representing the zodiac with the sun-god at its center, depictions of Hercules, scenes reminiscent of the Dionysus cult, and other pagan symbols (Baumgarten 1999: 73, 80). To what extent such decoration is evidence of a syncretistic assimilation is highly debated, but the fact that other Jews defaced many such symbols in ancient times suggests their passionate disapproval. The impulse for the incorporation of Hellenistic symbols into synagogue decor came from wealthy Jewish donors as a display of “their acculturation in the Hellenistic world” (Baumgarten 1999: 82). Even though a penchant for decorative artwork does not necessarily imply Hellenistic Jews practiced the pagan vices that Peter lists in 4:3, assimilation to pagan cultural norms and practices cannot be ruled out in the reference to doing what the “Gentiles like to do.” To some extent and in various ways, some Diaspora Jews, though God’s covenant people, may have lived like pagans and were in any case as needy as Gentiles of renewing a covenant relationship with God in Christ.

Understood this way, it makes little difference whether the original readers were Jews or Gentiles. Both spiritual systems were empty in that in themselves they offered no redemption, and both people groups were equally guilty in God’s sight. Whether converts from paganism or Judaism, the letter’s recipients needed to understand their new covenant relationship with God in Christ and the implications of that relationship for transformed living. Nevertheless, faith in Jesus, the *Jewish* Messiah, brought converts into the religious world of Judaism, not of pagan religions. Therefore, whether Peter’s readers were formerly Jews or Gentiles, Peter addresses them indiscriminately from within the traditions of biblical Israel, in which the author was thoroughly steeped.

Foreigners and resident aliens: literal or metaphorical? Modern commentators almost unanimously take the description of the recipients as *parepidēmoi* (visiting foreigners) and *paroikoi* (resident aliens) to be a metaphor for the Christian journey through this earthly life and seek no further explanation. Most have not been persuaded by J. H. Elliott (1981; 2000), who argues that these terms are not metaphors but socioeconomic descriptors. When they are understood as figurative language, there is no agreement about the controlling metaphor of the book. T. Martin (1992a) understands *diaspora* to be the controlling metaphor (also Tite

1997: 32), Feldmeier (1992) presents *der Fremde* (the stranger), Seland (2001) argues for the *proselyte* as the key, and Achtemeier (1996) offers the quite general *Israel as the people of God*.

The view that the terms *parepidēmoi* and *paroikoi* are used metaphorically of Peter's Christian readers is justified because these terms occur in the LXX to describe God's ancient people Israel in their various historical situations.⁴ First Peter 2:9–10 uses other terms from the OT as well—chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession—to describe Peter's Christian readers who are now understood to be the people of God. The terms *parepidēmoi* and *paroikoi* are similarly understood as descriptions applied metaphorically first to ancient Israel and now to Christians. Clowney (1988: 228), for instance, believes “the figurative meaning that is clearly present offers ample ground for setting aside the literal meaning” of the terms. Achtemeier (1989: 228), arguing against J. H. Elliott, concludes that “this phrase [*paroikoi*] is drawn not from the political arena of the Greco-Roman world to describe the political status of the readers . . . but rather is again chosen under the influence of the controlling metaphor, the chosen people, and applied to Christians.” While the figurative sense of the description of the addressees is apt, the letter must nevertheless have had some particular social and historical setting, and there must have been some precipitating occasion for its writing. Whatever metaphorical sense these terms carry for the Christian life need not exclude some literal sense related to the letter's original historical circumstances. This study presents an alternative sociopolitical background from which the metaphorical sense derived its power for this particular group of people to whom the letter was originally addressed.

Discussions of Jewish or Gentile Christians and literal or figurative foreigners have proceeded from the unquestioned assumption that the Christians addressed were native to Asia Minor and had been converted to Christ in their native residence. This assumption raises the issue of how conversions over such a vast area of about 129,000 square miles occurred when there is not a shred of extant historical evidence of first-century evangelism in most of the regions mentioned, much less of apostolic evangelism. The assumption has been that Christianity came to northern Asia Minor by one or more unknown traveling evangelists. Some speculate this was possibly Peter himself or his associates from Jerusalem (Brown and Meier 1983: 131). Others propose a gradual evangelization through believers from the Pauline churches, since Paul himself was explicitly forbidden by the Spirit to enter Bithynia (Acts 16:6–10), and there is no evidence he ever traveled most of the area addressed.

4. See in the LXX: Gen. 15:13; 23:4; Exod. 2:22; Lev. 25:23; Deut. 23:8 (23:7 Eng.); 1 Chron. 29:15; Ps. 38:13 (39:12 Eng.); 104:12–13 (105:12–13 Eng.); 118:19 (119:19 Eng.).

The assumption that Christianity came to northern Asia Minor through the conversion of indigenous people has led to the inference that Christianity spread gradually throughout this area. Thurén (1990: 31) writes that 1 Peter “presupposes a *situatio* in the Christian mission which was hardly achieved before 60 AD.” The gradual evangelization of these areas of Asia Minor demands a date for 1 Peter much later than the mid-60s (the death of Peter) and possibly as late as the time of Domitian (S. Johnson 1975: 116). On the other hand, Pliny’s writings (ca. AD 110) imply persecution of Christians by the Roman authorities that had been present to some extent for at least twenty years (Pliny, *Letters* 10.96.6). This implies that by the late 80s or early 90s there must have been a critical mass of Christians who had come to the attention of society and of the authorities.

Those who speculate that the apostle Peter himself evangelized these areas often raise the concern about Peter working in areas that may have overlapped with Paul’s mission work in the provinces of Galatia and Asia, although most of the regions addressed lie outside Paul’s area of activity. Selwyn (1958: 61) has theorized that Paul was forbidden to enter this area (Acts 16:6–10) specifically because Peter was already at work there. Perhaps as Peter gradually made his way westward from Jerusalem toward his death in Rome twenty-some years later, he passed through these remote areas and later wrote to the Christian converts he left behind there. If so, it is strange that nothing in 1 Peter alludes to such travels or to a firsthand knowledge of any of the areas addressed. Furthermore, 1:12 seems to imply that others had preached the gospel to Peter’s original readers. Moreover, if Peter did travel to these places, his effort would have to have been quite extraordinary, for the shortest route across Asia Minor from the east to the major western port of Ephesus, and on to Corinth or Rome, was the southern Roman road traveled by Paul. That route would have taken him south of the Taurus Mountains, bypassing most of Galatia and avoiding Bithynia, Pontus, and Cappadocia altogether. Furthermore, if the apostle Peter had been the founder of Christianity in northern Asia Minor, it is more than curious that not even a hint of that apostolic heritage has survived in textual form from such a vast area that later became a center of Christianity.

Given the complete lack of historical evidence, the conversion of these regions through evangelization *in situ* is inference based on sheer speculation. Perhaps the alternative possibility should be considered: that the Christians to whom Peter writes had become Christians elsewhere, had some association with Peter prior to his writing to them, and now found themselves foreigners and resident aliens scattered throughout Asia Minor. Peter writes a word of encouragement, using their life experience to explain that all Christians, regardless of their geographical residence, become foreigners and resident aliens in some sense by virtue of their conversion to Christ. If so, Peter would be transforming the

personal situation of those to whom he writes into a powerful spiritual metaphor more broadly applicable to Christians living anywhere that society's values clashed with those of the gospel.

Calvin (1963: 230) understands that the power of the metaphor is derived from the historical and social situation of the recipients when he concludes that the "foreigners" of 1:1 were in fact Jews of the Diaspora in Asia Minor. Although there was a sizable Jewish population in Asia Minor at that time (Trebilco 1991: 32), most scholars have concluded it would be extremely unlikely that all converts to Christianity came from the relatively few Jewish synagogues, given what is known of the demographics of the early church. If, however, the description of the recipients as foreigners and resident aliens did have a particular historical significance—in addition to its clear spiritual significance—can another plausible scenario be found? Two possibilities present themselves: Pentecost pilgrims or Roman colonization.

Pentecost Pilgrims and the Origin of 1 Peter

Three of the regions named in 1:1—Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia—are also among those listed in Acts 2:9–11. Pilgrims from these regions may have heard Peter's first sermon on Pentecost in Jerusalem and taken the gospel message back to Asia Minor in the very earliest days of the church. There is, however, no explicit information in Acts that the people from these regions who heard Peter did in fact convert to Christ or that they returned to Asia Minor. Perhaps they were Jews who had emigrated from Asia Minor to Palestine and were in permanent residence there. However, if they were pilgrims from these regions who did convert and return, that would explain Peter's association with them, for they would certainly have considered Peter, the great preacher on the day of Pentecost, as their spiritual father and an authority on the gospel. If these are the people to whom Peter writes, then he was thinking of them as God's people living away from the promised land and therefore "foreigners and resident aliens" (*parepidēmoi* and *paroikoi*), as their remote ancestors in the Diaspora had also been (cf. Gen. 23:4; Ps. 39:12).

An argument against this scenario is that relatively few people from Asia Minor are likely to have been in Jerusalem and probably even fewer, if any, converted to Christ. If they were pilgrims to Jerusalem, Peter's acquaintance with them—if he had any personal contact at all—would have been current for only a short time. This would require the letter to have been written soon after Pentecost, probably in the 30s, and just shortly after Peter's making their acquaintance. But the letter does not seem to have in mind just a few individuals (it mentions no one by name), and it makes no allusion to Jerusalem or Pentecost, as might be expected if this were the origin of the correspondence. Furthermore, when he mentions "those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy

Spirit” (1:12), Peter implies that he did not first bring the gospel to them. Moreover, the letter itself suggests a time later than the early 30s. Elders are mentioned in 5:1, although they could have been elders of the synagogue before their conversion in Jerusalem. Persecution for the name of Christ had developed, and Peter already had an association with the church at Rome if “Babylon” in 5:13 is to be so understood. Such factors do not easily allow for a date shortly after Pentecost. Is there another place where converts could have been associated with Peter and then scattered to Asia Minor as foreigners and resident aliens?

Roman Colonization and the Origin of 1 Peter

Antiochus III was not the last ruler to displace people in order to strengthen the rule of his empire through colonization. In fact, territory gained by expansions of the Roman Empire was also colonized by displaced peoples (Noy 2000: 19). Roman colonization had begun in Italy in the earliest days of the republic and became standard procedure as the empire grew by conquest and annexation. Under Augustus,

a deliberate plan was adopted, whereby the newly annexed districts were to be Romanized by founding colonies with civic institutions modeled on those of Rome, established especially in that part of the province which had been least affected by contact with the Graeco-Roman world. Through these regions also roads were constructed to serve as the means whereby this contact might become increasingly closer. (Magie 1950: 1.466)

Such colonization was intended to accomplish one or more of three purposes: (1) to romanize an area, introducing Roman language, culture, and politics to the native populations through the colonists; (2) to provide a strategic military presence, especially on the frontier; and (3) to foster and accommodate commerce between distant places in the empire (Brewster 1993: 139; Salmon 1970: 13–28).

The policy of urbanization through colonization was an active principle of the Roman emperors in the first century.⁵ Under the *pax Romana* (Roman peace) established by Augustus, business, commerce, and personal travel occurred with relative speed and ease along well-established Roman routes, making such a strategy possible. After the

5. For instance, Augustus colonized Africa (Rostovtzeff 1926: 318) and Asia Minor (Frank 1962: 376); Tiberius colonized Caesarea in Cappadocia (Brewster 1993: 143); Claudius established colonies in Asia Minor and also in Thrace, Britain, and Syria (Rostovtzeff 1926: 251; *CAH* 10:679); Nero, in Italy (Alston 1998: 120); Vespasian, in Spain, Germany, the Danubian provinces (Rostovtzeff 1926: 111), and Asia Minor (Magie 1950: 1.570); Domitian, in the borderland of Lydia and Phrygia (Magie 1950: 1.570); Trajan, in Dacia, Thrace, and Moesia Inferior; though he forbade emigration from Italy (Rostovtzeff 1926: 250, 358).

time of Hadrian, the creation of cities became increasingly less frequent, though the process never completely stopped.

Claudius colonizes Asia Minor. Although most of the emperors colonized various regions of the empire, Claudius was the one who made the title of *colonia* a status much sought after by the provincial cities (Salmon 1970: 137). It is particularly striking that Claudius (reigning AD 41–54), whose administration was characterized by conquest and expansion, established Roman cities in *all five* of the regions named in 1 Pet. 1:1. Of all the emperors, Claudius was the one who left the greatest legacy in Asia Minor through the establishment of cities and roads (Mitchell 1993: 1.95–98). Coins and inscriptions from Asia Minor, as well as extant writings of Pliny, provide relevant historical information that Claudius established a *colonia* as a mark of imperial favor in *each and every one* of the regions named in 1:1.

There were good reasons for Claudius to colonize Asia Minor. The political boundaries in Asia Minor were still in flux during the middle of the first century, generating the need to establish strategic administrative centers where none had previously existed and to provide a military presence in unstable times. Of all the emperors of the first century, Claudius was most aggressive in his establishment of new cities throughout the empire (Levick 1990: 164–65; Rostovtzeff 1926: 84). Roman colonies were established (1) sometimes where no town or city previously existed, or (2) by simply conferring *civitas* (citizenship) status on existing prosperous cities whose populations were deemed culturally and politically worthy, or most often (3) by pumping Roman money and colonists into small towns that had become strategic due to changing political circumstances.

Claudius followed the second and third ways of colonization in the five regions named in 1:1 (Scramuzza 1940: 144; see map at the beginning of the introduction). In *Pontus*, Claudius conferred the status of a Roman colony on the old settlement of Andrappa, which then took the name Neoclaudiopolis (Jones 1971: 159; Magie 1950: 1.546–47; *CAH* 10:679). In *Galatia*, the ancient city of Iconium received a new political advantage from Claudius and took the name Claudiconium (Magie 1950: 1.547). Claudius also established another colony in the Galatian area of Trocmi called Claudiopolis (*CAH* 10:679). The ancient settlement of Archelais in newly annexed *Cappadocia* was given the status of a Roman colony (Jones 1971: 179; *CAH* 10:679; Levick 1990: 158, 178; Magie 1950: 1.547). In the province of *Asia* the Seleucid community of Laodicea became romanized with the name Claudiolaodicea (Magie 1950: 1.547). And finally in *Bithynia* the town of Boli was conferred with a new status that required its name to become Bithynium-Claudiopolis (Jones 1971: 164; *CAH* 10:679; Magie 1950: 1.546). Elsewhere in Asia Minor Claudius also established five colonies in Pisidia and Lycaonia (*CAH* 10:680; see also Levick 1990: 158, 178; Magie 1950: 1.547; Momigliano 1934: 64–65)

as well as in Syria at Ptolemais Acco (Levick 1990: 183) and in Thrace (Rostovtzeff 1926: 251). It is striking that Claudius—and perhaps only Claudius—established colonies in each of the five regions specifically named in 1:1.

Populating the colonies. The emperors determined how to populate these newly designated colonies, usually by sending at least three hundred colonists who had cultural and political loyalties to Rome (although in one case 6,000 colonists were settled; Rostovtzeff 1926: 316). The aristocracy of Rome generally encouraged colonization, for it presented a socioeconomic opportunity for those who would otherwise remain poor and discontented in the city of Rome. Sometimes slaves in the city of Rome were freed and granted citizenship if they would emigrate to a newly founded colony (Frank 1932: 58; Noy 2000). Some residents of Rome eagerly volunteered to emigrate, for as colonists they were given homesteading land, and their families often became a part of the elite local leadership within a generation or two (Rostovtzeff 1926: 317, 327). If the colony was of military value, the emperors often populated it with veterans of the Roman army.

Although colonists were not automatically granted Roman citizenship, colonization did create a class of provincial city-dwellers who would be the best supporters of the Roman regime, which had given them such opportunities (Salmon 1970: 15). The creation of new urban centers of commerce also provided an opportunity for the native indigenous population to become merchants and shopkeepers, creating a new economic class in Asia Minor. But it was also not uncommon for the emperor or senate to deport a group viewed to be troublemakers in Rome to colonize a newly acquired territory in some remote area of the empire (Frend 1967: 108). Expulsion of noncitizens from urban areas was a common occurrence throughout Roman history for a variety of reasons and sometimes for no obvious reason at all. At times, whole populations were forced to emigrate because they were perceived as disruptive of the *pax Romana* (Noy 2000: 41), or because the emperor had confiscated their lands (Rostovtzeff 1926: 250, 318), or because demands on the food supply needed relief in times of famine (Noy 2000: 27–39).

The choice of the target group was often based on religion, ethnicity, or occupation. Because of a famine during the reign of Augustus, all foreigners except doctors and teachers were expelled from Rome (Noy 2000: 39). Philosophers, who were perceived as being too “Greek,” were repeatedly expelled from Rome. The famous philosopher Epictetus returned to his town of Nicopolis in Asia Minor because of such an expulsion in AD 89 (Noy 2000: 45). Expulsions by the Romans for a variety of reasons are documented from the second century BC through the fourth century AD. The common feature of all of them, however, is that their targets were perceived as being “foreigners” (Latin: *peregrini*; Gk.: *parepidēmoi*; Noy 2000: 46).

Not only were those deported from Rome often “foreigners” (i.e., not citizens of Rome), but they were often viewed as foreigners at their destination as well. Because colonists immigrating from Rome generally benefited from resources often confiscated from the local indigenous population and because colonists enjoyed the official sanction of Rome, they were naturally viewed as foreigners by the native populations, and at times with great resentment (Mitchell 1993: 1.178; Salmon 1970: 150). Sometimes colonists even became a target of violence and persecution by the native population (Magie 1950: 1.548; Salmon 1970: 150). By virtue of being Roman colonists, the people who settled in the colonies were granted some category of Roman rights (often Latin rights), if not full Roman citizenship (Goodman 1997: 136–37; Momigliano 1934: 66–67; Scramuzza 1940: 143; Stevenson 1939: 166). However, because cities reserved the right to bestow local citizenship, even colonists with Roman citizenship were not automatically made citizens in the city in which they found themselves living as colonists until they earned it or bought it through benefaction. And even Roman citizens could be quite poor, since citizenship provided a legal status that did not reflect economic or social standing (Alston 1998: 215). Moreover, upper-class provincials who were citizens of their city but were foreigners with respect to Roman citizenship nevertheless tended to acquire privileges of Roman status even though they may never have technically achieved Roman citizenship (Goodman 1997: 136–37; Sherwin-White 1974: 254). Hence, citizenship in the Roman period was a complicated issue, and therefore the word “foreigner” could be applied in various contexts to various people depending on the reference point. This resulted in complex social relationships accompanied by serious tensions that played out differently between citizens and noncitizens, free and slave, rich and poor in each city (Garnsey 1974: 159–65; Sherwin-White 1974: 254; Levick 1967: 189; MacMullen 1974; Mitchell 1993: 1.177–78; Rostovtzeff 1971: 318–19).

Disputed entitlements, such as land rights, were one way the problem of foreignness played out (Rostovtzeff 1926: 255, 319). From the perspective of Roman colonists, native inhabitants of the territory around the colonized cities had no share in the form of government recognized as Roman and were therefore viewed as “by-dwellers” (Latin: *incolae*; Gk.: *katoikoi*, or possibly *paroikoi*) with respect to the newly established Roman colony (Clausing 1925: 203, 217–18; Rostovtzeff 1971: 250, 334). J. H. Elliott (1981: 2000) has argued that, as *paroikoi* (2:11), all the recipients of 1 Peter were converted to Christianity from among these rural, disenfranchised native populations, who lived in relative poverty. The primary objection to Elliott’s specific social reconstruction has been that the relationships between the social and economic classes in first-century Asia Minor are too complex, and the terms that refer to them are understood too imprecisely, to validate Elliott’s hypothesis

(Achte-meier 1984: 130–33; Achtemeier 1989: 216–17; Bechtler 1998: 17, 206; Dalton 1983: 442–44; Danker 1983: 84–88; Hemer 1985: 120–23). Furthermore, Peter’s exhortation that their women not adorn themselves with gold jewelry and fine clothes (3:3) would seem a cruel mockery if addressed to subsistence peasants. Clowney (1988: 227–28) objects that *parepidēmoi* “cannot serve as a primarily sociological description of all the Christian churches over such a vast area.” Moreover, it cannot be assumed that the *paroikoi* inhabiting the rural regions could read Greek, for most people in these regions retained their own languages (Rostovtzeff 1926: 346). Although Elliott’s theory has not gained wide acceptance, it does rightly call attention to the largely overlooked issue of the historical and social realities that motivated the letter, especially if the later dating during Trajan’s reign has been abandoned (see “Date and Authorship” above).

Expulsion from Rome under Claudius. Claudius was not only aggressive in colonization; for political reasons he was also a champion of the Roman gods and a conservative when it came to religious policy (Scramuzza 1940: 145, 150). Beginning with Augustus, the expansion of the empire over other cultures and the need for imperial unity forced a certain official tolerance of “superstitions” and other religions. “The cardinal point of that policy was to grant hospitality to foreign religions, but to consider them a menace the moment they took advantage of that courtesy to disturb the public peace, offend accepted morals, or engage in converting native Romans” (Scramuzza 1940: 151–52, emphasis added). When the empire expanded under Claudius to Gaul and Britain, Claudius warred against Druidism, outlawing it as an unacceptable religion because of its practice of human sacrifice (Levick 1990: 170–72). Astrology for divination was gaining great popularity in Rome, and the seers of Egypt and Babylon were being preferred to the native Italian diviners. These foreigners were expelled from Italy time and time again, and once more by Claudius (Scramuzza 1940: 147–48; Momigliano 1934: 28).

The most famous Roman expulsion occurred during the reign of Claudius toward the end of the fifth decade AD. As the Roman historian Suetonius tells us, *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit* (“since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome”; Suetonius, *Claudius* 4; Rolfe 1939), an event corroborated by Acts 18:2. The name *Chrestus* has been taken as a reference to Christ, but some historians argue against this understanding (e.g., Slingerland 1989b). Current knowledge does not allow the issue to be decided with certainty, though the corruption of the same vowel also appears in early anti-Christian graffiti (Marucchi 1949: 21). The exact year of this expulsion is debated, but it apparently came several years after Claudius forbade “the Jews” to assemble in AD 41, according to Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 60.6.6).

An expulsion of Jews from Rome in AD 49 fits well the chronology in Acts 18:2, which mentions Priscilla and Aquila's arrival in Corinth after being forced to leave Rome. However, Slingerland (1992) argues that Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius more than once. The historical evidence suggests that the fourteen-year reign of Claudius was a difficult time for Jews living in Rome.

The problem among "the Jews" in Rome was happening about the same time Claudius was upholding the Jews' right to city citizenship in Alexandria (AD 41) and while he was relieving Jews throughout the empire of the oppressive edicts of his predecessor Gaius Caligula (Josephus, *Ant.* 19.280–87). For this reason some historians call Suetonius's historical accuracy into question, believing that Claudius actually held a pro-Jewish policy, which might have prevented the kind of expulsion that Suetonius records. Claudius, however, upheld the Jews' entitlements to freedom of worship, residence, and business in Gentile cities provided that they did not undermine the religious and political rights of their Gentile neighbors (Scramuzza 1940: 151; Momigliano 1934: 34–38). Evangelistic Christians, whether of Jewish or of Gentile origin, could be accused of violating all three points of Claudius's policy on religious tolerance: disturbing the public peace, possibly by their street preaching (as Paul seemed to do wherever he went); offending accepted morals (biblical morals being so different from those accepted by pagan society); and engaging in converting native Romans (which was the hallmark of first-century Christianity, as attested by the explosion of the church in those early decades).

Scramuzza (1940: 151), who is a historian and not a biblical scholar, understands the expulsion of the "Jews" from Rome in the late 40s to have been the expulsion only of prominent Christians. There were about fifty thousand Jews in Rome at that time, probably too many for Claudius to expel en masse, and so some selected group of lesser numbers was probably targeted (Momigliano 1934: 31). Moreover, in the 40s Christianity was still viewed by Romans as a sect of Judaism. This might explain how Suetonius's reference to the expulsion of "Jews" could have included Christians, whether they were of Gentile or Jewish origin. But Acts 18:2 refers to the expulsion of "the Jews," and Luke would certainly have distinguished between Jews and Christians. The example of Gallio indiscriminately driving away both Jew and Christian in Corinth when charges were brought against Paul may indicate the indifferent treatment that Jewish-Christian tensions provoked (Acts 18:12–17). Similarly, Claudius's expulsion of the Jews, for whatever reason, could have included Christians, but was probably not specifically targeted at Christians *as Christians*.

Peter in Rome? Recently, Botermann (1996: 127) has argued that Claudius became more hostile to the Jews of Rome because of trouble among them that resulted specifically from the preaching of the apostle

Peter in the early 40s. Tradition does associate Peter with Rome long before his death there during the reign of Nero (see O'Connor 1969 for an extensive discussion of the literary, liturgical, and archaeological evidence). A reference in Ignatius (*Ign. Rom.* 4.3) is sometimes cited as early-second-century evidence that Peter not only died in Rome but had also resided there, yet it actually says nothing to the question. It was not until the third century that the tradition of Peter's twenty-five-year episcopate in Rome developed (O'Connor 1975: 147). Since the time of the Reformation, Protestants have rejected this tradition because it has been used to validate apostolic succession for the Roman papacy. Moreover, both Catholic and Protestant scholars view the tradition with skepticism, since neither the NT nor any other contemporary, extant documents directly validate its historical accuracy, and the later Christian documents, such as Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, seem to be based more on inference than on historical knowledge. However, the absence of extant historical validation does not necessarily disprove that Peter had an early association with, if not residence in, the imperial city. Furthermore, even if Peter arrived in Rome in the early 40s, it does not mean that he held a supreme bishopric there or that Peter was founder of the church at Rome.

Wenham (1972), following Balleine, argues that when Peter was released from prison in Jerusalem and fled to "another place" about AD 42 (Acts 12:17), that place was Rome (also Thiede 1988: 155). The almost unanimous opinion of scholarship, both Catholic and Protestant, has dismissed this scenario as "wholly unhistorical" and "quite inconsistent with known facts," as J. B. Lightfoot concludes (cited in Wenham 1972: 95–96). Nevertheless, Wenham (1972), Thiede (1988), and Botermann (1996) are recent scholars who argue in similar terms for Peter's early arrival in Rome during the reign of Claudius.

Following Harnack's dating of Acts to AD 62, Wenham (1972) argues that Luke cryptically refers to Peter's fleeing to "another place" (Acts 12:17) to avoid disadvantaging his defense of Paul to Roman authorities (also Thiede 1988: 154). Moreover, a cryptic reference would also protect the knowledge of Peter's whereabouts, given that he was a fugitive from Roman law in Jerusalem, though this was probably less necessary by the time Acts was written. O'Connor (1969: 10) argues that the term could simply refer to another house in the same area, but agrees that the cryptic nature of the reference could be a security measure. Moreover, Peter's covert presence in Rome does give a reason for his cryptic reference to "Babylon" in 1 Pet. 5:13, if he was intending to avoid revealing his personal location. (The association of "Babylon" with Rome that is found in later Jewish apocalyptic literature is arguably not the same reason for its use in 1 Peter. See "Date and Authorship" above and comments on 5:13.) Just as the Jews had been driven out of Jerusalem and sent into exile in Babylon by their oppressors, Peter had also been driven out of

Jerusalem by persecution and is sojourning in exile in the capital city of his oppressors. Given the good Roman system of transportation, Peter could have fled to any number of places around the Mediterranean, but in fact the only place that claims any association with Peter is Rome.

The primary argument against Peter's presence in Rome in the 40s is silence. There is no early historical evidence that would indicate his presence, but there is also no historical evidence that contradicts the possibility or that offers an alternative. R. Brown is among those scholars who consider the absence of any mention of Peter's early presence in Rome by Luke in Acts or by Paul in Romans to imply that Peter did not first reach Rome until the early to mid-60s (Brown and Meier 1983: 103). Even J. B. Lightfoot bases his conclusion on silence: "If silence can ever be regarded as decisive its verdict must be accepted in this case" (quoted in Wenham 1972: 96). Inference from silence is always precarious, and while the silence in Acts about Peter's whereabouts is curious, it does not disprove Peter's early presence in Rome, especially if there is now some possible historical connection between Claudius and the original destination of 1 Peter.

As Wenham (1972) points out, a twenty-five-year period of Peter's association with Rome fits neatly between the period from Agrippa's reign in Palestine (AD 41–44) and Nero's death in AD 68, corresponding respectively to Peter's flight from Jerusalem and his execution by Nero. In the absence of a competing theory, most NT scholars at least acknowledge the strong tradition that Peter died during Nero's reign in Rome about 66–67. Ramsay (1893: 283) alone argues that Peter actually survived Nero's reign and lived to write 1 Peter about AD 80, but his theory is merely noted as a curiosity by other scholars.

Moreover, Peter's first arrival in Rome in the early 40s would explain how the tradition of a twenty-five-year Roman episcopate from AD 42 to 67 arose. Eusebius may only be inferring that Peter resided and held office in Rome for the full extent of the apostle's traditional association with Rome. However, the earliest use of the term *ἐπίσκοπος* (*episkopos*, overseer) referred not to the ecclesiastical office of bishop, as it later came to mean, but to leadership of the church more generally (as the related participle is probably used in 5:2; see comments). As Wenham (1972: 97) points out, "If Peter twenty-five years before his death worked for a time in Rome and kept in touch with the church thereafter, he could rightly have been regarded as its overseer." While Peter's association with Rome may have begun shortly after he fled Jerusalem, and ended with his death there, it is not necessary to conclude that he spent the entire twenty-five years in residence or that he held any position resembling the later bishopric. Neither the fact that Peter was not in Rome at the end of the decade of the 40s, when he was in Jerusalem and Antioch, nor his apparent absence from Rome in 57, when Paul wrote to the Roman church, proves that he could not have been in Rome previously. It is

well documented that people traveled between Rome and the East with relative speed and ease, especially by sea (Casson 1974; Noy 2000: 56). Repeated trips were not uncommon, as documented even among less prosperous Christians. The inscription on the tomb of the craftsman Flavius Zeuxis in Asia Minor records that he had sailed seventy-two times to Rome (Casson 1974: 128; Noy 2000: 56)! The crisis in the early church that created tensions between Jerusalem and Antioch would have provided a motivation for Peter to leave Rome and to make an extended visit to both cities. Moreover, Agrippa's death in 44 would have made it relatively safe for him to do so. Given the time span in view, Peter could have traveled to be present at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), in Antioch (Gal. 2:11), and possibly in Corinth as well (1 Cor. 1:12). From consideration of literary and archaeological evidence, Marucchi (1949: 22) concludes that Peter most likely arrived in Rome during the reign of Claudius, between 41 and 54, left when the edict of Claudius was published in about 49, and did not return to Rome again until shortly before his death.

Concerning Peter's association with Corinth, it is worth noting that Priscilla and Aquila arrived in that city after being expelled from Rome by Claudius (Acts 18:2) and that at a later time some in the Corinthian churches had loyalties to Peter (1 Cor. 1:12). Whether Priscilla and Aquila became Christians in Rome or only as the result of Paul's ministry in Corinth is unknown, but the theory that some Christians in Rome who previously knew Peter there ended up in Corinth after the expulsion provides another explanation of Peter's following in the Corinthian church.

But was not Peter in Rome when he wrote the letter? And would that not be unlikely following Claudius's edict? Since most Roman expulsions did not impose a permanent ban, the expelled sometimes returned at a later date after the precipitating crisis had passed. The career of Priscilla and Aquila is one example of the extent of personal travel possible to people who were in the socioeconomic class occupied by tentmakers. Originally from Pontus in Asia Minor, they were expelled from Rome, resided in Corinth, traveled to Ephesus, but were apparently back in residence in Rome when Paul wrote Romans (Rom. 16:3). And so Peter's return to Rome sometime after Claudius's edict would not have been impossible.

A similar problem is the whereabouts of Mark and Silvanus, who are both mentioned as with Peter when he writes (1 Pet. 5:12–13). When and where would all three of them have been together? Some speculate that the three were almost certainly in Rome in the early to mid-60s, possibly soon after Paul's execution. However, the three were also together in the late 40s or early 50s. Both Mark and Silvanus (Silas) resided in Jerusalem before and immediately after the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:22, 36–40). Silas was one of those sent to Antioch from the Jerusalem Coun-

cil (15:22, 32). Moreover, on one reading of the itinerary in Galatians, Paul's reference to Peter's visit to Antioch would have occurred during the same general time frame (Gal. 2:11–14). Peter, Mark, and Silvanus were in the same location in the early 50s in Jerusalem or Antioch and in the early to mid-60s in Rome, providing two opportunities during Peter's lifetime for 1 Peter to have been written.

A further lexical consideration. In addition to the historical considerations, a lexical point from the text of 1 Peter must be considered in light of this theory. The major "qualification" for deportation from Rome was the lack of Roman citizenship (although citizenship was sometimes granted to some colonists who volunteered to relocate). Roman citizenship was such a key to entitlements that Claudius made it a capital crime to impersonate a Roman citizen (Levick 1990: 165; Noy 2000: 24). People who were not Roman citizens were referred to in Latin as *peregrini*, usually translated in English as "foreigners." However, the semantic range of the English word does not fit the semantic specificity of the Latin term. *Peregrinus* "was primarily a legal term for someone who was free but not a Roman citizen," but it said nothing about one's social class, economic standing, or place of origin (Noy 2000: 1). As Noy points out, a *peregrinus* could be from a family who had lived in Rome for generations and spoke only Latin but still lacked citizenship. Conversely, a Roman citizen might not speak any Latin and might never have set foot inside the city of Rome but have acquired citizenship in the imperial city by inheritance, purchase, or manumission. Moreover, "people who were born at Rome could still be considered 'foreign,' by themselves and others, if their attachment to another place (the birthplace of their ancestors, or the centre of their religion) seemed greater than their attachment to the city of Rome" (Noy 2000: xii). But when push came to shove in Rome or other urban areas during times of famine or other duress, it was the *peregrinus* who was in jeopardy of being expelled, regardless of how long he had lived there. Eventually, in the fourth century, the term *peregrinus* was used as the label to refer specifically to the "foreigners" (noncitizens) who were expelled (Noy 2000: 1). To confuse the sense of the term with the semantic range of the English word "foreigner" even further, within the Christian context, *peregrinus* later came to be vested with the sense of "pilgrim." Interestingly, the Greek equivalent of the Latin term *peregrinus* is *παρεπίδημος* (*parepidēmos*, foreigner), the very term used to describe those addressed in 1 Pet. 1:1.⁶

While the use of *parepidēmos* in 1:1 does not prove that the original recipients of 1 Peter had been deported from Rome, it is certainly consistent with the colonization theory. Moreover, by suggesting that not all Christians of Asia Minor would have been described by the same sociological term, it answers the objection Clowney (1988: 228) raises

6. Scapula 1820: s.v. *peregrinus*; Bergren 1991: 116; Schmoller 1989: 386.

to taking the term literally. Because Peter's original readers were not citizens of the dominant power, they had been displaced and consequently found themselves outsiders both in Rome and in their new location. In effect, they were outsiders in their world, which is exactly the point that allows the metaphorical interpretation of Christians as sojourning pilgrims to emerge. This understanding may have actually contributed to the semantic shift of *peregrinus* to "pilgrim" in Christian contexts, reinforcing the metaphorical reference to the Christian life as a journey toward heaven, even though the word apparently did not bear that sense in the first century.

Roman colonization and 1 Peter. If the theory of Roman colonization is correct, Peter uses the sociohistorical situation of his readers to explain their sociospiritual situation. In 1:1 they are addressed as "foreigners," noncitizens, with respect to their society, but as *chosen* by God. In 2:11 Peter begins to exploit the sociopolitical situation of his readers in such a way as to describe Christian living more generally (see comments on 2:11). Once the letter circulated away from its original historical destination, the figurative sense naturally emerged as the predominant understanding. Although Peter's readers may in fact have been resident aliens and strangers in Asia Minor, the cause of their deeper alienation from society is their faith in Christ (which may have been why they were deported from Rome as disruptive "Jews" in the first place). Because they are citizens of the kingdom of God, they are to understand themselves as resident aliens and foreigners wherever they may be residing.

Peter explains to these socially alienated Christians that although they may be rejected in the eyes of their society because of their commitment to Christ—perhaps doubly so, if that was the cause of their expulsion from Rome—they are in fact chosen by God and fully entitled to the promise and inheritance of his kingdom. Moreover, these two concepts are concomitant in 1 Peter: to be chosen by God and committed to Christ is *by definition* to become a visiting foreigner and resident alien in the world and thereby disenfranchised from its entitlements that are based on undivided allegiance to its gods.

According to Peter, however, because they are Christians, their disadvantaged social status does not really matter. Having been chosen by God, they are participants in the new birth (1:3) that brings them into a new family and consequently bestows a new citizenship that is privileged beyond anything Rome or its provinces can offer. For all the glory of Rome is but as the grass and the flower of the field, which fades and falls (1:24). But the word of God, which has germinated within them their faith in Christ, stands forever. One need only look at the ruins in Rome today and the vitality of the Christian church throughout the world to see this truth in historical perspective.

The explanatory power of the theory of Roman colonization. Could it be, then, that a sizable number of Christians went, either voluntarily or by force, to help populate Claudius's newly established colonies in Asia Minor? Because 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.

This theory is based on several points of historical evidence: (1) Claudius, and perhaps only Claudius, established colonies in *every one* of the five regions to which 1 Peter is addressed. (2) Colonies were typically populated by deportations from Rome and other urban centers. (3) There is the historical evidence of Roman writers of the first and second centuries indicating that Claudius did expel people in some way associated with "Chrestus." (4) Peter is the stated author of 1 Peter. (5) The ancient tradition that places Peter in Rome during the reign of Claudius continues to be cogently argued (Botermann 1996; Thiede 1988; Wenham 1972). Even if Peter wrote in the 60s, the colonization of Roman Christians still provides a motivation for a letter to these remote regions.

Most commentators seem quite content to see the motif of foreignness to the world in 1 Peter as simply and exhaustively a metaphor for the Christian pilgrimage through this life. They feel that the spiritual application is sufficient to motivate and justify the metaphor. Perhaps that is true, but it seems odd that the entire book of 1 Peter is both framed (1:1; cf. 5:13) and saturated with the terms of exile and foreignness (e.g., the extensive use of Ps. 33 LXX [34 Eng.], a psalm of deliverance from sojourning as a foreigner). Moreover, 1 Peter is the only NT book to use the motif of foreignness to explain the life of the Christian with respect to society. Paul's use of the foreigner motif in Eph. 2:19 is somewhat different, since it refers to Gentiles, who as Christians are no longer foreigners with respect to God's people. This is a different thought, though not incompatible with the concept that as Christians Peter's readers have become foreigners with respect to the larger reference group of society. The nature and extent of the "foreigner" metaphor in 1 Peter are better explained if it was triggered by a real event or experience instead of just being pulled out of thin air.

One of the tests of a new theory is how well it explains issues that were puzzling or not addressed under the old theory. Looking at 1 Peter in the context of Roman colonization explains a number of issues. The strong Jewish character of 1 Peter would be explained not only because the author was himself a Jewish Christian but also because the defining experience of his original readers was their expulsion from Rome as "Jews" regardless of whether they were previously Jewish or Gentile. Peter addresses them as of the "Diaspora" of Asia Minor (1:1) because they literally have been scattered and because as Christians they are now, both in the eyes of the pagans who expelled them and in spiritual

reality, joined to the ancient people of God. If his readers were Jewish Christians from Rome but perhaps included Gentile converts among them, the puzzle is solved of how indigenous Gentiles of Asia Minor could be expected to understand Peter's theology based on the presumption of familiarity with the LXX. Otherwise, it is difficult to imagine that before the NT existed, scattered people who had come to faith in Christ without the presence of an apostle could be well enough acquainted with interpreting the Scriptures to have caught the theological relevance of Peter's many allusions to, and quotations from, both the OT and the teachings of Jesus. Greek would have been the common language of Peter and the Roman Christians, which eliminates the obstacle of the diverse indigenous languages of Asia Minor. Moreover, if Peter resided in Rome for a time, his own Greek proficiency would have increased markedly by using that language daily, and his exposure to Roman rhetoric would have presented opportunity for his own writing to be generally shaped by its structure. It would also more easily explain Peter's familiarity with Seneca's proverb alluded to in the fiery trial image, since Seneca was the most public literary figure in Rome during the middle of the first century (see comments on 1:7 and 4:12).

If Peter wrote in the early 50s, that would have been the period between Paul's first and third missionary journeys. This may explain why 1 Peter does not address regions visited on Paul's first missionary journey but seems to include some of those in western Asia Minor that were later evangelized on Paul's third journey. It also explains how Peter could write to residents of Asia Minor without violating the agreement to be an apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:8–9), though that distinction cannot be pressed absolutely. It also may explain why Peter does not write to the ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*, church) of specific cities, for his letter reflects a time when only unstructured groups of Christians resided as scattered enclaves throughout these regions. The knowledge of where the Roman colonies were located would have provided a sufficiently specific destination for a messenger to know where to deliver the letter; since no specific destinations or names are given in the letter itself. Moreover, the somewhat odd reference to elders "among" you in 1 Pet. 5:1 could reflect the same undeveloped structure (see comments on 5:1). Perhaps these individuals had been elders in their previous location but were uncertain of their role and responsibility now that they found themselves living among fellow-Christians but without a well-organized church to oversee. This would explain Peter's somewhat unusual instructions that elders should "shepherd" the believers (which would have been stating the obvious in a well-established church) and why he must instruct the younger to respect their leadership (see comments on 5:1–5).

If Roman colonization were the means by which Christianity first came to these regions, it would also explain why no evangelist's name is associated with the church in northern Asia Minor. If Peter had an

association with the city in which these Christians had previously lived, it would be appropriate for Peter to write to these people, whether or not he had a personal relationship with them. Colonization explains why the author speaks in general terms of his readers' situation but does not seem to know specifics he would have known had he personally visited their locations.

Roman colonization also explains how Christianity could have come to Asia Minor relatively quickly. The coming of Christianity to these areas through colonization in the late 40s or early 50s provides ample time for the situation of relatively mild persecution described in 1 Peter to develop into the more malevolent forms of persecution that began by the early 90s, if such time was actually necessary. Moreover, Peter's admonition to his readers to live good lives among the pagans (2:12) and to be prepared to give a gentle and respectful answer to those who ask (3:15) may indicate an encouragement to lifestyle evangelism rather than the more overt preaching and proselytizing that may have caused their expulsion from Rome.

Surviving historical evidence is too meager to confirm this or any other proposal advanced thus far about the origin of 1 Peter. Moreover, perhaps the greatest weakness of this theory is that 1 Peter itself makes no direct reference to such an event, as might be expected. However, the letter refers to no event or situation that could directly enlighten its historical background. We must therefore content ourselves only with possibilities and probabilities. The theory of colonization provides an explanation for many previously puzzling issues, and there are no other competing theories that offer similar specificity. Taken together, this evidence offers for the historical background of 1 Peter a scenario that must be considered at least as plausible as the sheer assumption that the recipients of 1 Peter were evangelized and converted in situ.

The colonization theory also provides a more specific motivation for the letter, motivation that is lacking if the description of the recipients is read solely as spiritual metaphor. Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, was addressing Christians who had been converted elsewhere, with whom he shares an association with Rome, and he writes to encourage them in their Christian commitment when they find themselves scattered across a desolate and pagan Asia Minor. How should they live in such a place? How should they treat each other? How will their faith survive? The later semantic extension of *parepidēmos* (noncitizen) explains how the original historical reference came to be understood in purely spiritual terms of "pilgrim" when the letter circulated beyond its original setting. The perception of Christians as foreigners both in Rome and in their new location yields its power to the truth that Christians are foreigners and resident aliens anywhere in a world that is hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ.