

Disambiguating Rebirth:
A Socio-Rhetorical Exploration of Rebirth Language in 1 Peter

by

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Abstract

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Rebirth language has traditionally been associated with the initiation rite of baptism and relegated to discussions within this limited framework. Analyses of 1 Peter—where rebirth language is particularly dominant—have focussed almost exclusively on a baptismal framework for understanding this language. However, a detailed reading of the letter does not reveal any association between rebirth and Christian rites of initiation. Whatever action, activity or idea triggered the use of this language, its role in the letter has never been adequately explored.

This study employs socio-rhetorical analysis to examine the role of rebirth language within the letter of 1 Peter and within its larger cultural and textual context. Rebirth language is employed in the key opening section of the letter and, within the framework of familial language, serves as a central distinctive of the letter's recipient-focussed argument. As part of the familial metaphor, rebirth highlights the readers' identity as children whose πατήρ ("father") is God. A comprehensive analysis of all other extant (first century) texts employing rebirth language, reveals that, while 1 Peter's use of such language shares some points of contact with other expressions of rebirth, the meaning of rebirth in 1 Peter is not directly tied to any related language. More likely, 1 Peter contains cultural allusions to the developing idea of rebirth that is also shared—in different ways—with other extant

materials. No other source, however, contains the same usage and implied meaning of rebirth language as 1 Peter. Instead, 1 Peter's author, building upon the powerful father-child analogy, intends to shape his readers' self-perceptions using this language to provide a sense of identity without encouraging extensive alienation from the larger society. 1 Peter's use of rebirth language builds upon and intensifies the cultural familial metaphor in order to help firmly establish the recipients' Christian identity in the midst of their associations and interactions within their social context.

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INTRODUCTION

The language of rebirth is found relatively extensively in the brief letter of 1 Peter. Rebirth terminology is quite rare in extant writings and inscriptions of the Greco-Roman world prior to 150 CE. In the opening section of 1 Peter, the author refers to the letter's recipients as those who have been "rebirthed"¹ by God their father (ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ... ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς). Further, in the subsequent section of the letter, the concept of the recipients as rebirthed people is repeated twice. The same rebirth term (ἀναγεννάω) is highlighted a few verses after its initial use, re-emphasizing the importance of this rebirth (1:23). Then, in this letter's second section, the author builds upon these two previous uses of ἀναγεννάω and encourages the recipients to live in a manner appropriate to their newborn identity (ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη...).

This relatively extensive use of rebirth language, in combination with the later Christian identification of rebirth with the sacramental rite of baptism, eventually led scholars to link 1 Peter to the rite of baptism. First, in 1897, Adolf Harnack described 1 Peter as a sermon rather than a letter.² Subsequently, Richard Perdelwitz refined Harnack's theory, proposing that 1 Peter was a substantially reworked baptismal message;³ A few

¹ This is my own term, which I will use at various points throughout the dissertation. I find that other English terms are too "loaded" with meaning that distracts from a discussion of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter.

² A. v. Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, vol. 2, *Die Chronologie*, pt. 1, *Die Chronologie der Literatur bis Irenäus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897), 451.

³ E. R. Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion und das Problem des 1 Petrusbriefes: ein literarischer und religionsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1911), 16-19, 26. Independently of Perdelwitz, W. Bornemann, "Der erste Petrusbrief - eine Taufrede des Silvanus?" *ZNW* 19 (1919): 143-65, proposed a similar hypothesis. Bornemann does not refer to Perdelwitz's work; however, despite the lack of any citation, G. R. (continued...)

decades later, Frank L. Cross contended that the letter actually stemmed from a baptismal liturgy.⁴ Other voices have added to the discussion, and different nuances of these themes have been proposed as well as criticized.⁵ But, while the idea that baptism was a central theme of the entire text has been largely discounted, the idea that baptism underlies certain portions of this letter remains virtually unchallenged.⁶ Furthermore, the function of rebirth language in this letter has not been explored apart from its assumed connection to baptism.⁷

(continued)

Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), 252 n.1, argues that Bornemann is indebted to Perdelwitz.

⁴ F. L. Cross, *I Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co., 1954). Cross was not actually the originator of this idea. The idea was first proposed by Herbert Preisker in a 1951 revision of Hans Windisch's commentary, but Cross popularized the idea. For Preisker's proposal see H. Windisch and H. Preisker, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 3d ed. HNT, no. 15 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1951), 156-62.

⁵ See, e.g., F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, 3d revised and enlarged ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), esp. 27; M.-É. Boismard, "Une Liturgie Baptismale dans la Prima Petri: I. Son influence sur Tit., I Jo. et Col," *RB* 63, no. 1-2 (1956); M.-É. Boismard, "Une Liturgie Baptismale dans la Prima Petri: II. Son influence sur l'Épître de Jacques," *RB* 64, no. 1-2 (1957); M.-É. Boismard, *Quatre Hymnes Baptismales dans la Première Épître de Pierre*. *Lectio Divina*, no. 30 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961); J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*. Black's New Testament Commentaries, ed. H. Chadwick (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 15-20; A. R. C. Leaney, "I Peter and the Passover: An Interpretation," *NTS* 10 (1963): 8, 15-16; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1947; reprint, 1952), 62, 363-461; B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 123-28; W. C. van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*. *NovTSup*, no. 30 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980); and H. Windisch and H. Preisker, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 2d ed. HNT, no. 15 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1930), 76-77, 82.

⁶ See, e.g., M. Dibelius, "Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments," *TRu* 3, no. 4 (1931); L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 1st English ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993); D. F. Hill, "On Suffering and Baptism in I Peter," *NovT* 18 (1976); E. Lohse, "Parenthesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter," in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert. *NABPRSS*, no. 9 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986); R. P. Martin, "The Composition of 1 Peter in Recent Study," *VE* 1 (1962); C. F. D. Moule, "The Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter," *NTS* 3 (1956); B. Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude: Introduction, Translation and Notes*. *AB*, no. 37 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964); and T. C. G. Thornton, "1 Peter, a Paschal Liturgy?" *JTS* 12 (1961). Cf. footnote 12.

⁷ A recent exception to this trend can be found in R. Feldmeier, ed. *Wiedergeburt*. *Biblich-theologische Schwerpunkte*, no. 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). In his own essay in that work (R. Feldmeier, "Wiedergeburt im 1. Petrusbrief," in *Wiedergeburt*, ed. R. Feldmeier. *Biblich-theologische Schwerpunkte*, no. 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), esp. 77-81) as well as in his more recent commentary (R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 23-25, 127-30), Feldmeier discusses the idea of rebirth apart from baptism. Instead of linking rebirth to baptism (at least in 1 Peter), he analyzes it as part of a vertical dimension of soteriology—God's overcoming of the human condition through regeneration. Unfortunately, Feldmeier, and (continued...)

The ongoing assumption of most scholars is that the rebirth language of 1 Peter is linked to Christian baptismal practices despite the lack of any such evidence in the letter itself or even in the writings of the first century CE.⁸ Consider, for example, the highly regarded commentary by Leonhard Goppelt. Although Goppelt agrees that the letter did not arise out of a baptismal sermon nor was it developed from a series of liturgical writings,⁹ he later compares 1 Peter 1:3-5 to Paul's baptismal argument in Romans 6, concluding that 1 Peter represents "was in der Taufe widerfahren ist" and that 1 Peter 1:13-21 commands "sich diesem Widerfahrnis gemäß anzusehern und zu verhalten."¹⁰ Further, Goppelt connects other parts of the book (e.g. 1 Peter 3:6 and 4:1) to baptismal paraenesis.¹¹ Similar views—that 1 Peter contains significant allusions and imagery related to baptism—are echoed by other scholars, and these views continue to influence Petrine studies.¹²

Scholars who question the baptismal nature of this document continue to see baptismal links in the letter, especially in conjunction with the language of rebirth. Even, for example, Paul J. Achtemeier, who recognizes that ideas previously considered baptismal in

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those on whom he is dependent (see, especially, F. Back, "Wiedergeburt in der religiösen Welt der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit," in *Wiedergeburt*, ed. R. Feldmeier. Biblisch-theologische Schwerpunkte, no. 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005)), does not distinguish between rebirth and regeneration, an unfortunate shortfall in this and other studies of rebirth that is discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

⁸ Although the language of rebirth was linked with baptismal language in the mid-second century CE, its function in 1 Peter shows no evidence of any connection to baptism. See the discussion in the third chapter of this dissertation. Hereafter, I will not add CE to "first century," and "second century," etc. BCE will be specified.

⁹ L. Goppelt and F. Hahn, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, revised ed. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, no. 12, ed. H. A. W. Meyer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 219, 269.

¹² See, e.g., M. E. Boring, *1 Peter*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 37-38, 91-92; J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB, no. 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 392-93; K. H. Jobes, *1 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 54; and R. P. Martin, "1 Peter," in *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, ed. A. Chester and R. P. Martin. New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98-101.

nature may not be baptismal at all, still uses baptismal references in conjunction with rebirth language. Thus, in his commentary on 1 Peter, he admits that some phrases previously considered baptismal in nature have "less reference to baptism than has often been asserted".¹³ Likewise, he recognizes that the passages on rebirth (1 Peter 1:3; 1:23; 2:2) are more motivated by the metaphor of a newly born person than by baptism.¹⁴ Despite these assertions, however, Achtemeier argues elsewhere in that commentary that "[b]aptismal language is used here [he is referring to the rebirth sections of 1 Peter 1:3, 23-25] for wider implications of the Christian faith."¹⁵ He is similarly unclear in an earlier article.¹⁶ In both of these writings his arguments indicate his recognition that rebirth is likely functioning differently than previously assumed, but he is unable to fully break the assumed link between rebirth and baptism.

John H. Elliott's more recent commentary on 1 Peter is yet another example of these ongoing (mis)perceptions regarding rebirth language in 1 Peter. Like most recent Petrine scholars, he does not accept either the baptismal liturgy or homily theories for this letter. He does, however, discuss rebirth language in conjunction with familial language, although he offers no detailed study to support these discussions. Nonetheless, he continues to connect rebirth to baptism, declaring:

¹³ P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*. Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 145. See also Achtemeier's statement (which he makes concerning the idea of suffering presented in 1 Peter) "[b]aptism is in fact not a major theme, and allusions to it seem no more than incidental to the discussion of the kind of life Christians must live under adverse conditions" (62).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 145 n.29. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶ P. J. Achtemeier, "Newborn Babes and Living Stones: Literal and Figurative in 1 Peter," in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer*, ed. M. P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 225, sets forth an intriguing idea that the controlling metaphor of 1 Peter is the *new* people of God. He states unequivocally "[i]t is not, however, baptism which underlies this discussion, but the newness of God's new people," yet he continues in the same sentence: "who individually begin their careers as members of this people by baptism."

The image of new birth and regeneration appears elsewhere in the NT as a metaphor for conversion in contexts suggesting its role in the baptismal catechesis of the early Church (John 3:3-8; Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; Jas 1:18; 1 John 3:9-10; 5:1-5 . . .). This baptismal tradition appears to be the source of the image here as well. The theme of rebirth/new birth permeates the first section of the letter as a metaphor for the radical transformation of the believer's relation to God, Jesus Christ, one another, and society. This transformation of relationship and status was inaugurated in their baptismal conversion, later explicated in 3:21.¹⁷

A number of the assumptions in this statement will be engaged in the course of this dissertation, but a few comments here demonstrate the need for a sustained analysis of this topic. First, new birth and regeneration are not necessarily identical. Second, with perhaps the exception of John 3, the passages cited are not related to the rebirth language of 1 Peter (nor even baptism for that matter). Third, there is no question that rebirth language permeates the beginning sections of 1 Peter, as Elliott states, but its link to 3:21 is highly speculative.

The term βάπτισμα is used in 3:21, but, not only is it the *only* use of the term βάπτισμα or its cognates in 1 Peter, the meaning of the term in this context is highly debated.¹⁸ Even if this passage contains a reference to the recipients' sacramental rite of baptism (which I am not necessarily questioning), it is a very late reference (in the letter) to baptismal language, and, more importantly, no direct link to the rebirth language of the earlier sections of the letter is offered in conjunction with this reference to baptism: instead,

¹⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 333. Elliott makes such a statement because he still considers the letter to be "echoing much baptismal catechetical tradition" (10) for which he offers no support other than the assumption that the language of the letter relies on baptismal traditions.

¹⁸ See, e.g., R. E. Nixon, "The Meaning of 'Baptism' in 1 Peter 3,21," *SE* 4 (1968), as well as the long history of this passage's interpretation described in W. J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, 2d, fully revised ed. *Analecta Biblica*, no. 23 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 25-50; B. Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Pet. iii.19 and Its Context*. *Acta Seminarii neotestamentici Upsaliensis*, no. 13 (København: E. Munksgaard, 1946), 7-51; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 314-62.

the author highlights a connection between salvation and baptism. Thus, one should not assume that the occurrence of βάπτισμα in this later passage is connected to rebirth language without evidence that the author of 1 Peter intended such a connection.

If, therefore, the epistle is not a baptismal homily or liturgy, nor is baptism even a significant theme of the letter, how are the multiple references to rebirth functioning for the writer of this epistle? The answer is that no detailed examination exists that adequately explores the role of rebirth language in 1 Peter. This dissertation will fill that lacuna by examining how rebirth language functions in the overall structure and argument of this letter.

I. Questions of Authorship, Dating, Location and Composition

Four critical aspects of 1 Peter have implications for this study: matters of authorship, dating, location and composition. Authorship relates to the function of Peter's name in the letter's overall thrust and will be particularly relevant in the discussions of narrational texture in the second chapter of this dissertation. Dating is not as directly relevant to any specific section, but we need to establish the basic time-frame of the letter's circulation in order to ascertain what writings pre-date or are roughly contemporary with this letter (this becomes particularly relevant in chapters three and four). The geographical location of both the letter's recipients and its author may offer correlation with the related evidence, and strengthens the probability that the rebirth language of 1 Peter is connected to similar language in other texts and inscriptions. Asia Minor and Rome figure prominently in these geographical connections. Finally, in order to consistently understand the role of rebirth language in the letter's structure and argument we need to clarify questions regarding the letter's compositional unity.

A. Authorship

The topic of 1 Peter's authorship is widely debated. Some continue to argue that the author is the apostle Peter as stated in 1:1.¹⁹ A subset of this argument contends that some of the problems of attributing this to the apostle Peter can be solved by viewing the writing as actually completed by Sylvanus/Silas, whose mention in the final chapter (5:12) can be construed as evidence of his participation in the letter's formation.²⁰ Others propose that, while portions of the letter are likely traced back to Peter, the actual letter was composed by a "Petrine school" or associates of Peter.²¹ While the arguments against Petrine authorship cannot be proven absolutely, the majority of scholars regard the letter as pseudonymous.²²

¹⁹ See, e.g., E. M. Blaiklock, *Commentary on the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 230; P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 10; W. A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, no. 17 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1990), 21-32; R. H. Gundry, "'Verba Christi' in I Peter: Their Implications Concerning the Authorship of I Peter and the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *NTS* 13, no. 4 (1966): 336-50; R. H. Gundry, "Further 'Verba' on Verba Christi in First Peter," *Bib* 55, no. 2 (1974): 211-32; D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970), 773-90; S. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude*. New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 9; S. McKnight, *1 Peter*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 29; J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter*, vol. 49. Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), lxi-lxvii; F. Neugebauer, "Zur Deutung und Bedeutung des 1. Petrusbriefes: Dem Andenken Paul Wätzels," *NTS* 26 (1980): 66-72; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1976), 140-69; and C. Spicq, "La I^{re} Petri et le Témoignage Évangélique de Saint Pierre," *ST* 20 (1966). On the whole, the arguments of such scholars are complex, and they examine the many questions that Petrine authorship raises, but conclude that the weight of the opinions against Petrine authorship are not sufficient to prove that Peter did not write it.

²⁰ See, e.g., E. Best, *1 Peter*. New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1971), 32-36, 64-65; Davids, *Peter*, 6-7, 198; Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 14-15, 48-53, 368-71; Kelly, *Commentary*, 33; Martin, "1 Peter," 92; Reicke, *The Epistles*, 69-71; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 9-17, 27.

²¹ Michaels, *Peter*, lxi-lxvii, tentatively concludes that Peter was responsible for the letter while still alive, but he also offers an alternative in which the church in Rome produced the final composition based on issues raised by Peter himself. The idea of a Petrine school has been raised by a number of scholars. See, e.g., Best, *1 Peter*, 60-63; J. H. Elliott, "Peter, Silvanus and Mark in 1 Peter and Acts: Sociological-Exegetical Perspectives on a Petrine Group in Rome," in *Wort in der Zeit* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 264-65; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 127-30; and T. V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*. WUNT, 2d Series, no. 15 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), 154.

²² The emerging consensus since the 1970s is that the letter is pseudonymous. See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 39-42; Beare, *Peter*, 48; S. R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter*. SBLDS, no. 162 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 47; Best, *1 Peter*, 54; Boring, *1 Peter*, 33; N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, 2d ed. Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 21 (Zürich: (continued...))

Another approach to the authorship question focuses on the letter itself and asks why Peter's name is attached to it. This question has been engaged and answered in several ways by scholars. For scholars from the Tübingen School, 1 Peter was intended to mediate the second century dispute between Pauline and Petrine "camps." Within this school, the letter's exact purpose can vary. Some claim that it was written by those in the Petrine camp favourably disposed to Pauline theology.²³ Others claim it was written by Pauline Christians who attached Peter's name in an attempt to demonstrate Peter's agreement with their perspectives.²⁴ While various forms of these theories have been promoted in New Testament (NT) scholarship,²⁵ the theory, in general, is no longer held. Part of the reason for its decline is that the second century dating necessary to justify this theory has been largely

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Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 43-47; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 120-30; Feldmeier, *Peter*, 38; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 51-52; J. B. Green, *1 Peter*. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 6-7; D. G. Horrell, *1 Peter*. New Testament Guides (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 23; Kelly, *Commentary*, 33 (with reservations); Martin, "1 Peter," 94; W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, revised ed., trans. H. C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 423-24; E. J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 9-10; and W. L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*. WUNT, 2d Series, no. 30 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989), 7. There are, however, exceptions to this trend as indicated in footnote 19. Cf. the discussion in Jobes, *Peter*, 5-19.

²³ F. C. Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, des Gegenstaz der petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der alter Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *ZT 4* (1831). Cf. F. C. Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 3d ed., vol. 1. Theological Translation Fund Library (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878), 130-31.

²⁴ See, e.g., A. Schwegler, *Das Nachapostolische Zeitalter in den Hauptmomenten Seiner Entwicklung* (Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1846).

²⁵ See, e.g., B. W. Bacon, *Jesus and Paul* (London: Hodder, 1921), 168; R. K. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. K. Grobel, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 180-83; H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 295; M. Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 188; R. Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judae*. Meyers Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, no. 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), 8; and E. Lohse, *The Formation of the New Testament*, trans. M. E. Boring (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 213.

discounted.²⁶ More significantly, the idea that 1 Peter represents Pauline theology has been called into question.

The Tübingen School was built upon the characterization of 1 Peter as a Pauline writing. 1 Peter's acknowledgement of Mark and Silas/Silvanus (5:12-14)—who are identified with Paul in other early Christian writings—seems to support this characterization.²⁷ Further support for this view comes from the recognition that 1 Peter contains some connections to the terminology and theology of the Pauline writings, particularly Romans and Ephesians.²⁸ Certainly a number of theological ideas are shared,²⁹ but these shared ideas do not necessarily indicate a direct association with Pauline theology. As early as 1940, these connections have been called into question.³⁰ 1 Peter lacks many central ideas from Pauline theology such as justification by faith, the role of the law, Pauline Christology, or faith versus works. More importantly, 1 Peter offers perspectives and ideas

²⁶ See the section on dating, below, for the general consensus on this letter's date.

²⁷ Some of these associations stem from the Acts tradition (e.g. Paul's association with Mark is noted in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13; 15:37-39 and with Silvanus/Silas in Acts 15:40-18:5). Silvanus/Silas is also mentioned in 2 Cor. 1:19 and in 1 Thess. 1:1 and 2 Thess. 1:1 as Paul's co-author, and Mark is mentioned in Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; and Philemon 24. See the discussions in Selwyn, *Peter*, 9–17, 241; and Reicke, *The Epistles*, 69–71; as well as the counter-discussions in Beare, *Peter*, 212–16; and J. H. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 277.

²⁸ See the discussions in Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 28-30; C. L. Mitton, "The Relationship between 1 Peter and Ephesians," *JTS* 1 (1950); and Selwyn, *Peter*, 384-439. The NT books of Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Titus are also included in these discussions.

²⁹ T. R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 34-35, observes the following: "(1) salvation is an eschatological gift (1 Pet 1:3–9; Rom 5:9–10); (2) believers will suffer for their faith (1 Pet 1:6–7; 3:13–17; 4:12–19; 2 Tim 3:12); (3) believers should live holy lives (1 Pet 1:13–2:3; Rom 6:1–23; Eph 4:1–6:9; Col 3:5–4:6); (4) Jesus is God's cornerstone (1 Pet 2:6; Rom 9:33); (5) believers should submit to governing authorities (1 Pet 2:13–17; Rom 13:1–7); (6) wives should submit to husbands (1 Pet 3:1–6; Eph 5:22–24); (7) husbands should treat their wives kindly (1 Pet 3:7; Eph 5:25–29); (8) Christ is exalted as Lord over angelic powers (1 Pet 3:18–19, 22; Eph 1:20–23; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15); (9) the end is near (1 Pet 4:7; Rom 13:11–14)." While not all of these observations relate to what are considered the genuine Pauline epistles, they do demonstrate the sharing of ideas by those writings associated with Paul's name.

³⁰Cf. footnote 33.

that distinguish it from Paul's writings. For example, while Paul briefly mentions the "election" of Christians (Rom. 11:26-29), 1 Peter expands significantly upon this theme (2:4-10) and uses non-Pauline ideas such as co-election (5:13).³¹ Indeed it has come to be recognized that 1 Peter is distinct enough that its derivation from Pauline theology is unlikely. As John Elliott expresses, "the theory of a Petrine dependence upon Paul must now be rejected in favor of a common Petrine and Pauline use of a broadly varied (liturgical, paraenetic, and catechetical) tradition."³² 1 Peter is more likely an independent writing that utilized not only material connected to the Pauline writings but also other sources—many of which were anchored in common early Christian traditions—in the course of shaping this distinct letter.³³ Recognizing the distinctive nature of this letter allows us to move away from discussions of Paul's relationship to the letter.

The inclusion of Peter's name in the opening of this letter should draw attention away from mere questions of who actually wrote the letter or how it relates to Pauline writings and focus, instead, on the authoritative role of Peter's name for the letter. As Elliott writes, "Less important than the question of who actually wrote the letter is the fact that 1 Peter represents the witness of the apostle Peter, the personal networks of a brotherhood reaching from Jerusalem to Rome, and the rich tradition of the Roman Christian community."³⁴ Here,

³¹ For a fuller discussion of some of these distinctions see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 38-40.

³² J. H. Elliott, "The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95 (1976): 247.

³³ P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism: A Study in the Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), seems to have been the first to offer this proposal and his ideas were expounded upon by Selwyn, *Peter*, 361-466. The support for this has been gradually growing. See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 21-23; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 38-40; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 29-30, 36; Kelly, *Commentary*, 32; and Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 153. As Elliott, "Epistle," 271, aptly remarks, "Relative to its length, 1 Peter has more affinities to more NT writings than any other NT document."

³⁴ Elliott, "Epistle," 277-78. Cf. the discussions in Boring, *1 Peter*, 20-37, esp. 28; Lohse, "Parenthesis," 52-53; and A. Stewart-Sykes, "The Function of 'Peter' in 1 Peter," *ScrB* 27, no. 1-2 (1997): esp. 8-9. I (continued...)

Elliott has at least moved beyond the question of whether Peter wrote the letter to a question of why Peter's name might be significant to the letter's recipients.³⁵ I would push the discussion one step further, towards an analysis of how Peter's name is actually being utilized by the letter writer. This discussion will continue in chapter two, through an analysis of 1 Peter's narrational texture.

B. Dating

The question of the letter's date is directly tied to the question of authorship. Those who claim that the author was the apostle Peter propose an early date. On the opposite side, as indicated above, the date is pushed well into the second century by those who argue that this letter was written to reconcile Pauline and Petrine camps. The question of a second century date has largely been rejected, however, and a proposed date within the first century ranges from approximately 60-95 CE. While those who argue for Petrine authorship would push the date earlier, the idea that it was written any later than 95 (e.g. during the reign of Trajan) has largely fallen out of favour, particularly due to the recognition that the suffering

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recognize that these discussions take different directions, and, here, am only highlighting the need to move beyond debates that obscure or ignore the role of Peter's name in the letter.

³⁵ If the recipients understood this as a pseudonymous letter, that would also have relevance for how the letter was received/perceived. There is no evidence, however, that this was the case. In contrast to 2 Peter, we have no extant evidence that the authorship of 1 Peter was ever questioned in the early church, and the letter received authoritative attestation relatively early. As Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 53, points out, "[a]s far as we can tell, its ecclesiastical validity was uncontested by the second century." This "ecclesiastical validity" was based significantly upon perceived authorship. More clearly, A. G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text & Canon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 93-94, indicates that, "There is no record that the authenticity of 1 Peter was challenged in the early church, even though there is no explicit ascription of the letter to Peter until the time of Irenaeus." Cf. the discussion in H. Y. Gamble, "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. L. M. McDonald and S. J. A. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 270-71, 287-88. If the letter's recipients questioned the authority of Peter's name in the letter opening, we do not have that evidence.

described in the letter could well refer to a number of earlier periods or, more likely, are a reference to increasing social pressures and unofficial persecutions.³⁶ Given the probability of pseudonymous authorship, I propose a date-range between 70-95 CE—a range that corresponds with the vast majority of scholarly opinion³⁷ and represents a very reasonable assumption from which to begin an analysis of this letter.

C. Geographical Location

The location of 1 Peter's intended readers is specified in the letter's opening as Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. There is no doubt that the letter is directed to recipients in Asia Minor, although the exact location in Asia Minor is questioned by some. The question of location revolves around whether the references are to Roman provinces in

³⁶ Selwyn, *Peter*, 52-56, was the first to counter the perspective that 1 Peter contains references to official persecutions. The idea that 1 Peter refers to official persecutions is usually focussed on the apparent break between 4:11 and 4:12 of 1 Peter. As J. L. de Villiers, "Joy in Suffering in 1 Peter," *Neot* 9 (1975): 67, has demonstrated in a study of these two sections, "there is nothing in the references to persecution in 4:12-19 and 5:9 which necessitates regarding them as relating to a period other than that of 1:6 and 3:13-17." Further, technical terminology for official persecution is absent from the letter as is unambiguous mention of any formal accusation, imprisonment, or execution. See, particularly, the discussions in Elliott, "Rehabilitation," 252, and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 97-103. The material collected in the study by D. L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*. SBL Monograph Series, no. 26 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), adds further weight to the idea of unofficial hostility. Evidence from the letter only indicates persecution in the form of assaults and verbal harassment. See, e.g., 1 Peter 2:10, 12; 3:6, 9, 16; 4:1, 4, 14. Cf. the discussions in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 28-36; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 38-39; P. A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 184-89; Kelly, *Commentary*, 5-11; Moule, "Peter," 8; S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 123-24; and E. J. Richard, "The Functional Christology of First Peter," in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert. NABPRSS, no. 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 127.

³⁷ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50; Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 133-34; Beare, *Peter*, 48; Bechtler, *Following*, 48-52; Best, *1 Peter*, 64; Boring, *1 Peter*, 33; Elliott, "Peter, Silvanus and Mark," 254; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 134-38; Feldmeier, *Peter*, 40; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 46-47; Horrell, *Peter*, 23; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 425; Martin, "1 Peter," 94; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 17; and Smith, *Petrine Controversies*, 153;

Asia Minor or to older geographic boundaries.³⁸ The primary issue that is raised concerning the Roman provinces is that Pontus and Bithynia were one administrative Roman province, but are not only listed separately in 1 Peter's opening, they are not even listed together: one begins the list and the other ends it. However, this problem is relatively minor and Pontus and Bithynia could have been listed in this manner for any number of reasons.³⁹ The proposal that this list is a reference to older geographic boundaries is much more problematic. The most obvious objections to this proposal is that only those areas that shared a name with the Roman provinces are listed, and would not form a natural area but would be separated by Phrygia (one of several older geographic areas not mentioned in the list).⁴⁰ The overwhelming majority of scholars consider that the Roman provinces of Asia Minor are listed in 1 Peter and this would include all of Asia Minor north and west of the Taurus Mountain range.⁴¹

The location of 1 Peter's author is much more debated and is often tied to the questions of authorship discussed above. Rome, Syrian Antioch as well as Asia Minor itself have all been proposed as the letter's place of composition. If we can separate the question

³⁸ See, e.g., N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, vol. 21. Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Zürich: Benziger, 1979), 25-26; J. A. Fitzmyer, "The First Epistle of Peter," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R. E. Brown and J. A. Fitzmyer, vol. 2 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 364; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 792-93; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 45-46.

³⁹ J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism I Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 60, notes that inscriptional evidence attests to occasional independent mention of Bithynia and Pontus. F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St Peter: I.1 - II.17: The Greek Text with Introductory Lecture, Commentary, and Additional Notes* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), 157-84, originally proposed that the name order represents the order in which the bearer of a letter would travel. Hort's proposal continues to receive strong support. See, e.g. Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 85; Michaels, *Peter*, 9; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 119.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Best, *I Peter*, 15; Kelly, *Commentary*, 3; and Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 7.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *I Peter*, 85; Beare, *Peter*, 38-39; Best, *I Peter*, 15-16; Davids, *Peter*, 8; Elliott, *I Peter*, 84-86; Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 3-4; Kelly, *Commentary*, 3; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*. The Cambridge Bible Commentary on The New English Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 6-7; Michaels, *Peter*, 9-10; and Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 7-8.

of whether the apostle Peter actually wrote this letter from the question of the author's location, the geographical issue can be simplified. The use of Peter's name in this letter clearly indicates an intention by the author to associate this letter with the tradition of Peter which is linked to Rome both based on the external and internal evidence.⁴²

The connection of Peter's name to Rome receives strong attestation in the early Christian tradition.⁴³ If, according to Christian tradition, Peter died in Rome around 64 CE, the date of the letter's composition (70-95 CE—see discussion above) increases the likelihood that the Petrine tradition had come to be fully associated with the city of Rome.⁴⁴ Arguments for locations other than Rome are highly speculative, based upon limited evidence, and they lack historical verification. Marie-Émile Boismard, for example, proposes that Syrian Antioch is the location of the letter's composition. Both Origen and Eusebius know of a legend that identifies 1 Peter as the first bishop at Antioch.⁴⁵ Building upon this, Boismard indicates that given that the teaching on Jesus' descent to the underworld was first attested in Antioch and that the designation "Christian" also originated in Antioch, that the letter itself must also originate in Antioch.⁴⁶ As Elliott recognizes, this proposal lacks historical value. Peter would have been the immediate predecessor of Ignatius who makes no mention of Peter, and the label of "Christian" in Rome in the mid-

⁴² As Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 354, points out, the view that the letter's origin was anything but Rome was held universally until some Protestants disputed the claim because of Rome's association with papacy.

⁴³ D. W. O'Connor, *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical, and Archeological Evidence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), offers an extensive discussion of the evidence. Admittedly, O'Connor's discussion as well as subsequent evaluation of the evidence is intimately tied into the identification of 1 Peter's author as the apostle Peter.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., the discussion in R. E. Brown, K. P. Donfried, and J. H. P. Reumann, *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1973), 20-21.

⁴⁵ Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* 6.1; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.36.2.

⁴⁶ Boismard, "Liturgie Baptismale II," 183. Boismard draws attention to 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:16.

60s CE is just as likely a candidate as Antioch.⁴⁷ The association of the letter's origin with Asia Minor, because both Papias and Polycarp were familiar with it, is equally problematic and more likely due to the location of letter's addressees than to its place of origin.⁴⁸

Further, the reference to greetings from "she who is in Babylon" in 1 Peter 5:13 is considered to be a reference to the church in Rome. Following Rome's conquest of Judea in 70 CE, both Jewish and Christian literature use Babylon in place of Rome.⁴⁹ While this use of Babylon was often a cipher intended to disguise the writer's true meaning, there is no indication in 1 Peter that there is any hostility or subversive intent directed at Rome. Instead, as Elliott points out, 1 Peter's use of Babylon could come from a variety of motivations.⁵⁰ We cannot access the author's motivation for this use of "Babylon," but the evidence and scholarly opinion are overwhelmingly in favour of not only viewing Babylon as Rome but also in favour of Rome as the location of the letter's origin.⁵¹

D. Compositional Unity

The final critical aspect I will examine here is the question of the letter's compositional unity. The above-noted proposal—that the core of 1 Peter contained a baptismal homily or liturgy—implied that this document was a composite literary entity.

⁴⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131.

⁴⁸ Asia Minor is proposed, e.g., by A. Reichert, *Eine urchristliche praeparatio ad martyrium: Studien zur Komposition, Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie des 1. Petrusbriefes*. Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie BET, no. 22 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), 525-29; and Streeter, *Primitive Church*, 131-34. See a more detailed discussion of this proposal in Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131.

⁴⁹ See, e.g., *2 Bar.* 11:1; 67:7; 77:12, 17, 19; *4 Ezra* 3:1-5:20; 10:19-48; 15:43-63; *Sib. Or.* 3:63-74; 5:137-78; *Rev* 14:8; 16:19; 18:10, 21.

⁵⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 132-33. Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 354; C. E. B. Cranfield, "1 Peter," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), 139; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 304.

⁵¹ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 354; Beare, *Peter*, 208-09; Best, *1 Peter*, 178-79; Davids, *Peter*, 202; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 48, 374-75; Kelly, *Commentary*, 33-34; Jobes, *Peter*, 33-37; Michaels, *Peter*, 311; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 243.

More specifically, scholars viewed the letter as an epistolary adaptation of either a homily or a liturgy with an epistolary introduction (1:1-2) and ending (4:12-5:14) added. Even when the baptismal composition was considered unconvincing, questions of the letter's literary unity remained but began to fade as a result of more detailed analyses.⁵²

Many have documented 1 Peter's incorporation of various sources including hortatory and paraenetic material, Christian liturgical material, as well as numerous citations and allusions to OT writings.⁵³ While this variety of sources likely contributed to initial views of the writing as some kind of literary compilation, the most recent consensus not only considers 1 Peter to be a genuine letter but also a carefully-shaped, unified composition. In 1969 J.N.D. Kelly wrote of this letter that "it is, and always has been, a genuine unity, with a single consistent message" and that whatever material the writer used "he has evidently moulded it so as to conform to his overriding purpose."⁵⁴ John H. Elliott reinforces Kelly's

⁵² For example Moule, "Peter," 1-11, proposed that 1 Peter was the combination of two letters. Many of the questions of the letter's unity are based upon the supposed break between 4:11 and 4:12 and the supposed contrast between theory and reality of suffering before and after this break. As Elliott, *1 Peter*, 9, contends, this contrast is "more imaginative than cogent." See the discussion in footnote 36, above, as well as the comments by Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 60-62; Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 127-28; Best, *1 Peter*, 24; Bornemann, "Petrusbrief," 158; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 72-73, 95-102; F. W. Danker, "I Peter 1.24 - 2.17 - A Consolatory Pericope," *ZNW* 58 (1967): esp. 100-01; de Villiers, "Joy in Suffering," 67; Goppelt and Hahn, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*; D. W. Kendall, "The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3-12," in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert. NABPRSS, no. 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 115 n.24; Michaels, *Peter*, xxxiv-xl; Richard, "Functional Christology," 121-40; Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 28-32; W. C. van Unnik, "The Redemption in 1 Peter I 18-19 and the Problem of the First Epistle of Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*. NovTSup, no. 30 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 63; and W. C. van Unnik, "Christianity According to I Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*. NovTSup, no. 30 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 112-14.

⁵³ Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 33, lists eight different units (outside of biblical sources) which have been potentially identified by form-critics of 1 Peter. These include *topoi*, ethical lists, creedal statements, hymnic fragments, doxologies, household rules, testimonia and dominical sayings. His footnotes on that page provide a solid sense of the scholarship behind these views. A large number of writings—too many to provide a detailed list here—deal with 1 Peter's use of the OT. See, e.g., the comprehensive list of OT passages provided by Elliott, *1 Peter*, 13-16; the discussion in Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, of 1 Peter's use of the OT as well as that by G. L. Green, "The Use of the Old Testament for Christian Ethics in 1 Peter," *TynBul* 41, no. N (1990).

⁵⁴ Kelly, *Commentary*, 20.

conclusion when he states that “[t]he consistency and coherence of its language, style, themes, arrangement, and line of argumentation indicate that 1 Peter from the outset was conceived, composed, and dispatched as an integral, genuine letter.”⁵⁵ This perspective on 1 Peter is echoed in the vast majority of recent research on this letter, including those scholars who have specifically targeted the question of the letter’s compositional unity.⁵⁶ That 1 Peter is a carefully shaped compositional unity is the beginning point of my analysis of rebirth language in this letter.

II. Methodological Considerations

The goal of this dissertation, as stated above, is to examine “how rebirth language functions in the overall structure and argument of this letter.” What method best allows for a detailed examination of the role of specific terms in the overall argument of 1 Peter? Certainly, rhetorical analysis is designed to engage the question of how words are used for argumentation and persuasion within various contexts. As Rodney Duke has described, the

⁵⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 11.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*; Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*; Best, *1 Peter*; Boring, *1 Peter*; Brox, *Petrusbrief*; E. Cothenet, "Les Orientations Actuelles de L'Exégèse de la Première Lettre de Pierre," in *Études sur la Première Lettre de Pierre* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1980); Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*; Davids, *Peter*; Elliott, *Home*; Feldmeier, *Peter*; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*; Grudem, *Peter*; Hill, "On Suffering"; N. Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*. NIBC, no. 16 (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishers, 1992); Horrell, *Peter*; Kelly, *Commentary*; M.-L. Lamau and É. Cothenet, *Des Chrétiens dans le Monde: Communautés Pétriniennes au Ier Siècle*. Lectio Divina, no. 134 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988); Lohse, "Paranesis"; Martin, "Composition"; T. W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*. SBLDS, no. 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Michaels, *Peter*; Reichert, *Eine urchristliche praeparatio*; K. H. Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe, Der Judasbrief*, 3d ed. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, no. 13:2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1970); Schutter, *Hermeneutic*; D. Senior, *1 & 2 Peter*. New Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary, no. 20 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980); K. Shimada, "Is 1 Peter a Composite Writing? A Stylistic Approach to the Two-Document Hypotheses," *AJBI* 11 (1985); C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*. Sources Bibliques (Paris: J. Gabalda et Compagnie, 1966); J. W. Thompson, "The Rhetoric of 1 Peter," *ResQ* 36, no. 4 (1994); Thornton, "Peter"; L. Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*. JSNTSup, no. 114 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); P. L. Tite, *Compositional Transitions in 1 Peter: An Analysis of the Letter-opening* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1997); and van Unnik, "Redemption."

essential nature of rhetorical criticism is in understanding “the art of *persuasive* communication.”⁵⁷ Not only does rhetorical analysis seem to be the most suitable methodology for studying the function of words within a text, but its application to the field of biblical studies continues to grow and be refined. C. Clifton Black has described the expansion of rhetorical studies within NT studies in particular as “a tidal wave” that “shows no signs of imminent ebb.”⁵⁸ Moreover, within the last twenty years, rhetorical analysis has been a major component of multiple monographs on 1 Peter.

Recognizing the function of rebirth language in 1 Peter requires, however, not only an understanding of its role in the letter but also in the broader culture and writing in which this letter is set. More importantly, several analyses of 1 Peter using various rhetorical critical methods have already been applied to 1 Peter and none of them highlight rebirth language as important in this document’s structure and argument. Perhaps rebirth language is not as important as has been previously assumed. Or, perhaps the problem has been one of method. As we will see in the first chapter, rhetorical criticism does have a number of “blind-spots,” which could prevent one from recognizing the role of rebirth language in this letter. The tools of rhetorical criticism are being refined and these weaknesses are gradually being eliminated. One of the more recent methods to develop out of the field of rhetorical criticism, and one that avoids some of the weaknesses of previous rhetorical models, is socio-rhetorical theory, developed by Vernon K Robbins. In this dissertation, I will outline

⁵⁷ R. K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis*. JSOTSup, no. 88 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 30.

⁵⁸ C. C. Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. J. B. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 256.

the sources and examine the validity of socio-rhetorical theory within the field of rhetorical criticism and then apply this method through an analysis of rebirth language in this letter.

III. Chapter Summaries

Vernon Robbins defines socio-rhetorical criticism as “a textually-based method that uses programmatic strategies to invite social, cultural, historical, psychological, aesthetic, ideological and theological information into a context of minute exegetical activity.”⁵⁹ It is a complex, interdisciplinary paradigm that allows one to examine a text from a variety of positions without requiring that all positions be utilized in any given work.⁶⁰ While socio-rhetorical criticism—as is clear from its name alone—goes beyond rhetorical criticism, it is still rooted in and grew out of developments within the field of rhetorical criticism.⁶¹ The first chapter examines, therefore, the developments of rhetorical criticism, particularly as these developments relate to the field of biblical studies and to 1 Peter in particular, working towards a clearer understanding and summary of the socio-rhetorical method that will guide this dissertation. Understanding not only the benefits but also the pitfalls one wants to avoid in such a study requires setting socio-rhetorical criticism into the context of rhetorical criticism from which it has emerged. Socio-rhetorical criticism’s avoidance of some of the

⁵⁹ V. K. Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: Mary, Elizabeth and the Magnificat as a Test Case," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. E. V. McKnight and E. S. Malbon (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 164.

⁶⁰ As a result of this paradigmatic structure, I will not explore 1 Peter using every socio-rhetorical strategy. Chapter one will offer more details on the textures that will form the core of this dissertation’s analysis.

⁶¹ Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: Mary, Elizabeth and the Magnificat as a Test Case," 165-66, writes, e.g.: “[t]he beginnings of socio-rhetorical criticism lie in the goals for biblical interpretation Amos N. Wilder set forth in his presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1955, entitled ‘Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric’.”

weaknesses of traditional rhetorical criticism as applied to biblical studies as well as the strength of its multi-faceted approach, offers much more nuance in the analysis of a text than traditional rhetorical-critical methods.

The second chapter of the dissertation begins the process of applying various socio-rhetorical approaches to 1 Peter's rebirth language. Robbins is very clear in his method that one must begin with the text in question in order to ascertain as much as possible about the text's structure and argumentation. There are several features to this initial analysis, and these allow for a multi-faceted exploration of rebirth terminology within the text of 1 Peter. This multi-faceted exploration will engage such questions as how rebirth language fits into the introductory portions of this letter, whether this language exhibits any discernable pattern of repetition throughout the letter and how rebirth language functions within the letter's overall argumentative thrust. In order to answer these and related questions, the socio-rhetorical method proposes examining several aspects or "textures" of a text such as opening-middle-closing texture, repetitive-progressive texture, narrational texture and argumentative texture, all of which are subsumed under the rubric of inner textual analysis. Each of these textures analyzes an aspect of the text based upon very clear parameters and goals that are focussed primarily (although not always exclusively) upon the world within the text.⁶²

The third chapter begins with what Robbins terms "intertextual analysis." Here the focus shifts from the text itself to outside material from which the text draws or which may

⁶² Such language connects to detailed discussions of how the "real reader" goes about evaluating the text of an "implied author" without simply discovering what he or she (the reader) has read into the text. For more information, see V. K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 27-30.

have influenced the text as part of the larger cultural milieu. Although the ideal text for socio-rhetorical analysis is a long narrative, socio-rhetorical criticism offers the tools and has the flexibility to conduct an examination of specific terminology within a non-narrative work such as the letter of 1 Peter. The intertextual analysis of this chapter casts the net wide, so to speak, to assess similar terms and their relationship to the rebirth language of 1 Peter. The goal of this chapter, as well as the subsequent chapter (4), is to explore the extant writings that demonstrate (or are assumed to demonstrate) a relationship to the rebirth terminology of 1 Peter and to assess whether or not they connect to and/or shed light on 1 Peter's use of rebirth terminology. Thus, intertextual analysis continues in the fourth chapter through an examination of rebirth language in the epigraphy and texts of various other Greco-Roman cults⁶³ that utilize rebirth language.

The fifth chapter applies the final texture of socio-rhetorical analysis through a study of the social and cultural implications of 1 Peter's rebirth language. While this final chapter is somewhat different from the previous chapters in that it moves to examine social rather than rhetorical aspects of the text, it stems from the same (socio-rhetorical) method and builds upon the findings of the earlier chapters. If the rebirth terms in 1 Peter are not drawing upon an early Christian baptismal framework, how does the author intend these terms to be understood in the social world of his readers? More importantly, how does such language shape the recipients' perspective of and engagement of their world? Answering such a question requires an analysis of the cultural setting of the intended readers as well as

⁶³ The groups whose writings will be engaged in this chapter have historically been referred to as "Mystery Cults," but such terminology is, at best, unclear. I will avoid such unclear language unless directly engaging a scholar who uses these terms. Instead, I will speak of the specific cult/groups wherever possible. See chapter four for a much more detailed discussion of this type of terminology.

an analysis of the social implications of this rebirth language. Such analyses will shed light on the social function of rebirth language based on the cultural setting in which this language was used and interpreted.

This study will make significant strides in moving the study of rebirth language, particularly in 1 Peter, beyond generalized assumptions of meaning. Such language is distinct and is neither interchangeable with concepts of baptism nor with discussions of regeneration. 1 Peter weaves the language of rebirth into a carefully shaped argument that reconfigures cultural concepts of the language of rebirth and integrates this language into the cultural framework of its recipients. Within the text and context of 1 Peter, rebirth language will be shown to be integrated into the powerful ideals of familial identity—ideals that, while utilized for the purpose of group identity, are *not* aligned against societal interaction. These findings will undercut long-standing assumptions about the meaning and role of rebirth language in 1 Peter in particular and the Greco-Roman world in general.

Chapter 1

A METHODOLOGICAL INQUIRY: RHETORICAL CRITICISM AND 1 PETER

Introductory Comments

This first chapter will examine the merits of socio-rhetorical criticism in light of developments in the field of rhetorical criticism, including the application of rhetorical-critical methods to biblical studies in general and 1 Peter in particular. However, the use of the phrase “rhetorical criticism” and the study of “rhetoric,” especially with reference to the analysis of biblical texts, can be misleading. Such language implies a fixed, clearly-defined method. Yet these terms, like the field of study, have not always been precisely defined nor have the methods that lie behind them.⁶⁴ Some use the study of “rhetoric” to refer specifically to ancient or classical rhetorical criticism (or rhetorical analysis/theory); for others it refers to other ancient categories that focus upon compositional analyses of texts

⁶⁴ See, e.g., the comments by Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," 259, who writes: “As suggested by the preceding differentiation of its technical, sophistic, and philosophical varieties, orators and their analysts have never completely agreed on how rhetoric should be defined. A similar multiformity, if not confusion, characterizes current rhetorical analyses of the Bible. Much as ‘literary criticism’ has been applied to so broad a field of interpretive strategies that the label arguably deserves retirement from overwork, ‘rhetorical criticism’ is a sometimes cumbersome expression that describes a range of kindred yet distinguishable approaches to biblical exegesis.” I would use both “rhetoric” and “rhetorical criticism” to refer to the field as a whole and will use other, more distinct terminology (e.g. ancient rhetorical criticism, epistolary theory, etc.) where appropriate to the discussion at hand.

(e.g. epistolary theory); for yet others it can refer to many, more modern, literary-critical approaches to texts.⁶⁵

In order to understand the nuances of this (these) method(s), I will map out the various arenas of rhetorical criticism, including the recent history of its applications in the field of biblical studies. The examination of rhetorical criticism's application to biblical studies will provide, in general, a sense of the position of rhetorical criticism within this field and, specifically, an indication of the background and foundation upon which more recent rhetorical-critical studies of 1 Peter have been based. I will briefly summarize these studies of 1 Peter, particularly as they relate to the key opening sections of 1 Peter in which rebirth language is concentrated and will note the ways in which the application of these methods has ignored and/or obscured the role of rebirth language in these key sections.

In the course of my analysis, I will note the strengths and weaknesses of applying rhetorical criticism to a particular (biblical) text. This latter portion of the analysis will explore the relationship between epistolary theory and rhetorical criticism, as well as the relationship between "modern"⁶⁶ and ancient rhetorical criticism. I intend to establish that

⁶⁵ C. C. Black, "Rhetorical Questions: The New Testament, Classical Rhetoric, and Current Interpretation," *Di* 29, no. Winter (1990): 69, notes some of the ways in which all of these terms can have a variety of meanings that often overlap. Similarly, D. S. Dockery, "New Testament Interpretation: A Historical Survey," in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 61, reports that literary criticism and (modern) rhetorical criticism are closely related and at times are indistinguishable. Literary criticism, for example, can refer to such areas of study as compositional criticism, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, structuralism, etc., some of which are studied under the rubric of "modern" rhetorical criticism. I will use the term "modern" in conjunction with rhetorical criticism/analysis/theory to represent these more recent forms of literary analysis that have developed in conjunction with literary and rhetorical-critical methods (albeit with a connection to ancient rhetoric—see, e.g., D. F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism of the Pauline Epistles Since 1975," *CurBS* 3 (1995): 221, who describes modern rhetoric as "a philosophical reconceptualization of Greco-Roman rhetoric"). See also the discussion of modern versus ancient rhetorical criticism below.

⁶⁶ See footnote 65 for a discussion of this term in conjunction with rhetorical criticism as well as the more detailed analysis of the tensions between modern and ancient rhetorical applications later in this chapter.

epistolary theory and rhetorical criticism are not interchangeable methods and that modern and ancient rhetorical criticism need not be antithetical. Further, I will show how developments in this field of study have progressed to incorporate more flexible methods including the more recent move to combine various rhetorical critical models with social scientific models. This move has produced a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to the analysis of ancient texts, particularly through the use of socio-rhetorical analysis. All of these developments will be important in the subsequent chapters when socio-rhetorical theory is used to analyze the role of rebirth language in 1 Peter.

I. The History of Rhetorical Criticism in Biblical Studies

A. Rhetorical Awakenings in the Twentieth Century

1. The Influence of James Muilenburg

Rhetorical criticism is often considered a recent addition to the field of biblical studies, but its application to biblical texts is not new;⁶⁷ it was simply rediscovered in twentieth century biblical scholarship and sometimes modified by modern concepts of rhetorical criticism. As C. Clifton Black comments, “if the study of rhetoric appears innovative to modern biblical interpreters, then that is surely symptomatic of their philosophical amnesia. The practice of oratory is as old as Homer.”⁶⁸ Despite the truth of

⁶⁷ For a detailed examination of the application of ancient rhetorical theory to biblical texts prior to the 1900s, see R. D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, revised ed. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, no. 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 17-21, who traces its use beginning with Augustine, and C. J. Classen, “Melancthon’s First Manual on Rhetorical Categories in Criticism of the Bible,” in *The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions*, ed. L. Ayres. Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities, no. 7 (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 298-302, who offers detailed comments and references regarding rhetorical theory in medieval exegesis.

⁶⁸ Black, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 257.

Black's statement, the conscious (re)application of rhetorical criticism to biblical texts in the twentieth century is often attributed to James Muilenburg's address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968.⁶⁹ Certainly the influence of Muilenburg upon subsequent biblical scholarship provides an excellent point of entry for a discussion of the current state of rhetorical theory as it applies to biblical texts and to early Christian texts in particular.

Muilenburg's address was a call to move biblical studies beyond form criticism and into what he then termed "rhetorical criticism."⁷⁰ While the methods proposed by Muilenburg were not new, his address encouraged scholars to work consciously with this rhetorical criticism when engaging the biblical texts, and he began a new era not only in OT scholarship but in NT scholarship as well.⁷¹ Nonetheless, Muilenburg's conception of rhetorical criticism lacked a clear definition and was not specifically linked to any single

⁶⁹ See E. R. Wendland, "A Comparative Study of 'Rhetorical Criticism', Ancient and Modern with Special Reference to the Larger Structure and Function of the Epistle of Jude," *Neot* 28, no. 1 (1994): 195; D. K. Berry, *The Psalms and their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18*. JSOTSup, no. 153 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 81; D. Patrick and A. Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*. JSOTSup, no. 82 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1990), 11; B. L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 12; G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 4; J. R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*. SBLDS, no. 18 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 1; and B. W. Anderson, "The New Frontier of Rhetorical Criticism," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler. Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series, no. 1 (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1974), ix.

⁷⁰ J. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969).

⁷¹ Muilenburg was not the first to deal with rhetoric in the twentieth century. Others such as Amos Wilder, Kenneth Burke and Wayne Booth had been working with rhetoric from a literary critical point of view. A. N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel*. New Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1964), wrote about early Christian writings from a literary critical viewpoint and both Burke and Booth had helped to reintroduce rhetoric to literary studies through their writings. See, e.g., K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); K. Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*, California ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); W. C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); and W. C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Muilenburg's address is credited, however, with the wave of rhetorical studies within biblical scholarship that followed in the 1970s and 1980s. See, e.g., Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," 259; E. M. Cornelius, "The Relevance of Ancient Rhetoric to Rhetorical Criticism," *Neot* 28, no. 2 (1994): 458; D. C. Greenwood, "Rhetorical Criticism and Formgeschichte: Some Methodological Considerations," *JBL* 89 (1970): 418; and W. H. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *CBQ* 49, no. 1-4 (1987): 451.

method.⁷² He regarded rhetorical criticism as a form of literary criticism that paid attention to the stylistic uniqueness of individual pericopes; his primary concern was to make up for what he considered a shortfall in form criticism.⁷³ Yet, this field of rhetorical criticism into which he directed biblical scholars was far from being clearly mapped. Some of the lack of clarity in this field gradually changed as scholars took up Muilenburg's challenge and other, similar publications came to light. Nonetheless, the lack of any clear methodology continued in the field.⁷⁴

Perhaps part of the problem with this lack of a consistent methodology stemmed from Muilenburg's identification of rhetorical criticism with modern literary criticism rather than with ancient rhetorical criticism—which classical scholars still studied and which had been applied to biblical texts up until the early part of the twentieth century. The field of literary criticism was extremely broad and complex and the identification of rhetorical criticism with it rather than the more historically connected criticism using ancient rhetorical models caused a division between those of the side of “modern” rhetorical criticism stemming from literary criticism and those connected to “ancient” rhetorical criticism.⁷⁵ We will return to the distinction between ancient and modern elements of rhetorical criticism further below but must recognize here that these types of divisions made a consistent

⁷² Certainly, this is the criticism of Wuellner, "Where?" 451, who expresses that “neither Muilenburg nor his school worked with an identifiable model of rhetorical criticism.”

⁷³ See Muilenburg's assessment of the inadequacies of form criticism in Muilenburg, "Form Criticism," 4-7.

⁷⁴ In 1974 and then in 1977 M. Kessler, "A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism," *Semitics* 4 (1974), and I. M. Kikawada, "Some Proposals for the Definition of Rhetorical Criticism," *Semitics* 5 (1977), voiced the need for a rhetorical-critical method.

⁷⁵ Regarding the complexity of literary criticism, M. Kessler, "An Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: Prolegomena," *Semitics* 7 (1980): 6, quotes Richard Ohmann's 1963 statement “No man [sic] of ordinary human capacity could possibly stay even with this surge of criticism, except by laying aside every other task and pleasure.” Kessler cites M. Schorer, "A Symposium on Formalist Criticism—Introduction," *TexQ* 9, no. 1 (1966): 186, for this quote.

methodology difficult. The move to a more consistent understanding of methodology was helped, however by other, similar publications.

2. The Influence of the “New Rhetoric”

In the same year that Muilenburg published his address (1969) an English translation of Chaïm Perelman’s and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s, *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité de l’Argumentation* was published.⁷⁶ *The New Rhetoric*—a philosophical work on argumentation based upon Aristotle’s *Rhetorica*—significantly influenced the development of rhetorical criticism within biblical studies, at least in NT studies.⁷⁷ R. Dean Anderson considers that *The New Rhetoric* fit well with the ideas presented by Muilenburg and gave biblical scholarship a focus for their new approach: argumentation.⁷⁸ Further, scholars like James D. Hester, George A. Kennedy, Burton L. Mack and Wilhelm Wuellner adapted the ideas of the *New Rhetoric*.⁷⁹ Although the *New Rhetoric* had an influence on rhetorical criticism as applied to biblical studies, the field *still* lacked a solid methodology, particularly in NT rhetorical criticism (as we will see below).

⁷⁶ C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *Traité de l’Argumentation: La Nouvelle Rhétorique*. Logos: Introduction aux Études Philosophiques (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), was translated as C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

⁷⁷ Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 23.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁹ J. D. Hester, "The Use and Influence of Rhetoric in Galatians 2:1-14," *TZ* 42 (1986); Kennedy, *New Testament* (who does not cite the book directly in his work, except to refer to it once as, “perhaps the most influential treatise on rhetoric” (29), does list it in his bibliography of books and describes it as, “likely to be of interest to the practitioner of rhetorical criticism” (162). Further, Kennedy’s goal, which is best seen when he states that, “The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author’s intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience” (12), is virtually identical to that of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca); Mack, *Rhetoric*, esp.14-17; and W. H. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans," *CBQ* 38, no. 1-4 (1976).

3. Increasing Interest in Rhetorical Criticism

This resurgence of interest in rhetorical criticism also brought several earlier works to the attention of biblical scholars including the writings of Wayne C. Booth, Kenneth Burke, and Amos N. Wilder.⁸⁰ These works, written from the literary critical point of view, became the basis for a number of new studies of the biblical texts.⁸¹ In the course of this developing new criticism, literary critics sought ways to move from the texts and examine the social histories behind the texts. The result was the beginning of dialogues between social historians and literary critics.⁸² Further, some NT scholars engaged and applied various developing theories such as structuralism, semiotics, linguistics, narrative theory, and reader-response criticism.⁸³ Much of this work was very promising and represented cutting-edge scholarship. Yet, despite the flurry of activity, most NT scholarship did not use these

⁸⁰ See Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*; K. Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961); Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*; and Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric*.

⁸¹ In the field of NT studies, see, e.g., R. W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); D. M. Rhoads and D. Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); C. H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts*. SBLMS, no. 20 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974); and D. O. Via, *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

⁸² See, e.g., M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith. Cape Editions (London: Cape, 1967); S. B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); R. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); M. Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986); R. M. Fowler, "Who is 'The Reader' in Reader Response Criticism?" *Semeia* 31 (1984); K. A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*. *Semeia Studies* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); Rhoads and Michie, *Mark*; E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation--Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985);

⁸³ Mack, *Rhetoric*, 13-14, discusses some of these details and notes that these unfolding theories were examined in special issues of *Semeia*. Consider, e.g., the following *Semeia* titles: A Structuralist Approach to the Parables (v. 1); Classical Hebrew Narrative (v. 3); Literary Critical Studies of Biblical Texts (v. 8); Narrative Syntax: Translation and Reviews (v. 10); Reader Response Approaches to Biblical and Secular Texts (v. 31); Thinking in Signs: Semiotics and Biblical Studies (v. 81).

variations of rhetorical criticism (some of which have come to be categorized as separate from but related to rhetorical criticism).

B. The Influence of Hans Dieter Betz

It was not until Hans Dieter Betz, drawing upon a strong German tradition of applying classical rhetorical theory to NT texts, wrote a series of commentaries that NT scholars began to more seriously use rhetorical criticism in their research. Black writes that “[p]robably no work has spurred more interest in NT rhetoric than the *Hermeneia* commentary on Galatians, written by Hans Dieter Betz,”⁸⁴ and he describes both this commentary and Betz’s later commentary on 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 as “trailblazing commentaries” with “impressively erudite demonstration of the disciplined passion and rhetorical subtlety of Galatians and 2 Corinthians.”⁸⁵ The realities of these “trailblazing” commentaries are both positive and negative: they demonstrate both the potential benefits of rhetorical criticism as well as some of the weaknesses of this method, or at least Betz’s application of it.

Betz describes Galatians as an apologetic letter, which he considers to be a combination of autobiography and apologetic speech.⁸⁶ Structuring and analyzing it *primarily* as an apologetic speech using forensic or judicial oration common to the law court, he writes, “the apologetic letter . . . presupposes the real or fictitious situation of the court of

⁸⁴ Black, “Rhetorical Questions,” 63.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 66. His perception of this commentary is also shared by W. D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 172, 88. These references are to H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); and H. D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*. *Hermeneia*, ed. G. W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

⁸⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 15.

law, with jury, accuser, and defendant.”⁸⁷ According to Betz, the letter’s addressees are the jury, Paul is the defendant and Paul’s opponents are the accusers, and he divides Galatians into five structural components: *exordium* (1:6-11), *narratio* (1:12-2:14), *propositio* (2:15-21), *probatio* (3:1-4:31), and the *exhortatio* (5:1-6:10).⁸⁸ Further, he considers these five components to be framed by an epistolary prescript (1:1-5) and postscript (6:11-18).⁸⁹ Probably the most significant contribution made by Betz in this commentary, is his recognition of a number of rhetorical features utilized by Paul in this letter, features which had, up until that time, not been recognized by prior analyses. Previously, A. D. Nock had failed to recognize *any* rhetorical features in this letter, describing Paul’s writings as a “failure to organize the subject-matter of his letters in a methodological structure,” at least based upon “the art of rhetoric.”⁹⁰ Betz’s commentary directly contradicts such evaluations of Paul’s writing style and highlights the multiple rhetorical features of Galatians, drawing extensively on various ancient handbooks such as Cicero’s *De inventione rhetorica* and the anonymous *Ad Herennium*.⁹¹ Betz’s commentary radically changed the perceptions and analyses of Paul’s letters particularly as they relate to ancient rhetorical theory.

Despite the success of his rhetorical analysis, there are some problems with Betz’s evaluation of Galatians. The first, and greatest, problem is that, in treating virtually all

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 16-23.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15. He eventually concludes that the postscript is functioning primarily as a rhetorical *peroratio* (313).

⁹⁰ A. D. Nock, *St. Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1938), 234.

⁹¹ D. E. Aune, "Review of *Galatians: A Commentary of Paul's Letter to the churches in Galatia*, by H. D. Betz," *RelSRev* 7 (1981): 325, notes that Betz does not always draw on these handbooks directly but through the summaries of others such as R. Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer in systematischer Übersicht* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1885); H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft* (Munich: M. Hueber, 1960); and J. Martin, *Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode*. *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, no. II.3 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1974).

aspects of the letter as an apologetic speech, he forces the letter into a pre-determined rhetorical pattern—that is, all components *must* be part of *this* ancient rhetorical structure whether or not they fit that structure or whether or not the structure can accommodate them.⁹² Thus, for example, while chapters 1-2 do conform to a number of features of judicial rhetoric, chapters 3-6 do not. Betz himself recognizes this lack of correspondence between the letter and the rhetorical structure. He writes, “[v]iewing Galatians from a rhetorical perspective suggests at once that chapters 3 and 4 must contain the *probatio* section. Admittedly, an analysis of these chapters in terms of rhetoric is extremely difficult.”⁹³ He faces a similar problem in his designation of Galatians 5:1-6:10 as an “*exhortatio*.” Clearly, this primarily paraenetical section does not fit any of the standard components of forensic oratory and Betz provides a division (*exhortatio*) that finds no parallel in ancient apologetic speeches.⁹⁴

Another problem with Betz’s work is his inability to deal adequately with the epistolary and rhetorical dimensions of the letter. His lack of clarity on how to understand the epistolary elements in light of the rhetorical features is obvious from his introductory

⁹² The assumption by Betz is that all theoretical elements of judicial rhetoric must be present in Paul’s letter to the Galatians because it contains some judicial elements.

⁹³ Betz, *Galatians*, 129.

⁹⁴ See, e.g., the criticisms by G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts*. JSNTSup, no. 29 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 57-71, esp. 70; and S. E. Porter, “Paul of Tarsus and His Letters,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.-A.D. 400*, ed. S. E. Porter (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 542. Aune, “Review of *Galatians*,” 324-25, notes that in his general analysis of this section, Betz’s customary references to the ancient rhetorical handbooks are missing and he comments: “Indeed, no real attempt is made to integrate this extensive *exhortatio* into the general rhetorical scheme which he finds in the letter. The reason is simply that it cannot be done, for no discussion of *exhortatio* is to be found either in the ancient rhetorical handbooks or in the modern synthetic presentations of ancient rhetorical theory.” Even G. A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 130, who supports Betz’s analysis of Galatians (albeit in a reference to an earlier article of Betz (H. D. Betz, “The Literary Composition and Function of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 21 (1975)), mentions all of Betz’s sections *except* for this one.

comments. In Betz's words, the opening and closing function almost as an "external bracket for the body of the letter."⁹⁵ Yet, he vacillates on this framework as he further analyzes the epistle. The postscript, he notes, is *both* epistolary and rhetorical (no longer merely an external bracket), but he does not define their relationship. Instead, he struggles with the application of each method in relation to the document itself. For example, he indicates that one must note the "general *function* of the letter as a letter," but subsequently states that "[i]f one looks at the letter from the point of view of its *function*, i.e., from the rhetorical point of view..."⁹⁶ In the end he positions the rhetorical structure over the epistolary structure.⁹⁷

Several evaluations of Betz's analysis have noted that, while portion of Galatians 1-2 do fit the judicial structure, much of the rest of the epistle is better understood as a form of deliberative rhetoric. Duane Watson observes that 3:1-6:18 deals with a number of deliberative topics including future actions Paul desires the Galatians to take and an argument based on what is advantageous to the Galatians' lives.⁹⁸ Paul W. Meyer, while recognizing the importance of Betz's commentary on Galatians, makes the following incisive critique,

There are some serious questions to raise. Betz's arguments draw heavily on ancient handbooks *about* rhetoric and the nature of oratorical persuasion..., and rather minimally on actual speeches, much less on epistolary models. Indeed the basis in historical parallels is exceedingly tenuous, especially with regard to the Hellenistic period... So there is a real danger of imposing upon the analysis of Galatians an ideal construct, a kind of literary or rhetorical

⁹⁵ Betz, *Galatians*, 15. Betz does, however, acknowledge that are sufficient interrelations between the "framework" and the body to indicate that "both elements are part of one and the same composition."

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23-24. Emphases mine.

⁹⁷ Thus, for example, while the postscript is both epistolary and rhetorical in his estimation, he ultimately defines it based upon its rhetorical function (*ibid.*, 313). For a critique of Betz on this point, see Aune, "Review of *Galatians*," 326.

⁹⁸ Watson, "Pauline Epistles," 233. Cf. the comments by Aune, "Review of *Galatians*," 325; and Black, "Rhetorical Questions," 66.

parallel to the phantom of “the” Gnostic redeemer myth, or the product of hypostatizing a rhetorical phenomenon into an historical one. The search for hard classifications for literary genres is especially susceptible to what has been dubbed a “cookie-cutter criticism.”⁹⁹

Meyer further states that “The best safeguard against such abuses of method is still a deliberately cultivated sensitivity to the text itself that is being analyzed, to sense where it resists the overlay of predetermined patterns, and a readiness to acknowledge that Paul has proven himself in other ways to be quite free to modify or adapt the forms to which he is heir.”¹⁰⁰ Meyer’s observations are echoed in a more subdued form by W. D. Davies who, while he describes Betz’s commentary as “indispensable,” recognizes that Betz’s approach has several weaknesses and requires other approaches to complement its shaping of Galatians.¹⁰¹

Davies’ suggestion for other, complementary approaches to the analysis of Galatians recognizes the multi-faceted nature of NT letters like Galatians which cannot be adequately assessed using a single method. Subsequent adaptations of Betz’s work (drawing on his observation that Galatians does exhibit rhetorical features) conclude that Galatians is not an example of judicial but rather deliberative rhetoric.¹⁰² Unfortunately, these subsequent analyses fall into a similar pattern of defining Galatians based upon only one rhetorical model (in this case substituting deliberative for judicial), rather than recognizing that ancient

⁹⁹ P. W. Meyer, "Review of *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches of Galatia* by Hans Dieter Betz," *RelSRev* 7 (1981): 319.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Meyer’s thoughts are echoed by Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," 275, who writes: “Common to all forms of rhetorical criticism... is a tendency among some practitioners to absolutize the insights of their favoured approach and, in the process to lose clear sight of the text itself ... Sensitivity to the multiple dimensions of NT texts and their interpretation ... remains the best precaution against all sorts of ‘cookie-cutter criticism’, rhetorical or otherwise.”

¹⁰¹ Davies, *Studies*, 188.

¹⁰² See, e.g., R. G. Hall, "The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians a Reconsideration," *JBL* 106 (1987); Hansen, *Abraham*; and J. Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech," *NTS* 35 (1989).

letters, of which several of the NT letters including Paul's writings as well as 1 Peter are likely examples, incorporated a variety of rhetorical as well as epistolary features, none of which seem to dominate the entire structure.¹⁰³ Thus, for example, it is best to recognize that Galatians exhibits elements of both judicial and deliberative rhetoric (among other elements) while also understanding and evaluating it as an ancient letter.

This type of variety in a single document is not unusual given that even the ancient speeches that were designed according to specific rhetorical models did not precisely follow the handbooks.¹⁰⁴ The same is true of the influence of epistolary conventions.¹⁰⁵ It is not that Galatians, as a letter, does not exhibit rhetorical features—for that we are indebted to Betz for his careful comparative analysis—it is as Aune has phrased it: “The great strength of this commentary, then, lies not in the author's zeal to push Galatians into a structural framework to which it does not fully belong, but rather in his recognition of various constituent structures in Galatians and his use of them in attempting to explain the meaning of Paul's statements.”¹⁰⁶ In the end, the bulk of these criticisms arise from two problems

¹⁰³ Consider the general comments by D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*. Library of Early Christianity, ed. W. A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Westminster press, 1987), 159, who recognizes that rhetorical, speech elements are present in letters but also that: “[t]he relationship between written and oral [speech] communications, however, can be exaggerated. While there are many similarities between written letters and oral communications, there are also significant differences in language, style, and structure.” Similarly, Watson, “Pauline Epistles,” 232, argues: “[s]ince epistles address the multi-faced relationship between sender and addressee, the type of rhetoric often varies with a single epistle.”

¹⁰⁴ Watson, “Pauline Epistles,” 221, notes the dangers of reliance on the rhetorical handbooks, recognizing that “rhetorical theory is an abstraction from actual practice. It is more formal than extant speeches, which were varied, being governed by particular rhetorical situations and their contingencies as well as by theory.” Cf. M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*. HUT, no. 28 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck); Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ Aune, “Review of *Galatians*,” 324, acknowledges that, “ancient epistolary theory was not infrequently violated in practise, a discrepancy evident in modern studies of the theory and practise of Horace.” See R. K. Hack, “The Doctrine of Literary Forms,” *HSCP* 27 (1916); and W. Allen, Jr. and others, “Horace's First Book of 'Epistles' as Letters,” *CJ* 68, no. 2 (1972-73).

¹⁰⁶ Aune, “Review of *Galatians*,” 326.

with the approach of rhetorical critics like Betz: 1) how to use ancient rhetorical categories for works that do not fit specified patterns, and 2) how to deal with NT epistles, especially given the range of the letter genre. More will be said on these topics below.

C. Beginnings of a Methodological Refinement: George Kennedy

The popularity of Betz's analysis of Galatians led George Kennedy, a classicist, to develop a method to assist NT scholars in applying rhetorical criticism to ancient texts. Kennedy had found himself regularly fielding requests from students of biblical literature to teach them classical rhetorical theory,¹⁰⁷ and he responded in 1984 with a book entitled, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*.¹⁰⁸ Kennedy linked his definition of rhetorical criticism to the use of rhetoric from the Greco-Roman world. He raised two key points in the course of outlining his method: 1) rhetorical criticism is concerned about the text's interaction with the ancient audience and not with the modern reader,¹⁰⁹ and 2) that, while rhetorical criticism is focused upon the text and not oral communication, the likely *reading* of the early Christian texts means that the oral and linear nature of the texts need to be taken into account.¹¹⁰ Kennedy set out what is considered a relatively simple and solid method, which has been applied extensively in NT studies.

The method itself, while sometimes difficult to outline, was not problematic.¹¹¹ Instead, it was Kennedy's methodological philosophy that created tensions and problems in

¹⁰⁷ Kennedy, *New Testament*, ix.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹¹¹ Surprisingly, this relatively simple method has proven difficult to outline (see the stages listed by Kennedy, *New Testament*, 33-38). For example, Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 28, notes the difficulty (continued...)

the field. Like Muilenburg, Kennedy contended that rhetorical criticism filled a void that form criticism was unable to address.¹¹² In contrast to Muilenburg, however, he juxtaposed his idea of rhetorical criticism with the forms of rhetorical criticism that stemmed from literary theory. While other scholars called these forms of literary criticism “rhetorical,” Kennedy placed them under the rubric of literary criticism and labelled them accordingly; only *his* approach, he argued, could rightly be called rhetorical criticism.¹¹³

Within this framework of what might be called philosophical idealism, Kennedy also argued that ancient Greek rhetoric is universally applicable to any culture in any age regardless of whether that culture had any knowledge of Greek rhetoric.¹¹⁴ He writes, “[t]hough rhetoric is colored by the traditions and conventions of the society in which it is applied, it is also a universal phenomenon which is conditioned by basic workings of the human mind and heart and by the nature of all human society.”¹¹⁵ Despite his recognition of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (and the Aristotelian idea of argumentation) and despite his stated distinction between ancient rhetoric and modern rhetorical analysis, Kennedy, in practice, equated ancient rhetoric with modern rhetorical study in-so-far as he expected

(continued)

of outlining Kennedy’s approach, and offers, as a solution, five basic, *unnumbered* steps. Anderson’s attempt to simplify Kennedy’s approach by avoiding numbering the steps does not resolve the fact that, even without a numbering system, the steps do not always match in content (even compared to those who also offer five steps). Compare, for example, Anderson’s outline with Wuellner, “Where?” 455-58; and D. F. Watson, “Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 699. To complicate matters, the number of steps varies from summary to summary. A. H. Snyman, “Style and the Rhetorical Situation of Romans 8.31-39,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 218, offers only four steps and his third step, which he divides into two parts, does not directly match components offered by others. Moreover, C. C. Black, “Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation,” *ExpT* 100 (1989): 254-55, offers six different steps.

¹¹² Kennedy, *New Testament*, 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, esp. 10-11.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

ancient rhetoric to cover *all* aspects of a text’s argumentative structure.¹¹⁶ This not only fed into the developing tensions between the literary or “modern” and ancient rhetorical criticism (which I examine in more detail below),¹¹⁷ it also created a model that expected ancient rhetorical criticism to provide all the answers for any given text—an unreasonable and unhealthy expectation.

D. Further Methodological Refinements: Burton Mack

The first work to more coherently connect modern and ancient rhetorical theories and recognize the limitations of rhetorical criticism came from Burton Mack. Mack supported Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s approach and also recognized the importance of ancient rhetoric to biblical analysis, but he neither confused nor divided the roles of ancient and modern rhetorical criticism. Mack went beyond Kennedy in limiting the influence of classical rhetoric to providing the *cultural context* for studying the NT rhetorically.¹¹⁸ He also integrated modern theories of rhetorical analysis—especially those that recognized the texts as patterns of argumentation or means of persuasion—into his method without making the ancient and modern methods indistinguishable.¹¹⁹ Mack correctly based his approach on

¹¹⁶ Kennedy’s awareness of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca is evident in his work, but he does not utilize them in shaping his method. See the criticism by Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 30-31. Kennedy does cite them once and list them in his bibliography as “likely to be of interest to the practitioner of rhetorical criticism.” See Kennedy, *New Testament*, 29, 162.

¹¹⁷ I have already noted these tensions above and will address them in more detail below. At this juncture it might be helpful to note that part of the problem stems from a lack of clarity in the use of this terminology. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 29, notes regarding Kennedy’s statements: “‘Literary criticism’ is, unfortunately, a rather vague term. In older works this term is used in a very general sense, which would mean that *rhetorical criticism* would be a sub-discipline of *literary criticism*. More recent scholarship has developed *literary criticism* in two directions, namely, (literary) structuralism, and what is known as the *new criticism*.” See also footnotes 64 & 65.

¹¹⁸ Mack, *Rhetoric*, esp. 25. Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, esp. 19-21.

the ancient rhetorical framework that would have informed the biblical writers, and he further integrated this framework into the developing modern rhetorical criticism in order to expand the ability of his approach to engage all aspects of a text. He did not consider these two methods to be in tension nor did he argue, like Kennedy, that ancient rhetorical criticism was all-encompassing.¹²⁰ Moreover, for Mack, the rediscovery of rhetoric in the later twentieth century helped to divorce it from the misnomer that “rhetoric” was merely “stylistic ornamentation” and to reconnect it with ancient rhetoric through the recognition that, according to the ancient Greco-Roman writings, rhetoric is a strategy of argumentation.¹²¹ Mack regarded this grounding of rhetoric in the ancient models as especially useful for the study of biblical texts, and he proposed that the connection of ancient models with modern rhetorical theory helped to link rhetorical studies with the social theory of language.¹²²

Mack agreed with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca that this was indeed a “new rhetoric” and yet, at the same time, he noted that it was really a rediscovery of the old (ancient) rhetoric. Nonetheless, the question for Mack still remained as to whether rhetorical criticism could help “to bridge the gap between a literature and its social history,”¹²³ which would offer the added dimension of understanding rhetorical constructs as derived from social constructs. Although Mack thought that rhetorical criticism “may be in fact the most promising form of literary criticism for the task of reconstructing Christian origins with

¹²⁰ In fact his statement regarding the parameters for the study of classical rhetoric implies that there are limits to its practice and application. See Mack, *Rhetoric*, 25. This sense of limitation permeates his writing without detracting from the value of this type of analysis.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 17.

social issues in view,”¹²⁴ he did not propose to accomplish this task in his book, but he did want to take rhetorical criticism that direction.

Recent scholarly activities have sought to capitalize on the strengths of rhetorical criticism and avoid its limitations by applying the methods consistently and by combining methods to produce more nuanced, multilayered approaches. This multilayered approach is different from Mack’s approach (although it does grow out of it) in that it does not place the weight of understanding social constructs upon rhetorical criticism. Rather, such a multilayered approach provides the opportunity for a fuller and clearer picture of the meaning within the texts under investigation by using various other methods including social-scientific analysis. Vernon Robbins is a key contributor to the multilayered approach. I will return to and summarize Robbin’s method at the end of this chapter. Initially, however, I want to explore how these rhetorical models have functioned in practice, particularly in their application to the letter of 1 Peter, and clarify the strengths and weaknesses of these applications.

II. Rhetorical Criticism as Applied to 1 Peter

Since 1989, four significant studies based on rhetorical criticism have been applied to the text of 1 Peter: one by Troy Martin,¹²⁵ one by Barth Campbell, and two by Lauri Thurén.¹²⁶ Troy Martin initially applies classical epistolary theory but then switches to a type of literary theory once he has provided the basic outline and thrust of the letter using

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Philip Tite, a student of Martin, has also published a book using rhetorical criticism to study 1 Peter. Tite, essentially, uses Martin’s book as a “working base,” and, therefore, I will focus primarily upon Martin’s approach. See Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, esp. 18.

¹²⁶ The details of these writings are listed below.

epistolary theory. Barth Campbell seeks to apply classical rhetorical theory via literary theory. Lauri Thurén, who is perhaps the most balanced in his application of rhetorical theory, uses modern rhetorical theory but recognizes its connection to and dependence upon classical rhetorical theory.¹²⁷ I will draw on and critique various aspects of these studies more specifically in chapter two, but, here, will introduce these works and assess their relationship to the scholars and methods covered above. Further, I will summarize their approach and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each one's method as applied to 1 Peter, especially in light of the occurrences of rebirth language.

A. Troy Martin

Martin, a student of Betz, examines several significant aspects of 1 Peter in his published Ph.D. dissertation, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, including: 1) the history of the composition of the letter, 2) the epistolary format of the letter, 3) a recognition and analysis of the letter as paraenesis, and 4) his main thesis that the metaphorical use of *diaspora* is the key to understanding the letter's composition. The two strengths of Martin's work are his thorough analyses of the document as a piece of epistolary literature and the argument that its main section is paraenetic. Further, subsequent works on 1 Peter have drawn heavily and benefited from the rhetorical insights highlighted by Martin. Some of these insights will be utilized in the subsequent chapter, when we examine the text of 1 Peter. Despite the many benefits of his study, Martin, as one of the forerunners in applying rhetorical theory to 1 Peter, is unable to avoid some of the pitfalls of rhetorical study.

¹²⁷ Although Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 22 n.41, argues that Thurén does not apply his method consistently throughout the text. I recognize Tite's point, but disagree with his conclusions.

Like Betz, Martin falls into the trap of forcing his text into a predetermined framework. In contrast to Betz, he does not use an ancient rhetorical framework, but, instead, determines that 1 Peter must fit exclusively into an epistolary framework. He begins by taking the position that one must first draw upon ancient epistolary theory in order to properly identify the epistolary form and function of the various parts 1 Peter.¹²⁸ He does not, however, explore the issue of epistolary theory and its strengths and weaknesses as applied to NT texts; rather, he assumes its importance, and he assumes that, once 1 Peter is identified as an ancient letter, epistolary theory must offer the best (and only?) approach to understanding its compositional components (and, thereby, understanding the significance of these components). After stating that 1 Peter is in fact in epistolary form,¹²⁹ Martin concludes: “Since 1 Peter corresponds to the epistolary form and answers to the epistolary situation, the first step in a compositional analysis is to identify the letter formulas in the document.”¹³⁰ Despite this statement, Martin’s only subsequent discussion of the epistolary character of 1 Peter (or of epistolary theory in general) is when he disagrees with previous assessments of the compositional nature or function of sections of the letter, and, in these instances, he reiterates the importance of paying attention to the epistolary form. One example on this point is sufficient: Martin states that “[t]hose scholars who advocate a liturgical analysis of 1 Peter conclude that the liturgical materials maintain their own form,

¹²⁸ The same problem is found in Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 19, who seems aware of the weaknesses of forcing a text to conform to a specific model when he criticizes an article by Thompson, "Rhetoric." Tite writes that Thompson’s article has a “lack of appreciation for the epistolary nature of 1 Peter (he relies far too heavily on classical rhetorical theory, as applied to speeches, without properly considering 1 Peter as a letter in literary form)” (23). Yet, while Tite is obviously aware of the dangers of simply applying one theory without giving full consideration to the nuance of the document under consideration, he, like Martin, assumes that epistolary theory is free of such danger.

¹²⁹ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 41.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

perform their own functions, and pre-empt the epistolary formulas. I would argue, however, that although the epistolary formulas may be influenced somewhat by the liturgical materials, they nevertheless maintain their epistolary form and function.”¹³¹

I agree with Martin that one needs to pay attention to the epistolary nature of the letter, but to impose a *generalized* epistolary form upon 1 Peter simply because it is a letter is to ignore the fact that the exact epistolary form of some ancient letters, especially those of the NT, is difficult to determine.¹³² Martin, nonetheless, makes sweeping denunciations of previous methods while analyzing the various components of the letter. He states, “[a]lthough it draws on liturgical, paraenetic, and other materials, *all* of these materials have been modified to fit the epistolary situation.”¹³³ Yet later he admits that, “the paraenetic genre to which 1 Peter belongs is not determined by a definite compositional structure.”¹³⁴ Despite his earlier, sweeping pronouncements, most of the letter (1:14-5:11) eludes his analysis of its compositional structure, and he seeks to “*devise* a method of literary analysis that can explain the compositional structure of the letter-body.”¹³⁵ The literary theory that he *devises* leads him to the conclusion that the *diaspora* is the controlling metaphor of the three metaphor clusters that constitute the bulk of this letter.

His approach, I find, forces the text to conform to a pre-determined framework with little consideration given to the individual elements of the text—including rebirth language—or to the persuasive function of those elements in the text. Instead he selects a term that has a limited function in the text of 1 Peter (and that may not even be functioning

¹³¹ Ibid., 49; cf. 50-51 and 79 n.132.

¹³² The question of the NT letter form is discussed in detail below.

¹³³ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 78. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 135.

¹³⁵ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

metaphorically—see the discussion in chapter 2 below). His method is sporadic, and he switches from an all-encompassing epistolary theory to a form-critical analysis to what he calls a “literary method” without any clear overarching method or any attention to the key sections he identifies in 1 Peter.¹³⁶ Portions of Martin’s work are helpful in their analysis of some of this letter’s components, but his overall methodological approach is inconsistent and, occasionally, unhelpful—obscuring rather than revealing key components in this letter. His approach is a reminder to clarify the distinctions between methods and to apply each method consistently rather than, seemingly, arbitrarily.

B. Barth Campbell

Barth Campbell has produced an analysis of 1 Peter, entitled *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, that uses components of classical rhetorical criticism as well as social-scientific analysis.¹³⁷ In this work, he seeks to determine the underlying situation of 1 Peter. Campbell structures the book according to his “classical” analysis of its sections while integrating his findings with the elements of honour and shame into these rhetorical divisions. He divides 1 Peter into an exordium followed by three arguments, each of which

¹³⁶ For example, *ibid.*, 78, concludes that the opening sections of 1 Peter provide the “context within which the letter is to be understood,” yet, instead of giving it the weight this critical epistolary opening, he claims to have now “identified the *letter formulas*” (emphasis mine) and relegates these *formulas* to their appropriate compositional positions in the structure and moves to an analysis of the letter body using non-epistolary methods.

¹³⁷ My concern in this chapter is with the uses of rhetorical criticism and not with social-scientific techniques. The final chapter of this dissertation will engage the questions of social-scientific analysis and will focus on Robbins’ proposals in light of the uses of rebirth language in 1 Peter. I will not, therefore, be evaluating Campbell’s social-scientific techniques which have no direct bearing on the analysis of rebirth language (unlike his rhetorical techniques which do affect such an analysis in 1 Peter).

he believes primarily follows the pattern of the ancient Latin rhetorical work, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

The strength of Campbell's argument is the detailed manner in which he presents evidence of the author's awareness and employment of rhetorical language and techniques. Whether or not the author of 1 Peter employed the specific handbook cited by Campbell, Campbell's analysis makes it clear that the author was well acquainted with ancient rhetorical devices and employed some of these devices in the course of writing this letter. As David deSilva observes in a review of Campbell's book, "Campbell certainly displays, contrary to the opinion of those who dismiss rhetorical criticism as a legitimate and helpful approach to NT interpretation, the fact that NT texts do develop arguments in ways more than coincidentally similar to the techniques found in the progymnasmata and advanced rhetorical books."¹³⁸ Campbell's argument certainly reinforces the importance of using rhetorical criticism to explore the text of 1 Peter.

Methodologically, Campbell's work displays some of the same weaknesses we have seen in related studies. Campbell aligns himself with the rhetorical approaches of Betz, Kennedy and Mack in his introduction, but is primarily dependent upon Kennedy.¹³⁹ He explains the structure of classical rhetorical analysis based upon the five-part approach proposed by Kennedy, but he does not actually follow this approach consistently. Instead, he adds elements to or ignores important aspects of Kennedy's structure. For example, Campbell initially identifies 1 Peter 1:3-12 as the exordium and correctly identifies three

¹³⁸ D. A. deSilva, "Review of Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter," *RBL* (2000).

¹³⁹ B. L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*. SBLDS, no. 160 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 2-9.

major concerns of the exordium, the first of which is to introduce matters that will be covered in the rest of the document.¹⁴⁰ Yet, in his detailed examination, Campbell skips the first five verses of “the exordium” (including the material containing rebirth language) and moves immediately to verse six, announcing, as a result, that the “predominant subject in all of 1 Peter is suffering,”¹⁴¹ without considering the structure of the exordium or proposing any other aspects that may warrant consideration.¹⁴²

Problems with his structure and labelling are especially evident in the material that does not fit his model. The first two verses (1:1-2) serve as an excellent example of this problem. Initially, in the course of his analysis, Campbell ignores 1:1-2. Eventually, while examining 1:3-12 as an encomium (a kind of epideictic speech), Campbell asserts that “[a]lthough the encomium proper is 1:3-12, one must take into account the rhetorical function of the prescript to the letter.”¹⁴³ He classifies 1:1-2 as the encomium’s introduction, and asks: “[d]oes 1 Pt. 1:1-2 have any contribution to make to the letter other than to supply merely conventional greetings as *preamble* to the real heart of the letter?”¹⁴⁴ While he does

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Certainly, the idea of suffering does play a role in 1 Peter’s argument. However, the presentation and development of the idea of suffering is not part of the initial introductory portions of 1 Peter. No mention is made of any affliction until 1:6 which speaks of *λυπέω* (distress) and *πειρασμός* (trials). The normal terms for Christian suffering (*πάσχω*, *πάθημα*), at least in relation to the sufferings of Jesus, do not occur until 1:11 (*πάθημα*—in reference to Jesus) and then are picked up again at 2:19 (*πάσχω*—in reference to the letter’s recipients) and continue steadily until near the end of the letter. Numerous other terms occur before the language of suffering is introduced and are more integral to the opening portions of the letter. Even in terms of numbers, *θεός* and *χριστός*, for example, occur earlier and far more often than terms related to suffering (32 times and 20 times respectively), and I do not find that they are “predominant subjects” of the letter. While suffering does become an important theme in the letter, highlighting it as the predominant subject ignores the letter’s actual introduction and development of its key terms.

¹⁴³ Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, 42.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 42-3.

respond positively, indicating that this section serves a rhetorical function, it is clear that this *preamble* does not fit into the rhetorical structure he has presented.¹⁴⁵

Even within the rhetorical structure that does “fit,” Campbell is sometimes hard-pressed to include many of the letter’s elements in his discussion of this structure. For example, having labelled 1:3-12 as an encomium, Campbell assesses its contents based upon Burton Mack’s description of the elements of an encomium.¹⁴⁶ His assessments often stretch the role of the encomium’s expected content and, although some of the parallels are a bit intriguing, they force 1 Peter 1:3-12 into unnecessarily static categories. Perhaps the reason Campbell labels 1:1-2 as the encomium’s introduction (despite not actually being part of the encomium?) is that verse three functions, for him, as the narrational component of the encomium.

Narration, according to Mack, is meant to deal with the origin, genealogy and/or birth of the hearers, which for Campbell corresponds with God as their father who has given them rebirth. Although this is an intriguing argument, it becomes clear in his next section that Campbell forces the parallels too much. The next section of the encomium, according to Mack, is meant to cover the achievements of the hearers, including their education and/or pursuits, their virtues, their deeds and their blessings and/or endowments.¹⁴⁷ However, Campbell is unable to find clear parallels to this aspect of Mack’s structure and, instead of applying the structure consistently, he focuses primarily on the somewhat vague category of blessings/endowments (although he does manage to squeeze in a few virtues). Certainly

¹⁴⁵ Campbell’s label of 1:1-2 as the introductory portion of the encomium (1:3-12) first necessitates moving outside of the encomium to locate this “introduction.” Further, his label of 1:1-2 as “epistolary in form” is an admission that it is not part of the rhetorical structure proper that he has proposed.

¹⁴⁶ Mack, *Rhetoric*, 47-48.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

these are sub-categories of achievements, but the bulk of 1:3-12 is about what has been done for the readers by God *not* what they have themselves achieved—which is the primary function of an encomium’s achievements section.¹⁴⁸ Finally, while one could argue that 1:3-12 generally corresponds to the role of the exordium by providing positive pathos,¹⁴⁹ it does not fit the precise role of epideictic speech as an encomium. Campbell thinks that the letter should conform to the rhetorical structure he has outlined, despite the fact that the letter is not an epideictic speech, but only contains certain features of the epideictic speech.¹⁵⁰

Like Betz, with whom he aligns himself, Campbell’s study is helpful and does highlight certain rhetorical elements in this letter, but, ultimately, forces the letter into rigid categories rather than paying attention to the actual flow and structure of the text itself. But, while he does exhibit the weaknesses of the rhetorical approach already noted, he also goes beyond rhetorical criticism by introducing social-scientific method into his analysis. His approach confirms that rhetorical criticism, while *potentially* beneficial, has its limits, and that questions of social context need to be answered using an appropriate method.

C. Lauri Thurén

Lauri Thurén’s rhetorical analyses of 1 Peter are much more consistent than Martin’s or Campbell’s, and, while his analyses have less impact on understandings of rebirth

¹⁴⁸ Some elements of this section are part of the readers’ achievements, such as the genuineness of their faith (v. 7) and their love of Jesus (v. 8), but most aspect of this section stem from their rebirth which has been accomplished by God, according to the author of 1 Peter.

¹⁴⁹ The exact role of the exordium will be discussed in chapter 2 below.

¹⁵⁰ 1 Peter exhibits various ancient rhetorical features. As Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 6, notes, the letter “shows elements of judicial and epideictic structures, but seems to reflect most closely the deliberative rhetoric of its Hellenistic age.” Although he does not elaborate on his statement, Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 5, considers the letter to exhibit skill in the rhetoric of the schools.

language directly, his method does offer important insights into the application of rhetorical theory generally. Thurén's two books, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter: with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* and *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*, will be considered together.¹⁵¹ Thurén sets forth his method most explicitly in his first work, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*. Much of his method will be discussed in the section below—on the relationship between ancient rhetorical theory and epistolary theory. In *The Rhetorical Strategy*, Thurén's central thesis is that the various participles scattered throughout 1 Peter are not based on Hellenistic usage or accidental semiticizing (as others have argued), but are deliberate indicators of the letter's purposes. He divides 1 Peter into six rhetorical units, and, although he uses a somewhat different method than Martin or Campbell (he uses a variety of methods and also notes the potential problems and tensions between these methods), he affirms the basic structure of the book that has been proposed by those other studies—a point to which I will return in the next chapter.

Thurén's *Argument and Theology* builds upon his earlier *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter*, and seeks to uncover the motives for the paraenesis in the letter based upon the rhetorical perspective supplied by the letter itself. He finds three systems of motivation to which the letter appeals: 1) the changed status of the recipients as symbolized by their baptism, 2) Christ's example and God's will, and 3) non-religious reasoning. A final diagram pulls together these conclusions in which Thurén places the divisions between the sections at: 1:13; 2:11; 3:13; and 4:12.¹⁵² Thurén's work demonstrates that one can use

¹⁵¹ L. Thurén, *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions* (Åbo: Åbo Academy Press, 1990); and Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter*.

¹⁵² Thurén, *Argument*, 221.

rhetorical criticism to illuminate aspects of the text without succumbing to some of the pitfalls noted above.¹⁵³ Part of the reason for his success is that he demonstrates an awareness of these potential problems.¹⁵⁴ In the course of his work, Thurén draws attention to the need to clarify the relationship between ancient and modern rhetorical criticism, and he proposes ways to apply these methods to ancient texts in an appropriate manner.¹⁵⁵ I will return to some of Thurén's comments in the major section (III) that follows.

D. Concluding Remarks

Each of the above monographs has helped to focus on key aspects of the text of 1 Peter with attention to ancient categories of analysis as well as methods of argumentation. Ultimately, however, they reveal the need for a more comprehensive approach that takes into account the distinctives of the text and does not force it into preset categories. Within these four rhetorical works we do find clear differences of opinion on how to apply rhetorical criticism to a specific text—1 Peter. Further, they demonstrate the very problems that have been highlighted concerning the application of rhetorical criticism; there is still no consistent application of rhetorical theory to biblical texts, and there are ongoing problems with the ways in which it is applied. These problems are in some way representative of the field as a whole in which the use of the term rhetorical criticism is used inappropriately to indicate epistolary theory and can range from a customized literary theory to a specific ancient

¹⁵³ Albeit, Thurén does associate baptism with the rebirth language of 1 Peter, but this incorrect association is not a result of his rhetorical method but rather stems from his dependence upon the assumptions of others. His approach is not intended to engage the question of the role of rebirth language and does not hinder such an analysis.

¹⁵⁴ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 42-45.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-78.

technique of argumentation. Ultimately, for the purposes of this dissertation, these problems can be divided into two main categories: 1) the problem of applying rhetorical analysis to letters, which manifests primarily in the methodological question of the relationship between epistolary theory and rhetorical analysis; and 2) an ongoing tension between what has come to be termed “modern” rhetorical criticism and ancient rhetorical analysis. These problems are far from insurmountable, but do require more detailed analysis, beginning with an examination of the solution to the tension between ancient rhetorical analysis and epistolary theory.

III. Ongoing Issues in Rhetorical Criticism

A. The Relationship between Ancient Rhetoric and Epistolary Writing

One of the ideas circulated in studies on rhetorical criticism is that rhetorical styles of writing permeated the Greco-Roman world and, thereby, were naturally incorporated into the ancient writings including the NT letters. George Kennedy appears to be the source of this idea, particularly given his proposals concerning the universal nature of ancient rhetoric (discussed above) and the pervasiveness of rhetorical theory in the Greco-Roman world of the first century.¹⁵⁶ Apparently influenced by Kennedy, Richard N. Longenecker, writing concerning Paul’s letter to the Galatians, states that “[t]he forms of classical rhetoric were ‘in the air’,” and he proposes that Paul “seems to have used them almost unconsciously for his own purposes—much as he used the rules of Greek grammar.”¹⁵⁷ This idea, that rhetorical

¹⁵⁶ See especially Kennedy, *New Testament*, 9-10.

¹⁵⁷ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary, no. 41, ed. R. P. Martin (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), cxiii.

styles of writing were “in the air,” can be a dangerous statement if, by it, one means—as Longenecker seems to intend—that we are free to apply any type of rhetorical category to any text since all texts written during that period would have been rhetorical in nature.¹⁵⁸

Nonetheless, one who was trained in classical rhetoric in the course of learning to write undoubtedly incorporated rhetorical structures into various aspects of writing—which is possibly what Kennedy intended to convey. Further, as Kennedy observes “there were many handbooks of rhetoric in common circulation” and it is possible that NT writers would have had access to these materials.¹⁵⁹ In contrast to Longenecker’s interpretation of this perspective, however, I would argue that NT writers who utilized these rhetorical methods would have learned them somewhere, much as they would have learned the rules of Greek grammar—these ideas simply did not “float” around to be picked up by whoever put pen to paper.¹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the permeation of these rhetorical methods has been well noted, even

¹⁵⁸ S. E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht. JSNTSup, no. 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 104-05, despite his initial questioning of this view as problematic, comes to a similar conclusion when he states, “There may well be elements of ancient rhetoric found in Paul or other letter writers of the time . . . [b]ut it is difficult to establish what and how much Paul could have known on a conscious or formal basis.” J. T. Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht. JSNTSup, no. 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 324, seems to reach the exact same conclusions when he states, “one must allow for the possibility that Paul’s usage may be functionally related to, but not formally (and consciously) based upon, the ancient rhetorical practices.” Ultimately, however, Porter is questioning whether an ancient rhetorical model can be overlaid upon a text to provide a tool for discourse analysis. I would agree with him that one cannot assume an absolute correlation between a model and its application—yet the application may show some correlation with *portions* of the model.

¹⁵⁹ Kennedy, *New Testament*, 10.

¹⁶⁰ The point is that the authors would have *learned* these techniques, whether formally or informally. We do not have sufficient data on the education level of many of the NT authors, and can only assess the evidence of the writings themselves. Certainly, one would expect variance in the rhetorical elements of the NT writings based upon the educational level of the authors, and that is clearly the case. See the essays by: R. A. Burridge, "The Gospels and Acts," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997); Porter, "Paul"; D. L. Stamps, "The Johannine Writings," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); and L. Thurén, "The General New Testament Writings," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.-A.D. 400* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

in Palestinian Judaism and in the varied writing of the NT.¹⁶¹ Further, those reading/hearing these writings would be influenced by the persuasive nature of the argument, and those who had rhetorical training would certainly recognize aspects of the rhetorical structures employed.

Rhetorical devices were widespread but did not float “in the air” nor did they permeate writings unless they were used intentionally.¹⁶² Further, the use of rhetorical techniques in ancient writings did not involve the direct application of a fixed system of rhetorical structure from handbook to writing.¹⁶³ Not only was ancient rhetoric considered an art in terms of its application to public oratory (for which it was originally designed), its gradual inclusion in writings, including letters, was even more varied.¹⁶⁴ Those authors who utilized rhetorical features would have altered, expanded or even avoided standard rhetorical categories in the course of their writing, depending on their purpose and the genre of their writing. At the very least, lack of agreement over the rhetorical units of a text should signal that the author was not following a fixed rhetorical structure.¹⁶⁵ More importantly, when we

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., Aune, *Literary Environment*, 199; D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *HUCA* 22 (1949); M. Dibelius, *Paul*, trans. F. Clarke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), esp. 31; R. M. Grant, "Hellenistic Elements in Galatians," *ATHR* 34 (1952); Hansen, *Abraham*, 55-6; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 1st American ed., trans. J. Bowden, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 81-83, 312; and G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 7-8.

¹⁶² There may have been occasional, unintended devices, but not a consistent, yet unintentional, shaping of the text

¹⁶³ See also footnotes 104 and 105.

¹⁶⁴ See the comments by Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 49-51, as well those of S. J. Kraftchick, "Ethos and Pathos Appeals in Galatians Five and Six: A Rhetorical Analysis" (Ph.D., Emory University, 1985), 62-123, who offers a thorough discussion of the flexible nature of ancient rhetorical applications. See also footnote 105.

¹⁶⁵ This relates back to the earlier-noted problems of forcing a text into a fixed rhetorical structure, especially as seen in the analyses of Betz, Martin and Campbell above. Cf. the comments by Porter, "Theoretical Justification," 104.

speak about ancient letters in particular, we must recognize that these writings were guided by other structures, including expectations within the ancient epistolary genre.

The modern discussion concerning the epistolary form began with Deissmann.¹⁶⁶ His distinction between epistles (literary, with conscious prose) and letters (non-literary, which are individual and non-public)¹⁶⁷ has not been upheld,¹⁶⁸ yet his work introduces and highlights what has been a recurring problem in NT research: clearly categorizing the NT letters.¹⁶⁹ A significant part of the problem of categorization stems from the lack of continuity among actual letters, letter writing as it was taught in the schools, and epistolary theory as provided in the handbooks. As John L. White notes, “There was never a full integration of the practice and the theory. Ordinary letter writing, occasioned by practical necessities, influenced the theory but did not dominate it.”¹⁷⁰ Although White acknowledges that, eventually, “epistolary theory seems to have influenced the practice [of letter writing],”¹⁷¹ a definitive point of connection between the theory and practice remains elusive. Heikki Koskenniemi, in the course of analyzing friendship letters, confirms the elusiveness of any clear point of contact between theory and practice. Koskenniemi notes

¹⁶⁶ G. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 4th ed., trans. L. R. M. Strachan (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), 148-49, 224-46; G. A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies: Contributions Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity*, trans. A. Grieve (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), 3-59.

¹⁶⁷ See Deissmann, *Light*, 228-30, for his summary of the distinctions between the letter and the epistle.

¹⁶⁸ Aune, *Literary Environment*, 161, indicates that few have put forward typologies of ancient letters and none of those proposed have received wide acceptance. Porter, “Theoretical Justification,” 100, notes that Deissmann even undermined his own categories. Deissmann’s argument that letters were personal and non-literary does not hold up in his own example of a letter from a son to father (P. Oxy. 119) that exhibits various “literary” features including irony and sarcasm.

¹⁶⁹ I agree with W. G. Doty, “The Classification of Epistolary Literature,” *CBQ* 31 (1969), that the absolute distinction established by Deissmann between “letter” (*Brief*) and “epistle” (*Epistel*) should be eliminated.

¹⁷⁰ J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters. Foundations and Facets: New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 190.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

that although the handbooks provide numerous letter types (he finds up to 41), closer examination reveals that these “types” seem to be more examples of different styles as a result of varied circumstances of the writers.¹⁷² These different styles are examples of the fluidity of ancient letters. By the first century, letters had come to “absorb” various genres, and the incorporation of ancient rhetorical methods was part of that absorption. The early Christian letters in particular had come to expand beyond the typical letters of more ancient times and some had come to resemble rhetorical speeches yet were clearly also letters. The question of how to interpret them using epistolary and/or rhetorical theory is a point of debate.

Broadly speaking, there are 3 major approaches to the NT epistles using epistolary and rhetorical criticism.¹⁷³ The first, represented by John White, William Doty, H. Hübner and Stanley Stowers, argues that these epistles are *real* letters and the application of rhetorical criticism to them can only be secondary.¹⁷⁴ The second, provided by Klaus Berger, George Kennedy, and David Aune, contends that the epistles are essentially

¹⁷² H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1956), 61-63. This does not mean that the ancient letter writers did not follow certain parameters. In fact, Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.*, 63, argues that those who wrote letters in ancient times tended to protect the traditional elements of the letter style. The key point, however, is that while there were certain key elements in a letter, there was also great flexibility to expand or contract (or eliminate?) certain aspects of the letter based upon the tone, the circumstances faced by the writer and the needs of the recipients.

¹⁷³ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 57-64; and Porter, "Theoretical Justification," 100-02, both provide information which I have included in this summary.

¹⁷⁴ J. L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter*, 2d, corrected ed. SBLDS, no. 2, ed. H. C. Kee and D. A. Knight (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972); Doty, "Classification"; W. G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1973); S. K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*. SBLDS, no. 57 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); and H. Hübner, "Der Galaterbrief und das Verhältnis von antiker Rhetorik und Epiustolographie," *TLZ* 109 (1984).

speeches with epistolary openings and closings attached.¹⁷⁵ This second approach is slightly modified by Betz who, as we saw above, studies the letter opening and closing as valid epistolary forms, but then switches to classical rhetorical theory to study the letter body.¹⁷⁶ The third approach, represented by Bruce Johanson, Wilhelm Wuellner, Franz Schnider and Werner Stenger, and Lauri Thurén, contends that epistolary and ancient rhetorical approaches are different in nature and need to be applied separately to the epistles, revealing different aspects of the texts.¹⁷⁷

As an example of this third approach, Wuellner uses both epistolary and rhetorical methods to study the text so that Rom. 1:1-15, normally identified as an epistolary letter opening can *also* be identified as a rhetorical exordium.¹⁷⁸ Michael Bünker critiques Wuellner for failing to see the letter to the Romans *simultaneously* as speech and letter,¹⁷⁹ yet, as Thurén observes, Bünker's critique precisely underscores the point of this third approach: if epistolography and rhetorical analysis represent different methodologies, they

¹⁷⁵ K. Berger, "Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe," *ZNW* 65 (1974); K. Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1984), 216-17; Kennedy, *New Testament*, 86-87; and D. E. Aune, "Romans as a Logos Protreptikos in the Context of Ancient Religious and Philosophical Propaganda," in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, ed. M. Hengel and U. Heckel. WUNT, no. 58 (Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991). Cf. K. Berger, "Hellenistische Garrungen im Neuen Testament," in *ANRW*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, vol. II.25.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984).

¹⁷⁶ Betz, *Galatians*, 15, 37-43. Betz also preferences the rhetorical over epistolary even in his analysis of the opening and closing (see the discussion on Betz above). Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, as had also been noted above, follows Betz's example but switches to a literary-critical approach for the body of the letter rather than the classical rhetorical approach of his teacher, Betz.

¹⁷⁷ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*; B. C. Johanson, *To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians*. Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series, no. 16 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 61-63; Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric"; and F. Schnider and W. Stenger, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular*. New Testament Tools and Studies, no. 11 (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1987).

¹⁷⁸ Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric," 335-36.

¹⁷⁹ M. Bünker, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief*. Göttinger theologische Arbeiten, no. 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 14-15.

cannot be simultaneously engaged.¹⁸⁰ The beginning of a letter is, therefore, part of the letter opening from an epistolary perspective. When engaging the letter as a rhetorical perspective, however, one should fully incorporate the opening into the rhetorical analysis to assess its overall rhetorical function. The beginning of the letter should, then, also be viewed as fully part of the exordium. Trying to accomplish both analyses simultaneously produces the sort of problems noted in the works of Betz, Martin and Campbell, where portions of the text are ignored or treated as secondary elements within the text despite the obvious structural (and functional) issues this creates. Recognizing the distinction of these methodologies, as espoused in this third approach, offers more flexibility in engaging the NT letters, especially given the complex nature of these writings.

The complexity of letters becomes immediately clear when one pays attention to its components. On the one hand, ancient letters are just that, letters.¹⁸¹ In the Greco-Roman world, just as today, letters were categorized based upon function and, as letters, contained certain literary features. Letter writing, or epistolography, was a popular subject in the rhetorical schools both in terms of teaching the basic categories and structures but also in terms of understanding the letter as a vehicle of literary expression.¹⁸² It is the letter as a vehicle of literary expression that, on the other hand, likely led to the use of the letter as a repository for various forms of writing, especially rhetorical expression.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 63. Thurén, in his observations, notes that Bünker's critique reveals the dilemma of the "mixed genre" or of viewing epistolographical and rhetorical structures on the same level.

¹⁸¹ As P. Schubert, "Form and Function of the Pauline Letters," *JR* 19 (1939): 365, observes, this statement comes from a form-critical perspective.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 367.

¹⁸³ See N. A. Dahl, "Letter," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. supplementary (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 539; Schubert, "Pauline Letters," 367; J. L. White, "New Testament Epistolary (continued...)"

According to Aristotle, the main types of rhetoric were deliberative, forensic and epideictic, although, according to Thomas Olbricht, a fourth category—church rhetoric—ought to be added.¹⁸⁴ This addition of “church rhetoric” would correspond to the intersection of ancient rhetoric and epistolary writing, particularly as found in many of the NT letters.¹⁸⁵ For some this would seem to put the analysis of the letters using epistolary theory in opposition to an analysis of them using rhetorical theory. As John Kloppenborg notes, however, epistolary and rhetorical categories need not function in opposition.¹⁸⁶ Indeed the incorporation of rhetorical features into the letter form necessitates using these two literary aspects in conjunction with one another. Yet, one must be cautious about the arbitrary application of a mixed analysis, at least in an application that pays partial attention to one method or the other—an application that the first two approaches above support.

Only paying partial attention to either ancient epistolary or rhetorical elements does not allow enough flexibility or demonstrate sufficient appreciation for the complexity of the epistolary form.¹⁸⁷ The NT epistles are letters. At the same time, they resemble speech.¹⁸⁸

(continued)

Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," in *ANRW*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, vol. II.25.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 1739; and White, *Light*, 192.

¹⁸⁴ T. H. Olbricht, "An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 225.

¹⁸⁵ J. L. White, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," *CBQ* 45, no. 1-4 (1983): 433, writes about R. W. Funk, "A Response to the Seminar Proposal of Nils A. Dahl," (Unpublished Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1970), who described this phenomenon as being that the Christian letters were, “essentially derivative in function” in the sense that they utilized an existing literary writing but adapted it to fit its own situation, specifically, to fit the unique “conversation between apostle and community.” Whether or not one agrees fully with Funk, the point is that the NT writings represent the utilization of various techniques to accommodate a specific situation.

¹⁸⁶ J. S. Kloppenborg, "Philadelphia, Theodidaktos and the Dioscuri: Rhetorical Engagement in 1 Thessalonians 4.9-12," *NTS* 39 (1993): 266.

¹⁸⁷ Some of these scholars are not entirely consistent in their categories, which can be both positive and negative. For example, if, after proposing a specific approach, they only apply the categories that suit their argument this may, positively, be an adaptation of the approach to the text in question or, negatively, it may be (continued...)

As Abraham Malherbe notes, a letter is half of a dialogue in which the writer “speaks” to a person as if she/he were present.¹⁸⁹ As far as the NT letters are concerned, there is ample evidence that they were read regularly to early Christian groups.¹⁹⁰ This oral presentation of these writings heightens their potential rhetorical function.¹⁹¹ As such, letters, while clearly guided by epistolary concerns, can also be viewed as rhetorically-shaped arguments. If, however, letters have the potential to be both fully epistolary and fully rhetorical, then simply dividing them into sections to be analyzed differently or treating either the epistolary or rhetorical facets as secondary, does not offer sufficient analytical nuance. Moreover, while it is undoubtedly true that the author used a mixture of these methods, given the

(continued)

an arbitrary application of the method as it suits their purpose—which is both unfair to the text and to the method.

¹⁸⁸ Aune, *Literary Environment*, 158, e.g., points out that “The letter is...a substitute for oral communication and could function in almost as many ways as speech.”

¹⁸⁹ A. J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*. SBL Sources for Biblical Study, no. 19, ed. B. B. Scott (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 4-6. As evidence Malherbe cites Demetrius of Phalerum, *De elocutione* 223-235 and Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 12.30. Cf. the comments by White, *Light*, 190-91.

¹⁹⁰ See, esp., the influential article by P. J. Achtemeier, “*Omne Verbum Sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109, no. 1 (1990). Achtemeier clearly identifies the many relationships of oral and written communication (e.g. the oral origins of many ancient writings) as well as the scholarly assessments of these relationships. He focuses, however, on how written documents were created and read in the Greco-Roman world, concluding that “apart from any unique characteristics they may possess in the matter of form or language, they are oral to the core, both in their creation and in their performance” (19). While the absolute claims regarding the absence of silent reading in antiquity until the fourth century that are argued by Achtemeier as well as by M. Slusser, “Reading Silently in Antiquity,” *JBL* 111, no. 3 (1992), in a complementary article, are questioned by F. D. Gilliard, “More Silent Reading in Antiquity: *Non Omne Verbum Sonabat*,” *JBL* 112, no. 4 (1993), the core of Achtemeier’s claims are solid. Sometimes, however, the way in which scholars have engaged discussions of orality can lead to a polarization of terminology (such as orality and writing (i.e. literacy)). Thus, for example, J. Dewey, “Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions,” *Semeia* 65 (1994), romanticizes oral communication (which is inclusive) over written communication (which is selective—used by the educated (male) elites). V. K. Robbins, “Oral, Rhetorical, and Literary Cultures: A Response,” *Semeia* 65 (1994), proposes using more precise terminology and making a distinction between a **rhetorical culture** (presupposes a comprehensive interaction between the spoken and written works—which is essentially the category we are talking about here) and an **oral culture** (proceeds on spoken word alone).

¹⁹¹ The NT letters offer more than simple instructions or greetings and are often intended to persuade the readers/audience of something. In seeking such persuasion the letters may include ancient rhetorical components to assist in this endeavour. Moreover, the very act of seeking to persuade gives the letters a basic rhetorical nature whether or not they contain specific components.

fluidity of the letter form, we do not know the “formula” for these mixtures.¹⁹² The default position, then, is to use both rhetorical and epistolary approaches in one’s analysis.

While this position is the most nuanced—allowing for both the rhetorical and epistolary aspects of the epistles to be considered—it is not without its critics. Bruce Johanson, in a critique of the inadequacies of previous analyses of the structure of 1 Thessalonians, contends that although earlier scholarship has analyzed the letter based on formal observations, it has also observed functional results, such as the correlation between the letter-body and the *argumentatio* of a speech.¹⁹³ Johanson proposes that a new, “functional” category be created—a category that is based upon the pragmatic dimension of epistolography.¹⁹⁴ While Johanson’s approach has a certain appeal—it pays attention to the letter itself rather than imposing a pre-determined structure upon the letter—it is not pragmatically possible. Virtually every distinct letter would have its own “functional” category given the diversity of the letter form we have already noted. Thurén also disagrees with the usefulness of creating a “functional” version of epistolography and notes that Johanson’s study produces no new insight into the structure of 1 Thessalonians.¹⁹⁵

Another criticism of this proposed approach is put forward by Stanley Porter who doubts that the ancient writers would have approached the text using both epistolary and rhetorical methods. He writes concerning Thurén’s thesis: “Thus Thurén’s description of

¹⁹² Aune, *Literary Environment*, 158, writes: “[v]irtually any type of written text could be sent to individuals or groups in an epistolary format.” Further, he recognizes that the letter as the most problematic literary form because: “it exhibits more variety and flexibility than any other literary form” (159). Emphasis mine.

¹⁹³ Johanson, *Brethren*, 61-63.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63. S. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Library of Early Christianity, no. 5, ed. W. A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 22-23, offers a similar proposal.

¹⁹⁵ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 61-62.

what scholars are doing in the interplay of epistolary and rhetorical categories is a modern conceptual framework (only his first category—studying the epistles as letters—would have been recognizable by the ancients . . .). That is acceptable, so long as one recognizes what one is doing.”¹⁹⁶ I agree with Porter that the study of texts requires an awareness of one’s methods and their applicability to the materials being studied. Further, I would agree with him if he means that the rigid application of both rhetorical and epistolary methodologies would not likely have been a part of the practice of composing letters. Unfortunately, Porter does not appear to be making such a point: his point seems to be that the ancients, when writing letters, would only have employed only one method (i.e. epistolography) in the course of writing their letters. Porter oversimplifies the issue and this becomes clear when he criticizes the application of rhetorical categories to NT letters (his main concern is the Pauline corpus) and argues—as noted in the above quote—that only the study of epistles as letters would have been a recognizable category for the ancients. The reality of letter composition is more complex than Porter allows.

Recognizing that epistolary and rhetorical criticisms are not interchangeable is the first step in resolving this methodological problem. Both methods would have been utilized in some form by the ancient letter writers. From our perspective—as analysts of these ancient letters—these methods are complementary but not interchangeable; they provide two different ways of analyzing a text. We cannot know, initially, how each writer utilized the components of these methods. The application of both the rhetorical and epistolary approaches separately enables one to gain a fuller understanding of the text in question based

¹⁹⁶ Porter, "Theoretical Justification," 109.

upon the ancient context and various influences on letter writing. The text is not, thereby, forced to conform to a single method of analysis and is allowed to “speak” as fully as possible without being forced into a preconceived configuration. As a letter, the writing must be analyzed as fully as epistolary theory allows. Further, it must also be treated as an argument shaped by ancient rhetorical devices (given evidence of such devices). The insights offered by both methods can then be compared or possibly even contrasted. Naturally, if there is disagreement in the results, one must be cautious about the conclusions. Moreover, the tools of modern literary criticism will allow an assessment of the text that transcends specific, historical structures and categories and directly engages the persuasive intent of various elements in the text. First, however, the methodological opposition between ancient and modern rhetorical criticism must be surmounted.

B. Ancient versus Modern Rhetorical Criticism

As discussed above, the resurgent interest in rhetoric in the latter part of the twentieth century developed, initially, through the utilization of literary-critical methods. Literary Criticism has been around longer and is more developed than what has come to be termed “modern” rhetorical criticism. Broadly speaking, literary criticism assisted in the birth of modern rhetorical criticism, and could be construed as the rubric under which all rhetorical criticism should function.¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, scholarship is never so simple. As Kennedy’s response (noted above) indicates, many scholars who engage the biblical text from an

¹⁹⁷ As Kessler, "Introduction," 1, notes, “Literary criticism is a broad enough label to include virtually every serious study of literature.” Kessler lists rhetorical criticism as a sub-category of literary criticism. So also Mack, *Rhetoric*, 17. See also footnotes 2 and 45.

ancient rhetorical perspective consider their work to be different from literary criticism and often ignore the benefits of literary-critical models. Certainly, prior to 1970, most biblical scholars were unaware of the methods of literary criticism and even in the post-1970 interest in rhetorical studies, the majority of biblical scholars did not engage the various forms of literary criticism.¹⁹⁸

Nonetheless, as interest in rhetorical analyses increased within biblical studies, scholars became more aware of the existence of literary criticism through the developing (modern) rhetorical criticism. Modern rhetorical criticism is not a singularity and describes a wide-range of different methods. Wuellner asserts that modern rhetoric (stems) from three lines: Anglo-American theories of argumentation, Continental theories of literary rhetoric, and the largely American theories of rhetoric as part of social science hermeneutics.¹⁹⁹ In many ways these criticisms, particularly the last category are a synthesis of various methods. As Watson observes, modern rhetorical criticism is often interdisciplinary, “combining literary criticism, text linguistics, semiotics, social description, stylistics, reader-response criticism and discourse analysis.”²⁰⁰ I cannot, within the boundaries of this dissertation, hope to offer background and analysis on any one much less all of the varieties of modern rhetorical criticism. However, modern rhetorical criticism is distinguished by its separation from the historically-based ancient rhetorical criticism. While some modern rhetorical criticisms do draw upon the ancient Greek ideas of argumentation and persuasion, much of

¹⁹⁸ Much of the evidence of this separation is indirect: evident from the lack of references to literary-critical studies.

¹⁹⁹ W. H. Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11," in *Text and Interpretation* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 176.

²⁰⁰ Watson, "Pauline Epistles," 222. Watson's comments primarily concern studies related to the Pauline epistles.

the analyses move beyond the historical categories established in the Greco-Roman world. These historical categories of Greco-Roman rhetoric are considered to be the realm of ancient or classical rhetorical criticism.

The writings of Betz and Kennedy (re-)introduced ancient rhetorical theory into the developing rhetorical interest in popular biblical scholarship. For some, including Kennedy, the study of ancient texts using ancient rhetorical criticism was considered more “natural,” and a tension developed between the function of the newly-developing modern criticism in contrast to analyses using ancient rhetorical models (which were also newly developing in biblical scholarship). The argument that these ancient texts could only be understood from the perspective of the ancient methods that shaped it is representative of this shift and a contributor to the division between ancient and modern rhetorical criticism. As a result of this shift, some models applying modern rhetorical theories were considered to be ahistorical in contrast to the more historically grounded ancient rhetorical criticism.²⁰¹

Essentially, those focused upon the classical rhetorical approach are understood to take categories out of the ancient rhetorical handbooks and apply these to ancient texts, while those focused upon modern rhetorical criticism are understood to be (primarily) interested in modern, literary-critical methods.²⁰² There are strengths to each approach. There are drawbacks to each as well. Classical rhetorical analysis pays attention to categories that were operative and influential in the Greco-Roman world. However, as we have seen above, this method has some difficulty analyzing texts that did not strictly adhere

²⁰¹ See, e.g., the comments by Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," 264.

²⁰² Some modern methods have ignored the ancient models that had, initially, shaped the text; others have simply moved beyond the ancient models to try and assess other aspects of the text.

to the ancient categories. This is especially true of letters that utilized a variety of ancient methods and genres and were shaped by the demands of the letter's context.²⁰³ Applying only ancient rhetorical criticism to these letters can force them into unrealistic categories or leave portions improperly analyzed or categorized. Some of the tools available through modern rhetorical criticism offer other means of assessing or analyzing various components of a text including, for example, such elements as the role of the text's internal structure or the text's overall argumentative thrust. In the process, however, some modern rhetorical criticisms tend to ignore ancient rhetorical categories that can assist in understanding the text's original purpose and function.²⁰⁴ What is needed is a combined approach that moves beyond the tensions and divisions and, instead, utilizes the strengths of both. Further, combining multiple approaches, not just those of rhetorical criticism, allows for a diversity of methods—with a sensitivity to the specific nature of text in question—and seems to be the direction in which many scholars who use some form of rhetorical analysis have been gradually heading. This is where we find socio-rhetorical criticism—a method proposed by

²⁰³ Consider, e.g., the comments by Watson, "Pauline Epistles," 221-22, who argues that "Greco-Roman rhetorical theory does not address all theoretical, practical or philosophical questions posed by speech," and he notes that "[m]any interpreters find rhetorical criticism of the Pauline epistles using Greco-Roman rhetoric too limited and turn to the many forms of modern rhetoric." Cf. the discussions in J. Botha, "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric," *Scriptura* 31 (1989); S. M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians*. SBLDS (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 7-35; Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 41-78; and Wendland, "Comparative Study."

²⁰⁴ Consider the comments by Mitchell, *Paul*, 6-7, who indicates that her study will be done in light of the Greco-Roman historical tradition, not modern rhetoric which she characterizes as "an essentially synchronic investigation of human communication and argumentation." She further notes that the New Rhetoric in particular, while important, is a reappropriation of ancient rhetoric to modern philosophical problems (esp. epistemology), and she considers its intention to be "contrary to that of these New Testament scholars—it aims at *expanding* the realm of argumentation rather than classifying particular texts according to genre or arrangement." Emphasis hers. Mitchell, unfortunately, cannot see beyond the distinctions of these two approaches to see the potential benefits of utilizing both. She even notes the benefits of these modern rhetorical methods (e.g. Plank, *Paul*, which she describes as a "successful synchronic approach to Paul's rhetoric") but criticizes them for slipping into *any* historical argument—a criticism that seems unnecessarily rigid.

Vernon Robbins that seeks to move beyond these tensions and, utilizing a variety of related methods, accurately assess a diversity of texts.

IV. Understanding and Applying Socio-Rhetorical Criticism

Writing at the same time as Burton Mack, in the late 1980's, Vernon Robbins began developing a more comprehensive method of rhetorical study, which, like Mack's, did not juxtapose ancient and modern rhetorical theories but provided a synthesis of these methods. Further Robbins moved rhetorical study beyond Mack by including other useful methods to assist in the analysis of ancient texts. Robbins eventually titled this method of analysis: socio-rhetorical criticism. Robbins' "meta-method" integrates the methods from various disciplines in what I would describe as an open-ended approach. This method has a solid framework yet is open-ended or flexible enough to be applied to a variety of different texts. Robbins eventually wrote two monographs dedicated to a description of the socio-rhetorical method and, most recently, completed a more comprehensive description of this method.²⁰⁵

Robbins has been described as one who employs the techniques of modern rhetorical theory vis-à-vis ancient rhetorical theory.²⁰⁶ It is true that he does base a large part of his theory upon modern rhetorical analysis that considers "the way language in a text is a means

²⁰⁵ See V. K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); Robbins, *Tapestry*; V. K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*. *Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity*, no. 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

²⁰⁶ Black, "Rhetorical Questions," 68, states that Robbins' understanding (and analysis) of rhetoric is in direct contrast to Kennedy who uses an ancient rhetorical analysis. Still, Black recognizes that Robbins is not in competition with ancient rhetorical models and writes: "Robbins is engaged in a kind of historically-based literary criticism that is compatible, though not directly connected, with classical rhetoric." I would disagree with the observation that Robbins is not directly connected to classical rhetoric. See the discussion that follows, esp. footnotes 211 and 212.

of communication among people.”²⁰⁷ At its heart, then, his theory is concerned about language as a means of communication and persuasion which is a fundamental reality of both modern and ancient rhetorical analyses. Thus, Robbins does not ignore classical rhetorical theory, nor epistolary theory; nor—for that matter—does he limit himself to the field of rhetoric, but he includes such approaches as ideological, social & cultural analyses. Unlike many theories, Robbins’ method is focused upon the text (as opposed to a focus upon the method itself) and seeks to ascertain the meaning of the text based upon its ancient setting. This focus encourages multiple methods, some in combination and some separately, despite, perhaps, the traditional lack of communication between those who develop and/or employ these methods.²⁰⁸

An exploration of Robbins’ method reveals that he has links to traditional rhetorical theory, and he attempts to make this theory more viable by connecting it to literary methods that recognize the role of language and its place in the historical, social cultural, ideological and theological worlds in which the text was created and received.²⁰⁹ Given the limitations (and dangers) that we have seen when employing a single method to ancient texts, Robbins’ approach offers a much more careful and comprehensive way of accessing a text and is *more* concerned about paying attention to the text than about forcing a text to conform to a single

²⁰⁷ Robbins, *Exploring*, 1.

²⁰⁸ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 1, writes, “[i]t is no surprise that these movements and methods have given rise to an environment fragmented by individual interests and insights rather than an environment unified by issues they have in common with one another . . . I have viewed this situation as a challenge to integrate major strategies of the new movements and methods through a rhetorical approach that focuses on literary, social, cultural and ideological issues in texts.”

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

approach.²¹⁰ Further, his method arises out of textual analyses and engagements in the field, that is, it was developed in conjunction with its application: he did not begin with the method and then seek to apply it.

In the course of his analyses, Robbins draws upon various forms of rhetorical analysis; he pays attention to the theories proposed by modern interpreters of ancient rhetoric²¹¹ as well as the principles proposed in ancient rhetorical handbooks.²¹² Further, he utilizes the approaches of modern rhetorical analysis, particularly when they assist one in analyzing, for example, the argumentative or progressive nature of a text—elements that may not be evident using ancient rhetorical analysis alone. Robbins also recognizes that all texts are grounded in real, historical situations and need to be examined using the tools connected to those situations.²¹³ Thus, he explores the more nuanced backgrounds of the texts to move the analysis beyond traditional *Sitz im Leben* approach that often has only an abstract description of the context but lacks a grounding in the specifics of social beliefs and

²¹⁰ This would go back to the earlier critiques of various rhetorical approaches that have the potential to obscure or even overpower the nuances of the text under examination. See also the comments by Robbins, *Exploring*, 2, who states that, while each method has its strengths: “when interpreters use only one of them, the result is too limited.” Robbins’ goal (and challenge) “is to bring practices of interpretation together that are often separated from one another.”

²¹¹ He is dependent upon such scholars and practitioners of ancient rhetoric as Kennedy (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 50, 59, 151; and Robbins, *Exploring*, 25), Mack (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 59, 61-62, 77, 80, 100, 106, 113, 115-16, 152, 164, 167, 170, 172-73, 182; and Robbins, *Exploring*, 41-43, 45, 48, 56-57, 60, 109-10), Watson (Robbins, *Exploring*, 56-57), and Wuellner (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 61, 73, 82, 85, 97, 142, 182-88).

²¹² For example, Robbins uses a variety of ancient authors and handbooks, including Aristotle’s *Rhetorica* (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 59, 151, 159; and Robbins, *Exploring*, 86), the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 81; and Robbins, *Exploring*, 21, 23, 53-54); and Anaximenes’ (wrongly attributed to Aristotle) *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (Robbins, *Tapestry*, 166, 182, 189).

²¹³ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 6-10, notes that trends in the field in which the text is approached as if it were a product of the mind alone and not necessarily related to the real, historical situation. See, e.g., the discussions of this problem in C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 55-83; and M. Johnson, *Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

practices.²¹⁴ He therefore incorporates sociological and anthropological models that allow for an assessment of the text's cultural context that is beyond the grasp of even a multi-faceted rhetorical approach such as that of Burton Mack.

Robbins' method is much more flexible than many other interpreters not only because of the variety of approaches he draws together in his method, but because he does not demand that all approaches be applied equally to every text.²¹⁵ Robbins offers as many nuances and complexities of analysis as possible but recognizes that each text is different and that not all approaches will be useful in all circumstances.²¹⁶ He encourages those who employ his method to experiment with various strategies on a text and select those that work well with that particular text.²¹⁷ This applies both to the various textures he proposes as well as to the different techniques offered within each texture.²¹⁸ I will apply this open-ended method in the course of my analysis and in each chapter will give a description and justification of the various approaches employed. Further, I will deviate slightly from his method when I deem it appropriate to the text under examination, and, again, will offer justification for any such deviation.

²¹⁴ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 145. See also J. Z. Smith, "The Social Description of Early Christianity," *RelSRev* 1, no. 1 (1975).

²¹⁵ Robbins, *Exploring*, 5-6.

²¹⁶ For example, *ibid.*, 7, notes the distinction between narrative texts (those that tell a story) and epistolary literature. Although many of the examples with which Robbins is interested are narrative texts, he does provide examples of how one might approach epistolary discourse as well. See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 65-91, 120-42, 76-89, 220-35.

²¹⁷ Robbins, *Exploring*, 8.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2

REBIRTHED RECIPIENTS AND THEIR ΠΑΤΗΡ: AN INNER TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER

Introductory Comments

This chapter highlights some elements of the persuasive focus of 1 Peter while, simultaneously paying attention to some of the ancient models that influenced its shape in order to ascertain its internal argument.²¹⁹ This portion of the socio-rhetorical analysis is labelled by Vernon Robbins as “inner textual” analysis, and the primary question asked within this framework is: what is happening within the text under investigation? Given the premise that language is a “symbolic act that creates history, society, culture and ideology as people know it, presuppose it and live concretely in it,” a text can help to create the world as we perceive it and motivates us as we live in it.²²⁰ With these realities in mind, inner texture examines the text on its own basis in order to understand the relationships among the words of the text as well as the patterns of argumentation developed within the text. In the course of this analysis, the focus is on the text of 1 Peter, and detailed discussions of meaning are

²¹⁹ I follow Robbins’ lead on this and examining the text itself apart from outside material. I am aware that any position which one takes (i.e. either starting outside of the text or starting with the text) will have drawbacks. To examine a text apart from the influences of outside meaning can allow for undue bias on the part of the examiner (i.e. he/she will “find” what they are looking for). The alternative, however, is more problematic. To examine a text on the basis of other texts is not only potentially subject it to the examiner’s bias, it can also ignore the text under consideration by imposing assumed meaning from other text(s). Robbins’ approach offers the best opportunity to discover the nuances of the text before the influence of outside meaning. Furthermore, this approach is only the first step in a multi-layered examination. Outside meaning and influences will be examined in subsequent chapters. This focus on the text itself does not apply, however, to the structural divisions of the text and the significance of those divisions, which are shaped by the ancient epistolary and rhetorical categories utilized by all writers in the ancient world. These categories also inform one of the purpose and significance of these divisions.

²²⁰ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46.

reserved, as much as possible, for the later chapters.²²¹ The primary interest here is how the text of 1 Peter is shaped, not with its relation to the wider world of nuance and meaning; these relationships will be explored in chapters three to five. The inner textual layers (or “textures”) that will be used in this chapter to investigate the text of 1 Peter are opening-middle-closing texture, repetitive-progressive texture, narrational texture, and, finally, argumentative texture. A variety of tools (e.g. discourse, epistolary, exegetical, and rhetorical analyses) will be used to assess each individual texture as clearly as possible in light of rebirth language; the tool(s) used depends upon the location of the section under evaluation and the nature of the material that is being examined. More will be said on each of these textures in the relevant sections below.

While some of what will be covered below has been recognized by previous studies, there are some significance differences. Most notably, the value of key divisions and the importance of rebirth language within those divisions has never been consistently applied or always recognized. Opening-middle-closing texture clarifies the importance of the opening sections for the overall programmatic thrust of the letter. Within these opening sections rebirth language stands at a key juncture, indicating its potential influential value for the entire letter. This potential value of rebirth language is realized through an analysis of the repetitive-progressive texture, which demonstrates the link of rebirth language to a larger web of meaning through its connection to other familial language. Examination of the letter’s narrational texture underscores the letter’s focus on the recipients and confirms the role that rebirth language plays in strengthening the recipients’ identity by linking them to

²²¹ Any deviation from this inner textual focus on 1 Peter will be noted in the relevant section below, and discussion of outside meaning, etc. will be kept to a minimum.

the larger Christian community without establishing an “us-them” mentality—an insight that will become important in the final chapter of this dissertation. Finally, the argumentative force of the key opening section further highlights the letter’s focus on the recipients’ identity as those who have been born into a new community with God as their πατήρ. In course of examining this final texture, it is important to demonstrate that, contrary to the more popular scholarly interpretations of the opening argument, the use of πατήρ is intentional and central in this opening portion. Each of these textures confirms the insights of the others and corroborates the central role that rebirth language plays in the persuasive thrust of this letter.

I. Opening-Middle-Closing Texture

Opening-middle-closing texture explores the “boundaries” of the text under consideration; it involves the exploration of the various sections of the text in order to help shed light on the text in its entirety. Vernon Robbins notes that discourse is divided into opening, middle, and closing sections and these sections can be further divided into sub-sections, each of which can have beginnings, middles and ends.²²² Each sub-section can be analyzed individually as well as in light of the entire writing. Further, we must recognize that in order to understand the argument of the entire text, one must understand the argument of the parts; as Kennedy has phrased it, “the rhetoric of large units often has to be built up from an understanding of the rhetoric of smaller units.”²²³ Opening-middle-closing texture

²²² Robbins, *Exploring*, 19.

²²³ Kennedy, *New Testament*, 33.

highlights the structure of a text and the significance of that structure both within each distinct unit and within the work as a whole.

While Robbins' method focuses primarily on narrative texts, his model is equally applicable to epistolary texts.²²⁴ Unlike narrative texts, epistolary texts do not have stories or events that lend themselves to beginnings, middles and endings in the same way as narrative texts, but, the writing itself has structure based upon ancient methods of writing. In the case of 1 Peter—a Greco-Roman letter—two ancient structural influences are significant, epistolary theory and rhetorical criticism.²²⁵ Once we recognize the divisions of 1 Peter, identify the significance and function of those divisions, and then compare the similarities and differences of these divisions, we will better understand how each section and sub-section shapes the work as a whole. For this study, I will focus primarily on the initial units in which rebirth language is found in 1 Peter, using first epistolary theory and then ancient rhetorical criticism. As will become obvious, the opening section(s) of this document is very significant to the letter as a whole, and I will highlight that significance and its implications for the entire text as well as the role rebirth language plays within the opening sections.

To begin, it will be beneficial to note how the text has been sectioned by Petrine scholars who use rhetorical and/or epistolary methods, especially given that both of these

²²⁴ Robbins also includes a number of examples of epistolary writings in his analyses despite his focus on narrative material. See, e.g., Robbins, *Tapestry*, 65-91. Also see footnote 216.

²²⁵ See the discussion in the previous chapter. Although Robbins does not explicitly mention epistolary theory (he primarily examines narrational texts), epistolary theory fits well within such a structural analysis and some letter analysis is included in his method. See White, *Form and Function*, who, while dealing explicitly with epistolary theory, uses the same language as Robbins to divide the letter body into opening, middle, closing. I am expanding upon these parallels to provide the type of balanced analysis espoused by Robbins.

methods contribute to the subsequent analysis.²²⁶ Recognizing the consistency of these textual divisions at the outset of this chapter allows for a clearer analysis in the sections that follow without being distracted by structural issues. Each of the monographs on 1 Peter that were highlighted in the previous chapter—regardless of whether they utilized epistolary theory, ancient rhetorical theory, modern rhetorical theory, or a mixture of these approaches—divided 1 Peter into various sections based upon clues from the text itself. On the whole, significant agreement exists regarding the structure of 1 Peter and the major divisions within that structure. This agreement is important to recognize and is especially pertinent in the later development of this opening-middle-closing section as well as the repetitive-progressive section. There is no need to recreate the work of these scholars unless there are questions or significant disagreements over these divisions. These divisions of 1 Peter, as given by Lauri Thurén, Troy W. Martin and Barth Campbell, are presented below and then placed into a chart for comparative purposes. Any significant discrepancies in these divisions will be noted below.

A. The Structure of 1 Peter

The primary divisions of 1 Peter according to Martin, Thurén, and Campbell are as follows:

²²⁶ See chapter one for a discussion of the importance of using both epistolary and rhetorical approaches separately. In terms of the divisions, I have drawn upon recent monographs that utilize ancient rhetorical or epistolary models to divide this letter. There are, of course, many writings that have offered divisions of these letters and, more recently, there has been a reasonable consensus on these divisions, for which the monographs I have selected serve as examples. For example, Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 73-74, offers divisions that are very similar to the ones discussed here. On the importance of including both epistolary and rhetorical analyses, see the relevant discussion in the first chapter.

Martin divides 1 Peter based upon epistolary theory:²²⁷

- 1:1-2 – Prescript
- 1:3-12 – Blessing
- 1:13-5:12 – Letter Body
 - 1:14-2:10 – Paraenesis supported by metaphor cluster #1
 - 2:11-3:12 – Paraenesis supported by metaphor cluster #2
 - 3:13-5:11 – Paraenesis supported by metaphor cluster #3
(which he further subdivides into 3:13-4:11 and 4:12-5:11)
- 5:13-14 – Greeting and Farewell

Thurén, also using epistolary theory divides up the letter in a very similar manner:²²⁸

- 1:1-2 – Prescript
- 1:3-9/12 – Opening thanksgiving
- 1:10/13-5:12 – Letter Body
 - 1:10-12 – Previous Communication
 - 1:13/14-5:11 – Body Middle²²⁹
 - 5:12 – Body Closing
- 5:13-14 – Letter Closing

Thurén has divided the structure of 1 Peter based upon rhetorical theory as follows:²³⁰

- 1:1-12 – Common exordium, functioning as a captatio
- 1:13-2:10 – *Argumentatio*, an extension of the exordium
- 2:11-3:12 – *Argumentatio*
- 3:13-4:11 – *Argumentatio*
- 4:12-5:7 – *Argumentatio*
- 5:8-14 – Common *Peroratio*

Campbell, using ancient rhetorical categories, makes the following divisions:²³¹

- 1:1-12 – xx
- 1:3-13 – Exordium
- 1:13-2:10 – Argument 1 (*propositio, ratio, confirmatio, exornatio and complexio*)
- 2:11-3:12 – Argument 2 (*propositio, ratio, confirmatio, exornatio and complexio*)
- 3:13-4:11 – Argument 3 (*propositio, ratio, confirmatio, exornatio and complexio*)
- 4:12-5:11 – *Peroratio*
- 5:12-14 – xx

²²⁷ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* .

²²⁸ Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 65-92, divides the letter based, first, upon epistolary theory and, second, upon ancient rhetorical categories. I will follow suit in this section. Although his divisions are related, there are some distinctions based upon different rhetorical functions. In the end, however, he does not consider these divisions to be at odds and builds upon them in his subsequent work. See Thurén, *Argument*, 88-183.

²²⁹ Based upon epistolary theory, 1:13 functions as an introduction to the letter body and can therefore be either listed separately or with the letter body.

²³⁰ See, esp., Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 88.

²³¹ Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter* .

The above divisions can be summarized in the following chart:

Martin (Epistolary)	Thurén 1 (Epistolary)	Thurén 2 (Rhetorical)	Campbell (Rhetorical)
1:1-2	1:1-2	1:1-12	xx
1:3-12	1:3-9/12 ²³²		1:3-13
	1:10-12		
1:13	1:13	1:13-2:10	1:13-2:10
1:14-2:10	1:14-5:11 ²³³		
2:11-3:12		2:11-3:12	2:11-3:12
3:13-4:11		3:13-4:11	3:13-4:11
4:12-5:11		4:12-5:7	4:12-5:11
		5:8-5:14	
5:12	5:12		xx
5:13-14	5:13-14		

The differences among the above structural divisions, though minor, should be explored briefly. First, Campbell does not know what to do with 1:1-2 (as was noted in chapter 1), nor, for that matter, with 5:12-14. Second, Campbell and Thurén disagree on the rhetorical structure of the final portion (4:12-5:11/14) which Thurén has divided into an *argumentatio* (4:12-5:7) followed by the common *peroratio* (5:8-14) while Campbell simply combines the two into the common *peroratio* (minus 5:12-14 as noted above). Martin's differences stem primarily from the fact that he uses epistolary theory (rather than ancient rhetorical theory) to provide his outline and so has a very similar structure to Thurén's epistolary outline. In the introductory structure this means that 1:1-2 is separated out as an epistolary prescript, and 1:10-13 reveal various transitional components which results in discussion on whether they should be appended to the earlier or later sections. In the end, however, many of the variations are based upon the labelling system of different theories and

²³² Although Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 85-88, eventually places verses 10-12 within the letter body, he recognizes that this portion could well be an extension of the opening thanksgiving

²³³ Thurén does not provide any further divisions for the letter body.

not upon significant structural distinctions in the letter. There is some disagreement about the sections nearer to the end of the letter, especially on how to designate and divide 5:8-14, but, because the instances of rebirth language occur nearer to the beginning of the letter, the above noted disagreements over how to divide and label the final portion of 1 Peter do not affect our analysis and do not need to be resolved in this study. Based upon the overall divisions, one can identify the following six major sections for which there is significant agreement:

Section #	Verses covered
1	1:1-12/13 ²³⁴
2	1:13/14-2:10 ²³⁵
3	2:11-3:12
4	3:13-4:11
5	4:12-5:7/11
6	5:8/12-14

With these divisions identified, we can turn our attention to the initial portion of 1 Peter and to the placement of rebirth terminology within it.

Rebirth language first occurs at 1:3 in 1 Peter and can be either included in the opening section or considered part of the second, related section. However, as will be seen, even the scholars who label 1 Peter 1:1-2 and 1:3-12 as two different sections (based upon epistolary theory) agree that these two sections are very closely linked and both form significant opening units for the letter. The primary question for opening-middle-closing texture is: what is the relationship of this opening section(s) to the rest of the letter? To answer that question, we must understand how this opening portion functioned (from both an

²³⁴ The disagreements over these divisions are because verse 13 is transitional and one may choose to attach it to the previous verses or to the subsequent verses depending on whether one considers it to be a summary that points ahead or an introduction that points backward.

²³⁵ See the above footnote (234).

ancient epistolary and rhetorical perspective) in the ancient context. The rest of this opening-middle-closing analysis will be devoted to clarifying the structure of this opening portion and its role in 1 Peter as a whole.

B. The Role of 1 Peter 1:1-12 (Ancient Epistolary Theory)

Troy W. Martin, who emphasizes epistolary theory, categorizes 1 Peter 1:1-2 as the epistolary prescript (*praescriptio*).²³⁶ Like most epistolary prescripts, it includes the introductory formula, “From A to B, greeting (χαίρειν)”²³⁷ along with variations. These variations depend upon the type of letter being written (e.g. familiar, business, official, etc.) and could include various additions depending upon the relationship between the writer and his correspondent.²³⁸ A familiar letter, for instance, might include an expression of the friendship that existed between the writer and correspondent.²³⁹ These elements of greeting and the expression of the relationship between the writer and correspondent are expanded upon in the NT epistles, especially the Pauline letters, and, as Lohmeyer argues, result in a separation between the address and the greeting corresponding to the oriental practice in letter writing.²⁴⁰ This expansion of the address within the NT letters is used to more

²³⁶ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 42. Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 84, also labels 1 Peter 1:2 as the prescript when he analyzes it from an epistolary perspective. Cf. Thurén, *Argument*, 90 n.8; and Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 37.

²³⁷ F. X. J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri (3rd c. B.C. - 3rd c. A.D.): A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1976), 23, 62. Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "Some Notes on Aramaic Epistolography," *JBL* 93 (1974): 211-13. In this instance, ‘A’ was the writer/addressant and ‘B’ was the addressee.

²³⁸ Exler, *Form*, 23, 60, indicates that the most typical variation is “To B- from A-“ and occurs more often in petitions, complaints and applications whereas the more standard from A- to B- occurs most often in familiar, business and official communications.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁴⁰ E. Lohmeyer, "Probleme paulinischer Theologie," *ZNW* 26 (1927). Lohmeyer’s argument seems to be generally accepted (see Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 46; and White, "Epistolary Literature," 1740), but as G. Friedrich, "Lohmeyers These über das paulinische Briefpräskript Kritisch (continued...)

precisely define the status of the sender and the recipients so that the sender “particularizes the qualification, on each occasion, so that the message of the individual letter is anticipated.”²⁴¹ This idea that the epistolary prescript sets the tone/agenda for what follows receives virtually unanimous agreement.²⁴²

Furthermore, it is both this expansion (which defines status) and this particularization (which anticipates the letter’s message) that make the epistolary prescript develop into something that is much more important than the simple “A to B, greeting (χαίρειν)” upon which it was built. As White notes, the primary role of the opening formula was to establish or maintain contact.²⁴³ The NT and later Christian letters expand significantly upon this contact role of the prescript. For example, Paul’s letters are considerably different from the papyri in both length and style²⁴⁴ which shows this significant development and expansion.

(continued)

beleuchtet,” in *Auf das Wort Kommt es an*, ed. J. H. Friedrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 106, notes regarding Lohmeyer’s argument “er hat aber zu radikal jeden griechischen Einfluss abgelehnt. Ganz verfehlt ist seine Annahme, daß die Salutatio ein Bestandteil der urchristlichen Liturgie gewesen ist.” I would register a caution against radical disassociation from Greek writings. While the roots of this particular element may well have an oriental flavour, it is generally recognized that the Greek traditions strongly influenced various aspects of the letter tradition as well. Clear demarcations are not so absolute.

²⁴¹ White, “Epistolary Literature,” 1740. Although White is arguing at this juncture specifically regarding Pauline letters, in the same article he points to the significant parallels in the opening conventions of Pauline and non-Pauline epistles (1752). Cf. H. Koester, “I Thess--Experiment in Christian Writing,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. F. F. Church and T. George. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, no. 19 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), who argues that Paul was the creator of the Christian letter, not only the apostolic letter tradition as White proposes. The similarities in style/structure should be sufficient to assume similarity in function. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 79-80, notes the similarities that 1 Peter’s introduction has with Jewish diaspora letters. The similarity in function should apply regardless of the specific source upon which the author drew.

²⁴² See, e.g., Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 43; Exler, *Form*, 62; Michaels, *Peter*, 4; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 307; Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 39; and J. S. Vos, “Paul’s Argumentation in Galatians 1-2,” *HTR* 87, no. 1 (1994): 3-4. We will notice below that the thanksgiving/blessing section is added to the growing complexity found in prescripts, particularly those seeking to establish relational feelings between the author(s) and the recipients.

²⁴³ White, “Epistolary Literature,” 1733. White would also argue that the closing formula has the same broad function.

²⁴⁴ P. Arzt-Grabner and others, *1. Korinther*. Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament, no. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), esp. 45-54.

Analysis of Paul's letter openings reveals clearly that the opening not only is a window into the relationship of the author and the recipients, but also sets the tone (and agenda) for the letter that follows.²⁴⁵ Other early Christian letters utilize the opening in a similar manner, including 1 Peter.

Many scholars of 1 Peter agree that the prescript sets the tone for the rest of 1 Peter although some might over-emphasize the function of the prescript.²⁴⁶ While I do not want to exaggerate the value of the prescript, clearly it does establish important parameters for the rest of the letter and introduces some of the key themes to be developed as the letter progresses.²⁴⁷ Further, it would appear that the longer the prescript, the more significant its role in outlining key terms and themes within the letter body.²⁴⁸ That an expanded prescript carries greater weight in emphasizing a letter's themes raises the question of how one determines the prescript's parameters. More specifically, can the health wish or thanksgiving section that originally developed from letter's prescripts still be included within the prescript's function?

In 1 Peter 1:3-12 falls broadly into this category of a health wish or thanksgiving.

The exact purpose of this section of 1 Peter is a matter of some debate by those who examine

²⁴⁵ See, e.g., D. Cook, "The Prescript as Programme in Galatians," *JTS* 43 (1992); Longenecker, *Galatians*, 2; and White, "Epistolary Literature," 1740.

²⁴⁶ Regarding an overemphasis on the prescript, see Tite, *Compositional Transitions*, 38, who contends that "the Petrine prescript functions as the programmatical introduction for the entirety of 1 Peter."

²⁴⁷ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 66 (Goppelt and Hahn, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 79), considers 1:2 to introduce the first part of the letter programmatically and that this is then expanded upon in the second part of the letter. Unfortunately, Goppelt focuses primarily upon *παρεπίδημος* and minimizes the implications of the rest of 1:2 as well as 1:3-12 for this letter. Cf. Arzt-Grabner and others, *1. Korinther*, 54; Best, *1 Peter*, 69; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 95-98; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 25-26; Hort, *Peter*, 13; Michaels, *Peter*, xxxiv; and Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 24.

²⁴⁸ Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 96, writes, "As happens in other New Testament letters, the opening address is expanded to announce some of the chief themes to be treated in the body of the letter." Cf. Cook, "The Prescript," 511-19; P. Schubert, *The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*. BZNW, no. 20 (Berlin: Von Alfred Töpelmann, 1939), 180.

it from the perspective of epistolary theory.²⁴⁹ In order to discuss more fully the function of this section, we must decide exactly what epistolary category 1:3-12 constitutes and then assess how it functions within the letter's overall structure. One of the key reasons that the role and function of 1:3-12 is debated in epistolary theory is because this kind of writing was not common in ancient letters. Nonetheless, this kind of writing did exist.

As ancient letter writing continued to expand to include more complexity and incorporate various writing forms, we find the development of and expansion upon a healthgiving or thanksgiving statement. From the second century BCE onward, as a part of the standard greeting, letters would often add a health wish such as: "Dionysios to Ptolemy greeting *and health*."²⁵⁰ By the first century, this initial wish was sometimes expanded upon in a fuller, more explicit wish for health (which might also include information about the sender's health status) and could be expressed as a prayer (βούλομαι) or wish (εύχομαι) for health.²⁵¹ Along with the health wish, familiar letters would also commonly include expressions of good will and statements of intercession.²⁵² Further, when keeping in contact was an important factor, the writer might also have included an expression of thanksgiving to the Deity for safety or escape from personal harm.²⁵³ This expression of thanksgiving was used either in addition to or in place of the assurance of health.²⁵⁴ In the NT letters, especially the Pauline writings, the thanksgiving clauses were significantly developed and

²⁴⁹ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 47-48, places this as a separate section from the prescript. Exler, *Form*, 101, would connect it to the letter body. This issue will be examined in more detail below.

²⁵⁰ This example comes from White, *Light*, 70-71, 200. Emphasis mine. The text from White reads: Διονύσι[ος Πτολε]μαίωι χαίρειν καὶ ἐρωσθα[ν].

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 200-02.

²⁵² White, "Epistolary Literature," 1734.

²⁵³ J. T. Reed, "Are Paul's Thanksgivings 'Epistolary'?" *JSNT* 61 (1996): 87; White, "Epistolary Literature," 1735, 41.

²⁵⁴ White, "Epistolary Literature," 1735.

often replaced the health wish. Following this line of development, one can argue for a significant connection between the thanksgiving section and the epistolary prescript, given that the health wish grew out of the prescript and was developed into the thanksgiving section.²⁵⁵

Not all agree, however. Francis Exler not only separates the thanksgiving section from the prescript, but includes it within the letter body (rather than as a separate section).²⁵⁶ In contrast to Exler, Troy W. Martin argues that this section is not part of the letter body.²⁵⁷ Martin further contends that this section, which he labels the “blessing” section, provides the context for understanding the letter.²⁵⁸ He is not alone in these insights. White admits, “Nils Dahl convinced me that such phrases [e.g. expression of thanksgiving], like the opening and closing greetings, the wish for health, and related expressions, tend to maintain contact between correspondents, which is more characteristic of the opening and closing of the letter.”²⁵⁹ I would agree and emphasize that the function of this section is very similar to the

²⁵⁵ P. Arzt, "The 'Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving' in the Papyri and in Paul," *NovT* 36 (1994), questions the connection of (Paul's) thanksgivings with epistolary conventions concluding that “[t]here are no formal ‘introductory thanksgivings’ in the prooemia of letters contemporaneous with the Pauline and other New Testament letters; hence, any reconstruction of such an ‘introductory thanksgiving’ shatters on the lack of evidence.” His conclusions are countered by Reed, "Paul's Thanksgivings," , who cites numerous examples to demonstrate that there were epistolary thanksgiving traditions upon which Paul [and others] may have drawn. Reed does, however, affirm Arzt's conclusion that thanksgiving traditions were not always limited to introductory sections. In the case of 1 Peter, however, the thanksgiving section is closely associated with and likely a part of the introductory portion of the letter.

²⁵⁶ Exler, *Form*, 101.

²⁵⁷ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 47-50. Martin also argues against the liturgical function pre-empting the epistolary function (which I would support), and argues that this section functions as “a surrogate healthgiving clause.”

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 51. The use of a blessing in place of a thanksgiving clause is not without precedent and, as Martin notes, it “functions as a surrogate healthgiving clause.” The function of these different types of sections is considered extremely similar and the specific label it has does not affect this function. N. A. Dahl, "Adresse und Prooemium des Epheserbriefs," *TZ* 7 (1951): 251-52, seems to reach similar conclusions when he states, “Die Funktion der Briefeingangs-Eulogie ist dieselbe wie die der Danksagung.”

²⁵⁹ White, *Light*, 201. White does not indicate the manner in which Dahl convinced him of this perspective.

function of the prescript or letter opening, and should be considered as an extension of the opening.²⁶⁰

This view—that the function of the thanksgiving section is similar to the prescript—is further confirmed by the significant role it plays in “keeping in touch” with the recipients, a role identical to that of the prescript.²⁶¹ For instance, in familial letters one finds that the health wish was often extended with statements of supplication on behalf of the recipient(s).²⁶² Koskenniemi refers to these supplications as *proskynema* which has added a religious aspect to the sentiment of the health wish.²⁶³ The role the thanksgiving section plays as part of the letter opening in strengthening the relationship of correspondence is also noted by White, who proposes that the fuller the opening, the more important the connection between sender and recipient, and, I would add, the more important the opening is to that letter.²⁶⁴

The blessing section of 1 Peter forms a significantly large portion of this letter, and its importance in understanding the rest of the letter (in combination with the prescript) must be acknowledged. Balch, in agreement with Dalton, notes that the initial address is expanded upon in the blessing section to highlight some of the key themes of this first

²⁶⁰ White seems to be drawing the same conclusion, but he does not state it clearly. Cf. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 48.

²⁶¹ White, "Saint Paul," 435, describes the opening as the “keeping in touch aspect of letter-writing.”

²⁶² This is noted by J. L. White, "Ancient Greek Letters," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, ed. D. E. Aune. SBLSPS, no. 21 (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1988), 92-93, who is drawing on Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* Cf. Cook, "The Prescript," 511-19; and Schubert, *Pauline Thanksgivings*, 180.

²⁶³ Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.*, 113-14. This convention began in Egyptian writings and was incorporated into letters during the Roman period. Cf. White, "Greek Letters," .

²⁶⁴ White, *Light*, 198; and White, "Greek Letters," 96.

chapter.²⁶⁵ Moreover, Martin correctly clarifies that the blessing section does not merely expand upon the prescript, but assists in establishing context for the rest of the letter.²⁶⁶

White's comments on the significance of this extended opening are particularly germane:

“Generally speaking, if the opening and closing are full, the letter is a family letter or a letter between friends in which ongoing maintenance of friendship is an important consideration.”²⁶⁷ According to White the NT letter tradition exhibits these characteristics, and “family” ties are a critical aspect of this type of correspondence. Thus, based upon an epistolary reading, the prescript and the thanksgiving sections provide considerably important information for understanding the rest of 1 Peter, and it is within these sections that we first encounter familial as well as rebirth language.

C. The Role of 1 Peter 1:1-12 (Ancient Rhetorical Theory)

We now shift our attention to a classical-rhetorical (or ancient rhetorical) understanding of the role(s) of 1:1-2 and 1:3-12 in order to provide a complete understanding of the importance of this opening section for 1 Peter. Classical rhetoric labels the first portion of a rhetorical writing, the exordium.²⁶⁸ Campbell, who uses classical rhetoric for his analysis, does indeed label 1:3-12 as the exordium, although he is unclear as to how to label 1:1-2.²⁶⁹ Thurén, when drawing upon classical rhetorical theory, labels the entire introductory section (1:1-12) as the “common exordium” and argues that 1:1-2 and 1:3-12

²⁶⁵ Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 124; Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation*, 96-98.

²⁶⁶ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 51-52, esp. n.43.

²⁶⁷ White, *Light*, 19.

²⁶⁸ It is also known as the prooemium, principium, προοίμιον or the prologue. See H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, trans. M. T. Bliss, A. Jansen, and D. E. Orton (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1998), 121.

²⁶⁹ Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*. See chapter one for a discussion of Campbell's treatment of 1:1-2 in conjunction with 1:3-12.

are closely linked when examined from a rhetorical perspective. Based upon the parameters set out in chapter 1, one should not simply mix and match methods as one sees fit, but each theoretical approach needs, initially, to be examined on its own merits. If, therefore, one examines 1 Peter according to ancient rhetorical theory, contrary to Campbell above, this entire first portion (1:1-12) must be regarded as the exordium.

The five basic structures of an ancient rhetorical writing²⁷⁰ are: 1) exordium, 2) narratio, 3) propositio, 4) argumentatio, and 5) peroratio; although a variety of terms are used to designate these five structures.²⁷¹ The exordium functions as the beginning of the writing. The primary goal of the exordium is to gain the sympathy of the audience regarding the topic of the writing.²⁷² Often the writer begins with the persons being addressed and then would need to capture the attention of the audience, using a variety of methods, while trying to overcome various potential obstacles such as unresponsiveness or indifference and render the audience “attentive, receptive and well-disposed.”²⁷³ Many variations and methods are employed by the writers in order to accomplish the goal of the exordium. Because of the numerous possibilities in application, despite the apparently static categories, in practice, each writer would modify these systems in various ways in order to accomplish their goal.

In the case of NT letters, there are significant expansions and modifications to these rhetorical structures. Certainly that is true for 1 Peter which contains a relatively long

²⁷⁰ Speeches are actually what ancient rhetorical theory describes. The relationship between speech and writing is complex for a speech can be written and a writing, especially in the Greco-Roman world, was often read. Thus, we can talk about 1 Peter as a speech (& thus an ancient rhetorical writing) in that it was written to be read aloud to the recipients and was, therefore, likely written with rhetorical theory in mind. For more details on the relationship between speeches and letters, see chapter 1.

²⁷¹ Lausberg, *Handbook*, 123.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁷³ M. Heath, "Invention," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.-A.D. 400* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 103. Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook*, 125-28.

exordium. If the exordium functions to capture the attention and sympathy of the audience, then it would follow that an extended exordium such as we find in 1 Peter would be significantly more integral to the aim of capturing the audience's attention and advancing the goals of the letter itself. Thus classical rhetoric draws our attention—perhaps more strongly than epistolary theory—not only to 1:1-2 but to 1:3-12 and the role that this entire unit plays in establishing the foundational elements of this epistle.

D. Some Conclusions on 1 Peter's Opening

Whether one examines the divisions of 1 Peter from the perspective of epistolary theory or rhetorical theory the results are mutually supportive: the initial section(s) is extremely important to an understanding of the goals and persuasive purpose of this letter. These separate analyses both confirm that the entirety of 1:1-12 is significant, especially from the perspective of opening-middle-closing texture, and that an examination of this opening section(s) is crucial to understanding the letter as a whole. While this is not an entirely surprising conclusion, many studies ignore or minimize the rebirth language despite its occurrence in 1:3 (where the recipients are described as having been rebirthed by God their father—ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ... ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς), which is part of a section that is considered foundational to the entire letter.²⁷⁴ Having clearly established this fundamental reality, I will continue to build upon it both by exploring rebirth language within this framework and by examining the role of other terms in this introductory section, including

²⁷⁴ Consider, e.g., Kendall, "Literary," who only mentions rebirth twice (107, 110) despite his contention that "1:3-12 provides the foundation for *all* of the author's subsequent remarks" (106, emphasis his). If Kendall is correct, then as we will see below, the opening clauses in which we find rebirth language are the foundation for the rest of this section, and, therefore, for the rest of the letter. Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 91.

their relationships to rebirth language. These tasks can be accomplished by noting the different occurrences of rebirth language in the letter as well as tracking its development or progress within the letter as a whole, along with any changes that occur within the various textual divisions. This type of analysis is known as repetitive-progressive texture.

II. Repetitive-Progressive Texture

Repetitive-progressive texture can be separated into repetitive texture *and* progressive texture.²⁷⁵ Repetitive texture assesses whether there is any pattern of word or phrase repetition in a text.²⁷⁶ Within this framework, one can look for other repetitive phenomena (e.g. grammatically or syntactically related words/concepts) to see whether there are any other connected patterns in the text.²⁷⁷ Repetitive patterns reveal general insights into the text and offer details that allow one to focus more specifically on certain aspects of the text. These repetitive patterns connect very closely to the progressive texture in which a text may also exhibit a progression of words or phrases. That is, repeated words or phrases may alternate; they may form a sequence of steps as they progress; they may occur in sequential patterns; etc.²⁷⁸ As Vernon Robbins states, “[p]rogression emerges out of repetition” and he recognizes that repetition is, in fact, a type of progression.²⁷⁹ This type of

²⁷⁵ Robbins lists them separately as well as in combination. See Robbins, *Exploring*, 8-10; and Robbins, *Tapestry*, 66-70; versus Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46-50.

²⁷⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 8, proposes that when the same word or phrase occurs *at least twice* in a text, one can find repetitive patterns. Of course, if one only finds a single repetition, there is not much of significance. If, however, the word or phrase fits within a larger pattern of repetition or progression, its significance is increased.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

analysis is not unique to Robbins' socio-rhetorical method but can be traced back to the works of scholars like Robert Tannehill, Phyllis Trible and Robert Alter.²⁸⁰

In the course of repetitive analysis, Robbins notes that, more recently, he has found the benefits of displaying the repetitive-progressive patterns in word diagrams.²⁸¹ Although Robbins has built his repetitive-progressive analysis upon the works of scholars like Tannehill and Trible, he does not necessarily follow the same mode of diagramming as they utilize. When, for example, Tannehill discusses the repetitive-progressive texture of Luke 6:37-38, he displays the full text for the reader in a basic word diagram revealing the structure in which the repetition and progression occurred.²⁸² Similarly, Trible in her rhetorical analyses of biblical texts provides extensive diagramming of the verses' structures to aid in her analysis. Robbins prefers to highlight the key words within the text and note their repetition and progression in more of a chart form and, further, notes that such charts (what he refers to as "word diagrams") are part of a progressive development of his analysis that combines a number of approaches.²⁸³ Such a diagramming method receives a significant amount of emphasis by Robbins²⁸⁴ and offers a pragmatic way of displaying and clarifying the information gathered using repetitive-progressive texture. I do find, however that, while the diagrams proposed by Robbins assist one in viewing clearly the patterns

²⁸⁰ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46. Robbins has the following specific publications in mind: R. C. Tannehill, *The Sword of His Mouth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); P. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality. Overtures to Biblical Theology*, no. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); and R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

²⁸¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 48.

²⁸² Tannehill, *Sword*, 107. One also finds similar diagramming of the text under investigation throughout the work of Trible, *God*.

²⁸³ See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46-50. Robbins specifically mentions combining Tannehill's approach with that of Frans Neirynck, Kenneth Burke and Robert Alter.

²⁸⁴ See, e.g., Robbins, *Exploring*, 9-14; Robbins, *Tapestry*, 46, 70; and Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: Mary, Elizabeth and the Magnificat as a Test Case," 173.

progressing throughout the text, ultimately, they do not allow one to identify the textual context because only the highlighted words and phrases are listed, and one is unable to identify the function of these highlighted words/phrases in the overall structure of the text. I will, therefore, combine these methods and offer diagramming both of the passages under examination and of the repetitive-progressive patterns of key words/phrases. The focus of the repetitive-progressive pattern will be the rebirth language of 1 Peter as well as other key terms to which it is linked.

I understand this repetitive-progressive analysis to demonstrate what are likely *unconscious* patterns of emphasis by the author (i.e. what words matter to the author or are important to the text's overall argument, but are not necessarily consciously organized). Further, I am not arguing that the (conscious or unconscious) repetition of a term is always indicative of its importance (or lack of importance). It is only indicative of its importance in-so-far as repetitive-progressive analysis is concerned. Emphasis through repetition is but one possibility, and any importance must be corroborated by other aspects of the socio-rhetorical analysis. In this section, the progressive nature of a term's use is just as important a marker of its importance as its repetition, which is another reason why I have combined these two in this analysis. Ultimately, details of the text that are discovered in this repetitive-progressive section need to be further substantiated through analyses of other textures (in this chapter) and of other components of the text's context (in the subsequent chapters). I am, however, primarily focussed on rebirth language, and analysis of other terms will not be a major component of this analysis.

The first occurrence of rebirth language (*ἀναγεννάω*) is in 1:3, near the beginning of the rich introductory section. *ἀναγεννάω* occurs again in the second major section of 1

Peter, at 1:23. While this is the last use of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter, it is not the end of rebirth language; the term ἀρτιγέννητος (born anew or newly born) also occurs in this second section, at the start of the second chapter (2:2) and is linked to the term βρέφος (new born child or baby). The use of ἀρτιγέννητος in conjunction with βρέφος is not only repetitive in and of itself (a new-born *is* a baby) but is a comparative reference to the recipients who were, physically, beyond that stage of infants, and, thus, can also be understood metaphorically, as an indirect reference to their rebirth. These three references form the initial portion of the repetitive-progressive pattern of rebirth language in 1 Peter as represented in the following chart:

Section#	Verse	Terms
1	1:3	ἀναγεννάω
2	1:23	ἀναγεννάω
2	2:2	ἀρτιγέννητος βρέφος

This chart assists in visualizing the pattern noted, and we can observe that: 1) the term ἀναγεννάω occurs in the key opening section; 2) the term is repeated in the next major section and then rephrased near the end of that section; 3) no more direct occurrences of rebirth language occur in 1 Peter. The lack of ongoing rebirth references, however, can be misleading. While the rebirth terminology is limited, it is linked to the term βρέφος and may be also linked to other terminology. An examination of its use in context should clarify whether it is grammatically or syntactically linked to other terms and how these terms relate to the overall repetitive-progressive pattern.

1 Peter 1:3, where rebirth terminology first occurs, has a unique quality: 1:3-12 forms a single sentence.²⁸⁵ If you were to diagram this sentence (see appendix 1), you would notice that the entire structure is built upon the opening clauses:

Εὐλογητὸς
 ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ
 τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ
 ὁ ἀναγεννῶν ἡμᾶς
 κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος

Within these foundational clauses, we find a clear, structural relationship, perhaps even a form of parallelism between the phrase ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ and the phrase ὁ ἀναγεννῶν ἡμᾶς.²⁸⁶ This second phrase parallels and adds clarification to the first phrase: God as πατήρ serves as the initial focus of this foundational clause, the reality of which is emphasized and clarified by the statement that this father has rebirthed the recipients. Thus, he is not just the God and father of Jesus (as per the first phrase and its modifiers), but is also *their* father: he is their father because he has rebirthed them. This parallelism provides a significant link in the text between the language of rebirth and the description of God as πατήρ. If we add this linked term (πατήρ) to the initial chart of the repetitive-progressive texture of rebirth language, we end up with the following expansion:

Section#	Verse	Terms
1	1:2	πατήρ
1	1:3	πατήρ ἀναγεννάω
2	1:17	πατήρ
2	1:23	ἀναγεννάω
2	2:2	ἀρτιγέννητος βρέφος

²⁸⁵ See Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 79, who writes, “The entire section 1:3-12 is grammatically one complete sentence-thought, structured with stylistic care in a series of relative clauses.”

²⁸⁶ While there is not a clear repetition of terms (except for ὁ), there is clear relationship between the subject and structure of both of these phrases. As A. Berlin, “Parallelism,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 155, recognizes: “parallelism is a matter of relationships—between lines and/or parts of lines.”

This expanded chart highlights some interesting repetitive and progressive elements. πατήρ receives very early mention in the opening section and then is repeated and, in the course of this repetition, is linked to the language of rebirth (as seen in 1:3 above). The second section contains the repetition of πατήρ one last time, after which it “disappears,” and the progression moves more explicitly to the language of rebirth. This use of γεννάω as a compound verb (twice with ἀνα and once with ἄρτι) is linked to πατήρ in the first section, and is used twice more in the second major section of the letter. In the third and final use of a cognate of γεννάω (ἄρτιγέννητος), rebirth is specifically linked (even though one could have assumed the link given the reference to one newly born) to the term βρέφος. Given the solid textual connection, as illustrated in the chart, the repetitive-progressive pattern reveals a progression from πατήρ to γεννάω cognates and then a progression from γεννάω cognates to other familial language (particularly the language of a newly-born baby and, thus, to the language of children). Given the clear links between rebirth terminology and these familial terms, it would seem reasonable to include other familial language into this progressive pattern. This expansion is revealed in the following chart:

Section#	Verse	Terms	
1	1:2	πατήρ	
1	1:3	πατήρ	ἀναγεννάω
2	1:14		τέκνον
2	1:17	πατήρ	
2	1:23		ἀναγεννάω
2	2:2		ἄρτιγέννητος
3	2:17		βρέφος
3	3:6		ἀδελφότης
3	3:8		τέκνον
5	5:9		φιλάδελφος
5	5:12		ἀδελφότης
5	5:13		ἀδελφός
			υἱός

Even if we exclude ἀδελφός and υἱός in 5:12 and 5:13 respectively (because they refer to specific people who are not the recipients), we still observe a clear pattern.²⁸⁷ Similar to the initial pattern of repetition and progression from πατήρ to γεννάω cognates, this pattern continues as rebirth language progresses to the language of children and the language of children progresses to brotherhood terminology, which receives multiple repetitions in various forms. To summarize this pattern, we can see from the chart, reading left to right, that each cognate term is mentioned at least once before another term is introduced. The term is repeated at least one more time and then the text transitions to the new/next term. The pattern moves us down and across the chart, with one term “fading” and gradually being replaced by a new set of related/cognate terms that have been linked to the previous term. In this letter we move from πατήρ to rebirth to childhood to brotherhood. The language of rebirth functions as an integral component to this repetitive-progressive pattern in 1 Peter.

This repetitive-progressive analysis has yielded some interesting patterns so far, but is not without its assumptions. Primarily, I have assumed (based upon the parallel structure found in 1:3) that the use of πατήρ is meant to reflect a relationship between the readers and God as father, not simply a relationship between God as the father and Jesus as the son. Given the earlier use of πατήρ in the initial section of 1 Peter (1:2) and the importance to inner textual analysis of understanding how each term is functioning in relationship to the surrounding text, it is vital to return to this initial portion and determine the exact

²⁸⁷ Although I am not proposing we should exclude these terms—a case can be made that they are still part of the repetitive-progressive texture because they are referring to fellow Christians with familial terms, I do acknowledge that a reference to specific people as part of the closing greetings could be perceived as outside of this pattern. So, *even if* we exclude them, the pattern still persists. Their exclusion does not change the pattern; their inclusion strengthens it, especially in terms of the repetitive structure.

relationship of these terms to the surrounding text. Moreover, given the significance of this introductory portion in setting the stage for the rest of the letter (as noted in opening-middle-closing section), it is critical that we clearly understand the inter-relationship between the words and phrases in this passage so we recognize the precise argumentative force of this section. The rest of this section will focus on a repetitive-progressive analysis of this introductory portion and then return to the role of familial (and rebirth) language in light of this analysis.

A basic diagram of this passage (1:1-2) will assist in visualizing the inter-relationship between its words and phrases:

πέτρος
 ἀπόστολος
 Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 ἐκλεκτοῖς
 παρεπιδήμοις
 διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας.
 [ἐκλεκτοῖς]
 κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς
 ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος
 εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥάντισμόν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

After the designation of the author—which is discussed in the introduction—this opening passage is based grammatically/structurally upon two words: ἐκλεκτός and παρεπίδημος.²⁸⁸ The letter is written “to those who are chosen” and “to those who are

²⁸⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 315, argues that ἐκλεκτοῖς is an adjective modifying παρεπιδήμοις because the use of καί has limited manuscript evidence. While the evidence for καί is limited (I have not included it in the text), one need not conclude with Elliott that the only other solution is that ἐκλεκτοῖς is a substantive joined to παρεπιδήμοις by an added καί. It is much simpler to regard ἐκλεκτοῖς as a substantive functioning in apposition with παρεπιδήμοις. In fact this latter solution fits much better with the scholarly consensus (with which Elliott, 317, agrees) that the three prepositional at the end of this section are syntactically related to ἐκλεκτοῖς. To argue that ἐκλεκτοῖς is merely modifying παρεπιδήμοις, and yet, without being repeated, ἐκλεκτοῖς also functions as the key term upon which these three later prepositional phrases are built seems almost contradictory. Instead, as a substantive, the placement of ἐκλεκτοῖς first indicates its primacy, and it is (continued...)

strangers.” A series of genitives immediately follows and builds upon *παρεπίδημος*, while the series of prepositional phrases that conclude this section are built upon the earlier *ἐκλεκτός*.²⁸⁹ The use of *ἐκλεκτός* as the first term to describe the readers is an obvious place to begin this part of the analysis.

After its initial use in 1:1, *ἐκλεκτός* does not appear again until chapter 2 where it occurs three more times, and then is not used any more by the author. However, the related term *συνεκλεκτός* is used near the end of chapter 5. A repetitive chart of *ἐκλεκτός* shows the following pattern:

Section#	Verse	Terms
1	1:1	ἐκλεκτός
2	2:4	ἐκλεκτός
2	2:6	ἐκλεκτός
2	2:9	ἐκλεκτός
6	5:13	συνεκλεκτός

συνεκλεκτός in 5:13 offers a parallelism to *ἐκλεκτός* in 1:1. Just as the readers are *ἐκλεκτός*, so their sister church in “Babylon” is *συνεκλεκτός* alongside of them. That the letter begins and ends with this terminology reveals some significance to its role in the letter, but the gap between its use in chapter two and its use in chapter five raises questions about its role in the letter as a whole, unless, like rebirth language it is linked to other terms which provide a clear pattern of progression from one term to another throughout the letter and then returning to the cognate term, *συνεκλεκτός*, at the letter’s ending. While, structurally, *ἐκλεκτός* is linked to *παρεπίδημος*, I will begin by examining whether there is similar

(continued)

then modified by the appositive *παρεπιδήμιος* and then by the subsequent prepositional phrases. This latter interpretation is much more consistent and likely.

²⁸⁹ See footnote 341.

terminology to which ἐκλεκτός might be related (i.e. cognate terminology) and whether this related terminology contributes anything to the repetitive-progressive pattern of ἐκλεκτός. I will return to the link between ἐκλεκτός and παρεπίδημος after examining other proposed links.

Some have attempted to link ἐκλεκτός with καλέω. Troy Martin affirms Best’s connection of these two terms when he writes, “Best has correctly connected this word [“called”—καλέω] with the term *elect* in 1:1.”²⁹⁰ Others assume a similar connection.²⁹¹ This connection, however, is based upon what are assumed to be related ideas, but there is no etymological link between these two terms. Further, no textual connection between these terms is offered in 1 Peter. ἐκλεκτός and καλέω do occur, however, in the same verse at 1 Peter 2:9. It reads: ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν. βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα. ἔθνος ἅγιον. λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν. ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς and can be diagrammed as follows:

ὑμεῖς δὲ
 γένος **ἐκλεκτόν**
 βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα
 ἔθνος ἅγιον
 λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν
 ὅπως ἐξαγγείλητε
 τὰς ἀρετὰς
 τοῦ ὑμᾶς **καλέσαντος**
 ἐκ σκότους
 εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς

²⁹⁰ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 161 n.85. Best, *1 Peter*, 86, writes, “The word expresses the strong belief of the early Christians that God had *chosen and destined (1:1f)* them to be his people.” Emphasis mine. Best’s statement comes under his comments on the word “called” (καλέω) in 1:15.

²⁹¹ Davids, *Peter*, 69, 92, connects the use of καλέω in 1:15 with “Israel as the *elect, called* people.” Emphasis mine. Selwyn, *Peter*, 167-68, appears to make similar assumptions about the meaning of “called” (καλέω). Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 121, esp., n.54, parallels “calling” (καλέω) with “election” (ἐκλεκτός).

The diagram of this verse shows that there is no clear evidence of parallelism or even significant grammatical or syntactical connection between ἐκλεκτός and καλέω, at least in the letter of 1 Peter. ἐκλεκτός is used in this verse in parallel with two other modifiers: βασιλείον (royal/kingly), and ἅγιον (holy), but any textual connection to καλέω, which is buried in a series of modifying phrases, is virtually nonexistent. Thus, while the argument that the readers may have seen some parallelism or connection in meaning between these two terms may or may not be true, we have no evidence in 1 Peter of such a connection and must draw back from any assumption of connection based upon the evidence from the text. In fact, none of the other references that contain a form of ἐκλεκτός show evidence of a significant connection or parallel with any other term. So, while ἐκλεκτός is key in that it begins and ends the letter, its significance for the letter—at least on the basis of a repetitive-progressive analysis—is found more in its connection to other elements in this introductory section. The term that immediately follows ἐκλεκτός and, in fact, offers a parallel grammatical structure to ἐκλεκτός in this first portion of 1 Peter is παρεπίδημος (stranger).

Παρεπίδημος occurs only twice in 1 Peter at 1:1 and 2:11 and offers a brief repetitive chart:

Section#	Verse	Terms
1	1:1	παρεπίδημος
3	2:11	παρεπίδημος

These two occurrences barely constitute evidence of repetitive-progressive texture, but as has become evident in the other repetitive-progressive patterns, it is the linking of cognate terms as well as other terms clearly connected within the text that produces a clearer repetitive-progressive pattern, and, perhaps, this is also the case with παρεπίδημος.

John H. Elliott, in a detailed analysis of 1 Peter, has noted the importance of *παρεπίδημος* in the opening of 1 Peter and he has further linked this term with other terms that he considers to relate to the “identity of the addressees and their relation to society at large.”²⁹² These other terms include: *πάροικος* and its linguistic correlate *οἶκος*²⁹³ as well as *διασπορά*.²⁹⁴ Troy Martin also notes the connection of these terms and argues that *παρεπίδημος* and *διασπορά* serve as key metaphors around which sections of the letter are built, with *διασπορά* serving as the controlling metaphor.²⁹⁵ Certainly, based upon the repetitive-progressive analysis of the text, we do find connections between *παρεπίδημος* and *διασπορά* as well as *πάροικος*. *παρεπίδημος* and *διασπορά* are linked in 1:1 and *παρεπίδημος* is used in parallel with *πάροικος* in 2:11. If we include all of these textually connected terms within the repetitive-progressive texture we have the pattern provided in the following chart:

Section#	Verse	Terms	
1	1:1	<i>παρεπίδημος</i>	<i>διασπορά</i>
2	1:17	<i>παροικία</i>	
3	2:11	<i>παρεπίδημος</i> <i>πάροικος</i>	

Not much of a pattern has developed here, and even if we include the cognate terms highlighted by Elliott such as *πάροικος* (*οἶκος*, etc.) as well as terms such as *λαός* which could be considered as thematically related to *οἶκος* we do not see a clearer/more significant pattern emerge. The inclusion of all of these (somewhat) related terms produces the following chart:

²⁹² Elliott, *Home*, 23.

²⁹³ See *Ibid.*, 24, for a full list of the terms he considers related to *οἶκος*.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30, would connect *παροικία* with *διασπορά*, considering them at times to function as equivalent terms.

²⁹⁵ As I indicated in the introduction, I will refrain from any detailed discussion of meaning and will leave that for chapter 3.

Section#	Verse	Terms		
1	1:1	παρεπίδημος		διασπορά
2	1:17		παροιμία	
2	2:5		οἶκος	
			πνευματικὸς	
2	2:5		οἰκοδομέω	
(2	2:7		οἰκοδομέω)	
2	2:9			λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν λαὸς θεοῦ
2	2:10			
3	2:11	παρεπίδημος	πάροικος	
3	2:18		οἰκέτης	
3	3:7		συνοικέω	
4	4:10		οἰκονόμος	
5	4:17		οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ	

While the οἶκος family of terms has a much more substantial offering in terms of a repetitive pattern it does not appear until the second section and is never linked in the text with παρεπίδημος, πάροικος or διασπορά. There is no clear textual connection in 1 Peter of παρεπίδημος (or of πάροικος for that matter) with οἶκος (or even λαός), and, although we might contend that after the introduction of παρεπίδημος in 1:1 and then πάροικος in 1:17, οἶκος & λαός phrasings are introduced, and that παρεπίδημος and πάροικος are repeated at which point οἶκος and its cognates replace these terms and continue the pattern, this argument is, at best, forced. While we find that παρεπίδημος is connected to διασπορά in 1:1, διασπορά does not occur at any other point in the entire text. We also find πάροικος introduced in 1:17 and then later paralleled with παρεπίδημος in 2:11, but, as with παρεπίδημος, πάροικος barely qualifies within repetitive texture and, even when combined with thematically related (and, somewhat, textually connected words), none of these terms is important from a repetitive-progressive perspective. οἶκος is the only term that stands out in the above chart because of its importance from a repetitive standpoint. παρεπίδημος is linked to the more repetitively-progressively important ἐκλεκτός which, in

turn, as we will see in the argumentative section below, is defined by the recipients relationship to God as πατήρ.

In terms of parallelism, Martin has argued that διασπορά is a significant part of this initial phrasing (ἐκλεκτός, παρεπίδημος & διασπορά).²⁹⁶ Based upon repetitive-progressive texture, however, διασπορά seems to be of little consequence.²⁹⁷ In fact διασπορά seems to simply function as part of a string of genitives that build upon παρεπίδημος. To really be parallel to παρεπίδημος, διασπορά should be in the dative case: “to those who are strangers, to those in the dispersion. . .” Instead, διασπορά appears to be functioning differently from a structural/grammatical perspective. Martin’s argument, as well as the function of the prepositional phrases that build upon ἐκλεκτός do not fit with repetitive-progressive texture but are more related to argumentative texture, which forms the final section of this chapter.

In this section on repetitive-progressive texture, several important aspects of rebirth language of 1 Peter have been highlighted. By itself, rebirth language reveals a limited repetitive pattern in the first two major sections of this letter. Its connections to familial language, specifically to father (πατήρ) and child or baby (τέκνον, βρέφος) and, by implication, to the language of brotherhood, offers a much fuller and clearer pattern of repetitive progression. οἶκος terminology, which appears later in the letter, also may contribute to and is thematically related to the familial language with which rebirth language

²⁹⁶ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* .

²⁹⁷ Refer to the diagram of this section above.

is intricately connected.²⁹⁸ This repetitive-progressive pattern begins in the second verse of the first chapter and continues into the final chapter of the letter.

Thus, in conjunction with familial language to which it is clearly linked, rebirth language serves as a one of the key pieces of the opening section of this letter, and its influence continues throughout virtually every major section of the letter right to the end. In contrast, no other term (despite proposals by scholars) offers a comparable repetitive-progressive pattern. Moreover, the overall focus of this significant repetitive-progressive web is on the positive identity of the recipients as rebirthed members of a new family in which God is their *πατήρ* and other Christians are brothers and sisters. The more limited, negative terms of identification (such as strangers (*παρεπίδημος*), aliens (*πάρουικος*), and perhaps even dispersed people (*διασπορά*)), are important in that they serve to contrast the sense of belonging with a sense of alienation although they are dominated by the more repeated and developed familial language. However, we must recognize, that these conclusions are only based upon the repetitive-progressive analysis of these terms.

III. Narrational Structure

As the name implies, narrational structure is most clearly related to narrative texts and often deals with patterns in the narrator's voice or patterns in the relationship between

²⁹⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 113-15, offers the most convincing summary of this reality, although I would disagree with his declaration that "it is the symbolization of the community as the *household of God* that serves as the root metaphor and organizing ecclesial image in 1 Peter." This image is not introduced until later in the letter and any such "root metaphor" should be in evidence early on. It is a powerful image nonetheless and is definitely linked to the familial focus of the letter which finds itself rooted in the idea of God as *πατήρ* and the recipients as rebirthed.

the narrator's voice and other elements in the text, such as speeches.²⁹⁹ For example,

Robbins notes that:

[T]he alternation of narrational commentary and speech attributed to various characters in the story begins to reveal some of the inner nuances of the story itself. At this point, however, the story may still look 'innocent'. It may appear that the narrational voice is simply presenting a straightforward account of the way things happened. Yet the narrational texture reveals that there is considerable staging of events in the discourse. The discourse allows only a limited number of people to be on stage. Even among those on stage, only some are allowed to speak."³⁰⁰

Thus, the narrator shapes the text through his/her words and the relationship of those words to other elements within the text. While examining a letter is, in many ways, quite different from a narrational analysis, the letter writer serves as a narrator, and many of the elements noted by Robbins are still relevant.

In a letter the examination of narrational texture focuses on the author's self-referencing as well as the relationship of that self-referencing to the "other" referencing in the text. Evidence of the significant limiting or increasing of certain types of referencing can provide insight into the letter's focus. Who receives considerable mention or who is "centre stage," and, conversely, who is not, are relevant factors for narrational texture. In letters, these factors are accessed, initially, through an analysis of the writer's use of the first person voice. This is the perceived voice of the narrator, although one must keep in mind that, from the perspective of this analysis, the narrator is controlling the use of that voice and is

²⁹⁹ This is how Robbins, *Exploring*, 15, defines such analysis. Others such as M. E. Boring, "Narrative Dynamics in 1 Peter: The Function of the Narrative World," in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin. Library of New Testament Studies, no. 364 (London: T & T Clark, 2007); and J. B. Green, "Narrating the Gospel in 1 and 2 Peter," *Int* 60 (2006), focus on different aspects from the field of narrative criticism. I will align myself with Robbins' approach.

³⁰⁰ Robbins, *Exploring*, 18.

“narrating” regardless of whether the voice appears or not. The relationship of that voice to other pronouns is of particular interest in a narrational analysis of a letter, especially in light of how they function for the author/narrator of the letter.³⁰¹ For this discussion, I have limited my analysis to the use of first and second person voices.³⁰²

This analysis is applicable to rebirth language either directly (e.g., through the “selective” use of the first-person plural voice) or indirectly (e.g. by offering an understanding of the overall narrative framework in which rebirth language is embedded). Further, some of the analysis is particularly relevant to the final chapter of this dissertation. Of particular note is how the overwhelming use (and focus on) “you” stands in stark contrast to an “us/we” framing that one would expect of document intent on highlighting the recipients alienation from the world around them and on emphasizing their connection to all the other members of their “group.” Further, the author is not trying to convince them of his authority or even to (over-)emphasize a connectedness between himself and the readers through the use of the first person voice.³⁰³ Finally, the use of the second person plural imperative—which essentially begins after the readers’ identity as members (re)born into this family is established—explodes in the latter part of the letter in which the readers are

³⁰¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 53-58, makes it clear that narrational texture in socio-rhetorical analysis seeks to analyze the role of the narrator in shaping the text and the impact of the text on the implied readers, while avoiding being drawn into the narrator’s rhetorical purpose. Note how Robbins analyzes Paul’s use of “I” in comparison with “others” and his use of “we” in 1 Cor 9 (72-77).

³⁰² Earlier versions of this chapter included the third person statistics, but there was no clear use of the third person in reference to other “characters” that would contribute to this narrative discussion, even in comparison to other writings. More particularly, the inclusion of the third person pronouns and verbs requires a more detailed analysis of their specific referents; an analysis that I feel offers little to the present discussion. I will however draw attention to the third person voice (or lack thereof) at key junctures to assess the presence or lack of an “us-them” contrast.

³⁰³ There are other emphases, which occur in the final section of the letter, such as the emphasis on the author as a witness to the sufferings of Jesus and as an elder (5:1).

encouraged to participate in the larger society (see chapter five for the details of this discussion).³⁰⁴

I begin my analysis with a chart of the use of first and second person pronouns in 1 Peter as well as all the other NT letters in order to highlight the narrator's voice and its relationship (demonstrated through statistics) to the other voices in the letter:³⁰⁵

	ἐγώ		ἡμεῖς		σύ		ὕμεῖς		Totals
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Romans	90	32%	58	21%	47	17%	83	30%	278
1 Corinthians	76	27%	54	19%	8	3%	146	51%	284
2 Corinthians	55	17%	108	34%	3	1%	153	48%	319
Galatians	38	34%	21	19%	5	5%	47	42%	111
Ephesians	16	17%	28	30%	3	30%	45	49%	92
Philippians	52	40%	6	5%	1	1%	51	39%	110
Colossians	11	14%	13	16%	0	0%	57	70%	81
1Thessalonians	1	1%	49	37%	0	0%	84	63%	134
2Thessalonians	0	0%	25	39%	0	0%	39	61%	64
1 Timothy	6	20%	9	30%	14	47%	1	3%	30
2 Timothy	33	52%	9	14%	20	32%	1	2%	63
Titus	4	15%	15	56%	7	26%	1	4%	27
Philemon	17	38%	4	9%	20	44%	4	9%	45
Hebrews	35	28%	31	25%	29	23%	31	25%	126
James	14	20%	8	12%	8	12%	39	57%	69
1 Peter	2	3%	4	7%	0	0%	53	90%	59
2 Peter	5	12%	15	37%	0	0%	21	51%	41
1 John	1	1%	56	62%	0	0%	34	37%	91
2 John	2	14%	4	29%	5	36%	3	21%	14
3 John	1	6%	5	31%	10	63%	0	0%	16

I have focussed this chart on the use of personal pronouns. The data from the verb voices³⁰⁶ is virtually identical to the pronoun data, at least in the case of 1 Peter, and I have

³⁰⁴ They are only constrained by certain demands of their new identity. See chapter five for the details of this discussion.

³⁰⁵ The percentages are based upon the overall use of *pronouns* in the letter, *not* the total number of other words.

included this information in the discussion below.³⁰⁷ The data from these other letters serves to highlight the distinctive nature of 1 Peter's narrational texture. The percentages column allows for a direct comparison of pronoun use between different-sized letters. The percentage is relative to the total number of pronouns in each letter. Two significant facts about 1 Peter stand out in this chart: 1) the limited use of the narrator's voice in the first person, and 2) the overwhelming use of the second person plural voice.

The low use of first person pronouns is very interesting from a narrational perspective. The direct use of the author's voice is barely present. Only 3% of the first person pronouns are in the singular voice. Although this is not the lowest percentage—1 & 2 Thessalonians and 1 John are lower—it is one of the lowest percentages in all the NT letters. Further, books with a low percentage of first person singular pronouns tend to have higher numbers of first person *plural* pronouns. In the instances noted above, 1 & 2 Thessalonians and 1 John have some of the highest uses of the first person plural pronouns of the NT books: 37%, 39% and 62% respectively.³⁰⁸ Such is not the case, however, with 1 Peter. Not only does it have the lowest percentage of the first person singular (3%), it also

(continued)

³⁰⁶ I recognize that this use of "voice" here is problematic. Grammatically, the voice of a verb normally refers to active-middle-passive distinctions. In this section, I will use "voice" in reference to the narrator's voice through the use of first and second person verb forms. Similarly, I will speak of the "imperative voice" as part of the second person narrational voice, fully aware that, grammatically speaking, imperative is a "mood."

³⁰⁷ In 1 Peter, the verb data matches the pronoun data very closely. The total of all first and second person verbs is 62. First person singular verbs represent 10% (6) of this total; first person plural represents 1.5% (1); second person singular represents 1.5% (1); second person plural represents 87% (54) of these verb forms.

³⁰⁸ Essentially, letters with a low first-person singular voice tend to have a high first-person plural voice and vice-versa.

has the second lowest use of the first person plural (7%), exceeded only by Philippians.³⁰⁹ It is in the combined average (of singular and plural first person pronouns) that the lack of a first person voice is most clear. In 1 Peter, the combined average is by far the lowest of any other NT letter at only 10%.³¹⁰

A closer examination of the occurrences of these pronouns is even more telling. The first person singular voice is almost non-existent, at least in terms of the nominative (“I”) form. Of the two occurrences of the first person singular pronoun, one is a quote in which God is speaking (1:16) and the other is a possessive genitive (μου) in reference to “my son Mark” (5:13). This is the first and only indication of the author’s presence in the text of 1 Peter in terms of the first person pronoun.³¹¹ The data from verb forms is almost identical, albeit with a bit more evidence of a first person singular voice.³¹²

The first person *plural* voice is more prominent in 1 Peter than the singular voice, but still *appears* to be relatively insignificant. The first person plural pronoun, ἡμεῖς (“we”), is used only 4 times in 1 Peter (1:3 (2x), 2:24, and 4:17). The first person plural verb only appears once (2:24). The “we” can refer to the larger Christian community (such as the “co-elect church in Babylon” (5:12)), but, given the use of only Peter’s name in the introduction,

³⁰⁹ Philippians’ first person plural pronouns represent only 5% of these pronouns. This statistic is balanced, however, by the fact that 40% of its pronouns are in the first person singular, which is exactly what one would expect from a personal letter of this nature.

³¹⁰ The next lowest percentage of combined first person pronouns is a tie between Colossians and James at 20%. The pronoun average in 1 Peter is virtually the same as that of the verb forms, in which the combined average for the first person voice is 11.5%.

³¹¹ There are six (6) uses of the first person singular verb form in 1 Peter. Two of these, however, are quotes with God as the implied speaker. The other four (2:11; 5:1, 12 (2x)) do reference the author’s voice, with the bulk of these occurring in the final chapter.

³¹² See the discussion that follows.

it is likely not referring to a group of writers.³¹³ Instead, this use of “we” highlights a connection between the recipients themselves and the letter’s author as well as the larger Christian community, a connection that is not evident from the statistics alone.

Despite the low number of occurrences of the first person plural voice, there still is a notable relationship between this voice and rebirth language. Half of the uses of ἡμεῖς are concentrated at the beginning of the letter in the central opening passage in which rebirth is mentioned (1:3):

Εὐλογητὸς
ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ.
ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγενῆσας ἡμᾶς

While the first instance of ἡμεῖς occurs in the phrase ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, which, on its own, could conceivably be considered a standard Christian phrase,³¹⁴ the second use of ἡμεῖς here, used in conjunction with rebirth, must be regarded as part of the author’s narrative focus. It does not match any standard phrasing. Given the distinctive nature of the phrase, the likelihood is that both uses of ἡμεῖς here are part of a deliberate emphasis of the author. The author has strategically placed these pronouns where they provide the most connection with the recipients. In this primary passage highlighting their new identity, the narrator uses the plural, first-person voice to link the recipients to other Christians, thereby highlighting their connection to the larger reality of which they are a part: the Christian “family.”

³¹³ While Silvanus’ name is mentioned in the letter closing (5:12), the lack of use of his name in the opening indicates that the letter’s voice (and its authority) is meant to be that of Peter.

³¹⁴ See, e.g., Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 80, who contends that this phrasing is “from the liturgical language of prayer.”

The focus by the narrator on the recipients' identity is further confirmed by the placement of the first-person plural voice: this double use of "we" is made precisely when the author *first* highlights the recipients' rebirth and re-emphasizes God as their πατήρ. The third use of "we" in 1 Peter 4:17 further emphasizes this narrational focus. In 4:17 the author states that judgement must begin with the "household of God" (τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ). The statement is then rephrased with τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ being replaced by the pronoun ἡμεῖς. Here "we" is used to highlight the recipients' connection to a larger reality: the household of God. Thus, most if not all of the occurrences of ἡμεῖς are placed precisely at the points where the recipients' new familial or household identity is emphasized.³¹⁵ The strategic placement of these first person plural pronouns functions to strengthen the recipients' sense of connection to the author as well as to the larger Christian community. Even in the limited use of the first person plural voice, the narrator strategically focuses on the recipients' sense of identity. Interestingly, however, in these key instances that are focussed on the recipients' identity and where the "us/we" voice is employed by the narrator, there is no corresponding "them/they" language particularly in the passage that deals with the recipients' rebirth (1:3).

When compared to other pronouns in the letter, and certainly in comparison to the other NT letters, second person plural pronouns dominate 1 Peter. ὑμεῖς represents 90% of the personal pronouns used in 1 Peter, and second person plural verbs represent 87% of the personal verb endings. These statistics, in and of themselves, demonstrate the overwhelming

³¹⁵ Even the use of ὑμεῖς in 2:24, "He himself bore our [ἡμῶν] sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live (ζήσωμεν) for righteousness" (NRSV) provides a link between the recipients and the larger community in emphasizing the foundation for all Christians of Jesus' sacrifice (2:24 uses ὑμεῖς as well as a first person plural verb (ζήσωμεν) before returning to a focus on the recipients at the end of verse 24 and continuing into verse 25).

focus on the letter's readers. If other letters had similar or higher percentages, it would not diminish the importance of ὑμεῖς in this letter; yet, the significance of this statistic is accentuated by the fact that no other NT letter comes close to the use of the second person plural in 1 Peter. The next closest letter, Colossians, sits at a distant second, with only 70% of its personal pronouns in the second person plural voice. In 1 Peter, verb use again parallels pronoun use. Of the 62 first and second person (singular and plural) verbs in 1 Peter, 54 (87%) are in the second person plural form. An important statistic connected to this data is the significant use of the imperative "voice"³¹⁶ in 1 Peter's second person plural verbs. More than half of the second person plural verbs (35 of the 54) are in the imperative form.³¹⁷ This reality, from the perspective of narrational texture, confirms and further underscores what has been indicated by the other textures: the letter is overwhelmingly focussed upon the recipients and their identity. Even more significant is that the bulk (85%) of the imperatives in 1 Peter occur *after* 2:12, after the first two sections of the letter in which their identity is outlined.³¹⁸ This use of the imperative demonstrates that the narrator is seeking to direct the recipients' lives (i.e. how they ought to live) in light of their shaped identity.

In this narrational section, it is vital to remember that the actual author/narrator has specifically shaped and contributed to what is and what is not stated in this letter. Robbins reminds us that the interpreter of a text must not be seduced by the narrator into only noticing what the narrator chooses to highlight but must also pay close attention to the intent

³¹⁶ See footnote 306 above for an explanation of this expression.

³¹⁷ The imperatives are found at: 1:13, 15, 17, 22; 2:2, 13, 17(4); 3:3, 10, 11(4), 15; 4:1, 7(2), 12, 12, 15, 16(2), 19; 5:2, 5(2), 6, 8(2), 9, 12, 14.

³¹⁸ Of the 35 imperatives in 1 Peter, 30 occur after 2:12. Cf. footnote 325.

of the narrator.³¹⁹ The intriguing lack of a first-person “authorial” voice combined with the focus upon the recipients, particularly through the use of the imperative voice, sheds important light onto the letter’s narrative thrust. Contrary to many of the authorship discussions of this letter (see the introduction to the dissertation), the use of the apostle Peter’s name is central to the narrative voice. J. Ramsey Michaels proposes that, with the exception of a few statements in chapter five, “the author consistently keeps his personality out of the letter. He is content to let his arguments stand on their own merit, without taking advantage of his supposed identity as the apostle Peter.” Certainly, there is little evidence of the “author’s” voice in this letter, but I would disagree with Michaels’ assertion. Rather than bolster the implied author’s presence and authority in the letter, or even argue for it as in some Pauline letters,³²⁰ this letter assumes it; the narrator simply identifies the name and title of its implied author—“Peter the apostle of Jesus Christ.” In contrast, when there are questions regarding Paul’s authority in his letters, these questions are engaged in the opening section of the letters, which is considered to reflect the relationship of the writer and the addressees. The same arguments must apply to 1 Peter. The narrator presents the author as

³¹⁹ See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 55-56.

³²⁰ See, e.g., Gal 1:1 where apparent questions of Paul’s authority as an apostle likely prompted Paul to expand upon the source of his apostleship. See, e.g., the comments by Betz, *Galatians*, 37-39; and H. N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, trans. H. Zylstra. NICNT (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1953), 40-41. While Betz questions whether Paul’s response relates directly to charges made against Paul, he still recognizes the central role of this part of the prescript for the development of themes in the rest of the letter. On the importance of the prescript in establishing or reflecting the relationship between reader and sender, see Exler, *Form*, 60-62; and White, “Epistolary Literature,” 1740. The less Paul states regarding himself, the more likely his authority was accepted by the letter’s recipients. Contrast, e.g., the opening of Philippians with that of Galatians. In the opening of Philippians, Paul is mentioned, along with Timothy, followed by the phrase “slaves of Christ Jesus” (δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). No mention is made of his apostleship nor is there any defence or clarification of his apostolic authority as is found in Galatians (and a number the other writings that bear his name—see Rom 1:1-6; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1-3). Paul’s close relationship to the Philippians (see Phil 1:8, 12, 19, 24-26; 2:12, 19-24; 4:10) likely accounts for this brief opening. A very similar opening is found in the letter to his “friend and co-worker” (ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ) Philemon.

Peter and assumes the recipients' acceptance of the letter's authority on the basis of this opening statement. Peter is the "author" whose presence is rarely identified but whose authority is implied by the narrator through every use of the second person plural voice.

More importantly to rebirth language and to the documents overall thrust, the narrator does not (over)emphasize the readers' connectedness to the author—such connectedness only occurs in several key passages, particularly the passage when the readers' are first identified as rebirthed. Moreover, in contrast to the emphasis by scholars on the readers' alienation from the world around them (by highlighting such terms as *παρεπίδημος* and *διασπορά*), the narrator does not contrast the use of "us" with "them." Further, the expected focus on "us/we" (if alienation and/or separation is the focus) is obscured by the overwhelming use of (and focus on) "you." Moreover, as I noted above, the use of the second person plural imperative—which essentially begins after the readers' identity as members (re)born into this family is established—explodes in the latter part of the letter where the readers are encouraged to participate in the larger society. Finally, the overwhelming narrative focus on the recipients (rather than, for example, on God or the larger society or the implied author) is an important element in understanding the argumentative thrust of the letter—particularly in the letter's opening section—an element on which I will now focus.

IV. Argumentative Texture

The final portion of this chapter calls attention to the socio-rhetorical category of "argumentative texture." Argumentative texture concerns itself with the persuasive

argument of the text's author based upon elements from the previous textures examined.³²¹

In the previous textures we have seen that the opening portions are the most critical for establishing the tone and themes of this letter, regardless of what ancient methods shaped its formation. Within these key opening sections rebirth language is first introduced. Further, rebirth language is part of a repetitive-progressive web of interconnected familial terminology that sets the tone for and shapes the letter's focus on the recipients' identity. The absolute focus on the recipients is underscored by the author's use of "voice" in the letter through the overwhelming use of the second person plural pronoun. With these aspects in mind, we turn our attention to the argumentative thrust of 1 Peter.

Concerning argumentative texture, Robbins writes:

Study of argumentative texture investigates multiple kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse. Some of this reasoning is logical. In other words, the discourse presents assertions and supports them with reasons, clarifies them through opposites and contraries, and possibly presents short or elaborate counterarguments. Other reasoning may be described as qualitative. This occurs when the quality of the images and descriptions encourages the reader to accept the portrayal as true and real.³²²

Much of Robbins' description of the argumentative texture stems from narrative-based texts in which he notes that this type of reasoning is supported through speeches, actions and specific arguments presented by the narrator.³²³ 1 Peter has none of the first two elements but does have the third element. The writer of the letter is clearly presenting an argument of which he seeks to convince the readers. This is accomplished in both of the manners Robbins has indicated in the above quote. First, the author presents assertions that have

³²¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 58-59, indicates that argumentative texture is best explored in light of opening-middle-closing, repetitive-progressive and narrational texture.

³²² Robbins, *Exploring*, 21.

³²³ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 59, 62.

underlying or qualitative elements and, second, the reader is encouraged to accept these assertions as real. In 1 Peter the first part—the assertions presented—fits well into the inner textual argument. The second part—the encouragement to accept these assertions as real—is related more to the quality of the metaphors presented and their perception within the larger societal context. This second part will be explored more fully in subsequent chapters in which we move beyond the text of 1 Peter to the larger context in which it is set.

In essence, much of 1 Peter is argumentative, that is, it is designed to convince the reader to think in a certain manner. This is also the case with Paul's letters where Robbins has argued that "The inner nature of most of Paul's letters is argumentative. This means that the words are designed to persuade the reader to think, do or feel in a certain way, and they regularly give reasons why a person should respond in this manner."³²⁴ Simply on the basis of verb forms alone, one can make a very convincing argument that the entire first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter set out the argument that forms the basis for the rest of the letter. As I noted in the narrative analysis above, by 2:12 of 1 Peter, only 5 of the 35 imperatives in this letter have been encountered.³²⁵ After 2:12, we encounter the 30 other imperatives, which is why its label as paraenetic letter is certainly suitable;³²⁶ but this

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

³²⁵ That is, by the end of the second major section. See the brief discussion in the section on narrative texture above. The imperatives are found at: 1:13, 15, 17, 22; 2:2, 13, 17(4); 3:3, 10, 11(4), 15; 4:1, 7(2), 12, 12, 15, 16(2), 19; 5:2, 5(2), 6, 8(2), 9, 12, 14. Others also speak of imperatival constructions and would include the imperatival use of adjectives and participles. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 67; H. G. Meecham, "The Use of the Participle for the Imperative in the New Testament," *ExpT* 58 (1947); Selwyn, *Peter*, 467-88; and S. Snyder, "Participles and Imperatives in 1 Peter: A Re-Examination in the Light of Recent Scholarly Trends," *FN* 8, no. N (1995).

³²⁶ 1 Peter's paraenetic or hortatory character has long been highlighted. See, e.g., Aune, *Literary Environment*, 221; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 67; D. F. Hill, "'To Offer Spiritual Sacrifices.'" (1 Peter 2:5): Liturgical Formulations and Christian Paraenesis in 1 Peter," *JSNT* 16 (1982); Kelly, *Commentary*, 16; Lohse, "Parenesis," 37-59; Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, 120-30; Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 96; and van Unnik, "Good Works," 101-05. Thurén, *Argument*, 223, does correctly note that what is meant by a "paraenetical text" needs to be reconsidered in 1 Peter. Cf. G. Dellling, "Der Bezug der christlichen Existenz (continued...)"

paraenesis is built upon the argument from the early portions of the letter. Paraenesis is the exhortation to live or behave in a certain manner and relates more to persuasion (though it is not simply persuasion) which contains the elements of what one “ought” to do.³²⁷

Augmentation has this persuasive aspect as a goal (and is therefore closely linked to paraenesis) but is aimed at convincing the audience of something (which may result in them being persuaded to think (cognitive) or act (behavioural) differently). In the opening portions of the letter, 1 Peter uses ethical appeal (ethos) by identifying the author as Peter the apostle and rational (logos) appeal through the development of his argument.³²⁸ The primary thrust of 1 Peter’s argument, however, is the use of emotional (pathos) persuasion, specifically seeking to evoke confidence in their identity and connection or friendship with the larger Christian communities.³²⁹ It is in the opening section that the bulk of this argumentative thrust is concentrated and where many of the key perceptions about which the reader is meant to be convinced are established.³³⁰

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auf das Heilshandeln Gottes nach dem ersten Petrusbrief," in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz*, ed. H. D. Betz (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973), 112; Hill, "On Suffering," 189; and Thompson, "Rhetoric," 237-38.

³²⁷ See W. A. Wallace, "Aitia: Causal Reasoning in Composition and Rhetoric," in *Rhetoric and Praxis*, ed. J. D. Moss (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 121; H. W. Simons, *Persuasion: Understanding, Practice, and Analysis*. Addison-Wesley Series in Speech-Communication (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), 137; and Thurén, *Argument*, 49-54. Thurén offers a very detailed discussion.

³²⁸ See Campbell, *Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, for the details of the letter’s argumentative components and structure.

³²⁹ For a further discussion of this as well as the previous modes of persuasion see E. P. J. Corbett and R. J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 4th ed. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-19; and Kennedy, *New Testament*, 14-16. It is typical to see a complex mixture of methods in early Christian writings. As Mack, *Rhetoric*, 35, affirms, “Most attempts to define precisely the issue of an early Christian argument fail, however, simply because the social circumstances of the early Christian movements did not correspond to the traditional occasions for each type of speech. Early Christian rhetoric was a distinctively mixed bag in which every form of rhetorical issue and strategy was frequently brought to bear simultaneously in an essentially extravagant persuasion.”

³³⁰ As Robbins, *Exploring*, 21, proposes: “Study of argumentative texture investigates multiple kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse. Some of this reasoning is logical...Other reasoning may be described as qualitative. *This occurs when the quality of the images and descriptions encourages the reader to accept the* (continued...)

Within this section on argumentative texture, I will deviate slightly from Robbins' proposal. Robbins proposes that the inner textual analysis should focus strictly on the text in question and should not include exterior material; he suggests that only minimal meaning be attached to the words at this juncture (so that one does not impose or import too much external evidence in the initial examination of the text under one's particular scrutiny).³³¹ I will indeed focus upon the text of 1 Peter, but, in the course of engaging the question of what this text is arguing, I will include the proposals of previous scholarship. In order to maintain this scholarly dialogue, the discussion in question will at times extend beyond the text of 1 Peter. I will, however, seek to keep such expansion to a minimum.

My primary goal in this section is to establish the argumentative thrust of the introductory portion of the letter. In particular I am interested in how *πατήρ* functions in

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portrayal as true and real." Emphasis mine. Thurén, *Argument*, 90-91, correctly notes that, while there is no explicit admonition here, this section is important for the motivation that stems from its rhetorical function. Two key functions of this opening section are to create a good atmosphere and introduce the central themes. Thus, while we have simple "descriptive expressions," these expressions serve a function in the argumentative texture. I disagree, however, with Thurén's assertion that this section is too compact and obscure to understand its function (92). The more explicit exhortations appear later in the letter, but these exhortations are clearly based upon these early descriptions of the readers. As such these descriptions form the foundation of the argumentative texture upon which the later persuasive elements are built. For example, the early descriptive statements of their election by God as *πατήρ* (1:2a) for the purpose of obedience (1:2c) (see discussion below), is assumed the later persuasive statement that "as obedient children" (*ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς*) they should not be conformed to their earlier motivations (1:14). The author structures his argumentation by stating the reality of what he wants the recipients to believe and then exhorting them to live according to that reality. As such, these opening statements are foundational to the overall argumentative structure. For more on the importance of this introductory section see the discussion on opening-middle-closing texture above as well as Thurén, *Rhetorical Strategy*, 76-77.

³³¹ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 29, writes that "analysis of inner texture regularly does not concern itself with language or information outside the text." Thus the focus of inner texture is on an analysis of the text as a piece of writing (thus more concerned with literary and rhetorical analyses) rather than on the historical-critical interpretation of that text. Robbins, *Exploring*, 7, in fact proposes that one is trying to do analysis "prior to analysis of 'meanings'" and thus recommends that one works, as much as possible, with the basic meaning of the words. His point is that, as much as possible, one avoids detailed discussion of meaning (saving that discussion for later analysis) and focuses, instead, upon a discussion of how the text under examination is using the words. Once patterns of use have been established, one can move on to a fuller discussion that includes meaning, connections with other texts in question, etc.

this key introductory section of 1 Peter. Is πατήρ part of the central argument or is it more peripheral to the argument as part of a rough triadic or “Trinitarian” formula? The repetitive-progressive analysis above highlighted πατήρ as the initial and central term connected to rebirth language (in the developing web of familial language). However, if previous scholarly assertions are correct, then the argumentative focus of this introductory section is on some other term such as διασπορά or παρεπίδημος, and πατήρ is less intentional and central, serving as just part of an early Trinitarian formula. I will argue, however, that the choosing (ἐκλεκτός) of the recipients’ by God as their πατήρ is the central thrust of this introductory section and continues into the second portion in which πατήρ is subsequently joined with rebirth language. In order to prove this argument, however, I will need to engage the various proposals that have previously obscured this reality and will need to complete a detailed analysis of each component in the introductory portion of this letter (subsequent to the assertion of authorial identity).

After briefly asserting the author as the apostle Peter (Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), the letter switches to a much more detailed description of the readers:

ἐκλεκτοῖς
παρεπιδήμοις
διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας.
[ἐκλεκτοῖς]
κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς
ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος
εἰς ὑπακοήν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Some of the most significant assertions presented in 1 Peter occur in this initial section of the letter in which the author seeks to convince the readers of their identity. For this argumentative texture, I will explore what the author is declaring about the readers’ identity, especially his description of them as ἐκλεκτός and παρεπίδημος and the language that

surrounds and defines this phrasing, particularly the term διασπορά as well as the three prepositional phrases which conclude the opening and lead into the subsequent introductory portion of the letter. Previous scholarship has made a number of declarations about this section that remain relatively unsubstantiated.

A. The Argumentative Function of διασπορά

As noted in the repetitive-progression section above, Troy Martin picks up on the use of διασπορά in the introductory section and argues that it functions as the controlling metaphor for the letter.³³² Yet, as J. Ramsey Michaels notes in a review of Martin, “the metaphor of the Jewish diaspora ... is indeed significant in 1 Peter, but Martin burdens it with more weight than it can carry.”³³³ Michaels is partially correct in his critique. The problem with Martin’s argument is that he places the emphasis solely upon διασπορά, an emphasis that is not supported by the textual evidence.

Several scholars have argued that διασπορά forms the third part of a triad of terms.³³⁴ Achtemeier writes, “The readers are identified by the use of three substantives (ἐκλεκτός, παρεπίδημος, διασπορά) that announce important themes for the letter.”³³⁵ Yet, as was noted above at the end of the repetitive-progressive analysis, not only is διασπορά not significant from a repetitive-progressive standpoint, it is *not* used in parallel with ἐκλεκτός and παρεπίδημος. These last two terms are in the dative case and are clearly referring directly to the letter’s recipients. With διασπορά, the connection to the recipients

³³² Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*.

³³³ J. R. Michaels, "A Review of *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*," *JBL* 112, no. 2 (1993): 359.

³³⁴ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 81; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 64; and Michaels, *Peter*, 6.

³³⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 81, cf. 80.

is made indirectly. In the phrasing, διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας, we find διασπορά occurring in the genitive form, modifying παρεπίδημος and, thirdly, indicating that the readers are dispersed in various parts of Asia Minor: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

The addition of the physical location of the readers' dispersion further weakens the idea that the author intended a metaphorical meaning for διασπορά; instead, the letter opening is merely describing the fact that the recipients are literally dispersed throughout the region of Asia Minor. John H. Elliott confirms the reality of how διασπορά functions in 1 Peter when he writes that "the precise identification of the location of the Diaspora in Asia minor . . . indicates that the term *Diaspora* here has a customary literal (geographical) rather than figurative force."³³⁶ Further, this use of διασπορά in 1 Peter is very different from its use in James (to which it is often linked)³³⁷ where the author clearly uses διασπορά in the dative to describe the recipients of that letter with the phrase: ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ. That the author of 1 Peter has placed διασπορά in the genitive in a string of genitives, that it is not clearly linked to any other key terms, and that this term is not repeated anywhere in the rest of the letter all indicate that διασπορά plays a minor role in the argumentative texture of 1 Peter. Based upon the focus of this initial section, it is clear that, while the use of διασπορά is important, because it gives information about the recipients, it is not something about which the author is seeking to convince the readers. Instead, the διασπορά clause

³³⁶ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 314. Such as reading is supported by Selwyn, *Peter*, 118, who contends that: "It is easiest to take it as the genitive of time and place . . . the same genitive, in fact, as occurs immediately afterwards in Πόντου, etc."

³³⁷ A number of scholars have linked the use of in 1 Peter with the use in James. See, e.g., Beare, *Peter*, 74; Best, *1 Peter*, 69; and Michaels, *Peter*, 6.

offers a comment on the location of the readers' who have been identified as "strangers" (παρεπίδημος).

B. The Argumentative Function of παρεπίδημος

The use of παρεπίδημος does stand as a primary description of the readers, although not so much in parallel to ἐκλεκτός as in contrast to it. The repetitive-progressive texture above highlighted that παρεπίδημος is alone here, although it is picked up again at 2:11 where it is linked to πάροικος. The lack of repetition of παρεπίδημος along with the lack of immediate thematic elaboration (at least until 2:11) indicates that this term is not playing a major role.³³⁸ Instead it appears to serve the argumentative purpose of highlighting the recipients' sense of alienation in order to better contrast with the more positive identification of the readers as ἐκλεκτός. The same seems to be true of the combination of παρεπίδημος and πάροικος which together serve as a negative identification to the more positive terminology by which the readers are identified immediately preceding this passage (newborn babies, spiritual house, people of God, etc.). παρεπίδημος is either confirming the recipients perceived sense of alienation or seeking to convince them of it. Either way it stands in contrast to their identity as a chosen people who have been born into a new family. This positive and negative contrast may well correspond to Thurén's discussion of 1 Peter's "emotive factor that is designed to motivate the addressees to think and act in a specific

³³⁸ M. E. Kohler, "La Communauté des Chrétiens Selon la Première Épître de Pierre," *RTP* 114 (1982): 1, incorrectly asserts that the recipients "se singularise en disant «aux étrangers» [παρεπίδημος]." Their initial and primary designation is as ἐκλεκτός.

way.”³³⁹ Thurén contends that this emotive factor “eventually labels the argumentation and theology in the Letter” and has a certain “duality” with a positive line and a more negative line.³⁴⁰ The negative line contains an implicit fear of deprivation. As a rhetorical device the emotive factor serves to both encourage (positive) as well as warn (negative). The use of *παρεπίδημος*, and its implicitly negative connotation of not belonging, serves to encourage the recipients to accept the positive sense of belonging/identity that the letter is seeking to establish.

C. The Argumentative Function of *ἐκλεκτός*

The three prepositional phrases in 1:2, which modify and clarify the author’s use of *ἐκλεκτός*,³⁴¹ are central in fully understanding the persuasive function of this term. These phrases accentuate the positive focus on the readers as a chosen group by identifying God as their *πατήρ* and by focussing on the transformation that has occurred as a result of this new identity. They read:

³³⁹ Thurén, *Argument*, 224.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Kelly, *Commentary*, 42, notes that several ancient commentators considered these phrases to be linked to *ἀπόστολος*, while some modern commentators link them to various terms. Beare, *Peter*, 75-76, for instance, argues that they cannot be linked exclusively to *ἐκλεκτός* because they are separated from it by eight words (which, interestingly, is simply the designation of them as strangers of the dispersion) and, concludes, therefore, that they must be linked to the entire introduction. The bulk of weight falls in favour of *ἐκλεκτός*. See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 79, 86; F. H. Agnew, “1 Peter 1:2 - An Alternative Translation,” *CBQ* 45, no. 1-4 (1983): 69; C. Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 2d ed. The International Critical Commentary, no. 42, ed. S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Biggs (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902; reprint, 1961), 91; Davids, *Peter*, 47-48; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 307; Feldmeier, *Peter*, 58; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 70; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 26; Hort, *Peter*, 18; Kelly, *Commentary*, 42; Michaels, *Peter*, 5, 10-11; and J. Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Judas*. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), 90. Even Selwyn, *Peter*, 119, who tries to offer a connection to *ἀπόστολος*—a connection without any grammatical support—notes that “most commentators regard this and the following prepositional clauses as governed by the verbal noun *ἐκλεκτοῦς*.”

[ἐκλεκτοῖς]
κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός
ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος
εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

The expression θεοῦ πατρός in the first phrase is acknowledged by commentators, yet its importance to the readers' identity is often obscured by other discussions.³⁴² Most commentators discuss the function of πατήρ as part of a brief formula related to the identity of God (i.e. triune theology). I would contend, however that it relates more specifically to the identity of the readers. If the identity of God as πατήρ is simply part of a larger rudimentary formulaic expression, then one is forced to contend that the argumentative thrust of this key introductory section is focussed not only on the identity of the readers but also on a correct understanding of God. If, however, this is not part of a formula focussed on the identity of God, but, rather, is focussed on the readers, we can recognize the overwhelming argumentative thrust of the letter opening is on the transformation of the readers and their understanding of this new identity. Further, the use of πατήρ in this early portion of the letter becomes even more critical in understanding the significance of rebirth language in the letter's argumentative foundation. I would contend that these phrases do not offer a parallelism but that the first phrase carries the most weight in identifying God as their πατήρ. The next two phrases highlight changes in the recipients as a result of this identification before returning in the next verse (1:3) to re-emphasize their identity with God as πατήρ along with their rebirthed status. Attempting to view these three phrases in

³⁴² Elliott, *1 Peter*, 318, is an exception to the general trend. He recognizes the significance of the phrasing, noting its use in Israelite, Christian and Greco-Roman society and that here in 1 Peter, "The metaphor recurs in 1:3 and 1:17 and is linked conceptually with the images of Christian conversion as "rebirth" (1:3, 23; cf. 2:2) through the agency of God as procreator (1:3, 23), the believers as "children" of God (1:14) and hence loving "brothers (and sisters)" one with another (1:22; 3:8; 5:12, 13), and the dominant corporate image of the Christian community as "brotherhood" (2:17; 5:9) and family or "house(hold)" of God (2:4-10; 4:17)."

parallel as part of an early Trinitarian formula obscures the compelling image of the first phrase and forces the other two phrases into ill-fitting moulds.

1. ἐκλεκτος not Modified by an Early Trinitarian Formula

These three prepositional phrases have been described as a “Trinitarian formulation” by some scholars.³⁴³ Others, such as Achtemeier, still conform to similar interpretation. Achtemeier, while he does not specifically call this a Trinitarian formulation (in fact he considers this designation “anachronistic”), does describe it as a “triad of prepositional phrases with references to God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ” and links it to “clear” Trinitarian formulations.³⁴⁴ Several significant problems, however, raise significant doubt regarding any view that considers these phrases to be Trinitarian: 1) the use of God the father, with the corresponding, Jesus the son that one should expect in a Trinitarian formula, is lacking; 2) the only clear subjective genitive is θεοῦ, and the use of πνεύματος and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in the two subsequent phrases are better understood as objective genitives; 3) verse three immediately expands upon the idea of God as the father of the recipients; and, finally, 4) understanding εἰς as causal in the third prepositional phrase is questionable and reveals problems with how ὑπακοήν and ῥαντισμὸν have been interpreted in order to justify the supposed Trinitarian connection and parallelism of these phrases.

³⁴³ See, e.g., Davids, *Peter*, 47; Hort, *Peter*, 18; Michaels, *Peter*, 5; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 119, 247-50.

³⁴⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86. He includes such “clear” formulations as Mt 28:19 and 2 Cor 13:13.

a) Focus on God as πατήρ

A Trinitarian formula focuses upon the relationship within the Christian godhead, such as found in Matthew 28:19: βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος—which is the only complete “Trinitarian” formula in the NT. In the series of prepositional phrases in 1 Peter, the important designation of Jesus as “son” is lacking. Instead, the primary evidence that 1 Peter 1:2 is linked to Trinitarian language is the introductory phrase: θεοῦ πατρὸς. Goppelt considers this introductory phrase to be “an expression of refined liturgical language.”³⁴⁵ The idea that θεοῦ πατρὸς represents the refinement of a liturgical expression leads others, such as Michaels, to argue that this phrase “suggests the emergence of a Trinitarian outlook.”³⁴⁶ Michaels finds support for his view in the third verse where God is described as “the father of our lord Jesus Christ.”³⁴⁷ But, this approach is problematic. The idea that this phrase “suggests” the

³⁴⁵ Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 72.

³⁴⁶ Michaels, *Peter*, 11. Other scholars offer similar opinions. Selwyn, *Peter*, 119, 247, compares it to 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Cor 13:14 and Mt 28:19 and describes it as a rudimentary Trinitarian formula; Kelly, *Commentary*, 42, considers this to be a Trinitarian formula of archaic pattern. Best, *I Peter*, 72, considers it to be the beginnings of Trinitarian doctrine. Beare, *Peter*, 76, states that it is natural to assume a Trinitarian baptismal formulation for it. Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 92, states that it suggests a Trinitarian arrangement can also be found in 1:3-12, with verses 3-5 for Father, verses 6-9 for Jesus and verses 10-12 for the Spirit. Moffatt’s view is also supported by P. Bony, “Lecture Cursive de la Première Épître de Pierre: II. La Bénédiction Initiale (1 P 1, 3-12),” *EsVie* 111, no. 31 (2001), in the second of a series of articles. While the view is intriguing, it is ultimately incorrect and only matches the text of 1 Peter 1:3-12 if one ignores the content and focus of this section. The focus of 1:6-12 is salvation (σωτηρία). Jesus is mentioned at the end of verse 7 and modified by a description in verse 8, but is certainly not the focus of that section. In the same manner, the Spirit of Christ (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ) is mentioned as guiding the prophets in verse 11, and in verse 12 the Holy Spirit (πνεῦματι ἁγίῳ) is mentioned as guiding those who brought the message of salvation to the recipients, but, again, the spirit is not the focus of this section. If one were to apply the principle that seems to be guiding these interpretations to verse 3—that *is* clearly the foundation of this entire section and is also clearly focussed on God as the πατήρ, one would have to conclude, instead, that this section is primarily about Jesus, given the repetition of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ twice in this one verse. One cannot build an interpretative theory based upon the arbitrary selection of terms that happen to occur in the passages under examination without also including evidence of the importance of those terms in the overall structure and argumentation of the text.

³⁴⁷ Michaels, *Peter*, 11.

emergence of a Trinitarian formula (an idea echoed by others³⁴⁸) arises from the perspective that this phrasing must be an early/rudimentary formulaic expression, the culmination of which is found in Matthew 28:19. 2 Corinthians 13:13 (Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος), which, like 1 Peter, also lacks the designation of Jesus as “son,”³⁴⁹ is cited as further evidence of such early formulations. The assumption is that the reference to Jesus as son, in conjunction with the reference to God as father, had not yet fully developed in both 1 Peter and 1 Corinthians. However, the subsequent description of God as the father of Jesus Christ in 1 Peter 1:3 contradicts this assumption (in contrast to Michaels’ argument above) 1 Peter 1:3 makes it clear that the understanding of Jesus as “son” was very much a part of the author’s understanding. The contrasting lack of reference to Jesus as son in 1:2 indicates that the author is not intending the expression θεοῦ πατρὸς in the first prepositional phrase to initiate an identification of God which culminates in an understanding of Jesus as son in the third prepositional phrase. Rather, the use of πατήρ here is a deliberate emphasis of the author meant to expand upon the identification of the readers as ἐκλεκτός.

Despite attempting to associate θεοῦ πατρὸς with the beginning of a triadic formula, most scholars agree with the reality that God as πατήρ is the “subject” of ἐκλεκτός and that the readers are the “object” in this first prepositional phrase.³⁵⁰ How the other two phrases function is the subject of much more debate, primarily because the Trinitarian focus creates

³⁴⁸ See the discussion above.

³⁴⁹ At least 2 Cor 13:13 offers a parallelism in its presentation, something that is completely lacking in 1 Peter 1:2. Yet, 2 Cor is a much earlier document. It seems strange, if these texts represent *developing* formulations, that the later writing of 1 Peter does not improve upon this parallelism, but in fact weakens it.

³⁵⁰ See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 68, 70; Schelkle, *Petrusbriefe*, 20; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 65.

more problems than it solves. How πνεύματος and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ function in the subsequent prepositional phrases is more widely debated. If we continue with the reading in which these phrases are directed at the recipients, we are left with a much better fit with the overall context and argument of 1 Peter.

b) πνεῦμα in Reference to the Recipients

The designation of πνεύματος as a subjective genitive and thereby a reference to the spirit of God in the second prepositional phrase, ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος, is far from a foregone conclusion despite the assurance of scholars.³⁵¹ Achtemeier, for instance, labels πνεύματος as a subjective genitive and states, “The point is not that the human spirit is sanctified, which would require the objective genitive, but that sanctification occurs by means of the divine agent.”³⁵² He further claims that similar NT uses support his statement, yet offers no evidence. J. Ramsey Michaels echoes Achtemeier by contending that this phrase is “emphatically a divine act.”³⁵³ Whether this is a divine act is not the question here; the question is: what is the author arguing for: the activity of God or the perceived reality of the recipients? The assumptions of these commentators seem, in the end, to be the basis for their statements, assumptions that receive virtually no support from the text of 1 Peter and very little from other NT passages.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ See, e.g., Feldmeier, *Peter*, 58; Hort, *Peter*, 21; Michaels, *Peter*, 11; Schelkle, *Petrusbrieife*, 22; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 119-20.

³⁵² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 87 n.107.

³⁵³ Michaels, *Peter*, 11. See even the discussion in Selwyn, *Peter*, 119-20.

³⁵⁴ As noted above, I will occasionally go outside of the text of 1 Peter in this section, not as proof for what the text of 1 Peter is stating (that goes beyond the boundaries of inner textual analysis), but simply to demonstrate the weakness of those who support their arguments using this evidence. This is not, however, meant to be comparative exegetical approach and so I will keep such comments limited.

Rather than offering a detailed analysis of the various nuances of this issue, let me note the basic evidence: 1) this exact phrase (ἁγιασμῶ πνεύματος—with or without a preposition) is only found here and in 2 Thessalonians 2:13—a passage whose meaning is also unclear;³⁵⁵ 2) the term ἁγιασμός is used only here in 1 Peter; 3) terms related to ἁγιασμός (ἅγιος, ἀγιάζω) in 1 Peter are only linked to πνεῦμα in one other verse—1 Peter 1:12—in which the more common phrase πνεύματι ἁγίῳ is used;³⁵⁶ 4) πνεῦμα regularly refers to people’s spirits in 1 Peter;³⁵⁷ 5) the use of ἅγιος in 1 Peter primarily refers to people.³⁵⁸ In summary: the author not only uses a rarer term (ἁγιασμός) in this prepositional phrase (which, in and of itself, may indicate that something different is intended), he does not use the more common phrasing for the “Holy Spirit” (πνεύματι ἁγίῳ). Further, while he does use πνεῦμα in a variety of ways in the letter, the most common use is to refer to people’s spirits. Finally, terms of “sanctification/holiness”

³⁵⁵ Even those who argue for a subjective genitive in 2 Thess 2:13, admit that it could also be an objective genitive (see, e.g., C. A. Wannamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 266-67, who, although he notes that the objective genitive (i.e. human spirit) finds support in 1 Thess 5:23, creates a complex argument in support of his view: that even if it is the human spirit that is the object of the sanctification, God is still the subject of the process of sanctification and, therefore, the Spirit of God is the agent). Further, proponents of the subjective genitive in 2 Thess often cite 1 Peter 1:2 as proof of this view. See, e.g., G. L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians. The Pillar New Testament commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Cambridge: Apollos, 2002), 327; and L. Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1959), 238. E. Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. Black's New Testament commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1979), 314-15, even states: “if 1 Pet. 1.2 depends on our phrase this view is confirmed.” This type of circular support is obviously problematic.

³⁵⁶ This phrase occurs 14 other times in the NT: Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33; Acts 10:38; 11:16; Rom 9:1; 14:17; 15:16; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 6:6; 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Pet 1:12; and Jude 20, all of which appear to have the preposition ἐν.

³⁵⁷ πνεῦμα occurs 8 times in 1 Peter: 1:2, 11, 12; 3:4, 18, 19; 4:6, 14. Of these eight occurrences: only one refers to the “Holy Spirit” (1:12); one refers to the “spirit of Christ” (πνεῦμα χριστοῦ) in the prophets (1:11) and one to Christ being made alive in the spirit (ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι) (3:18); one to the spirit of glory or of God (τὸ θεοῦ δόξης καὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα) (4:14); and three (ignoring the verse in question) refer to people’s spirits (3:4, 19; 4:6).

³⁵⁸ Of the eight uses of ἅγιος (1 Pet. 1:12, 15(2), 16(2); 2:5, 9; 3:5), five refer to people: 1:15, 16; 2:5, 9; 3:5. Further, the one use of ἀγιάζω in 1 Pet. 3:15 places the recipients as the subject.

(ἁγιασμός, ἅγιος, and ἁγιάζω) are most often used of people in this letter. The weight of evidence from the letter offers little to justify a subjective genitive interpretation of πνεῦμα in the phrase ἁγιασμῶ πνεύματος; instead, an objective genitive reading not only has more support from the letter, it also provides a more straightforward reading that sustains the view that this second prepositional phrase is focussed directly on the recipients. From an argumentative standpoint, this direct focus on the recipients encourages them to believe that their spirits have been (or will be) sanctified. Their belief would result in a greater personal “buy-in” to the reality of the identity the author describes.³⁵⁹

c) The Recipients’ Obedience (and Sprinkling)

The third prepositional phrase is also directly focussed on the recipients, although this reality is often obscured by arguments contending that the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive, which considers Jesus to be the focus of this third prepositional phrase. Even those who propose a subjective genitive reading in the previous prepositional phrase admit, however, that the genitive function of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in this third phrase is unclear.³⁶⁰ Francis Agnew attempts to solve this lack of clarity by proposing an alternative translation of this verse: “*because of the obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*”³⁶¹ A detailed examination of his argument would be useful since it represents many of the elements that drive the discussion of commentators. Agnew contends that his

³⁵⁹ See the discussion by Robbins, *Tapestry*, 60-61, 63, on the nurturing of “Christian” culture.

³⁶⁰ See, e.g., Best, *1 Peter*, 71; Michaels, *Peter*, 11-12.

³⁶¹ Agnew, “1 Peter 1:2,” 69-70. Emphasis mine.

translation is based upon syntactical and theological considerations.³⁶² He argues that εἰς should be understood in a causal sense for the following reasons:

The need to understand *hypakoen* absolutely, introducing the sojourners addressed in an active sense, is avoided. *Iesou Christou* stands as a subjective genitive in both parts of the *eis* phrase. Jesus is the initiator of the “activity” involved in both parts. The awkwardness of coordination in the standard translations is avoided. A syntactically clear and theologically significant . . . assertion emerges. Finally, the *eis* phrase (1:2c) is brought into perfect parallelism with the *kata* phrase (1:2a) and the *en* phrase (1:2b) where the “activity” involved is clearly ascribed to Father and Spirit. All that benefits the elect sojourners is attributed to the “Trinitarian” subjects of the triadic formula.³⁶³

The first portion of this quote is primarily concerned with a perceived awkwardness in translation that is due to a shift in either the subjects of the obedience and the blood (the readers as subjects of obedience and Jesus as subject of the blood) or the active and subsequent passive role of the readers (first being active in obedience and then passive in being sprinkled with the blood). The second half of the above quote deals with theological and structural concerns for making the perceived “Trinitarian” formula perfectly balanced. One might ask why it needs to be balanced given that the prepositions themselves and the structure of these phrases are all different. Moreover, even if one were to accept Agnew’s changes, the formula still remains unbalanced: there is no “activity” by the Father in the *κατά* phrase (the “action” is derived from ἐκλεκτός) and, as we have seen above, the “clear” activity of the Spirit in the second phrase is not necessarily clear at all. Nonetheless, Agnew’s assertions are echoed (either directly or indirectly) by many commentators and are counterproductive to a proper understanding of the argumentative thrust of this final

³⁶² Ibid., 70.

³⁶³ Ibid.

prepositional phrase (as well as the previous two prepositional phrases). The most misleading assertions are: 1) that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ functions as a subjective genitive, and 2) that εἰς is causal.

(1) εἰς is not Causal

John H. Elliott in his commentary on 1 Peter offers Agnew's proposal as justification for viewing εἰς as causal in this third prepositional phrase. He states, "The translation takes the initial preposition *eis* to indicate cause ('because of'), as argued persuasively by Agnew (1983) and Mantey (1923, 1951a, 1951b, 1952; cf. also BDF §207), rather than purpose ('for')." ³⁶⁴ As a point of clarification: Agnew was the first to propose εἰς as having a causal function in 1 Peter 1:2 while J. R. Mantey does *not* argue for the use of causal εἰς in *this* passage. Mantey, however, was the one who originally proposed the idea of εἰς as causal, and, to begin a discussion of the legitimacy of importing the idea of a causal εἰς in 1 Peter 1:2, it is necessary to return to Mantey's original proposal, because any subsequent discussion of causal εἰς merely cites Mantey's original proposal. ³⁶⁵ An analysis of Mantey's proposal of causal εἰς reveals the following: 1) Mantey admits that such a use of εἰς would be rare (he does not cite 1 Peter 1:2 as an example of such causal use) and that it receives no

³⁶⁴ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319. Elliott's references are to: Agnew, "1 Peter 1:2"; J. R. Mantey, "Unusual Meanings for Prepositions in the Greek New Testament," *Exp* 25 (1923); J. R. Mantey, "The Causal use of *EIS* in the New Testament," *JBL* 70 (1951); and J. R. Mantey, "On Causal *EIS* Again," *JBL* 70 (1951). His final reference to Mantey (1952) is actually a reference to R. Marcus, "The Elusive Causal *EIS*," *JBL* 71 (1952), who in fact argues against Mantey.

³⁶⁵ For example, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319, cites BDF (F. W. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, ed., *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 112) as part of his support, yet BDF only has a brief note that includes both the original proposal by Mantey as well as the counter arguments by Marcus. Under §207, "Other usages of εἰς" it states near the bottom of the list "Causal εἰς: J.R. Mantey, *JBL* 70 (1951) 45-8, 309-12; R. Marcus, op. cit. 129f.; 71 (1952) 43f."

support in lexicons and grammars;³⁶⁶ 2) in his article, “The causal use of *EIS* in the New Testament,” he is dependent upon the use of εἰς in non-biblical Greek sources—sources that are strongly questioned by Ralph Marcus in several articles.³⁶⁷

These realities—the admission of Mantey that causal εἰς is rare and the undermining of Mantey’s argument by Marcus—have been ignored in subsequent discussions of causal εἰς, as Elliott’s quote above illustrates. While Elliott does not state unequivocally that Mantey argues for the use of causal εἰς in 1 Peter 1:2, his above quote can certainly be interpreted as such. Mantey, however, states at the very outset of his argument that “we have to admit at the outset that this type of usage is infrequent and rare.”³⁶⁸ This statement echoes one he made in his initial study of unusual prepositions from which his idea originally began: “This article deals with only with rare and exceptional uses of prepositions.”³⁶⁹ Mantey never proposes the general acceptance of causal εἰς and he never mentions 1 Peter 1:2 as one of the candidates (the only time he mentions 1 Peter is to

³⁶⁶ Mantey, "Unusual," 453; and Mantey, "Causal," 45. In this latter work Mantey begins by stating that “None of the Greek lexicons translate *eis* as causal. And the only Greek grammar that does, as far as we know, is *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*.” This latter grammar is Mantey’s own, co-written with H. E. Dana (H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1957)). Subsequent references to causal εἰς draw attention to his article and the possibility of causal εἰς, but do not offer any further evidence nor expand upon his observations. Agnew, "1 Peter 1:2," 70 n.11&12, does cite some more modern sources that, in his words, “seem to admit” the possibility of causal εἰς. Some of the sources he cites do indicate the *limited* possibility of causal εἰς. See, e.g., the more minor M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples*. Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, no. 114 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), 35. More major sources such as W. Bauer and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaptation of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 230; and Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Greek Grammar*, 112, for example, only acknowledge that Mantey proposed causal εἰς and that Marcus countered his proposal. Perhaps more importantly, standard Greek grammars such as E. Mayser and H. Schmoll, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, 2d rev. ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1938; reprint, 1970); E. Schwyzler and others, *Griechische Grammatik*, 5th ed. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft (München: C. H. Beck, 1968-71); and H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), do not even mention causal εἰς as even a possibility.

³⁶⁷ See R. Marcus, "On Causal *EIS*," *JBL* 70 (1951); and Marcus, "Elusive," .

³⁶⁸ Mantey, "Causal," 45.

³⁶⁹ Mantey, "Unusual," 453.

propose that the use of ἐν—from which he claims εἰς is derived— in 1 Peter 1:6 is causal).³⁷⁰ Even more importantly, the evidence he does cite is called into question.

Mantey's key argument in support of causal εἰς is dependent upon evidence from non-biblical examples. He states, "Since usage rather than lexicons establishes the meaning of words, we shall present inductive evidence by citing several passages in which the contexts seem to demand a causal translation for *eis*."³⁷¹ He cites passages from Polybius and Josephus as examples of such inductive evidence, evidence that is effectively countered by Ralph Marcus in two articles.³⁷² Marcus' counter-arguments are not even mentioned by Elliott, who, mistakenly, cites Mantey as the author of one of Marcus' articles.³⁷³ The first article by Marcus countered all of the examples from Polybius and Josephus cited by Mantey, effectively undermining, if not eliminating, the key support for Mantey's proposal.³⁷⁴ In a subsequent article, Mantey responded to Marcus and acknowledged that Marcus' questioning had a reasonable basis.³⁷⁵ Mantey also stated, "We note the fact that he [Marcus] did not deny that *eis* is used in a causal sense in the NT, in spite of the fact that he did question the causal use of *eis* in most of the quotations we had cited from non-biblical

³⁷⁰ Mantey, "Causal," 45.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid., 45-48. While Mantey also includes NT evidence, he does so through regular appeal to his non-biblical sources. For instance, after examining three passages from Polybius, he offers possible parallels with Matthew and Mark, and then writes, "But someone might object and say that the above phrases [from Matthew and Mark] are idiomatic and therefore do not prove a general causal usage for *eis*. Against such an objection other evidence from Polybius and other writers can readily be supplied" (46).

³⁷³ Elliott, *I Peter*, 273, 319.

³⁷⁴ Marcus, "On Causal," .

³⁷⁵ Mantey, "On Causal," 309.

Greek.”³⁷⁶ In this quote it is clear that Mantey missed the intention of Marcus: to call into question the evidence upon which Mantey’s proof of causal εἰς was founded.³⁷⁷

In this second article, Mantey clearly reveals the perspective from which he has been arguing. He states, “In fact the inner core of Christ’s teaching is that man must sincerely repent of his sins and seek wholeheartedly to do God’s will or he can never receive God’s forgiveness. Ritualism, sacramentalism, ordinances and creeds, or what not, were, according to Jesus, without value unless man [sic] with faith in Christ sincerely repented of his sins...”³⁷⁸ This crux of this perspective is pinpointed by Marcus in his response to Mantey’s second article. Marcus states, “If, therefore, Prof. Mantey is right in his interpretation of various NT passages on baptism and repentance and the remission of sins, he is right for reasons that are non-linguistic.”³⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the scholarly discussion ends here, and Marcus’ point, that instances of causal εἰς do not have any clear linguistic or textual basis, is virtually lost in subsequent appeals to causal εἰς.

(2) Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is not a Subjective Genitive

Not only is the existence of causal εἰς tenuous and its use in 1 Peter 1:2 highly uncertain, but it is also very difficult to find solid support for Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive within the text or even beyond it. The idea that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

³⁷⁶ Ibid. The reality is that Marcus questioned *all* of Mantey’s quotations. Marcus, "On Causal," 129, wrote: “I must state flatly that he has been mistaken in his construing and rendering of *all* these passages.” Emphasis mine.

³⁷⁷ This point is also missed by Agnew, "1 Peter 1:2," 70, who records that Marcus’s articles “contest Mantey’s examples of this usage from non-biblical sourced but seem open to the existence of *eis causalis* in NT.”

³⁷⁸ Mantey, "On Causal," 311. Mantey’s primary focus is to offer a translation of Acts 2:38 which ignores the reality that the early Christians considered baptism to be efficacious.

³⁷⁹ Marcus, "Elusive," 44.

functions as a subjective genitive does not receive a large amount of support from a syntactical or grammatical point of view. Nonetheless, the idea persists. As Agnew claimed above, understanding Jesus as the “subject” of both these terms (by viewing εἰς as causal) sees “Jesus as the initiator of the ‘activity’ involved in both parts” and, further, avoids the “awkwardness of coordination in the standard translations.”³⁸⁰ Much later, Elliott, building upon Agnew, proposes a similar argument, “This final prepositional phrase roots the *cause* of Christian election in Jesus Christ’s obedience to the Father’s will and his suffering and death (involving the shedding of his blood; cf. 1:11, 19; 2:21-24; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1).”³⁸¹ Elliott’s commentary continues to influence others.³⁸² To propose that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive for both (or either) ὑπακοή (obedience) and ῥαντισμός (sprinkling) in order to fit this prepositional phrase into a triadic structure distracts from the argumentative focus of the author.³⁸³

The use of ὑπακοή in 1 Peter makes it clear that the focus is on the letter’s recipients. Of the 15 occurrences of ὑπακοή in the entire NT, three occur in this short letter, and all of these are in the first chapter.³⁸⁴ In the other NT uses, ὑπακοή refers overwhelmingly to the obedience of people.³⁸⁵ The next occurrence of ὑπακοή (1:14) is irrefutable. This passage

³⁸⁰ Agnew, “1 Peter 1:2,” 70.

³⁸¹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319.

³⁸² Virtually the same argument is now proposed by Green, *Peter*, 20, who cites both Agnew and Elliott.

³⁸³ Grammatical problems also abound. See the comments by Michaels, *Peter*, 11-12.

³⁸⁴ 1 Pet 1:2, 14, 22.

³⁸⁵ Outside of 1 Peter, ὑπακοή is only connected to the genitive use of either ἰησοῦς or χριστός once. That use is found in 2 Cor 10:5 (εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Interestingly, in this phrasing of 2 Cor 10:5 where Χριστοῦ could fit structurally/grammatically as an subjective genitive in conjunction with εἰς, M. J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 683-84, writes “τοῦ Χριστοῦ is unquestionably an objective genitive; any reference to the obedience shown by Christ would be out of place in this context.” Cf. R. K. Bultmann and E. Dinkler, ed., *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 1st English ed., trans. R. A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: (continued...))

describes the readers as τέκνα ὑπακοῆς (children of obedience), thereby not only linking obedience to familial language, but clearly indicating that the author seeks to persuade the recipient of the importance of their obedience.³⁸⁶ The final reference to ὑπακοή (1:22) also appears to refer to the recipients' obedience: it is the recipients' obedience (to the truth) that has "purified their souls" (τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας). While the obedience of Jesus may be theologically appealing for some, there is no evidence in 1 Peter to support the notion that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive modifying ὑπακοή.

The same is true of the connection between Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and ῥαντισμός. The phrase Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 1 Peter 1:2 simply functions as a possessive genitive in the second portion of this prepositional phrase (ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ): it identifies the owner of the blood that is sprinkled. What is significant for the author is that it was Jesus' blood (probably in contrast to that of bulls or goats) that was sprinkled. John Elliott's contention that the use of the phrase "the precious blood of Christ" in 1 Peter 1:18 supports the argument for Jesus as subject in 1:2 because the author is obviously talking about "blood that Christ, *as subject*, shed" is problematic.³⁸⁷ I do not disagree with the significance of the messiah's sufferings (and the implicit and explicit association of blood

(continued)

Augsburg, 1985), 186; and A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 2d ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton; George H. Doran, 1915), 500. The remaining eleven uses of ὑπακοή in the NT can be broken down as follows: only two (2) clearly refer to the obedience of Jesus (Rom 5:19; Heb. 5:8); seven clearly refer to the obedience of people (Rom. 6:16-2x; 15:18; 16:19; 2 Cor. 7:15; 10:6; Philemon 21); and two more probably refer to the obedience of people (Rom 1:5; 16:26).

³⁸⁶ Agnew, "1 Peter 1:2," 72, even supports this perspective and notes that obedience is contrasted to the "disobedience" of those in the past (3:20), although it is a different term (ἀπειθέω). Further he notes that they are obedient to the truth because of their redemption by the blood of Christ (1:19), an argument that seems surprisingly similar to 1:2. Despite these acknowledgements, however, Agnew maintains that the recipients are obedient because Jesus was obedient (1:2), without any clear support from the text.

³⁸⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319.

with those sufferings) within the letter of 1 Peter.³⁸⁸ Jesus, however, is never the subject of sprinkling (ῥαντίζω) (or shedding (ἐκχύνω) for that matter) of blood.³⁸⁹ There is nothing in 1 Peter’s argument to justify a reading in which Jesus is the subject of sprinkling (or obedience) in this final phrase. The text of 1 Peter, rather, is focussed on the readers as the “subjects” of both the obedience (i.e. *their* obedience) and sprinkling (i.e. *their* sprinkling with the blood of Jesus). From an argumentative perspective, the focus on *their* obedience can have a two-fold affect. If they are being obedient, it further encourages this obedience by confirming their identity as ἐκλεκτός. If they are not obedient, it prompts them to obey (the specific encouragement being given in 1:14) so they do not lose this ἐκλεκτός and the sense of belonging it brings. The focus on their sprinkling with *Jesus*’ blood reinforces their identity as Christians, and, like the sanctification of their spirits, encourages a greater investment in these descriptions if they believe they have been (or will be) sprinkled with his blood.

2. Some Conclusions on the Role of ἐκλεκτός and Its Modifiers

The above analyses of the three prepositional phrases in 1 Peter 1:2 reveal that, when one pays attention to both the structure and wording of this introductory section and its

³⁸⁸ Jesus suffering, as well as that of the recipients, certainly is a key component of 1 Peter. See 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2:18-23; 3:13-18; 4:1, 12-19; 5:1, 9-10.

³⁸⁹ ῥαντισμός (sprinkling) occurs in the noun form twice in the NT (1 Pet 1:2 and Heb 12:24) and five times in the LXX (Num 19:9-21). The verb form (ῥαντίζω) occurs four times in the NT (Heb 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22) and three times in the LXX (Lev 6:20; 2 Kings 9:33; Ps. 50:9). There are a variety of uses of sprinkling, but for our purposes here we can note that neither Jesus nor other sources of the blood are used as the subject. Regularly, however, people are the objects of the sprinkling. This may also be an allusion to Ex 24:8 in which Moses (using a different verb) scatters (κατασκεδάννυμι) the blood of the covenant on the people. For references to the shedding of blood, see Mt 23:35; 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 11:50; Lk 22:20; and Acts 22:20. All references that use ἐκχύνω with αἷμα as the subject are in the passive form (e.g. blood which was shed).

relationship to the rest of the letter, some very clear emphases emerge as part of the author's argumentative structure. First, the focus is on the designation of the readers. Second, ἐκλεκτός is the most prominent word in the introductory section when one considers both the structure of 1:2 and the term's use throughout the letter. Third, in order to fully understand what the author intends by his use of ἐκλεκτός, one needs both to understand the other terms to which it is linked and to properly recognize the emphases in the three prepositional phrases that modify it.

These prepositional phrases have too often been interpreted as part of a rudimentary Trinitarian formula. In reality, the text only clearly identifies God as πατήρ. While the phrase ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος can be understood either subjectively or objectively, the majority of the evidence within the text would support the objective sense in which it is the readers' spirits that are sanctified. Not only do the arguments for a subjective genitive reading of πνεύματος in this phrase receive no support from 1 Peter, they also receive little support from other first century Christian texts despite claims that are made otherwise. The same is true of the final phrase in which the use of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is a minor aspect of the text's structure (functioning as a possessive genitive for αἷμα). Any suggestion that Jesus is the subject of either ὑπακοή or ῥαντισμός requires the importation of details that are clearly countered in 1 Peter. Moreover, the assertion that εἰς (in the third prepositional phrase) is causal stems from a theologically driven interpretation rather than from any evidence in the text or in the argumentative thrust of 1 Peter. This series of prepositional phrases, which modify ἐκλεκτός, form a vital component of the author's overall argument that seeks to persuade the readers of their identity. More particularly, the use of the phrase θεοῦ πατρός is strategic in preparing reader for the emphasis of the next, related section in which the

fatherhood of God and their rebirth into this family is emphasized. This first prepositional phrase stands out as primary with the two subsequent phrases reinforcing their belief in the author's description of them.

Chapter Conclusions

Inner textual analysis offers the advantage of a focused and multiply-nuanced analysis of a particular text, paying attention to the structure, purposes, language and argument of that particular text in and of itself. The inner textual analysis of 1 Peter in terms of its opening-middle-closing, repetitive-progressive, narrational, and argumentative textures has not only served to highlight the emphases of this letter, but these textures have supported and confirmed the conclusions of each other.

Opening-middle-closing texture highlighted the significance of the opening section of 1 Peter where the language of rebirth is first introduced. Regardless of whether the author was influenced more by ancient rhetorical or epistolary modes of writing, the significance of the opening section (both the prescript and the blessing section) in establishing the focus of the rest of the letter and in capturing the attention of the readers is very clear. The extended opening, rarely found in ancient letters but found in 1 Peter, underscores the importance of the entire beginning section for establishing the structure and argumentation that shapes how one reads/hears the rest of this letter. Repetitive-progressive texture revealed the central language of the text by highlighting the key terms and phrases that guide and shape the entire writing. This texture not only clearly established the significant position of rebirth language but also stressed the connection between rebirth language and familial language, starting in the opening section and expanding throughout the letter.

Beginning with πατήρ in 1:2, 1 Peter weaves a progressively developing pattern in which πατήρ is linked to rebirth language (ἀναγεννάω, ἀρτιγέννητος) which, in turn connects to the language of the child (τέκνον, βρέφος) and finally into language of brotherhood (ἀδελφός and cognates). The lesser roles played by such terms as διασπορά and παρεπίδημος indicated that they are likely not key terms in the overall letter structure, at least based upon a repetitive-progressive analysis. This does not mean that these terms are insignificant, but rather that their significance should be interpreted in light of the more prominent terms in the letter. Rebirth language (within the familial framework)—with its focus on the readers’ identity—is a key aspect of the repetitive-progressive framework of this letter.

The narrational texture of the letter underscored the findings of the repetitive-progressive analysis of 1 Peter. The deliberate focus on the readers through the “narrator’s” use of second-person-plural pronouns; a use that, by comparison, outstrips all other NT letters. In contrast, the use of all other first- and second-person pronouns, especially the first person singular pronoun, is extremely low. Interestingly, however, the first person plural pronoun, while used rarely, is placed strategically in 1 Peter. Twice in the key opening section, in conjunction with the rebirth language, the first person plural (“we/us”) accentuates the author’s intention to convince the readers of their connection to other communities in the course of identifying them as those “born” into a larger family in which God is the πατήρ. Yet, despite the seeming lack of a first-person voice, the identification of Peter the apostle as the author of the letter is clearly intended to carry the authoritative voice of the second person plural commands that dominate the latter portion of the letter. These

commands are built upon the identity established in the letter's opening, in which rebirth terminology is prominent.

Argumentative analysis also confirmed that weighting *διασπορά* and *παρεπίδημος* with too much significance skews the focus of the opening itself and distracts from the significance of *ἐκλεκτός* and the familial identity being shaped for the reader.³⁹⁰ Contrary to the positions of numerous commentators of 1 Peter, the letter's opening does not modify *ἐκλεκτός* with an early Trinitarian formula, but, instead, this triad of prepositional phrases that modifies *ἐκλεκτός* and transitions to the second portion of the opening is focused upon the readers' identity, beginning with their immediate connection to God as *πατήρ*. The numerous arguments that would counter this position are not only dependent upon proposals of rare (and unsupported) grammatical labels but offer interpretations of these prepositional phrases that have little or no support either from within the text of 1 Peter or even from other early Christian writings. Instead, the weight of evidence from within 1 Peter supports the conclusion that the letter's author is focussed upon the readers and is seeking to present an argument that convinces them of their identity in relation to God and to other Christians both in their communities and beyond.

While inner textual analysis has been very beneficial in highlighting and clarifying the structure and argumentation of 1 Peter, this letter was not written in a cultural vacuum. Attention must also be paid to the occurrences of rebirth language in the larger Greco-Roman context. This type of examination is what Robbins refers to as "intertextual" analysis and will serve as the focus of the next two chapters.

³⁹⁰ I am not saying that *διασπορά* and *παρεπίδημος* do not have significance. I am saying that emphasizing their negative message—not belonging—over and against the more positive sense of belonging, which progresses throughout the letter, is not justified based on the elements of this intertextual analysis.

Chapter 3

RECREATION, RESURRECTION AND REBIRTH: AN INTERTEXTUAL EXPLORATION OF 1 PETER'S REBIRTH LANGUAGE

Introductory Comments

This chapter directs attention to understanding 1 Peter's rebirth language in the context of the Greco-Roman world, through an examination of texts containing similar language. The emphasis in this and the subsequent chapter—which continues the socio-rhetorical approach of Vernon Robbins through what he calls intertexture (also known as intertextuality or intertextual analysis)—is on the inter-connections between 1 Peter and other writings in its cultural milieu.³⁹¹ Intertextuality, a term first coined by Julia Kristeva,³⁹² is generally concerned with the relationship between the words of the text under examination and the words of other texts. Regardless of the type of analysis utilized, the basic premise behind intertextuality remains the same: to examine the text's relationship to the world around it. As Judith Still and Michael Worton state: "a text . . . cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system...the work...is

³⁹¹ See, e.g., the writings of G. R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-3: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 120, no. 2 (1990); and R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); as well the essays in S. Draisma, ed. *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J.H. Kok, 1989).

³⁹² Kristeva coined the term in French as *inter-textualité*. See her use in J. Kristeva, *La Révolution du Langage Poétique: L'Avant-garde à la Fin du XIXe Siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974), 59.

inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind.”³⁹³ Gail O’Day’s definition of intertextuality as recognizing “the ways a new text is created from the metaphors, images, and symbolic world of an earlier text or tradition” contributes to this fundamental understanding of a text.³⁹⁴

The premise of intertextuality is that the text under examination may imitate another text or tradition, it may restructure or reconfigure the previous text or tradition, it may recontextualize the previous text or tradition, etc., and a study of other texts with related language/phrasing will help to shed light on the text in question. The goal of intertextuality is the same as the inner textual analysis of the previous chapter: understanding the internal meaning of the text under examination or as more specifically stated by Robbins: “[w]hile analysis of the intertexture of a text requires an exploration of other texts, the object of the analysis is, nevertheless, to interpret aspects internal to the text under consideration.”³⁹⁵ Robbins further highlights that intertexture is concerned with “the precise wording of texts at every point,”³⁹⁶ and each of the next two chapters will focus on texts that share similar language with 1 Peter, with the goal of understanding their meaning and assessing the relationship of that meaning to the use of rebirth language in 1 Peter.

These two chapters will focus on finding evidence of oral-scribal and/or cultural intertexture. Oral-scribal intertexture as Robbins describes it, “involves a text’s use of any other text outside of itself” and can be evidenced through recitation (the transmission of oral or written tradition in the exact or different words), recontextualization (wording from texts

³⁹³ M. Worton and J. Still, "Introduction," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, ed. M. Worton and J. Still (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1.

³⁹⁴ O’Day, "Jeremiah," 259.

³⁹⁵ Robbins, *Tapestry*, 96.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

without necessarily referring to these texts or implying that the words are written anywhere else), reconfiguration (recounting a situation or term in a manner that makes it “new”), narrative amplification (extended recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration in an ongoing composition), and/ or thematic elaboration (a theme or issue is introduced at the beginning of a textual unit and its meaning or meaning effects are expanded on as the unit progresses).³⁹⁷ Cultural³⁹⁸ intertexture is described by Robbins as “insider” knowledge about the meaning of words or concept patterns through the use of reference (the use of a word that refers to a cultural tradition or understanding) or allusion (presupposing a tradition but not attempting to “recite” the text) and/or echo (when a word evokes, or potentially evokes, a concept from a cultural tradition).³⁹⁹

The language of rebirth was not created by the author of 1 Peter but was used and had meaning in the context in which it was written and read. These chapters are not seeking the “source” of rebirth language in 1 Peter⁴⁰⁰ but are an assessment of the broader use of this

³⁹⁷ See Robbins, *Exploring*, 40-58, and Robbins, *Tapestry*, 97-108, for a fuller elaboration of these various elements.

³⁹⁸ By “cultural” Robbins means “the status of a phenomenon that appears in a wide range of literature that spans many centuries.” See Robbins, *Tapestry*, 110.

³⁹⁹ See Robbins, *Exploring*, 58-62, and Robbins, *Tapestry*, 108-15, for a fuller elaboration of these elements.

⁴⁰⁰ Proof of the source of 1 Peter’s language has been attempted in other writings with varying degrees of success. For instance, W. D. Mounce, “The Origin of the New Testament Metaphor of Rebirth” (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen, 1981), looks for the source of the NT metaphor of rebirth in ancient Jewish ideas/writings, which has been a reasonable assumption for a number of years (see, e.g., F. Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” in *TDNT*, vol. 1 (1964), 674) even though this terminology is not present. A more dominant theory has been to argue that the mysteries were the source of 1 Peter’s rebirth language (see, e.g., M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, trans. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro. Hermeneia, ed. H. Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 148; and Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion*), although this theory has been largely discounted (see, e.g., Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” 673-75; W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 101; and Feldmeier, *Peter*, 128). These proposals, while intriguing, are ultimately not persuasive and, without further evidence, one cannot determine direct derivation for this language. The inability to prove the source does not mean, however, that one cannot assess 1 Peter’s use of this term in relation to the cultural ethos, which is a much more reasonable proposal.

language in the Greco-Roman world and are an assessment of the potential connection with the language in 1 Peter. Within this framework, we should understand that the intertextual relationship is not only between texts but can also be understood as between the text of 1 Peter and other traditions which may be represented in various “texts.”⁴⁰¹ For example, the subsequent chapter will pay attention to some inscriptional evidence, which, while in written form, is not a text in the traditional sense but nonetheless represents traditions which may connect to rebirth in 1 Peter.

I will *not* limit the intertextual evidence to the biblical canon. Robbins cautions against arbitrarily limiting the scope of textual influences to, for instance, the canon in which the text is located.⁴⁰² Instead, I will broaden the search to include the larger cultural world of which the text under examination is a part.⁴⁰³ I will, however, limit this study by not including all of the later writings that were considered to have been *influenced* by the rebirth language of 1 Peter; this form of intertextuality is not under examination here.⁴⁰⁴ Nonetheless, in this chapter, I engage some patristic writings that are used to demonstrate that ἀναγεννάω/ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία are identical in meaning. Moreover, in the subsequent chapter, I explore extant evidence that, while written later than 1 Peter, may

⁴⁰¹ Within the study of intertextuality, a “text” can be defined much more broadly than just a single writing that is being used directly. Worton and Still, “Introduction,” 1, states that “the dominant relations of production and the socio-political context—that could be included within a broad definition of *text*—are of course a major force influencing every aspect of a text.”

⁴⁰² Robbins, *Tapestry*, 99, 110. The use of the term arbitrary is my own. See the subsequent footnote (403) for some more discussion on this topic.

⁴⁰³ While one cannot study every intertextual aspect of a text, boundaries must be established. As *ibid.*, 99, indicates, “[t]he manner in which we establish the boundaries and refer to those boundaries after we establish them, is an important issue.” The limitation based on canonical compilation is arbitrary and may eliminate texts that are more relevant. For a more detailed discussion of the ideology behind the establishment of boundaries, see Robbins, *Tapestry*, 99-101.

⁴⁰⁴ Subsequent to 1 Peter, we find, in Christian sources, an explosion of uses of rebirth language (forms of ἀναγεννάω and cognates). A search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database for forms of ἀναγεννάω has well over 300 references in Christian sources by the late fourth century.

well reflect meaning from earlier traditions. In both of these next two chapters, I examine terms that have a connection to the rebirth language of 1 Peter in order to assess 1) what intertextual relationship exists, if any, between these texts and that of 1 Peter, and 2) how this evidence helps us better understand the role of rebirth language in 1 Peter. The ultimate goal is to illuminate how the author of 1 Peter is using (or redefining/reconfiguring) this language in light of its broader cultural meaning and usage.

In light of this goal, I will not explore rebirth language in most of the canonical and non-canonical texts of ancient Judaism. While several studies have attempted to find the origin of the NT metaphor of rebirth in the biblical and extra-biblical writings of Judaism, their arguments, as a whole, have not been widely accepted.⁴⁰⁵ Even within their own arguments, these studies do not offer very convincing conclusions when it comes to finding rebirth language in these writings. Erik Sjöberg, for example, explores the imagery of the

⁴⁰⁵ See, e.g., P. Gennrich, *Die Lehre von der Wiedergeburt, die christliche Zentrallehre in dogmengeschichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung* (Leipzigs: A. Deichert, 1907); A. von Harnack, "Die terminologie der Wiedergeburt und verwandter Erlebnisse in der ältesten Kirche," *Texte und Untersuchungen* 42 (1918); Mounce, "Origin;" O. Procksch, "Wiederkehr und Wiedergeburt," in *Das Erbe Martin Luthers und die gegenwärtige theologische Forschung, Festschrift für D. Ludwig Ihmels*, ed. R. Jelke (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1928); and E. Sjöberg, "Wiedergeburt und Neuschöpfung im palästinischen Judentum," *ST* 4 (1950). While Gennrich is primarily concerned with the historical development of rebirth in Christian theology, he does discuss concepts in Jewish writings that may serve as a source for the image of rebirth (37-41). One of the primary instances of metaphorical birth language is Deut 32:18, which is a reference to the birth of the nation by God. Mounce, "Origin," 295, argues that there are also a number of other passages that he thinks imply such metaphorical birth of the nation, but he does admit that "Deuteronomy 32:18 is the only Old Testament verse which actually says that God gave birth to the nation." There are also references to a birth by God in Prov 8:25 (of wisdom) and Ps 2:7 (of David). Discussions of Psa 2:7 often become bogged down in whether this is a messianic reference (i.e. of Jesus, which can then be applied to his followers), when its primary thrust is of the king as the (metaphorically) begotten son of God. The focus on sonship is also traced in a couple of writings (e.g. Sir 23: 1, 4; 51:10; Wis 2:13, 16, 18; 5:5; 9:7; 12:21; 16:10, 21, 26; 18: 4, 13), although there is no notion of birth (much less rebirth) language in these writings. The language of sonship does not occur in 1 Peter, however, and the likelihood that the author of 1 Peter is referring to foreign cultural notions without explicitly citing some of the texts/language that support them is a very unlikely scenario.

proselyte as a newborn child (along with other imagery).⁴⁰⁶ Assuming that this second century (proselyte) expression is representative of a first century tradition, Sjöberg concludes that it (along with other images from ancient Judaism) is more likely to explain the concept of a new creation (Neuschöpfung). He also concludes that the idea of rebirth (Wiedergeburt) does not stem directly from ancient Jewish writings but that one can postulate a development of the idea from some of these (ancient Jewish) expressions.⁴⁰⁷

Moreover, William D. Mounce, in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (which also seeks to propose such a development), contends that, while there may be images of or allusions to birth in some Jewish writings, *these are not the same as rebirth*.⁴⁰⁸ Mounce further admits that, while there are limited metaphorical uses of birth language, *Judaism never actually speaks of rebirth*, and, instead, argues that “conceptually and linguistically, Judaism provided a rich and fruitful field in which the concept and metaphor of rebirth *could have been cultivated*.”⁴⁰⁹ Given the conclusions of such scholars as Mounce and Sjöberg, there appears to be no need to assess ancient Jewish writings for intertextual evidence of rebirth language.⁴¹⁰ I will, however, explore possible connections to the meaning and use of

⁴⁰⁶ Yebam 48b, cites R. Jose [c.150] who said: “One who has become a proselyte is like a child newly born. Why then are proselytes oppressed? Because they are not so well acquainted with the details of the commandments as the Israelites.” Translation is from I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud*, vol. 1 (London: Soncino Press, 1952), 320. Selwyn, *Peter*, 306, also cites the non-canonical tractate Gerim in which R. Jehuda [c. 150] said that a new proselyte is “like a babe one day old.”

⁴⁰⁷ Sjöberg, “Wiedergeburt,” 81-85. He states, e.g., that: “Die Tendenz ist vielmehr entschieden die, von einer Neuschöpfung und nicht von einer Wiedergeburt zu reden” (83); and that: “Kind, das eine völlig neue Existenz beginnt, aber man redet nicht von seiner Wiedergeburt, wohl aber von seiner Neuschöpfung” (83). Yet, he concludes that: “eim Wiedergeburtsgedanken sind die Dinge komplizierter. Die neutestamentliche Wiedergeburtsvorstellung lässt sich nicht einfach durch die Übernahme jüdischer Wiedergeburtsvorstellungen erklären. Schon die Tatsache, dass man im N. T. ebenso gern von einer Wiedergeburt als von einer Neuschöpfung spricht, ist von jüdischen Voraussetzungen aus auffallend“ (84).

⁴⁰⁸ Mounce, “Origin,” 278, esp. n. 2

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*,” 289. Emphasis mine.

⁴¹⁰ See also footnote 400.

rebirth language in 1 Peter through an examination of other texts containing similar language both before and around the time of this letter (i.e. approximately first century).⁴¹¹ While the term ἀναγεννάω occurs twice in 1 Peter (1:3, 23),⁴¹² it is a term rarely found in the extant literature up to the first century. Nonetheless, the broader cultural use of this term in the extant literature of both Philo and Josephus indicates that it had a range of meanings/uses, and, in Philo, a link between the noun, ἀναγέννησις, and the term παλιγγενεσία is considered evidence of their inter-related meaning.

Such terms of “rebirth” need to be examined in their textual contexts and on their own merits in order to determine: 1) whether they are actually talking about rebirth and 2) whether their use offers some connection (and, possibly, insight) into the use of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter. Therefore, the link between ἀναγέννησις, and παλιγγενεσία in Philo will require further scrutiny because the often assumed equivalence of these terms is not clearly evident. Philo is not the only text where the use of παλιγγενεσία is considered to be parallel with ἀναγεννάω and its cognates. Scholars have assumed a link between ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία in a variety of places not the least of which is Titus 3:5. Beginning with one scholar—Joseph Dey—whose consummate work on the meaning of παλιγγενεσία is representative of assumptions made by other scholars, I will argue that the assumed connection between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγεννάω is without sufficient basis and that παλιγγενεσία may not even mean “rebirth,” at least in the sense of ἀναγεννάω. Finally, the use of γεννάω in combination with ἔνωθεν in John 3:5 is considered to parallel

⁴¹¹ See the Introduction to this dissertation for a discussion on the dating of 1 Peter.

⁴¹² The phrase ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη in 1 Peter 2:2 has no parallels in our extant literature (except for later quotations of this verse).

the use and meaning of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter.⁴¹³ Certainly, this language, like that of 1 Peter, is applied to humans and engages the idea of connectedness and community through an expression of rebirth. Further, it indicates the likelihood that rebirth language (as applied to humans) in the first century was in the process of being defined. Nonetheless, the idea of rebirth in John is markedly different from that of 1 Peter: John uses it to identify a distinct community vis-à-vis other communities, while 1 Peter does offer any such direct comparisons, but, instead, connects rebirth language to an extended familial metaphor as we saw in the previous chapter. As such, the meaning of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter is virtually unparalleled in the textual evidence of the first century, and this uniqueness may indicate that the author is reconfiguring its meaning for his own purposes.

I. Extant Uses of ἀναγεννάω and Cognates in the First Century

A. Josephus' use of ἀναγεννάω

Josephus uses the term, ἀναγεννάω once.⁴¹⁴ In his *Jewish War*, Josephus writes of a land that had been destroyed and now appears to be bearing fruit:

Adjacent to it is the land of Sodom, in days of old a country blest in its produce and in the wealth of its various cities, but now all burnt up. It is said that, owing to the impiety of its inhabitants, it was consumed by thunderbolts; and in fact vestiges of the divine fire and faint traces of five cities are still visible. Still, too, may one see ashes reproduced [ἀναγεννωμένην] in the fruits, which from their outward appearance would be thought edible, but on

⁴¹³ Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 81. Cf. Goppelt and Hahn, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 92-93.

⁴¹⁴ While the reading of Josephus' *Antiquities* 4.2.1 is stated by Selwyn, *Peter*, 122, to be ἀναγεννωμένων δειῶν, that is not the general consensus. Büchsel, "ἀναγεννάω," 673, argues that it should be ἄν γενόμενα δεινά. The Loeb reading is ἄν γενομένων δειῶν (H. S. J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus. Jewish Antiquities*, vol. 4. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 480-81 (4:13)).

being plucked with the hand dissolve into smoke and ashes. So far are the legends about the land of Sodom borne out by ocular evidence.⁴¹⁵

This text offers some important information regarding the meaning of ἀναγεννάω in the first century. Mounce argues that this instance of ἀναγεννάω is cyclical, by which he means “the recurrence of something which previously existed, went away, and has now returned. Its return is its rebirth.”⁴¹⁶ His statement is not entirely accurate given that Josephus makes clear that the vestiges of this burning are still visible. Rebirth, here, is understood in that the very things that existed before (smoke and ashes) appear outwardly to be different (fruit), but in fact are of the original substance. Certainly this is quite different from 1 Peter’s metaphor of rebirth in which one (while living) is transformed and placed into a new relationship with the “father” and others in the “family.” What is key about this reference in Josephus, however, is that it provides evidence that ἀναγεννάω did not necessarily have a single meaning nor was it necessarily applied to humans in the broader Jewish and Greco-Roman writings.⁴¹⁷ Neither oral-scribal nor cultural intertextual elements

⁴¹⁵ Josephus, *War* 4:484-85. The Greek text reads: γεινῆ δ' ἡ Σοδομίτις αὐτῆ, πάλαι μὲν εὐδαίμων γῆ καρπῶν τε ἔνεκεν καὶ τῆς κατὰ πόλιν περιουσίας, νῦν δὲ κεκαυμένη πάσα. φασὶ δὲ ὡς δι' ἀσέβειαν οἰκητόρων κεραυνοῖς καταφλεγῆναι· ἔστι γοῦν ἔτι λείψανα τοῦ θεοῦ πυρός, καὶ πάντε μὲν πόλεων ἰδεῖν σκιάς, ἔτι δὲ κἂν τοῖς καρποῖς σποδιὰν ἀναγεννωμένην, οἱ χροιάν μὲν ἔχουσι τῶν ἐδωδίμων ὁμοίαν, δρεψαμένων δὲ χερσὶν εἰς καπνὸν διαλύονται καὶ τέφραν. τὰ μὲν δὴ περὶ τὴν Σοδομίτιν μυθεύόμενα τοιαύτην ἔχει πίστιν ἀπὸ τῆς ὄψεως. The Greek text and English translation are from: H. S. J. Thackeray, trans., *Josephus. The Jewish War*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 298-301. Tacitus, although he does not use the same language as Josephus, also writes of this dissolution of the fruit into ashes. He records: “Not far from this lake is a plain which, according to report, was once fertile and the site of great cities, but which was later devastated by lightning; and it is said that traces of this disaster still exist there, and that the very ground looks burnt and has lost its fertility. In fact, all the plants there, whether wild or cultivated, turn black, become sterile, and seem to wither into dust, either in leaf or in flower or after they have reached their usual mature form.” See C. H. Moore, trans. and J. Jackson, trans., *Tacitus. The Histories; The Annals*, vol. 2. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 186-87 (5.7.1-6).

⁴¹⁶ Mounce, “Origin,” 30.

⁴¹⁷ Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” 673, describes ἀναγεννάω as having a “general sense” in Josephus. Selwyn, *Peter*, 122, perceives the range of meaning to indicate that ἀναγεννάω was “familiar and non- (continued...)”

are clearly evident here, although 1 Peter's use of ἀναγεννάω could be a reconfiguration of the meaning represented in Josephus.

B. Philo's use of ἀναγέννησις

Philo also applies an ἀναγεννάω cognate to the non-human world, but his use makes it clear that forms of ἀναγεννάω had connotations not necessarily found in other terms. Philo's use of a cognate of ἀναγεννάω in his *De aeternitate mundi* gives more potential insight into the broader use of this term and its cognates.⁴¹⁸ In his use of the noun, ἀναγέννησις, Philo has the only other extant use of ἀναγεννάω cognates outside Christian writings.⁴¹⁹ When describing the Stoic idea that the world is created yet destructable—being

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technical in meaning.” While the lack of extant evidence raises questions about ἀναγεννάω being a familiar term, the conclusion that it was non-technical does fit the evidence.

⁴¹⁸ Although Philo's authorship of *De aeternitate mundi* is questioned (see G. Nebe, "Creation in Paul's Theology," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. H. G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman. JSOTSup, no. 319 (London: Sheffield, 2002), 132 n.67; S. Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 76; and F. H. Colson, trans., *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, vol. 9. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 172), the prevailing opinion is that this is Philo's work. Despite Sandmel's contention that only a minority of scholars regard it as authentically Philo's (76), most scholars today acknowledge its authenticity (see G. E. Sterling, "Creatio Temporalis, Aeterna, vel Continua? An Analysis of the Thought of Philo of Alexandria," in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism*, no. 4, ed. D. T. Runia, A. Mendelson, and D. Winston. Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 36; R. Arnaldez, [*Philo*] *De aeternitate mundi*, trans. J. Pouilloux. Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie, no. 30 (Paris: Les Éditions du cerf, 1969), 12; and D. T. Runia, "Philo's *De Aeternitate Mundi*: The Problem of Its Interpretation," *VC* 35 (1981): 107), and, as Runia asserts, "today it can be said that the treatise is only ascribed to a pseudonymous author through inadvertence." One of the key reasons his authorship has been called into question is that Philo's treatment of certain themes, especially in conjunction with Aristotle, seems to counter statements in other works. As Sterling, "Creatio Temporalis," 37, recognizes, Philo is more freely citing other sources in this work than in other writings and is, therefore, not always presenting his own view. This observation is supported by Colson, *Philo*, 173-74. For a fuller discussion, see Arnaldez, [*Philo*] *De aeternitate mundi*, 12-37; and Runia, "Philo's," 107-12.

⁴¹⁹ There are a number of other variant or reconstructed readings that include ἀναγεννάω, but those are generally considered to be incorrect. Büchsel, "ἀναγεννάω," 673, writes,

In the prologue to Sirach (Swete, line 17), the v.l. ἀναγεννηθείς N* is an error. In Jos. Ant., 4, 13 we should not read ἀναγεννώμενα δεινά but ἄν γενόμενα δεινά. In the so-called regeneration Mystery in Corp. Herm., XIV ἀναγεννᾶν is not in the traditional text but is only conjectured by Reitzenstein and Scott. The text has ἐγεννήθη, so also Parthey. To conjecture

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destroyed by fire—Philo notes that the Stoics consider God the author of the world’s creation (γένεσις) but not of its destruction. He continues by stating that:

This is due to the force of the ever-active fire which exists in all things and in the courses of long cycles [περιόδοις] of time resolves everything into itself and out of it is constructed a reborn world [ἐξ ἧς πάλιν ἀναγέννησιν κόσμου συνίστασθαι] according to the design of the architect [προμηθεῖα τοῦ τεχνίτου]. According to these the world may be called from one point of view an eternal, from another a perishable world; thought of as a world reconstructed it is perishable, thought of as subject to conflagration [ἐκπύρωσιν] it is everlasting through the ceaseless rebirths [παλιγγενεσίας] and cycles [περιόδοις] which render it immortal.”⁴²⁰

As far as our understanding of ἀναγέννησις based upon this passage, we are left with limited information. In terms of its application to humans, Philo, like Josephus, is not describing the experience of a human being and, thus, his use of ἀναγέννησις is dissimilar to the rebirth ideas in 1 Peter. The contention of Achtemeier and Goppelt appears to be correct: 1 Peter’s use of ἀναγεννώω is unlike any previous use of the term.⁴²¹ If the text of 1

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ἀνεγεννήθης (Reitzenstein) or ἀναγεννηθεῖν ἄν (Scott) would be legitimate only if these words occurred at least once in some other passage. But we have only γεννᾶσθαι...and παλιγγενεσία...The claim of Reitzenstein that ἀναγεννᾶσθαι and μεταγεννᾶσθαι are interchangeable in the Mithras Liturgy is also incorrect. ἀναγεννᾶσθαι does not occur at all in the so-called Mithras Liturgy.

See R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres. Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1966), 340; and W. Scott, *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, vol. 1: *Introduction, Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1924), 238. Regarding the Mithras Liturgy, R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*, trans. J. E. Stealy. PTMS, no. 18 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 333, writes, “The verbal forms ἀναγεννᾶσθαι and μεταγεννᾶσθαι alternate” (die Verbalformen ἀναγεννᾶσθαι und μεταγεννᾶσθαι wechseln). Cf. Mounce, “Origin,” 32 n.2; 54 n.4.

⁴²⁰ *De aeternitate mundi* 8. The entire section in Greek reads: οἱ δὲ Στωικοὶ κόσμον μὲν ἕνα, γενέσεως δ’ αὐτοῦ θεὸν αἴτιον, φθορᾶς δὲ μηκέτι θεόν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐν τοῖς οὔσι πυρὸς ἀκαμάτου δύναμιν χρόνων μακρᾶς περιόδοις ἀναλύουσιν τὰ πάντα εἰς ἑαυτήν, ἐξ ἧς πάλιν ἀναγέννησιν κόσμου συνίστασθαι προμηθεῖα τοῦ τεχνίτου. δύναται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτους ὁ μὲν τις κόσμος αἰδῖος, ὁ δὲ τις φθαρτὸς λέγεσθαι, φθαρτὸς μὲν ὁ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν, αἰδῖος δὲ ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἐκπύρωσιν παλιγγενεσίαις καὶ περιόδοις ἀθανατιζόμενος οὐδέποτε ληγούσας. English translation and Greek text are from Colson, *Philo*, 190-91.

⁴²¹ See Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94; and Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 81-82.

Peter is echoing, referencing or alluding to cultural meaning, or if it is reconfiguring another text, it may be drawing meaning from terms other than ἀναγεννάω and cognates.

II. παλιγγενεσία as an Intertextual Synonym for ἀναγεννάω

A. παλιγγενεσία in Philo

One term from which ἀναγεννάω potentially draws meaning is παλιγγενεσία. The prevailing opinion is that ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία are synonyms. Certainly, Colson's translation of this passage from Philo (quoted above) makes it appear that ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία are interchangeable terms for the same reality, namely, the rebirth of the world. In fact, it is often either assumed or stated that this use of ἀναγέννησις by Philo (especially in combination with πάλιν) indicates an equation of ἀναγέννησις with παλιγγενεσία or, at the very least, that παλιγγενεσία signifies rebirth.⁴²² If that is true, 1 Peter's use of ἀναγεννάω may well represent an intertextual reference, allusion, echo or reconfiguration of the meaning of παλιγγενεσία either in this text or in other texts. The potential connection between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω needs to be carefully explored in Philo.

I would caution, however, against equating these terms based upon this passage from Philo for several reasons. First, Philo never uses the term ἀναγέννησις anywhere else,⁴²³ but he does use παλιγγενεσία a number of other times in *De aeternitate mundi* when

⁴²² See, e.g., Mounce, "Origin," 19 n.2; J. Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ: Ein Beitrag zur Klärung der religionsgeschichtlichen Bedeutung von Tit 3,5*. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, no. 17 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1937), 9-11; and J. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology: Its Origins and Early Development* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1962), 109.

⁴²³ Not only is this use of ἀναγέννησις Philo's only use of this term, it is the only known use in the extant literature of the first century.

describing this Stoic concept of the earth's regeneration after its destruction by fire, as well as in various contexts in several of his other writings.⁴²⁴ Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, if Philo saw these words as interchangeable, then one might expect him to use them interchangeably. The lack of any other occurrences of ἀναγέννησις in conjunction with the much more frequent occurrences of παλιγγενεσία suggests that, at the very least, ἀναγέννησις was a less desirable term in this context. The question is: why use it at all? Philo's use in this context suggests that, although he clearly saw a connection between them, he understood the terms to mean something different from one another. Thus, he may have employed ἀναγέννησις at this juncture to express something that, in his mind, παλιγγενεσία did not express.

In the phrase where we find ἀναγέννησις (ἐξ ἧς πάλιν ἀναγέννησιν κόσμου συνίστασθαι), Philo uses the term συνίστημι, the primary meaning of which is “to place or set together.”⁴²⁵ The verb forms of συνίστημι as well as its cognates are used regularly by Philo to describe the creative activity of God;⁴²⁶ the world is put together based upon the foresight/design of the architect (God). Here we find the language of Platonism with which

⁴²⁴ Philo uses the noun παλιγγενεσία 13 other times in his writings: Once in each of *De cherubim* (114), *De posteritate Caini* (124), *De vita Mosis* (65), and *Legatio ad Gaium* (325); and nine other times in *De aeternitate mundi* (9, 47, 76, 85 (twice), 93, 99, 103, and 107). These final nine uses relate most directly on our discussion.

⁴²⁵ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, "συνίστημι," in *An Intermediate Greek-English lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889; reprint, 1972).

⁴²⁶ See *De opificio mundi* 29 and 63, and *De aeternitate mundi* 25 and 101. *De aeternitate mundi* 25 provides the best example of how Philo uses these cognates when he describes the framing (σύστασις) of the world (κόσμου) in which the framer (συνιστάς) fashions or establishes (συνέστησεν) the world. The full text reads: τῶν δὲ δὴ τεττάρων ἐν ὅλον ἕκαστον εἴληφεν ἢ τοῦ κόσμου σύστασις· ἐκ γὰρ πυρὸς παντὸς ὕδατος τε καὶ ἀέρος καὶ γῆς συνέστησεν αὐτὸν ὁ συνιστάς, μέρος οὐδὲν οὐδενὸς οὐδὲ δύναμιν ἔξωθεν ὑπολιπών. The Greek text is from Colson, *Philo*, 202.

Philo is clearly aligned at points in his descriptions of the creation of the world.⁴²⁷ This language of craftsman (δημιουργός), architect (τεχνίτης) and world-shaper (κοσμοπλάστης) are also commonly applied to God by Philo⁴²⁸ and are associated with the act of creation.⁴²⁹ The inclusion of the τεχνίτης (τεκνίτου) in combination with συνίστημι (συνίστασθαι) in the above cited passage containing ἀναγέννησις reinforces the idea that Philo uses these other terms to speak of God's act of constructing the world (κόσμος). ἀναγέννησις is not, however, part of the process of the shaping and constructing of the world, but, instead, describes the world that has been (re)constructed through the creative activity of the architect: rebirth is how Philo describes the *result* of this creative activity, not the creative activity itself.

Conversely, παλιγγενεσία is used in parallel to the process of creation (συνίστημι, τεχνίτης, etc.) and is presented as counteracting the world's destruction in Philo's *De*

⁴²⁷ See H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, revised ed., vol. 1. Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza, no. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 300-01; and T. H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus*. Ancient Philosophy, no. 3 (New York: Garland, 1979). Generally, Philo is considered to be arguing against Aristotle's idea of the world as uncreated and, therefore, indestructible and aligning himself with Plato's view of the world as created and indestructible. He is also against the Stoic concept of the world as created and destructible (at issue for him is: how can it be recreated if nothing is left?). I am not concerned with an analysis of how closely Philo followed Platonic thought, although these connections have certainly been well documented (see Runia, "Philo's," and Sterling, "Creatio Temporalis," 33-37). What matters is that this is the language in both Philo and Plato of the ordering of the world by God, the architect of its creation. Further, Philo also uses similar language regarding the activity of creation in his other writings, especially *De opificio mundi*.

⁴²⁸ Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 301.

⁴²⁹ See, especially, *De opificio mundi* 20 and 146, and *De aeternitate mundi* 42- 44. Sections of this last passage are worth quoting as they illustrate well this language of God as the craftsman and architect of the world's creation in Philo (although in this translation, τεχνίτης is rendered as "craftsman" and δημιουργός and cognates as "framer," etc.): "For if it [κόσμος] is worse its framer [δημιουργός] also is worse . . . If it is a similar world [κόσμος], the craftsman [ὁ τεχνίτης] has wasted his toil . . . Far better than constructing a similar world [κόσμος] would it be . . . to leave where it is what was once originally created [γενόμενον] . . . For it is reasonable to suppose that what the craftsmen [τῶν τεχνιτῶν] have wrought [δημιουργηθέντα] should be assimilated to the nature of those who wrought them." The text and translation are from Colson, *Philo*, 212-15.

aeternitate mundi.⁴³⁰ παλιγγενεσία, precisely as its meaning (regeneration) would indicate, is the act of creation or, more specifically, of creating again or recreating. As such, it serves as a substitute term for Philo's descriptions of God as architect or (re)fashioner of the world.⁴³¹ Phrased another way, παλιγγενεσία replaces the fuller description of God's (re)creative activity. In conjunction with this usage, παλιγγενεσία is also used a significant number of times in *De aeternitate mundi* in juxtaposition to the destruction of the world by fire⁴³². Thus, Philo describes recurrent destructions by fire (ἐκπύρωσις) followed by the recurrent re-buildings (παλιγγενεσία) of the world. παλιγγενεσία is the activity of creation or, more specifically, of recreation or regeneration. It functions quite specifically for Philo, especially in conjunction with his articulation of the Stoic doctrine of the destructions and re-buildings of the world.

A very clear relationship between ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία in Philo exists: παλιγγενεσία is the process; ἀναγέννησις is the result. To understand differently requires one to postulate uses of παλιγγενεσία that do not occur in *De aeternitate mundi* or in any other of Philo's writings. While ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία are, therefore, related in Philo's writings, they are describing distinct concepts and are not interchangeable. As far as our understanding of ἀναγέννησις based upon this passage, we are left with limited

⁴³⁰ Perhaps, because παλιγγενεσία is so uncommon in his other works, Philo uses it more regularly in *De aeternitate mundi* because he is drawing on Platonic thought.

⁴³¹ As a reminder to the reader, Philo is actually arguing against the idea that the world is regularly destroyed and recreated. He is merely laying out the tenets of this Stoic perception of reality before denouncing it. The point here is simply that, within this Stoic framework described by Philo, if the world were recreated, it could be like a rebirth if one understands the initial creation to be a birth.

⁴³² Five of the ten occurrences of παλιγγενεσία in *De aeternitate mundi* (8, 47, 76, 99, and 107) juxtapose παλιγγενεσία with the destruction by fire; this juxtaposition is the most consistent use of παλιγγενεσία in *De aeternitate mundi*.

information because Philo's purpose is to debate and describe the process of the earth's regeneration, not its resultant reborn state.

Despite Philo's distinct use of *παλιγγενεσία*, the Loeb version of Philo's *De aeternitate mundi* regularly translates it as "rebirth," a translation that is, I think, misleading. Philo's use of *παλιγγενεσία* to literally mean "creation again" and, thus, recreation or regeneration is a more appropriate way to understand it. This use of *παλιγγενεσία* is more akin to a resurrection after death than to a "rebirth" that occurs in this life as is the sense in 1 Peter. Yet despite these kinds of distinctions, *παλιγγενεσία* has continued to be understood as parallel in meaning to *ἀναγέννησις*/*ἀναγεννάω*, and a fuller examination of the meaning of *παλιγγενεσία*, especially regarding its potential intertextual relationship to rebirth in 1 Peter, needs to be explored.

B. *παλιγγενεσία* in Titus 3:5

The use of *παλιγγενεσία* in Titus 3:5 has often been cited as offering a clear link between *ἀναγεννάω* and *παλιγγενεσία*.⁴³³ This link requires an examination to determine its validity. An excellent place to begin such an examination is Joseph Dey's monograph on *παλιγγενεσία*. Dey's seminal work, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, has served as a key for understanding this term, especially as it relates to *ἀναγεννάω*.⁴³⁴ His monograph has remained an influential study on rebirth and is often referred to by scholars examining the

⁴³³ The NA27 text of Titus 3:5 reads: οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ *παλιγγενεσίας* καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου.

⁴³⁴ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*. While Dey is primarily focussed on Titus 3:5, he includes a comprehensive survey of *παλιγγενεσία*.

idea of rebirth, especially as it is reflected in the term παλιγγενεσία.⁴³⁵ In the course of his study, Dey presents παλιγγενεσία as synonymous with rebirth, primarily by linking it to ἀναγέννησις. Our examination of παλιγγενεσία in Philo has already raised concerns about viewing this term as interchangeable with ἀναγέννησις, and even of viewing it as a “rebirth.” These concerns are further supported by an examination of Dey’s work whose assumed connection between these terms is based primarily upon a weak comparison between Titus and 1 Peter and upon a limited analysis of later patristic writings.

Generally speaking, Dey offers a useful and nuanced analysis of παλιγγενεσία. Providing a detailed listing of its occurrences, Dey notes that by the first century παλιγγενεσία had come to be a technical term for the transmigration of the soul.⁴³⁶ He also recognizes the progression of παλιγγενεσία from a philosophical concept—including the use we saw in Philo of a “renewed earth” (Welterneurung)—leading to what he describes as a “non-philosophical expression in common usage” (*nichtphilosophischer Ausdruck des profanen Sprachgebrauchs*), as well as in its religious usage.⁴³⁷ While the majority of his material is a thorough compilation and citation of the occurrences of παλιγγενεσία, the assumption of the link between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω

⁴³⁵ See, e.g., F. W. Burnett, “παλιγγενεσία in Matt. 19:28: A Window on the Matthean Community?” *JSNT* 17 (1983): esp. p. 60 and 66 n.1; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 148-50; and Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 81. Mounce, “Origin,” 6, states that although Dey work was never translated into English, it is “of monumental significance.” Ysebaert, *Baptismal Terminology*, 87, is the only one I know of who raises any questions of Dey’s findings on παλιγγενεσία as rebirth, and he considers that Dey, “does not see the semantic development which is apparent from the material.” I should note that I am not singling out Dey’s work as the only one about which I am concerned, but, rather, I am using it as an example of a highly regarded work that shares common assumptions about the connections between the idea of rebirth and παλιγγενεσία within scholarship.

⁴³⁶ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 13-24. The transmigration of the soul was by far the most common use of παλιγγενεσία. Cf. F. Büchsel, “παλιγγενεσία,” in *TDNT*, vol. 1 (1964), 686-89.

⁴³⁷ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 8, 25.

predominates.⁴³⁸ As with many assumptions, the evidence is not always dealt with directly, but his assumptions are clear as much from what he does not say as what he does say.

For instance, Dey's comments on Philo's use of παλιγγενεσία, though limited, do seem to assume the interchangeability of these two terms. Initially, Dey does not directly present Philo's use of παλιγγενεσία as a rebirth, but, appropriate to the text, speaks of "periodic renewals of the earth" (*periodische Welterneuerung*).⁴³⁹ Nonetheless, the occurrence of ἀναγέννησις within this context is not flagged as unusual by Dey.⁴⁴⁰ Further, within his discussion of παλιγγενεσία as *Welterneuerung*, he offers a brief note in which the phrase πάλιν ἀναγέννησιν κόσμου συνίστασθαι is understood as "the world emerging again through the providence of its creator" (*die Welt neu entsteht durch die Vorsehung ihres Bildners*) with no distinction offered regarding the use of ἀναγέννησις in conjunction with his ongoing discussion of παλιγγενεσία.⁴⁴¹ This apparent lack of distinction continues in Dey's examination of παλιγγενεσία in Titus 3:5.

Titus 3:5, the primary focus of Dey's work, provides him with the strongest link between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω in the first century. His first evidence of relatedness comes from what he perceives as significant connections between these two passages. According to Dey, 1 Peter 1:3 and following provides "extensive agreement" (*weitgehende Übereinstimmung*) with Titus 3:5.⁴⁴² He finds "pauline"⁴⁴³

⁴³⁸ We must remember that this assumption underlies Dey's entire work since his primary task is to ascertain the source of "Paul's" (Dey's conclusion) use of παλιγγενεσία in Titus 3:5. Dey assumes that παλιγγενεσία in Titus means rebirth and that it can be linked to the other terminology of rebirth. Nonetheless, we need to point out these assumptions to demonstrate the lack of evidence for these assumptions.

⁴³⁹ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 9.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9, esp. n.13.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 151.

thoughts in the passage from 1 Peter 1:3-5 in two instances: 1) God's action stems from his mercy (κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος—1 Pet. 1:3), and 2) the goal is salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν—1 Pet. 1:5).⁴⁴⁴ Although we do find similar terms used in 1 Peter 1:3-5 and Titus 3:5—both use the term ἔλεος—they are not used in parallel contexts nor do they offer parallel thoughts. Titus 3:5 states: κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς (“according to his mercy he saved us”), while 1 Peter 1:3 states: κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς (“according to his great mercy he rebirthed us”). Both texts do speak of God's activity as a result of his mercy (ἔλεος). 1 Peter, however, provides the result of the activity as the rebirth (ἀναγεννάω) of its recipients, whereas, Titus presents the result as salvation (σώζω). This concept of salvation dominates the Titus passage. In contrast to 1 Peter that describes God as father (πατήρ), Titus introduces verse five by describing God as saviour (σωτήρ) in 3:4 and, subsequently, Jesus as saviour (σωτήρ) in 3:6. Further, the language of salvation does not occur in the immediate context of 1 Peter 1:3 use of ἀναγεννάω.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, Titus is clear that the recipients have already been saved (ἔσωσεν), whereas, when the author of 1 Peter does speak about salvation, it is as either a future reality or something in progress.⁴⁴⁶ Thus, although the phrases that include ἔλεος initially seem similar in these two

(continued)

⁴⁴³ I am not engaging Dey's assumption of Pauline authorship for Titus other than to put this authorial assumption in quotes.

⁴⁴⁴ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 151. Similar conclusions regarding the connections between these two passages are reached by Boismard, "Liturgie Baptismale I," 183-86.

⁴⁴⁵ While we do find σωτηρία in verse five—to which Dey has already referred—it is with a very different focus. See the subsequent footnote (446) for more details.

⁴⁴⁶ 1 Peter 1:5 makes very clear that it views the recipients as being kept for a future salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμῆν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ). Subsequent descriptions of salvation in 1 Peter present a salvation into which the recipients are growing: 1:9-10; 2:2. Even the *present* tense of the verb σώζω when used in conjunction with baptism (3:21) indicates that the author understands that readers have not yet received this salvation but, rather, something they are in the process of receiving.

passages, the messages of 1 Peter and Titus are different, and the perceived connection is only superficial.⁴⁴⁷

It is, however, the inclusion of παλιγγενεσία in Titus 3:5 that offers Dey the most convincing parallel with ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter. The Titus passage continues (after κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς): διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου (“through the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit”) in which Dey perceives a parallel with the Petrine passage quoted above (κατὰ τὸ πολὺν αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς).⁴⁴⁸ He finds parallels between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγεννάω both for the reasons noted in the previous paragraph, and, more importantly, because he believes that both passages refer to Christian baptism, which, he argues, was perceived by “Paul” (and other NT authors) as producing a rebirth.⁴⁴⁹ In order to make this link between 1 Peter and Titus, Dey’s argument makes an interesting leap. He correctly recognizes that that the passage in 1 Peter is not expressly referring to baptism (Es ist nicht

⁴⁴⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 93, although he seems to be unaware of Dey, comes to similar conclusions against Dey when he states, “such similarities show themselves on further examination to be more apparent than real.” Cf. K. Shimada, “The Forumulary Material in First Peter” (Th.D., Union Theological Seminary, 1966), 179.

⁴⁴⁸ The inclusion of ἀνακαίνωσις (renewal) in Tit 3:5 is perceived by some to connect to the idea of rebirth. As P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 782, writes, “Almost synonymous with ‘rebirth’ is the connected genitive noun ‘renewal’.” Yet Towner recognizes that what this “means” is dependent upon one’s theology and can range from (water) baptism and confirmation, to baptism in the Spirit (782-83). Much of this discussion goes beyond the boundaries of this dissertation, but it is worthwhile noting that the only other occurrence of this word is in Rom 12:2, which is described by J. Behm, “καινός [etc.],” in *TDNT*, vol. 3 (1965), 453, as an “inward renewal, which affects the centre of the personal life” and is related to the activity of the Holy Spirit—a perspective that is closely related to Tit 3:5. However this renewal was understood and whatever its “mechanism” (e.g. spiritual baptism?), there are no specific parallels to this kind of language in 1 Peter.

⁴⁴⁹ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 136-37. Dey sums up his conclusions by stating that: Es genügt uns, gezeigt zu haben, daß Paulus, wenn er eine Wiedergeburt als Wirkung der Taufe sieht, in derselben Weise von der Taufe spricht und denkt wie andere neutestamentliche Schriftsteller auch (156). See G. Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries: The Problem of the Pauline Doctrine of Baptism in Romans VI. I-II, in the Light of its Religio-Historical "Parallels"*, trans. J. P. Smith (Edinburgh; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), 270, who correctly recognizes that Paul never uses the term “rebirth,” recognizing that Paul’s idea of death and resurrection in Romans chapter six “approximates to but does not coincide with the idea of rebirth.”

ausdrücklich von der Taufe die Rede) but then concludes that it cannot be speaking about anything else (trotzdem wird sich das ἀναγεννῶν kaum auf etwas anderes deuten lassen).⁴⁵⁰ This leap is partly based upon a connection noted earlier in his work. Prior to his conclusion of baptismal connection, Dey had already declared that παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω functioned as synonyms (Da wir in der sprachgeschichtlichen Untersuchung παλιγγενεσία und ἀναγέννησις als Synonyma gefunden haben).⁴⁵¹

C. παλιγγενεσία in the Patristics

Like many scholars who have reached similar conclusions, Dey's statement of synonymy is dependent on a conflation of ideas drawn from later patristic writers and necessitates a brief examination.⁴⁵² Dey's conclusion—that παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις are synonyms— stems primarily from the historical language section of his monograph, specifically his analysis of these terms in the patristic writings. Not only does Dey assume that the use of the παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω in the patristics is identical to their use in early Christian writings, the evidence he supplies for his conclusion is insufficient to demonstrate any synonymy. Interestingly, the proof that these terms are not synonymous is found in the very sources that are used in support of their synonymy. Dey contends that Justin Martyr uses ἀναγέννησις and ἀναγεννάω in conjunction with baptism in his Apology, and that Origen uses παλιγγενεσία with the same

⁴⁵⁰ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 152.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁵² See, e.g., the similar conclusions of Reitzenstein, *Mystery-Religions*, 333.

meaning.⁴⁵³ While these two passages may have some connections, the use of παλιγγενεσία in Origen is hardly synonymous with ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω in Justin or even with ἀναγεννάω generally, given that *both* terms (ἀναγέννησις and παλιγγενεσία) are used in the passage from Origen.

Justin writes in his first Apology:

Then we lead them to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated [ἀναγεννήσεως] in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated [ἀνεγεννήθημεν]. . . For Christ said: ‘Unless you be born again [ἀναγεννηθῆτε], you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Now, it is clear to everyone how impossible it is for those who have been born [γενομένου] once to enter their mothers’ wombs again.’⁴⁵⁴

Origen writes in his 28th homily on Luke:

But in Luke, because Jesus was about to come up from his baptism, we read ‘he began’. The Scripture records, ‘And Jesus himself was beginning’. For, when he has been baptized and has taken on the mystery [μυστήριον] of the second birth [τῆς ἀναγεννήσεως], he is said ‘to have begun’. He did this so that you too could wipe away your former birth [τὴν προτέραν γέννησιν] and be born in a second rebirth [ἀναβῆς δευτέραν διὰ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας].⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Dey, *ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 31, who argues: Justinus gebraucht dann auch ἀναγεννάω und ἀναγέννησις in Verbindung mit der Taufe: Apol. I,61 ... In gleicher Bedeutung wird παλιγγενεσία auch später angewandt, z. B. Origenes in Lucam hom. XXVIII.

⁴⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, *Apologia I* 61.3-4. The Greek text reads: ἔπειτα ἄγονται ὑφ’ ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστὶ, καὶ τρόπον ἀναγεννήσεως, ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀνεγεννήθημεν, ἀναγεννώμεθα . . . καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπεν· Ἄν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκουσῶν τοὺς ἄπαξ γενομένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερὸν πᾶσιν ἐστὶ. English translation is from T. B. Falls, trans., *Saint Justin Martyr: The First Apology; The Second Apology; Dialogue with Trypho; Exhortation to the Greeks; Discourse to the Greeks; The Monarchy, or, The rule of God*. Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, no. 6, ed. H. Dressler (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 99. The Greek text is from E. J. Goodspeed, ed., *Die ältesten Apologeten: Texte mit kurzen Einleitungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914; reprint, 1984), 70.

⁴⁵⁵ Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* 28.4. The full Greek fragment, which contains the latter portion of this text, reads: ὅτε γὰρ ἐβαπτίσαστο καὶ τὸ μυστήριον ἀνέλαβε τῆς ἀναγεννήσεως, ἵνα καὶ σὺ καταργήσῃς τὴν προτέραν γέννησιν καὶ ἀναβῆς δευτέραν διὰ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας, τότε >ἄρχεσθαι< λέγεται. English translation is from J. T. Lienhard, trans., *Origen: Homilies on Luke; Fragments on Luke*. The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, no. 94 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 116-17. The Greek text is from M. Rauer and Origen, *Origenes Werke*, vol. 9: *Die Homilien zu Lukas in der Übersetzung des Hieronymus und die griechischen Reste der Homilien und des Lukas-Kommentars* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 88.

Origen's 14th homily on Luke actually offers a much closer parallel to Justin's passage. In Homily 14 Origen argues that "Through the mystery of Baptism, the stains of birth are put aside. For this reason, even small children are baptized. For, 'unless a man be born again of water and spirit, he will not be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven'."⁴⁵⁶ The latter part of this passage, like the passage from Justin, appears to be quoting a version of John 3:5 but is only found in Latin as there is no corresponding Greek fragment. A detailed comparison of these two passages in Greek is, therefore, not possible.⁴⁵⁷ Dey does not even acknowledge this possible connection, and the two passages he does cite—Origen's 28th homily on Luke and Justin Martyr's *Apology*—have much more superficial connections. Certainly, the synonymy of ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία is not evident in these passages. In fact the structure of this passage from Origen (which contains *both* ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία) shows παλιγγενεσία to be functioning quite differently from what has been assumed.

Both Origen and Justin write about a second birth—in contrast to a former birth—in conjunction with baptism. Justin refers to the water of Christian baptism as a place of rebirth (ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω) and links this to the language of rebirth (versus original birth) using what appears to be a version of John 3:5.⁴⁵⁸ Origen also refers to baptism and rebirth in his 28th homily. In this homily, Origen describes Jesus' baptism as the point at which Jesus took up "the mystery [μυστήριον] of the second birth [ἀναγεννάω]." Origen does

⁴⁵⁶ Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* 14.5. Lienhard, *Origen*, 58-59.

⁴⁵⁷ Origen's Greek text exists only in fragments and we are primarily dependent on Jerome's Latin translation of Origen's homilies on Luke. See *ibid.*, xxxvi-xxxix; and Rauer and Origen, *Origenes Werke*, xxxiv. Rauer, also takes note of the fact that the validity of the fragments is not certain, and, after cataloguing all the manuscripts and editions he had used, states that, at this point, the real problems of sorting out and matching the fragments begins (Hier beginnen die Schwierigkeiten) (lviii).

⁴⁵⁸ A detailed discussion of John 3:5 follows below.

not refer to the recipients' baptism, and his connection between baptism and rebirth is quite different from Justin's use. Justin is focussed solely on the recipients' rebirth, while Origen's is focussed on the activities of Jesus that make the recipients' rebirth possible. Jesus' second birth, or rebirth, at his baptism is, for Origen, the beginning (ἀρχομαι) point for the recipients' rebirth. He establishes a relationship between Jesus' rebirth and the recipients' rebirth. Origen further distinguishes between Jesus and the recipients through his verb forms: both verbs referring to Jesus are in the Aorist Indicative—implying something that has already taken place—yet both of the verbs that refer to the people are in the Subjunctive—implying something that may/will take place but has not necessarily occurred (and/or is contingent upon something else).

This distinction is reinforced through Origen's use of the term μυστήριον in this passage. Crouzel has noted that when Origen uses μυστήριον, he does so in reference to the spiritual, heavenly, eschatological reality (a distinction that is not always maintained in the Latin translation).⁴⁵⁹ Thus, within this platonic framework, Jesus' rebirth represents the ideal and source, while the recipients' rebirth is in the realm of possibility, its certainty contingent on Jesus' activities. Moreover, ἀναγέννησις clearly stands on its own in this passage from Origen when referring to Jesus' rebirth, while the reference to the recipients' rebirth is contained in the phrase ἀναβῆς δευτέραν [γέννησιν] (you might take up a second

⁴⁵⁹ H. Crouzel, "Origène et la Structure du Sacrement," *BLE* 63 (1962): 82-83, who also notes that within this platonic framework, Origen uses the term σύμβολον to refer to the image of that reality here on earth. These distinctions by Origen need to be set within his larger framework in which the Christian age was prefigured in the Old Testament and is itself a figure for the reality which is to come (and is not complete but only a shadow of that future reality). Thus, the first resurrection (which finds its beginning in baptism) is in contrast to the second, true, complete and final resurrection, and the mystery of this final resurrection is contained/figured in the resurrection of Jesus. See H. Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 223-26; H. Crouzel, "La 'Première' et la 'Seconde' Résurrection des Hommes d'après Origène," *Did* 3 (1973); and E. Ferguson, "Baptism according to Origen," *EvQ* 78.2 (2006).

[birth]) not in the term παλιγγενεσία.⁴⁶⁰ παλιγγενεσία occurs as part of a subsequent prepositional phrase (διὰ τῆς παλιγεννεσίας) and as the agency by which the recipients take up this second birth. Like Philo, Origen uses παλιγγενεσία as a causal term connected to Christians' rebirth and may be implying that the final agent of their rebirth is Jesus' resurrection.

D. παλιγγενεσία as Resurrection

The idea that παλιγγενεσία refers to Jesus' resurrection finds support, interestingly, in 1 Peter itself. 1 Peter 1:3 states that the agency of rebirth is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς...δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν). The following chart highlights the notable parallels between these two passages:

Origen	1 Peter 3:5
you might take up a second [birth] (ἀναβῆς δευτέραν [γέννησιν])	he has rebirthed us ... (ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς)
through the (his?) regeneration (resurrection?) (διὰ τῆς παλιγεννεσίας)	through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν)

The parallel is very striking. If correct—and Origen's argument seems to support this reading—it means Origen is arguing that Jesus' baptism and rebirth are the beginning of and source for the recipients' second birth. The final *agent* for their rebirth is Jesus' resurrection, the full implications of which are contained in the term παλιγγενεσία. The idea that

⁴⁶⁰ A further complication of this passage from Origen is that what exactly is in view is unclear (e.g. *when* will they take it up? *what* are they taking up? etc.). There is no temporal framework provided by Origen which allows for a clear understanding of what he has in mind.

παλιγγενεσία refers to the resurrection, particularly in Christian writings, is not an uncommon proposal.

Jerome Quinn contends that: “Christian authors apply *paliggenesia* to the resurrection of the body.”⁴⁶¹ Certainly there are many examples that reinforce Quinn’s point. Clement of Alexandria has a very telling passage in which he indicates that an act of Christian repentance serves as a significant indicator of παλιγγενεσία which he describes as “a trophy of the resurrection [τρόπαιον ἀναστάσεως].”⁴⁶² Another example comes from Eusebius who quotes a letter from the martyrs of Lyons in Gaul which notes that after killing their victims the “adversaries” burned the bodies and spread the ashes on the river in order to “destroy their resurrection [παλιγγενεσία]” to which the letter adds “[n]ow we shall see, whether they will rise again [νῦν ἴδωμεν εἰ ἀναστήσονται].”⁴⁶³ Similar examples are found right into the Latin fathers.⁴⁶⁴

Both Augustine and Jerome demonstrate this understanding of παλιγγενεσία when they emphatically argue that Matthew 19:28 (the only other NT use of παλιγγενεσία) is a reference to the final resurrection.⁴⁶⁵ Despite a shift in the later church fathers and beyond to

⁴⁶¹ J. D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary and an Introduction to Titus, I and II Timothy, the Pastoral Epistles*. AB (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 195. Quinn regards earlier uses of παλιγγενεσία to mean “of regeneration” (194).

⁴⁶² Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 42.15.8.

⁴⁶³ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.1.63. The Greek of these two sections (slightly expanded beyond the English translation) reads: καὶ ταῦτ' ἔπραττον ὡς δυνάμενοι νικῆσαι τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἀφελέσθαι αὐτῶν τὴν παλιγγενεσίαν; and then: νῦν ἴδωμεν εἰ ἀναστήσονται καὶ εἰ δύνатаι βοηθήσαι αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν. English translation is from C. F. Cruse, trans. and I. Boyle, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus with an Historical View of the Council of Nice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955; reprint, 1991), 180. The Greek text is from G. Bardy, trans., *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire Ecclésiastique. Texte Grec*, vol. 2. Sources Chrétiennes, no. 41 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1955), 23.

⁴⁶⁴ See, e.g., Justin Martyr, *De resurrectione* 14; Origen, *De oratione* 25; Minucius Felix, *Ocatvius* 11.2.

⁴⁶⁵ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 20.5, writes with reference to Matthew 19:28: “And by the words ‘in the regeneration’ He certainly meant the resurrection of the dead to be understood; for our flesh shall be (continued...)”

translate *παλιγγενεσία* in Matthew 19:28 as “new world” or similar expressions, there were scholars who maintained the meaning argued by Augustine and Jerome and asserted that it should be translated as “at the resurrection.”⁴⁶⁶ More recently, J. Duncan M. Derrett has argued for the probability that “the true meaning is ‘resurrection’.”⁴⁶⁷ Derrett’s argument is picked up by Ulrich Luz in his *Hermeneia* commentary on Matthew. Luz states that, “It is not clear what Matthew means with the hapax legomenon *παλιγγενεσία*. Clearly the Greek-sounding term refers not to the ‘rebirth’ of the individual...but to the eschaton. Beyond that, however, the text gives no indication what is meant. It seems to me that the most likely possibility is the resurrection of the dead.”⁴⁶⁸ While this is not necessarily the consensus of all Matthean scholars,⁴⁶⁹ it does offer further substantial evidence for

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regenerated by incorruption, as our soul is regenerated by faith.” English translation is from M. Dods, trans., *The City of God by Saint Augustine* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 715. See similar statements in: Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 2.7; *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 3.3; and Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matthaem* 3.

⁴⁶⁶ J. D. M. Derrett, “PALINGENESIA (Matthew 19.28),” *JSNT* 20 (1984): 52, notes that Sebastian Munster, Beza, Jacobus Capellus and Hugo Grotius were among such scholars. Cf. Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” 674 n.9, who further supports such a reading of Matthew 19:28 when he argues regarding *παλιγγενεσία* that it “probably became current among the Gk. speaking Jews of Palestine to express the hope of the resurrection.”

⁴⁶⁷ Derrett, “PALINGENESIA,” .

⁴⁶⁸ U. Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, trans. J. E. Crouch, vol. 2. *Hermeneia*, ed. H. Koester (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 517, at which point he cites Derrett. Luz goes on to clarify his statement by adding that “resurrection of the dead...more in the sense of the eschatological restoration of the twelve tribes or the re-creation of the world” which seems to me to be an attempt to deal with the ongoing debates surrounding Matthew’s use of this word. Luz also refers to: Philo, *De posteritate Caini* 124; *De cherubim* 114; *Legatio ad Gaium* 325 (where Luz indicates that the word is almost a technical term).

⁴⁶⁹ The use of *παλιγγενεσία* in Matthew 19:28 will probably always be debated and a range of opinions offered. Nonetheless, virtually all fit within the framework I have laid out above and do not propose the idea of rebirth. D. C. Sim, “The Meaning of *παλιγγενεσία* in Matthew 19.28,” *JSNT* 50 (1993), for instance, regards Derrett’s proposal as a minority view (although it is growing significantly in stature) and proposes that it represents a complete re-creation of the cosmos (similar to Philo’s *De aeternitate mundi*). Even Burnett, “*παλιγγενεσία*,” , despite his claim that *παλιγγενεσία* refers to the rebirth of the individual soul or the cosmos (60), concludes that its use in Matthew 19:28 has “overtones of both the new world and life in the new world (‘resurrection’)” and that it clearly applies to a future reality (65).

understanding the use of *παλιγγενεσία* in the first century differently than has been assumed.⁴⁷⁰

The idea that *παλιγγενεσία* does not mean rebirth at all has been growing in consensus in the scholarly community. In his 2000 commentary on the Pastorals, William Mounce, writing primarily with regard to its use in Titus 3:5, contends that “*παλιγγενεσία*, ‘regeneration’, is not technically rebirth” and concludes that “therefore references to John 3 and 1 Peter are irrelevant.”⁴⁷¹ In 1962, Ysebaert had already questioned the assumption of *παλιγγενεσία* as rebirth. He proposed that this assumption of meaning is linked to the Latin rendering of *παλιγγενεσία* as *regeneratio* in conjunction with the literalism of early translators.⁴⁷² Various assumptions and literal—but incorrect—renderings of *παλιγγενεσία* as a term of rebirth have contributed to an understanding of *παλιγγενεσία* as parallel to *ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω*. While *παλιγγενεσία* is not unrelated to discussions of rebirth, it is not itself a direct term of rebirth and does not offer any intertextual connection (recontextualization, reference, allusion or reconfiguration) by the author of 1 Peter’s use of *ἀναγεννάω*.⁴⁷³ There is, however, one text whose language does indicate some potential

⁴⁷⁰ I should add that, if *παλιγγενεσία* does indeed come to mean “resurrection” within Christian writings, it was not a replacement for *ἀνάστασις*, but, rather, an expression of the fuller implications of Jesus’ resurrection for the individual Christians.

⁴⁷¹ W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 448.

⁴⁷² Ysebaert, *Baptismal Terminology*, 134. While it is true that translation indicates how a term was understood, it is also the case that incorrect perceptions of a term can contribute to less “accurate” translations. The evidence from the original texts indicates that certain understandings of *regeneratio* and subsequently “rebirth” have led to incorrect assumptions that *παλιγγενεσία* and *ἀναγεννάω* are identical in meaning.

⁴⁷³ All of the material cited in support of this connection is much later than the text of 1 Peter. Origen’s homilies on Luke, for instance, were not written until well into the third century; they can be roughly dated between 231-244 CE. Rauer and Origen, *Origenes Werke*, viii, dates them the earliest, early in period 231-244. Lienhard, *Origen*, xxiv, pushes the date somewhat later, but still falls within this range. More importantly, these later texts do not provide a clear link with any text before the second century, and there is no reason to consider that they reflect traditions that would have influenced the text of 1 Peter. Instead these later (continued...)

parallel with the language of rebirth in 1 Peter and may be the closest intertextual evidence from the first century.

III. John's use of γεννάω and ἄνωθεν

The third chapter of John's gospel has been mentioned several times in the above discussions and with good reason: it appears to contain the closest extant first century parallel to the community concept of rebirth language in 1 Peter. Yet, the implications of this rebirth language in John are different from the use of rebirth language in 1 Peter. John's use of rebirth language focuses on an identification of the "kingdom" community vis-à-vis other early Christian communities. 1 Peter presents no such distinction, and, as was

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texts reflect developing traditions and, *even in these later traditions*, we do not have a clear demonstration of the synonymy of ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία but only an indication of their relatedness. Even the third century text (while Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, 2-36, 207-11, 48, dates this writing to the second century, Scott, *Hermetica 1*, 47; and W. Scott and Hermes, *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, vol. 2: *Notes on the Corpus Hermeticum* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1925), 374, dates it late in the third century given its doctrinal content and relationship to the other tractates. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 234, contends that it cannot be dated any earlier than the fifth century). *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*—which has often been understood as the definitive document on rebirth and which uses the term παλιγγενεσία—fits into this developing pattern and seems to maintain a distinction between ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία although, perhaps, the boundaries are beginning to blur. The use of παλιγγενεσία in *Hermeticum XIII*, 1 begins with a description of human birth (γεννάω) that has led some translators to see this as a reference to rebirth and to insert ἀναγεννάω into the passage instead of γεννάω (see the discussion in footnote 419). The use of γεννάω in this passage is, however, a reference to the origin of humans, i.e., the true source of humanity. The questioner, prior to his regeneration (παλιγγενεσία) declares himself to already be a legitimate son (3) which would not be possible if the regeneration were the individual's birth. Instead, the use of παλιγγενεσία in this text is much more akin to a resurrection like the resurrection Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:35-57 in which the physical body is replaced by an incorporeal "body." The discussion of regeneration in *Hermeticum XIII* is about the indefinite, the formless, the unchangeable, the incorporeal (6) and is about estrangement or separation from the physical world so that one is no longer perceived as part of the physical world. As such this regeneration is akin to a death and a resurrection as a new being. While much more could be said on this topic, I do not want to take the time since this evidence is similar to what has been discussed above: it is late and does not demonstrate a connection between ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία. For the text of *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*, see W. C. Grese, *Corpus Hermeticum XIII and Early Christian Literature*. *Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, no. 5 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 2-33; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, 333-49; and Scott, *Hermetica 1*, 239-55.

indicated in chapter two, actually provides a link between the recipients and others, right at the point where rebirth language is introduced. Despite these differences, rebirth language in John does offer insight into the use of rebirth language in the late first century.

The third chapter of John's gospel presents a dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisee named Nicodemus. This dialogue has greatly affected how rebirth is understood.

The central part of the passage reads:

Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above [γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν]." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born [γεννηθῆναι] after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born [γεννηθῆναι]?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God [τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ] without being born of water and Spirit [γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος]. What is born [γεγεννημένον] of the flesh is flesh, and what is born [γεγεννημένον] of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You [ὕμῳ] must be born from above [γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν].' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit [ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος]." (NRSV)⁴⁷⁴

The use of the term γεννάω, especially in conjunction with ἄνωθεν, is certainly connected to ἀναγεννάω/ἀναγέννησις and may help shed further light on how this language was understood in that context. Several indicators of intended meaning are present in this passage. This dialogue with Nicodemus serves as an opportunity to explain the notion of rebirth and the ongoing (re)definition of rebirth language by this

⁴⁷⁴ John 3:3-8. The NA27 reads: ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν [ὁ] Νικόδημος· Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρον ὢν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν. μὴ θαυμάσης ὅτι εἶπόν σοι· δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

late first century Christian community. The expression γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος (born of water and spirit) significantly impacts how one understands γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν in this context and demonstrates an important link to Johannine community identity in light of this rebirth language. Moreover, the use of the phrase τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (the kingdom of God), in conjunction with the Johannine community's self perceptions, further consolidates this community identity link. I will examine each of these aspects and then suggest some ways this Johannine phrasing assists our understanding and reinforces our perception of how rebirth language is functioning in 1 Peter.

The use of γεννάω in conjunction with ἄνωθεν raises some interesting possibilities. ἄνωθεν can mean “from above” or it can mean “again.”⁴⁷⁵ Interpretations of this phrase are divided. As Schnackenburg notes, among the ancient versions, the Latin and the Coptic take the sense of “again” as do various church fathers, most notably Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustine and Jerome.⁴⁷⁶ While one can debate certain aspects of Schnackenburg's statement,⁴⁷⁷ it reveals the early divisions of interpretation. Others, such as Origen,

⁴⁷⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, trans. K. Smyth, vol. 1. Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 367, would claim three possibilities: 1) from above, 2) from the beginning, 3) once more. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John: The Authorized Version, with Introduction and Notes* (London: J. Clarke, 1958), 63, also points to three meanings: 1) from the top, 2) from the beginning, and 3) from above, although he recognizes that two interpretations have been favoured in this passage. Most scholars focus on these two meanings.

⁴⁷⁶ Schnackenburg, *John*, 367.

⁴⁷⁷ For instance, as M. R. Hillmer, “The Gospel of John in the Second Century” (Th.D., Harvard Divinity School, 1966), 57, notes: Justin Martyr is probably not quoting from John. Cf. A. Hilgenfeld, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Evangelien Justin's, der Clementinischen Homilien und Marcion's: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der ältesten Evangelien-Literatur* (Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1850), 163, who demonstrates that Justin is as close to Matthew as he is to John. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 358-59, notes the independence of the Matthean and (continued...)

Cyril of Alexandria and John Chrysostom preferred the sense, “from above.”⁴⁷⁸ The modern scene is not much different. Some take it to mean “again” while others argue that, in this context, it means “from above.” The majority of opinion sides with the latter.

Those claiming the meaning “from above” for ἄνωθεν offer the argument that the writer of John regularly speaks of “being born of God;” much of the evidence for this interpretation, however, is drawn from the Johannine epistles.⁴⁷⁹ Nonetheless, given the strong link between the epistles and the gospel, evidence from the epistles does not necessarily weaken this argument.⁴⁸⁰ As Westcott points out regarding the community’s use of such language, “it would be most strange under any circumstances that the usual mode of expressing it [“born of God”] should be abandoned.”⁴⁸¹ Certainly, the idea that the expression γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν would ultimately connect to the idea of birth from God is not unusual and finds support in the use of ἄνωθεν elsewhere in this writing, specifically 3:31; 19:11, 23. As Schnackenburg argues, “the ἄνωθεν of 3:31 undoubtedly takes up that of 3:3 ... and establishes clearly the notion of an event that originates in heaven and is brought

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Johannine sayings. Falls, *Justin Martyr*, 99 n.3, contends that Justin did know John’s gospel but does not offer any evidence to substantiate this assertion.

⁴⁷⁸ Schnackenburg, *John*, 367.

⁴⁷⁹ See Westcott, *John*, 63, who takes the other position but provides evidence for both sides.

⁴⁸⁰ That the gospel and the epistles are linked has long been recognized. See, e.g., R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979); M. Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International; London: SCM Press, 1989), 1; and S. M. Lewis, *The Gospel according to John and the Johannine Letters*. New Collegeville Bible Commentary; New Testament, no. 4 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005), 108. There is still ongoing debate as to the exact nature of that relationship, including matters of authorship. As C. S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 123, acknowledges, despite all the debate, that the epistles and gospel share a common community and perspective is fully demonstrable.

⁴⁸¹ Westcott, *John*, 63.

about by divine forces outside of human control.”⁴⁸² Even if one were born “again” that birth—from the Johannine perspective—would certainly come from God.⁴⁸³ Thus, it is argued, the pattern of use of ἄνωθεν in John supports the reading “from above” as the source of this rebirth.

However, as Haenchen correctly observes, while the source of rebirth may well be understood as “from above,” the entire point is that Nicodemus misunderstands Jesus’ statement.⁴⁸⁴ Commentators have recognized that this lack of comprehension is part of a pattern of misunderstanding in this book.⁴⁸⁵ At various points in John, those dialoguing with Jesus fail to understand his statements and, thereby, reach improper conclusions.⁴⁸⁶ Nicodemus, it is argued, has likewise misunderstood Jesus and drawn incorrect conclusions. Schnackenburg argues that Nicodemus’ response “raises objections which are couched as paradoxically as possible,” and that Nicodemus’ questions “are meant to bring out the senseless nature of the doctrine ... and force Jesus to admit to an absurdity.” Schnackenburg concludes that, in his response, Nicodemus has ignored the use of ἄνωθεν.⁴⁸⁷ It is unlikely that Nicodemus ignored ἄνωθεν, but, rather, as Barrett claims, this term’s

⁴⁸² Schnackenburg, *John*, 367.

⁴⁸³ See also John 1:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.

⁴⁸⁴ E. Haenchen, *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. R. W. Funk, vol. 1. Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 200.

⁴⁸⁵ See, e.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 208; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. 1. AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 130; A. T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*. Black’s New Testament Commentaries, ed. M. D. Hooker (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 150; and H. N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. J. Vriend (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 127.

⁴⁸⁶ Schnackenburg, *John*, 368, argues this and points to 4:15; 6:34, 52; 8:57; 14:8.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 368-69.

ambiguity is deliberate in John 3:5.⁴⁸⁸ Both meanings, “above” and “again” are valid, because ἄνωθεν has the ability to convey both meanings, and its use here is undoubtedly intentional.⁴⁸⁹ Nicodemus is portrayed as not understanding (or misunderstanding) so that his dialogue might serve as a springboard for the explanation of rebirth that follows.

Nicodemus’ misunderstanding demonstrates, at its simplest level, that the idea of rebirth was nonsensical for many within that society and provides opportunity for John’s gospel to engage this question.⁴⁹⁰ The third chapter of John is, ultimately, an attempt to explain its community’s concept of rebirth using the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus.⁴⁹¹ Not that the concept is clearly explained, yet John 3:3-10 does reveal some aspects of how rebirth is understood, and, more importantly, how critical rebirth is within the Johannine community.⁴⁹² Certainly, it is reasonable to conclude that the Christian concept of rebirth was not a fixed metaphor but was in the

⁴⁸⁸ Barrett, *John*, 205-06.

⁴⁸⁹ This is also the conclusion of Brown, *John*, 130-31; and L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John: The English Text with Introduction and Notes*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1971), 213.

⁴⁹⁰ Haenchen, *John*, 200, notes that the way in which Nicodemus understood this phrase is “foolish and grotesque” and that the author “thus paints the lack of understanding on the part of Nicodemus ... in the most lurid colors.” As Lincoln, *John*, 150, asserts, this “crass misunderstanding” of Nicodemus “serves as a foil for Jesus’ further teaching.”

⁴⁹¹ Based on Nicodemus’ extreme interpretation, it seems clear that the idea of rebirth was at least perceived as being nonsensical if not outside of the natural order of things. See J. Z. Smith, “Birth Upside Down or Right Side Up?” in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, ed. J. Neusner. *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*, no. 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

⁴⁹² Although she is concerned with Jesus’ relationship to his family and does not deal with the idea of a subsequent birth, J. C. Campbell, *Kinship Relations in the Gospel of John*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Series (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2007), proposes that much of John’s language, including the misunderstanding sections, is actually functioning as anti-language (or antilanguage). Anti-language is used by a group within a society as a conscious mode of countering or resisting the rest of society by offering an alternative way of understanding the world—which anti-language helps to create. For a more detailed discussion of anti-language, see M. A. K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1978), 164-82. One might also mention the article by Smith, “Birth,” who contends that the idea of birth may well represent a reversal of the cosmic order.

process of being defined in the late first century. The response by Jesus in John 3:5 that “no one can enter the kingdom of God [τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ] without being born of water and Spirit [γεννηθῆ ἔξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος]” represents the key to understanding the Johannine perception of this rebirth.

The use of ὕδωρ (water) in this passage is a good place to begin. Margaret Pamment argues that, ever since Bultmann’s claim (that in the expression γεννηθῆ ἔξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, the phrase ὕδατος καὶ is an ecclesiastical insertion),⁴⁹³ commentators have accepted the link between baptism and water.⁴⁹⁴ She notes that the subsequent discussions concern “the attitude to sacraments in various layers of the Johannine tradition.”⁴⁹⁵ While her observation is not entirely correct,⁴⁹⁶ it does point to an important question: is John’s use of ὕδωρ a reference to baptism? Some are convinced that ὕδωρ must refer to Christian baptism;⁴⁹⁷ others note various possibilities including the idea that ὕδωρ could be a reference to physical birth.⁴⁹⁸ I

⁴⁹³ See R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 138 n.3. There is no textual evidence whatsoever to support Bultmann’s claim of an insertion. See Brown, *John*, 142.

⁴⁹⁴ M. Pamment, "John 3:5," *NovT* 25 (1983): 189.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ The reality is that John 3 has been interpreted sacramentally dating back to the ante-Nicene and Nicene fathers (see B. Witherington, "The Waters of Birth: John 3.5 and 1 John 5.6-8," *NTS* 35 (1989): 155). Nonetheless, Pamment’s point is that Bultmann’s statement has solidified the idea that “of water” must refer to baptism.

⁴⁹⁷ See, e.g., Barrett, *John*. Brown, *John*, 141-42, is cautious but contends that this is how the Christian readers of John’s gospel would have understood this phrase. O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 1st American ed., trans. S. G. Sowers. The New Testament Library (New York; Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967), 280, sees allusions to baptism (and the eucharist) throughout the gospel. B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*. New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972; reprint, 1981), 59, 147, disagrees with Cullmann’s numerous allusions but still sees Christian baptism in 3:5 arguing that it is partly supported by Jesus’ baptizing activity. Cf. footnote 500.

⁴⁹⁸ See, e.g., Barrett, *John*, 209; and Morris, *John*, 216. H. Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel: Interpreted in Its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious Currents in Palestine and the Hellenistic-Oriental World* (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1974), 48-71, has collected a significant array of Jewish sources to argue that this is a reference to the divine procreation (his sources show that references to water, drop, etc. are often used to refer (continued...))

am not going to recreate all of these arguments here but, nonetheless, recognize that a brief analysis of ὕδωρ in John is important for understanding the phrase γεννηθῆναι ἕνθεν.

It is doubtful that the reference to ὕδωρ in John 3:5 refers to Christian baptism. Even those who argue in favour of Christian baptism do so not on the basis of the text of John but on the basis that this must have been how the early Christians would have understood it.⁴⁹⁹ Bultmann questions the validity of ὕδατος καὶ in this passage precisely because he recognizes that virtually no other material in John refers to or supports an emphasis on Christian baptism.⁵⁰⁰ Moreover, every other reference to ὕδωρ in John stands in juxtaposition to something greater/better.⁵⁰¹ Given these other references in John,⁵⁰² the use of ὕδωρ in 3:5 could reflect the ongoing drama of Jesus' relationship to John the Baptist within this gospel. John the Baptist contrasts his activity of baptism in (just) water with

(continued)

to semen). Part of the support for an interpretation of water as a physical birth is derived from the reference by Nicodemus to physical birth from one's mother in John 3:4.

⁴⁹⁹ See, e.g., Brown, *John*, 141-42; and Morris, *John*, 217-18.

⁵⁰⁰ Bultmann, *John*, 138-39, acknowledges that others have attempted to remove verse five entirely, as an editorial addition, and argues that John is against such sacramentalism. He recognizes that Jesus' involvement in baptism is actually denied in John 4:1-3. Barrett, *John*, 209; and Ridderbos, *John*, 127-28, both recognize the problem of a Christian baptismal reading in light of the perspectives found in the rest of John. See also Morris, *John*, 38, who points out, the author "never mentions either Christian Baptism or the Lord's Supper throughout the Gospel. It is quite possible to hold that he never refers, even obliquely, to either." So also J. Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), 137, who recognizes that "John gives no account of Jesus' baptism, no command to baptize, and no account of the institution of the Eucharist. He would not have ignored these events had he been a sacramentalist." Finally, I should note that, while some may point to the fact that John 3:22 presents Jesus baptizing, this statement is immediately contradicted in 4:1-2 and, more importantly, the text avoids using any reference to "water" in these statements.

⁵⁰¹ John 1:26-33 juxtapose John's baptism by water with Jesus' identity and baptism by the spirit (3:23 simply refers back to the fact that John needed water to baptize. 2:7-9 has Jesus turning plain water into wine at the wedding in Cana. John 4:7-14 juxtapose well water that does not satisfy with "living water." Finally, in John 5:7 a sick man who is waiting by a pool of water to be put in for healing is healed by Jesus. Note that I am not arguing that water is viewed negatively, simply that something better is always offered in John's gospel.

⁵⁰² Consider the perceptive statement by Keener, *John*, 440, that John the Baptist functions in John's gospel as "the first foil against Jesus in a water symbolism employed throughout the Gospel narrative."

Jesus' identity (John 1:26, 31) and with Jesus as the baptiser in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). Further, when John the Baptist speaks of his mode of baptism, he specifically identifies it as "a baptism by water," which implicitly identifies it vis-à-vis other types of baptism.⁵⁰³ The use of ὕδωρ in John 3:5 could well continue this contrast.

Further, one of the clear factors in the subsequent verse (3:6) is the juxtaposition of flesh and spirit ("what is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of Spirit is spirit"). This statement immediately follows and parallels the statement regarding water and spirit in 3:5 and lends even more weight to the argument that water and spirit are somewhat juxtaposed, even in 3:5. Thus, IF the water in 3:5 refers to John's baptism, then the author is identifying it as a purely physical/fleshly activity, which is why some scholars prefer to interpret water as a reference to physical birth. However one chooses to interpret the lesser form of birth (born of water-- γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος), it is *not* the rebirth about which this document is speaking: the primary thrust of this passage is that one must be *born of spirit*, and it is *this* phrase that most closely parallels rebirth from above (see, esp., 3:7-8 in which John's expression of rebirth (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν) is clarified by a statement regarding those who have been born of the spirit (γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος). Either Bultmann is correct and the phrase "of water" is a later insertion (although no textual evidence currently exists for such a theory) or one must understand this phrase in light of John's overall argument.

In the context of John's writing, whatever is meant by the phrase "born of water" (and the parallel phrase "born of flesh"), it is clearly not intended to be equated with rebirth (γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν), which is expressed by the Johannine community through the phrase

⁵⁰³ See John 1:26, 31, 33.

born of the spirit” (γεννηθῆ ἔξ...πνεύματος / γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος). I would argue that, within John’s larger discussion, the use of ὕδωρ in John 3:5, while not entirely negative, likely is a reference to the insufficiency of John the Baptist’s baptism by water. If this is true, it means that association with John the Baptist’s community is also not sufficient to enter the kingdom of God; to do so one must become part of a new community.⁵⁰⁴ This is a community whose distinctive is having been “born of the Spirit” or “rebirthed.”⁵⁰⁵

Johannes Nissen has argued for a community reading of this passage.⁵⁰⁶ Nissen’s work is closely connected to that of David Rensberger.⁵⁰⁷ Both Nissen and Rensberger argue that the notion of rebirth in this passage is not about the individual (e.g. Nicodemus) but about being connected to a new community. The Johannine community had been expelled from the synagogue and the social world they had known,⁵⁰⁸ and, in light of this reality, Nissen argues, John’s gospel is an attempt to connect them to one another through their identification with a new community.⁵⁰⁹ Those who have been rebirthed through the

⁵⁰⁴ See, e.g., the movement of John’s disciples to Jesus in John 1:33-35. Painter, *John*, 138, states unequivocally that this is a reference to John’s baptism, noting that water is either used to distinguish John’s baptism from Jesus’ baptism by the Spirit or the “life-giving water” for drinking which he claims is a symbol of believing because “[d]rinking water can hardly be equated with baptism.”

⁵⁰⁵ Note that John 3:7 moves beyond 3:5 by eliminating ὕδωρ and focussing *only* on role of the πνεῦμα in this new birth.

⁵⁰⁶ J. Nissen, "Rebirth and Community: A Spiritual and Social Reading of John 3, 1-21," in *Apocryphon Severini*, ed. P. Bilde, H. K. Nielsen, and J. P. Sørensen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993).

⁵⁰⁷ Nissen is building upon the work of D. K. Rensberger, *Overcoming the World: Politics and Community in the Gospel of John* (London: S.P.C.K., 1988).

⁵⁰⁸ See John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2. Raymond Brown’s theory of this dimension of the Johannine community is widely accepted. See Brown, *Community*. This distinction of communities can result in an “us” versus “them” mentality. For more detailed studies of how the Johannine community distinguished themselves vis-à-vis others, see W. A. Meeks, "Am I a Jew?" Johannine Christianity and Judaism," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner, vol. 1. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 180-83; J. L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, revised ed. (New York: Abingdon, 1979), 86-89; and J. Townsend, "The Gospel of John and the Jews: The Story of a Religious Divorce," in *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, ed. A. T. Davies (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 72-81.

⁵⁰⁹ Nissen, "Rebirth," 130-32.

spirit are part of this new community. Other communities, particularly the followers of John the Baptist and the community represented by Nicodemus, are outsiders.⁵¹⁰ Recognizing that Nicodemus represents a particular community, and that his community stands in contrast to the Johannine community, is another important component for understanding John 3.⁵¹¹

The plural language in John 3 is a strong indicator of these different communities. Nissen and Rensberger both highlight the fact that Jesus and Nicodemus speak in the plural with reference to themselves. Nicodemus speaks to Jesus using the plural “we,” (οἶδαμεν) in verse two,⁵¹² and, in what seems a clear contrast of the two communities, Jesus uses “we” in verse 11 stating that “we speak [λαλοῦμεν] of what we know [οἶδαμεν] and testify [μαρτυροῦμεν] to what we have seen [ἑωράκαμεν] yet you do not receive [λαμβάνετε] our [ἡμῶν] testimony.”⁵¹³ This statement by Jesus is an identification of the Johannine community with connections throughout the gospel and epistles of John.⁵¹⁴ Further, in contrast to the “we” of the Johannine community, Nicodemus is referred to by Jesus using the plural “you.” In the above quote, “you do not receive” is in the second person plural and “our testimony” is also plural. This plural reference to Nicodemus continues into verse 12 (where ὑμῶν is repeated twice more), and can also be traced back to verse seven—where Jesus had stated to Nicodemus “you [ὑμᾶς] must be reborn.” Rensberger sees the group

⁵¹⁰ Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 58-59.

⁵¹¹ Nissen, “Rebirth,” 129-30; Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 37-49. Cf. Lindars, *John*, 149; and Brown, *John*, 131. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 134-35, notes Nicodemus as a representative but is quick to argue that he has a very strong individual profile. Culpepper seems to ignore, however, any role Nicodemus plays in the setting of John’s gospel and focuses almost solely on Nicodemus in Jesus’ time (with one minor exception regarding Johannine misunderstandings and Nicodemus serving as a foil for Jesus’ explanation of rebirth).

⁵¹² Dodd, *Interpretation*, 328-30, argues that this section of John reflects the author’s connection to some common tradition with the synoptic (which would account for the “we” from the source—although Dodd does not address this directly. Brown, *John*, 130-31, discounts Dodd’s conclusions.

⁵¹³ NRSV

⁵¹⁴ See John 19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1-3; 3 John 11.

contrasts so distinctly that he translates this plural form as “you people” to highlight the communal rather than the individual identity.⁵¹⁵ Nicodemus is representative of a group of people who are viewed as outsiders to the Johannine community because they have not been given “rebirth” into that community.⁵¹⁶ While it is not clear how John intends this rebirth to occur, other than ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος (by the spirit), it certainly is clear that rebirth was perceived as a means by which this community distinguished itself.

Finally, Rensberger contends that recognizing the contrasting groups in John 3 helps to make sense of the long debated components of this chapter.⁵¹⁷ One such component is the phrase “the kingdom of God” (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ). This phrase is very rare in John’s gospel, occurring only in 3:3,5.⁵¹⁸ Nissen maintains that such language is introduced by John to underline the social components of this rebirth language in John. As he states, “To be born ‘from above’ is to be part of a new community.”⁵¹⁹ The kingdom of God *is* the distinctive for the Johannine community, and the other groups presented in John are outsiders; they must undergo a “rebirth” to be part of this kingdom community.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁵Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 38.

⁵¹⁶Most scholars agree that Nicodemus stands not only for himself but also for another group/community. J. H. Neyrey, "John III - A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology," *NovT* 23 (1981): 118, for instance, recognizes these distinct groups in John and notes that this dialogue represents an early and relatively non-hostile engagement between the Johannine community and another community (“the Jews” τῶν Ἰουδαίων). This engagement becomes more hostile as John’s gospel progresses (see, esp., chapters 5, 8, 9 and 10). Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, esp., 61—where he lists all four groups, building on the work of others, offers four important groups who are outside of this community: unbelieving Jews (2:14-22); secret Christian Jews (2:23-3:21); followers of John the Baptist (3:22-36) and finally Samaritans (4:1-42). Cf. Martyn, *History*, 87-88. Nissen, "Rebirth," 130-31, views Nicodemus as part of the sympathetic Jews or what he terms the “secret Christian Jews.”

⁵¹⁷ See Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 53-54, 60-61, for a summary of the discussions regarding the compositional unity and structure of John 3 and his conclusions based upon a recognition of the interplay between the Johannine community, John the Baptist’s followers and the community represented by Nicodemus.

⁵¹⁸ John does present Jesus speaking about his kingdom three times in 18:36.

⁵¹⁹ Nissen, "Rebirth," 132.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 131-32.

Rensberger reiterates Nissen's thinking and adds that the central claim of John is that the kingdom has come in Jesus. If Rensberger is correct, rebirth is not the focus of John 3, but, rather, the focus is on the kingdom into which one is rebirthed.⁵²¹ To phrase it another way: communal identity is the goal and focus of John's rebirth language. Nissen and Rensberger's interpretation is clearly supported by Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh in their social-science commentary on John when they note that to be "born for a second time..., however unthinkable that event might be, would alter one's ascribed honor status in a very fundamental way...[and] would be a life-changing event of staggering proportions."⁵²²

The social implications of such community rebirth language will be explored more fully in chapter five within the bounds of social and cultural analysis, but one important point should be made at this juncture. In John's communal identification, rebirth language is used to differentiate the Johannine community from other communities, such as those communities whose identity is based upon baptism. This does not mean that the Johannine community was hostile to these other communities; Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus does not indicate hostility, simply differentiation (in an almost playful manner) in that the only true "kingdom community" is a rebirthed community. In contrast, 1 Peter's use of rebirth does not exhibit any elements of communal distinction vis-à-vis other groups or communities.

⁵²¹ Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, 112, 147-48.

⁵²² B. J. Malina and R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 82.

Chapter Conclusions

The language of rebirth, as found in 1 Peter, while rare up to the second century, does appear in the extant Greek literature. Its occurrence, however, is not necessarily evidence of an intertextual connection with 1 Peter's use of this language. The use of ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω in Josephus and Philo is very different from the use of ἀναγεννάω in 1 Peter. The text of 1 Peter is definitely not referencing, alluding to or recontextualizing these texts nor does it draw upon any of the meanings contained within these texts. Moreover the use of ἀναγέννησις in conjunction with παλιγγενεσία in Philo, contrary to the assumptions and arguments of scholars like Joseph Dey, does not offer a parallel term that 1 Peter may be drawing from intertextually. Dey, ultimately, requires third century patristic writings in order to find a link between παλιγγενεσία and ἀναγέννησις/ἀναγεννάω, and, even in the patristics, the terms, while related, are not interchangeable. These later writers reveal a dependence upon 1 Peter's text but do not demonstrate any connection to an earlier tradition that may have been utilized by the author of 1 Peter. The evidence is that the author of 1 Peter is reconfiguring the meaning of rebirth language in his application of it to living human beings.

This evidence of a potential reconfiguration of rebirth language is further supported through the use of similar language in the third chapter of John's gospel. Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus regarding the necessity of rebirth using a combination of γεννάω and ἄνωθεν reveals—via Nicodemus' response—that the application of this concept to living humans was in the process of being defined in the first century. In the course of its application to humans, rebirth language is likely not associated with (water) baptism in John,

and this reality reinforces 1 Peter's lack of any such connection. Moreover, the language of this other birth in John is primarily focussed on the community's identity. 1 Peter's use of rebirth, as demonstrated in the second chapter of this dissertation, is also focussed on the recipients and their connected identity with Christians throughout Asia Minor and in Rome. However, in the end, 1 Peter's language does not function in the same manner as Johannine rebirth language, which is used to distinguish the Johannine community from communities that were considered to be outside of the kingdom community. In its meaning and function, rebirth language in 1 Peter appears to be unparalleled in the textual evidence of the first century. Nonetheless, while 1 Peter's language is distinct enough that we do not likely have a *direct* intertextual connection with John's writings, both of these texts demonstrate a similar reconfiguration of this language in relation to community identity. Such a similar reconfiguration of meaning may indicate that they are echoing (i.e. exhibiting a form of cultural intertexture) some similar cultural or sub-cultural concept of rebirth as applied to humans, a concept that was developing in the first century and may have been utilized by other groups.

The subsequent chapter will continue this intertextual analysis by examining the language of rebirth found in the mystery rites of several Greco-Roman cults. While the continuing intertextual analysis will cast the net fairly wide both in terms of language (moving to Latin terminology) and chronology (examining materials from the late second century), the analysis is not arbitrary but continues to be based on evidence that has significant connections to and the possibility of insight into the language of rebirth in the first century. I will reserve my final comments on the intertextual relationship of rebirth language in 1 Peter to other uses of rebirth language until the end of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

BORN INTO SECRECY: REBIRTH IN ANCIENT MYSTERY RITES

Introductory Comments

The rites from some ancient “mysteries”⁵²³ have long been connected to the idea of rebirth found in early Christian writings. Joseph Ysebaert, after a detailed examination of multiple examples of what he terms “renewal, re-creation, and rebirth” language, indicates that it is precisely in the ancient mysteries where “one seems to find a terminology for rebirth that resembles that of Christianity.”⁵²⁴ Ysebaert is not alone in his observations, although his language of “resemblance” is much more helpful than the language of “source.”⁵²⁵ Like Ysebaert, I am not seeking to ascertain the genealogy of these relationships or entering into the debate over which has primacy (i.e. who borrowed from whom); such approaches have proven to be problematic. As Jonathan Z. Smith convincingly

⁵²³ The language that refers to the ancient Hellenic and Hellenistic cults that practiced μυστήρια or related activities is problematic. In the recent past the many diverse groups that practiced “mysteries” as secret rituals were originally referred to as “mystery cults.” Such language implies, however, that these groups were related and performed similar activities and shared similar beliefs. Such is not the case. The expression “mystery cults” is less common in scholarly writing today, and I will avoid using it here unless describing a scholar who employs such language. The ancients had no idea of mystery cults but rather referred to “mysteries” or rites of initiations. The more generalizing term “the mysteries” is an attempt to reflect that reality, but it can also imply that there was a single phenomenon rather than a variety of rites in many different contexts. See, e.g., the discussions in J. B. Rives, “Graeco-Roman Religion in the Roman Empire: Old Assumptions and New Approaches,” *CurBR* 8, no. 2 (2010): esp., 257-60; and T. J. Wellman, “Ancient *Mystēria* and Modern Mystery Cults,” *R&T* 12, no. 3-4 (2005). Wherever possible, I will refer to the mysteries of the specific groups/cults under discussion but will use the term “(the) mysteries” to refer more generically to these varied rites.

⁵²⁴ Ysebaert, *Baptismal Terminology*, 114.

⁵²⁵ The strength of the potential connections is such that Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion*, first proposed that the mystery religions were a source for 1 Peter’s terminology. Perdelwitz’s stance has subsequently been questioned, although these discussions tend to centre around the question of the source for the NT language of rebirth (see, e.g., Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” 673; Michaels, *Peter*, 17-18; and Selwyn, *Peter*, 305-11). Apart from the concerns over source, the connections between 1 Peter and the mysteries, as Ysebaert makes clear, remain.

argues in *Drudgery Divine*, issues of genealogy rather than analogy have tended to distract from a comparison of the evidence.⁵²⁶ In the case of 1 Peter and the mysteries, there is evidence of analogy between rebirth in the texts and inscriptions of the mysteries and the rebirth language of 1 Peter. Exploring these analogies will help to set the rebirth ideas from 1 Peter into a broader cultural context.

This chapter will focus its analysis on some key materials from some ancient mystery practices, specifically inscriptions related to the *taurobolium* in the cults of the Magna Mater, inscriptions regarding initiates of Mithras from the church of Santa Prisca, and Apuleius' narrative (*Metamorphoses*) concerning the mysteries of Isis (and Osiris). Geographically, this evidence offers significant correlation with the letter of 1 Peter: all three have strong connections to Rome and two also have associations with Asia Minor. The language of these inscriptions and of this text reveal some remarkable connections to the rebirth language of 1 Peter, particularly to the idea that birth into the cult highlights the subsequent relationships that are formed, between the initiand/initiate and the god(dess) as well as among the initiates themselves. These relationships provide insight into what is perhaps the most tangible aspect of rebirth in some of the mysteries: the social implications of one's new birth.

The method of this chapter continues the intertextual investigation of the previous chapter. Two general aspects of intertextuality were noted in the previous chapter: 1) the current text's use of other writings, and 2) the use of that text by subsequent authors. I noted in the previous chapter that the latter use is not the focus of this dissertation. However, one can posit a third scenario, which is part of the latter aspect: evidence from later writings that stems from earlier concepts, even if those earlier texts are no longer extant. The significant

⁵²⁶ J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*. Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion, no. 14 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), esp., 113-15.

level of analogy between rebirth in the mysteries and in 1 Peter makes it possible that aspects of rebirth in 1 Peter are recontextualizations or reconfigurations of similar language in the now extant texts from the mysteries, or, even more probable, that 1 Peter has cultural allusions to the developing idea of rebirth that is also echoed by the mysteries. One must be cautious in this scenario, however, because the extant evidence is primarily from the second and early third centuries.⁵²⁷ Given the late nature of the evidence, I will not engage the intertextual possibilities until the conclusion of this chapter, after concerns over the later nature of the evidence have been addressed and the evidence itself has been analyzed in light of its possible connections to the rebirth language of 1 Peter.

I. Preliminary Matters

A. Addressing the Late Nature of Rebirth Terminology in the Mysteries

1. Evidence from Sallustius

Two key pieces of evidence speak to concerns regarding the late nature of the extant rebirth terminology in the mysteries. The first comes from the pen of the philosopher Sallustius. Sallustius, writing around 363 CE,⁵²⁸ offers the only use of ἀναγεννάω by a non-Christian writer after the first century. Sallustius uses the term ἀναγεννάω at a time when it proliferated in Christian writings.⁵²⁹ Having related the Attis myth, Sallustius explains how aspects of this myth are imitated by Attis' followers.⁵³⁰ As part of his

⁵²⁷ Given that this evidence is later than 1 Peter and that its significance for this dissertation lies primarily in reflection of earlier traditions, details of date are not relevant to the main discussion and will be reserved for the footnotes.

⁵²⁸ See the discussion A. D. Nock, ed. & trans., *Sallustius: Concerning the Gods and the Universe* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), cii.

⁵²⁹ See footnote 404.

⁵³⁰ Nock, *Sallustius*, xlix-lii. Although Sallustius likely copied his rendition of the Attis-myth from Julian's Fifth Oration, this does not necessarily mean that Sallustius' observations on those who are initiated into the Attis cult are derived from Julian or some other source. As Nock observes, "We must probably conclude that Sallustius used Julian's oration, but not without an independent exercise of his intelligence."

explanation, Sallustius includes what appears to be a description of an *Attis-mystes*'s initiation (perhaps even his own initiation?). He reveals that, “after this **we** are fed on milk **as though being reborn [ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων]**; that is followed by rejoicings and garlands and as it were a new ascent to the gods.”⁵³¹ In this passage we may have an element of personal insight into the inner workings of the cult—if we can take Sallustius’ use of “we” to be a personal elaboration.⁵³² Even if one takes his use of “we” as editorial in nature, however, it does not detract from the reality that the idea of rebirth was part of the Magna Mater and Attis cult, at least in the opinion of Sallustius.⁵³³

The most compelling component of Sallustius’ comments is that, as a non-Christian, he chooses to use what had largely, for all appearances, become a Christian term. One might suggest that Sallustius had borrowed ἀναγεννώω to apply to the Magna Mater cult, but such a suggestion runs counter to his perspective on Christianity. Sallustius was likely an intimate friend of the emperor Julian⁵³⁴ who is well known for his criticism of Christianity as the source of the corruption of the Roman Empire and for his attempts to restore practices of an earlier era in the Roman Empire. Like Julian, Sallustius used his writings to counter

⁵³¹ Sallustius, *De Deis et mundo* IV.10. Emphasis mine. The Greek text reads: ἐπὶ τούτοις γάλακτος τροφή ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων· ἐφ’ οἷς ἰλαρία καὶ στέφανοι καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Θεοὺς οἶον ἐπάνοδος. Greek text and English translation are from *ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵³² Sallustius had already used “we” earlier in his description of the initiation process. The use of “we,” found in the quote above, is in the form of the first person plural personal pronoun (ἡμεῖς). Earlier, several first person plural verbs had been used (e.g. κοσμηθήμεν, ἐσμέν, ἀπεχόμεθα). See Sallustius, *De Deis et mundo* IV.10.

⁵³³ The reference to milk strengthens Sallustius’ use of rebirth language. In the ancient world, the consumption of milk (γάλα) is closely linked with babies and has the connotation of suckling at the breast. In his explanation about the ritual use of milk, Proclus in his ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΙΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΝ (see the Greek text in W. Kroll, ed., *Procli Diadochi: in Platonis Rem publicam commentarii*, vol. 2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1965), 129-30) speaks both about milk as the first food of the newly born and the belief that souls dwell in the Milky Way (which is also mentioned by Sallustius immediately prior to the quote above). On the drinking of milk in antiquity see, e.g., A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 785; and A. D. Nock, "Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire," *JHS* 45 (1925): 99, esp., n.107.

⁵³⁴ Nock, *Sallustius*, cii.

Christian teachings and theology and to protect himself from criticism by Christians.⁵³⁵ To incorporate a Christian term into his writing, without opposing the Christian teaching behind it, stands in contrast to Sallustius' dealings with Christianity. If, however, Sallustius is drawing from other, non-Christian materials then no defence of his language would be necessary. Sallustius' unapologetic use of ἀναγεννάω likely indicates his language is based upon earlier, non-Christian traditions.⁵³⁶

2. Evidence of a “Secrecy Motif”

The second, more substantial piece of evidence to explain the dearth of these earlier textual traditions is what I would term the “secrecy motif.” Various sources make it clear that what goes on within the cult, especially in the initiation ceremonies, is not to be revealed to outsiders—that is, to the “uninitiated.” Consider the following passages:

She showed the tendance of the holy things and explicated the rites to them all . . . sacred rites, which it is forbidden to transgress, to inquire into, or to speak about, for great reverence of the gods constrains their voice. Blessed of earthbound men is he who has seen these things, but he who dies without fulfilling the holy things, and he who is without a share of them, has no claim ever on such blessings, even when departed down to the moldy darkness.⁵³⁷

[I]t is not lawful, however, for any but the initiated to hear about the mysteries.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁵ See, esp., *ibid.*, xlvi.

⁵³⁶ Büchsel, “ἀναγεννάω,” 673, states that the language of Sallustius may rest on a pre-Christian tradition. Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion*, also argues that this evidence from Sallustius (in combination with other evidence of rebirth language in the mysteries) provides proof that this rebirth language was present in the mysteries from an earlier period. However, I disagree with Perdelwitz's conclusions that 1 Peter is dependent on this tradition. See the discussion above (pp. 182-83).

⁵³⁷ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 475-484. The Greek text reads δρημοσύνην θ' ἱερῶν καὶ ἐπέφραδεν ὄργια πᾶσι, Τριπτολέμω τε Πολυξείνω, ἐπὶ τοῖς δὲ Διοκλεῖ σεμνά, τά τ' οὐπῶς ἔστι παρεξίμεν οὔτε πυθέσθαι οὔτ' ἀχέειν: μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν σέβας ἰσχάνει αὐδήν. ὄλβιος, ὃς τὰδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων: ὃς δ' ἀτελής ἱερῶν ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐποθ' ὁμοίων αἴσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφω ἠερόεντι. The Greek text is from the TLG. Translation is from D. G. Rice and J. E. Stambaugh, *Sources for the Study of Greek Religion*. SBLBS, no. 14 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 183.

⁵³⁸ Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica* 5.48.4. The Greek text reads: ὧν οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαι πλὴν τῶν μεμνημένων. Greek text and English translation are from C. H. Oldfather, trans., *Diodorus of Sicily*, trans. C. H. Oldfather, vol. 3. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 232-33.

Now the details of the initiatory rite are guarded among the matters not to be divulged and are communicated to the initiates alone.⁵³⁹

I may not reveal the rites of the Great Goddesses, for it is their mysteries which they celebrate in the Carnasian grove.⁵⁴⁰

Perhaps, my zealous reader, you are eager to learn what was said and done next. I would tell you if it were permitted to tell; you would learn if it were permitted to hear. But both ears and tongue would incur equal guilt, the latter from its unholy talkativeness, the former from their unbridled curiosity . . . Therefore I shall relate only what can be expounded to the minds of the uninitiated without atonement.⁵⁴¹

These are some of the texts that illustrate the secrecy of the cults.⁵⁴² With such clear descriptions about the need to keep the secrets of the mysteries concealed, one has to ask whether, if we do find evidence of rebirth, the evidence we find reveals an aspect of that specific cult or group at all. Further, if we do find evidence of rebirth, does this mean that we were meant to find this evidence (i.e. that it was meant to mislead us) and that, in fact, the mysteries have nothing to do with rebirth?

Two aspects of the findings speak against such speculation. First, the lack of extensive evidence for rebirth indicates that, if indeed rebirth was part of the secret, what we

⁵³⁹ Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica* 5.49.5. The Greek text reads: καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ μέρος τῆς τελετῆς ἐν ἀπορρήτοις τηρούμενα μόνοις παραδίδοται τοῖς μνηθεῖσι. Greek text and English translation are from *ibid.*, 234-35.

⁵⁴⁰ Pausanias, *Graeciae description*, Book 4: *Messenia* 33.5. The Greek text reads: τὰ δὲ ἐς τὰς θεὰς τὰς Μεγάλας – δρῶσι γὰρ καὶ ταύταις ἐν Καρνασίῳ τὴν τελετὴν--ἀπόρρητα ἔστω μοι. Greek text and English translation are from W. H. S. Jones, trans. and H. A. Ormerod, trans., *Pausanias: Description of Greece*, vol. 2. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 354-55.

⁵⁴¹ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.23. The Latin text reads: *Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum. Dicerem, si dicere liceret, cognosceres, si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et lingua, ista impiae loquacitatis, illae temerariae curiositatis.* Latin text and English translation are from J. A. Hanson, ed. & trans., *Apuleius Metamorphoses*, vol. 2. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 340-41. The dates for Apuleius' life are approximately 125-171 CE; see E. H. Haight, *Apuleius and his Influence*. Our Debt to Greece and Rome (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), 3.

⁵⁴² Cf. M. W. Meyer, ed., *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook: Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 4, who draws attention to an incident from Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* in which several friends face charges after a drunken parody of the Eleusinian mysteries.

have is more like “information leaks” rather than evidence meant to directly mislead; these “leaks” may have become more prominent as some of the cults who practiced the mysteries sought to compete with the growing Christian emphasis on rebirth, and, thus, our only extant evidence comes from the later period when these writings would have become more prolific. Second, much of the evidence comes in the form of private inscriptions. The inscriptional evidence is found in places of meeting and, thus, was largely internal to the cult. Moreover, what is meant by a second birth or a rebirth is elusive enough that it is safe to conclude that not much has, in fact, been revealed of the deep secrets of the mysteries (i.e. what exactly takes place in secret). This last point receives support from the above quote by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*. Apuleius makes clear that only certain things can be revealed to those outside of the mysteries and, as we will see, he does mention the idea of rebirth. Thus, the concept of rebirth may not have been off-limits in writings, as long as the details of the ceremonies remained secret.

B. Rebirth Terminology

Before examining the textual and/or inscriptional evidence from several groups, a brief note on terminology is in order. Despite the Greek evidence noted above from Sallustius, most of the extant evidence from within the cults themselves comes from Latin texts and inscriptions, and, thus, it will be necessary to examine several Latin terms related to rebirth, particularly: *natis*, *natalicius*, *nascor* and *renascor*. *Natalis* and *natalicius* are both nouns, which mean “birthday” or can refer to things connected to one’s birthday (e.g. a birthday present or birthday entertainment).⁵⁴³ According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, however, *natalis* can also be “applied to other days regarded as the beginning of new life”

⁵⁴³ *A New Latin Dictionary*, 1889 ed., s.v., “*natalicius*,” “*natalis*.”

and has more nuances in connection with its root meaning of birthday.⁵⁴⁴ *Nascor* is a verb that, at its root, means “to be born.” The important issue with each of the terms *natalis*, *natalicius*, or *nascor* is its referent. If these terms do not refer to an actual birth or birthday, then, it is more likely that they refer to another type of birth, a second birth or re-birth.

Renascor means to be rebirthed, but it can also convey the sense of being created anew, to grow again (e.g. of plants), to rise, or to be renewed or revived.⁵⁴⁵ While these latter two meanings (renewed or revived) could be construed as the resurrection of a physical body, they primarily relate to the (re)appearance of such physical phenomena as heavenly bodies.⁵⁴⁶ *Renascor* is the closest term to the language of rebirth from 1 Peter, the most common form of which is the perfect participle *renatus*. *Renascor* (*renati*) is specifically used in the Vulgate to translate ἀναγεννώω in 1 Peter 1:23.⁵⁴⁷

II. Rebirth Language in Various Mysteries

A. Rebirth in the Magna Mater Cult: Evidence from the *Taurobolium*

Much has been made of the use of birth and rebirth terminology in inscriptions connected to the *taurobolium* or *criobolium*.⁵⁴⁸ Jeremy Rutter describes three phases of the

⁵⁴⁴ *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1996 ed., s.v., “*natalis*.” Other examples of its meaning connected to the idea of birthday include, e.g., “the day on which a thing is produced,” and “the fact or possibility of being born.”

⁵⁴⁵ *A New Latin Dictionary*, s.v., “*renascor*,” *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1996 ed., s.v., “*renascor*.”

⁵⁴⁶ Ysebaert, *Baptismal Terminology*, 110, states that “(re)*nasci* and also (re)*generare* are used for the (re)appearance of the moon and stars, day, rivers, fevers, glory, etc.”

⁵⁴⁷ Further, Brown, *John*, 130, states that in the Old Latin, the Old Syriac (Sinaiticus manuscript), and in the Vulgate and the Greek Fathers *renascor* is the same as ἀναγεννώω. However, ἀναγεννώω in 1 Peter 1:3 is translated as *regenerare* (*regeneravit*), but this term does not appear in the documents associated with rebirth in the mysteries.

⁵⁴⁸ The *taurobolium* (ταυροβόλιον) and the *criobolium* (κριοβόλιον) are seen to be identical activities with the only difference being the animal involved (*taurobolium*--bull; *criobolium*--ram). See G. Thomas, “Magna Mater and Attis,” in *ANRW*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, vol. II.17.3 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 1522, who notes that it was also known as an *aemobolium*, an *ecitium*, and a *pantelium*--the meanings of which are uncertain. I will only use the term *taurobolium* in this paper. For a brief history of the interpretation of the *taurobolium* see R. Duthoy, *The Taurobolium: Its Evolution and Terminology*. EPROER, no. 10 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 1-3.

taurobolium. The first phase is not connected with any particular deity.⁵⁴⁹ The second phase finds the rite adopted into the cult of the Magna Mater.⁵⁵⁰ The third phase is limited and relates to a brief resurgence of the rite during the reign of Julian.⁵⁵¹ It is this second phase, connected to the Magna Mater in her various forms, which pertains to the inscriptional evidence of rebirth that we will examine here. The second phase was initiated in Rome and spread out from there, and its origins are in Asia Minor.⁵⁵²

The inscriptional evidence reveals two key terms that are connected to the birth/rebirth concept: the use of *natalicius* (and *natalis*) and *renascor*.

Natalicius, and its components, occur in four separate inscriptions:

- #1 This first inscription indicates a sacrifice being given *aram tauroboli sui natalici* (on the altar of the *taurobolium* on his birthday).⁵⁵³
- #2 The second inscription contains virtually the same phrase as the first inscription (*ara(m) t(aurobolicam) ob natalicium*) with almost the same meaning.⁵⁵⁴
- #3 This inscription describes a father and son's sacrifice to the mother god (*M(atri) D(eum) s(acrum)*) at the *criobolium* on their birthday(s) (*criobolati natali suo*).⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁴⁹ J. B. Rutter, "The Three Phases of the Taurobolium," *Phoenix* 22 (1968): 226.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 226, 230. So also Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 1, 116, although he considers the association of the *taurobolium* with Magna Mater as the first phase (124-26).

⁵⁵¹ Rutter, "Three Phases," 226.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 227, 230. The first phase identified by Rutter was also connected to Rome by the end of the first century.

⁵⁵³ The full inscription from CIL II, 5260 reads: *EMERITA AUGUSTA M(atri) D(eum) s(acrum) Val(eria) Avita aram tauroboli sui natalici redditi d(edit) d(edicavit) sacerdote Doccyrico Valeriano arc(h)igallo Publicio Mystico*. See Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 79, emphasis mine. This inscription is dated to the end of second century by G. Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis*. EPROER, no. 103 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 113.

⁵⁵⁴ The full inscription from CIL XIII, II.352 reads: *DIVODURUM (Metz) Ara magna ex lapide calcario, difficilima lectu; in latere sinistro patera ansata; in anticocaput tauri; in latere dextro syrinx, pedum, trulla; in postico caput arietis "----2 lines ----" nia ara(m) t(aurobolicam) ob natalicium [e]x iussu ref(iciendam) c(uravit) Annulino II et Fro(n)tone co(n)s(ulibus)*. See Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 53 (no.132), emphasis mine. The inscription is dated 199 CE.

⁵⁵⁵ The full inscription reads: *PAX IULIA (Beja) M(atri) D(eum) s(acrum) duo Irinaei, pater et fil(ius), criobolati natali suo, sacer(dotibus) Lucio Antist(io) Avito G(aio) Antisti(o) Felicis/simo*. See *ibid.*, 37 (no. 78), emphasis mine.

#4 This fourth inscription, the meaning of which is debated, reads:
*Natalici virib(us) Valer(ia) Iullina et Iul(ia) Sancta*⁵⁵⁶

Scholars debate what is meant by the uses of *natalicius* in these inscriptions. Some understand these uses as referring to the rite taking place on the birthday of the participant,⁵⁵⁷ while others propose that it represents one's birth into the cult or some sort of spiritual birthday.⁵⁵⁸ Gasparro asserts that two of the inscriptions (numbers one and two above) are vague and can be taken as support for either position.⁵⁵⁹ In contrast to Gasparro, Duthoy contends that *natalicium* in number two (and one) actually means "birthday."⁵⁶⁰ Duthoy's comments seem superfluous, however, since no one denies that *natalicius* and related terms mean "birthday." The question is: what sort of birthday is envisioned? Inscription number three—in which both a father and son (*pater et filius*) are participants—provides the best evidence that what is envisioned is not a literal birthday. While it is not inconceivable that these two shared the same birthday, in the words of Gasparro, "we would then have to presume the exceptional circumstance that the birthdays of father and son fell on the same date."⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁶ Inscription is from CIL XIII, 573. Emphasis mine. Cf. *ibid.*, 49 (no. 124). Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 106-07, summarizes this debate: "Zippel thought that the god of birth was referred to; Graillet that the inscription recorded the dedication of the *vires* that had freed the *dedicator* from the power of death and reborn him into a new life; and Lagrange that the word *natalicium* indicated that the *taurobolium* was sometimes performed on the birthday of the *dedicator*. Dey supported this [last] view." See Dey, *ἸΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 77-79; H. Graillet, *Le Culte de Cybèle, Mère des Dieux, à Rome et dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris: Fontemoing et cie, 1912), 150-87; M. J. Lagrange, "Mélanges: I. Attis et le Christianisme," *RB* 16 (1919): 566-67; and G. Zippel, "Das Taurobolium," in *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum Ludwzig Friedländers dargebracht von seinen Schülern*, ed. L. Friedländer (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1895).

⁵⁵⁷ See, e.g., Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 107; and Lagrange, "Attis et le Christianisme," 466-67.

⁵⁵⁸ See, e.g., F. V. M. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 68; and C. H. Moore, "The Duration of the Efficacy of the Taurobolium," *CP* 19 (1924): 363. Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 105-06, provides a more extensive list.

⁵⁵⁹ Sfamini Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 114.

⁵⁶⁰ On this comment see Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 107, who asserts that "if we take the word in No. 79 as an adjective, it comes to more or less the same thing . . . as 'a *taurobolium* performed on a birthday'" See also Dey, *ἸΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ*, 77-79, upon whom Duthoy builds.

⁵⁶¹ Sfamini Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 114. The fourth inscription offers little insight into this debate given its large spectrum of interpretation.

Although the interpretation that the *taurobolium* was performed on one's birthday does require a greater level of speculation in the case of inscription number three above, the interpretation of the *taurobolium* as some kind of spiritual birthday faces problems as well. The most telling problem with this latter interpretation is the argument from absence. If indeed the *taurobolium* was regarded as a regenerative event or some kind of birth, one has to ask why so few inscriptions attest to this event. Ultimately, based on the limited evidence, one is left to conclude that whatever the interpretation, the celebration of the *taurobolium* was not universally regarded as either an event to be celebrated on one's birthday or as a time of new birth. Based on these inscriptions, the best conclusion one can offer is that, for certain individuals, the *taurobolium* was connected to the idea of birth, be that one's own original birthday or a new "birthday."

The interpretation that *natalicium* in the *taurobolium* refers to a new "birthday" receives further support in an inscription from Rome in which the participant claims to be *in aeternum renatus* ("rebirthed for eternity" or "eternal rebirth"). This phrase has been used as proof that the *taurobolium* revolved around the concepts of regeneration and rebirth.⁵⁶² The consensus is not unanimous, however, and, more recently, this perspective has been called into question. Lagrange suggests that such terminology seems to represent an influence by Christianity on the very late stages of this ritual.⁵⁶³ Nilsson, among others, thinks that this phrase might not be so much a sign of a doctrine of unlimited rebirth as an enthusiastic

⁵⁶² See, e.g., Cumont, *Oriental Religions*, 66-69. Cumont argued that originally this rite was about physical regeneration but that it then moved beyond the physical sense and came to be more of a spiritual rebirth. Cf. Moore, "Duration," 363, who states explicitly: "In fact, as is well known, this form of initiation into the mysteries of the Great Mother of the Gods was a symbolic death and rebirth, as is shown by the word *renatus*."

⁵⁶³ Lagrange, "Attis et le Christianisme," 565-66. Such Christian influence is also suggested by H. Rahner, "Das christliche Mysterium und die heidnischen Mysterien," *ErJb* 11 (1944): 396-98.

expression of individual devotion.⁵⁶⁴ Duthoy observes that the absence of similar statements using *renascor* in conjunction with the *taurobolium* should caution one from assuming this is a standard *taurobolium* inscription.⁵⁶⁵ Inscriptional evidence from the *taurobolium* varies greatly, particularly in private inscriptions.⁵⁶⁶ This variance in inscriptional evidence in conjunction with the uncertainty over how to interpret the phrase *in aeternum renatus* does not negate the probability that ideas of rebirth developed in association with the *taurobolium*, at least by certain participants. The evidence does caution, however, against the emphatic declaration that the *taurobolium* always functioned as a sign of some kind of birth or rebirth.⁵⁶⁷

If the presence of both *natalicius/natalis* and *renascor* in the *taurobolium* demonstrates that aspects of the *taurobolium* were interpreted in certain circles as a rebirth, we would still need to ask: how was this birth to be understood? The evidence from the *taurobolium* is silent. Even if the use of *natalicius/natalis* in the *taurobolium* commemorated one's own birthday, and we accept Gasparro's point that even in the case of one's own birthday, choosing to perform the *taurobolium* on this date is nonetheless significant and justifies the hypothesis that the participant saw the connection of these two events to be religiously significant,⁵⁶⁸ we are no further along in discovering why the events were religiously significant. In fact, the only conclusion one can tease from the evidence of the *taurobolium* is that, if the *taurobolium* functioned for some as a type of second birth or rebirth, then the marker for rebirth is the *taurobolium* ritual. Rebirth here can be understood

⁵⁶⁴ M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2d ed., vol. 2. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft (München: C.H. Beck, 1955), 653.

⁵⁶⁵ Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, 3.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-91.

⁵⁶⁷ The central issue here is that the *taurobolium* likely underwent some development both in terms of its association with the Magna Mater cult and in the general purpose and format of the rite. Both Rutter, "Three Phases" and Duthoy, *Taurobolium*, have proposed stages of development in rite of the *taurobolium*.

⁵⁶⁸ Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 114.

to have immediate implications and this understanding reveals affinities with the idea of rebirth in 1 Peter.⁵⁶⁹

B. Rebirth in the Mithras Cult: Evidence from the Inscriptions of Santa Prisca

Within the Mithras cult, evidence of the language of rebirth has been found in the Mithraic inscriptions of Santa Prisca. These inscriptions were discovered in what appears to be a Mithraeum underneath the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome. Interestingly, these inscriptions can also be linked to Asia Minor given their connection to the Mithraic tradition.⁵⁷⁰ The findings were fully published in 1965 by Vermaseren and van Essen.⁵⁷¹ This Mithraeum was redone around 220 CE when inscriptions upon the wall were covered over with newer inscriptions.⁵⁷² The lower layer of writings (some of which were obscured by the later writings) includes a line that reads: *Dulcia sunt ficata avium, sed cura gubernat* followed by the line: *pi(e) r(e)b(u)s **renatum** dulcibus atque **creatum***.⁵⁷³ Taking these lines together,⁵⁷⁴ Vermaseren translates them as: “Sweet are the livers of the birds, but Mithras’ care guides him who is piously reborn and created by sweet things.”⁵⁷⁵ The “sweet things”

⁵⁶⁹ I am not attempting to discount any future implications with this statement, but rather am simply stating that, if the *taurobolium* marked the event of rebirth (and did not merely point to an event in the future when one would be reborn), then, from that day forward, one was reborn. One can, therefore, explore the changes that occurred after that day.

⁵⁷⁰ The original proposal by F. V. M. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, trans. T. J. McCormack (Chicago: Open Court, 1903), esp., 1-15, centered the rise of Mithraism in Anatolia. Much discussion and debate over Cumont’s thesis ensued, and, more recently, R. Beck, “The Mysteries of Mithras: A New Account of Their Genesis,” *JRS* 88 (1998), reinforced Cumont’s original proposal, although he questions the founding Anatolian group proposed by Cumont. For a survey of the discussion and debate over Cumont’s original thesis, see R. Beck, “Mithraism since Franz Cumont,” in *ANRW*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, vol. II.17.4 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984).

⁵⁷¹ M. J. Vermaseren and C. C. v. Essen, *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965).

⁵⁷² H. D. Betz, “The Mithras Inscriptions of Santa Prisca and the New Testament,” *NovT* 10 (1968): 62.

⁵⁷³ Line 11. See Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 207. Emphases mine.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 208, discuss whether these two lines should be read together. They conclude “*Renatus* is the person who is reborn in the cult, hence it seems reasonable to link this line with the preceding one...”

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

by which one is reborn, Betz asserts, “doubtlessly refers to the sacramental drink dispensed at the initiation.”⁵⁷⁶

Although we cannot be sure when this inscription was written, we do know, based upon a *graffito* found on the left wall, that the room was in use at least as early as 202 CE.⁵⁷⁷ What is most striking about this earlier inscription is that it contains the term *renascor*, which is not found in the later inscriptions. Thus, in contrast to the inscriptions of the *taurobolium*, *renascor* receives relatively early attestation in the cult of Mithras. This evidence corrects the argument that the use of *renascor* was only a late development in the mysteries. The use of *renascor* in this Mithraic inscription is sufficiently striking that Vermaseren connects it to the much later *taurobolium* inscription discussed immediately above,⁵⁷⁸ and he concludes that, “in the same way as the *Attis-mystes* (initiate) follows the reborn *Attis*, so the *Mithras-mystes* is reborn just as *Mithras* was born from the rock.”⁵⁷⁹

While Vermaseren may connect these concepts too quickly, this evidence certainly

⁵⁷⁶ Betz, “Mithras Inscriptions,” 71. As support for this, Betz draws in an earlier line (line 4) that reads: *Fons concludit petris qui geminos aluisti nectare fratres* and he translates it as: “Rockbound spring that fed the twin-brothers with nectar.” He considers the nectar to refer to a “saving drink” consumed at initiation.

⁵⁷⁷ CIMRM 498. The *graffito* is dated: 20th November 202 CE

⁵⁷⁸ There are connections besides the identical words, most notably that the *taurobolium* inscription is on an altar erected by Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius who, Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 209, note, refers to himself as: *pater patrum dei solis invicti Mithrae*.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Certainly Mithras’ birth from the rock is well attested through archaeological record. Although the limited inscriptions associated with this evidence do not use the language of rebirth, and are, therefore, beyond the scope of this dissertation, some of this language associated with Mithraism bears mentioning here. M. Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The God and his Mysteries*, trans. R. L. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2000), 62-71, offers a detailed outline of the numerous images of Mithras’ birth. In one statue, the base has an inscription that Clauss notes contains an unusual use of the Latin, *natura*, which he speculates might stem from a translation of the Greek, *γένεσις*. Further, Clauss highlights other figures that appear with Mithras in some rock-birth images, including the two torch-bearers Cautopates and Cautes. These two torch-bearers are related to the use of *γένεσις* and *ἀπογένεσις* in Mithraism. R. Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. 5-6, 16-17, 20-22, 41-43, 81-85, 102, 12-13, 212-14 (c.f. Porphyry, *De antro nympharum* 24, 31), describes *γένεσις* and *ἀπογένεσις* as motifs that are part of an axiom of “harmony of tension in opposition” which includes an indeterminate number of fundamental oppositions. *Γένεσις*—represented by Cautopates with his lowered torch—describes the human soul’s descent into the mortal life at birth; *ἀπογένεσις*—represented by Cautes with his raised torch—describes the return of or ascent of the soul at death. These motifs are best understood, Beck argues, as “actually occurring” in the Mithraeum because of its *functional* (not merely symbolic) representation of the universe.

reinforces the idea that rebirth language had been solidly fixed within some early Mithraic traditions.

The combination of *renascor* with *creatus* in the above-noted Mithraic inscription necessitates an examination of the relationship between these two terms. Vermaseren and van Essen note concerning this relationship: “It might have been expected that the *mystes* would first have been *creatum*, and after that *renatum*.”⁵⁸⁰ They conclude: “it is therefore quite possible that the word *creatum* in this context does not mean created,” but, rather, may mean “chosen.”⁵⁸¹ As support, Vermaseren and van Essen cite another inscription, which they consider to have been dedicated to Mithras.⁵⁸² Betz, in contrast to Vermaseren and van Essen, contends that the use of *creatus* after *renascor* in Santa Prisca, while surprising, does not negate the meaning of “created” for *creatus*. He proposes that “‘*creatus*’ in fact points to creation as *recreation*.”⁵⁸³ His suggestion fits the evidence from chapter three in which (re)creation and rebirth are perceived as related but distinct events.

This Mithraic inscription does offer more insight into the idea of rebirth than the evidence from the *taurobolium*. Although the inscription does not provide access to the meaning of rebirth, it does link this term with “sweet things,” that, as we have seen, is considered by Betz to refer to a drink in the initiation ceremony.⁵⁸⁴ If Betz is correct, then

⁵⁸⁰ Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 210.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. Surprisingly, they choose to maintain the meaning of “created” in their translation.

⁵⁸² For his evidence, see Ibid. If this inscription is dedicated to Mithras, then it is the only other example of *creatus* in Mithraic inscriptions. The inscription reads: *[Invic]to S[oli deo / ge]nitori P.[Ael(ius) Art]emidorus de[c(urio?) . . .] / sacerdos creatus a Pal[myre]nis do(mo) Macedonia et adven[tor] huius templi pro se / et suis fecit.* Emphasis mine. Cf. CIMRM 2008; and CIL III S. 7728. Note: concerning the phrase *sacerdos creatus a Palmyrenis* see A. D. Nock, “The Genius of Mithraism,” *JRS* 27 (1937): 109-10.

⁵⁸³ Betz, “Mithras Inscriptions,” 71. Betz suggests that other mystery cults do in fact have parallels that support such an understanding, but his only example (apart from Christian texts) comes from Apuleius who does not use *creatus* but rather *reformatus*. Essentially, Betz argues that, because other texts connect the idea of rebirth to that of recreation, this is how the passage is to be understood. His argument would be strengthened if he noted that *natus* (birth) can be used in the sense of *renatus* (rebirth) and that *creatus* follows a similar pattern.

⁵⁸⁴ See footnote 576.

the inscription provides a moment in time to which rebirth can be connected, although we do not know whether the drink was regularly consumed or whether it functioned as a singular event.⁵⁸⁵ We have, nonetheless, a point at which one can mark the temporal moment of rebirth, again corresponding to the idea of rebirth in 1 Peter.

One final piece of evidence from the Mithraic inscriptions of Santa Prisca is the *graffito* mentioned above, found in a niche of the outside wall which contains the term *natus*.⁵⁸⁶ While we do not know who is born, the use of *nascor* in this inscription is still significant, but very little has been written about this *graffitio*.⁵⁸⁷ Vermaseren in his *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* only comments “*natus*: I suppose a mystical sense.”⁵⁸⁸ In another work, Vermaseren, along with van Essen, elaborates on this *graffito* by contending:

In the *graffito* on the left side-wall of the cult-niche in this Mithraeum someone states that he is *natus*, ‘born’, i.e. initiated in the service. The more common phrase in the mysteries of the initiation is *renatus*; physically one has already been born, but by one’s reception into the service one is *reborn*.⁵⁸⁹

This *graffitio* offers little information except that formal service into the cult was regarded as some sort of birth; nonetheless, this does provide a degree of insight into the idea of (re)birth. According to Vermaseren and van Essen, the second birth, for the writer of the

⁵⁸⁵ Even if Betz is not correct, the text has connected rebirth to *dulcibus* (sweet), though, admittedly, this could refer to something to be received either literally or metaphorically in the future.

⁵⁸⁶ CIMRM 498. The inscription reads: *Natus prima luce / duobus augg. co(n)s(ulibus) / Servero et Anton[ino] / XII k(alendas) decem[bres] / dies Saturni / luna XVIII*. Emphasis mine. This *graffito* is used to date the lower portion of the painting discussed above (pp. 194-95).

⁵⁸⁷ M. Guarducci, “Il Graffito *Natus Prima Luce* Nel Mitreo di Santa Prisca,” in *Mysteria Mithrae*, ed. U. Bianchi. EPROER, no. 80 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 153-70, uses astral evidence to argue that the subject is Mithras himself (i.e. the “birth” of Mithras in this mithraeum and, hence, is the consecration date of the mithraeum). Guarducci has offered an intriguing possibility, although her argument is weakened by the lack of any other inscriptional evidence. Other, related inscriptions clearly refer to the birth/birthday of the participants.

⁵⁸⁸ CIMRM 498.

⁵⁸⁹ Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 208.

graffitio, is marked by service in the cult. If we accept their conclusions here, (re)birth, while it may have spiritual and future implications as well, affected the current social activities of the members (i.e. one was “born” into the service of the cult). A similar description of (re)birth occurs in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*.

C. Rebirth in the Cult of Isis (and Osiris): Evidence from Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*

The writing most cited for its use of rebirth language in conjunction with the mysteries is Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, especially book 11 in which the main character (Lucius) eventually undergoes initiation into the mysteries of Isis (and Osiris).⁵⁹⁰ Apuleius describes the goddess as representative of all other goddesses, whether Ceres, Venus, Diana, Hecate, the Mother of the Gods, etc., but she identifies herself to Lucius by her true name: Queen Isis.⁵⁹¹ Lucius’ final journey towards initiation into the Isis (and Osiris) cult begins in the Corinthian port of Cenchreae during a religious procession in honour of the goddess.⁵⁹² During this procession, at the instruction of the goddess, he is to eat a garland of roses held by one of the priests in order to be transformed from a donkey back into a human.⁵⁹³ Lucius’ (full) initiation into the service of Isis occurs later, when he is able to raise sufficient funds to travel, in Rome.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ Isis is regularly mentioned throughout *Metamorphoses* 11. It is not until part-way through Lucius’ initiation(s) that Osiris is mentioned. Apuleius writes of Lucius, “I had been steeped in the mysteries of the goddess, but I had not yet been enlightened by the mysteries of the great god and supreme parent of the gods, Osiris the unconquered” (11.27). English translation is from Hanson, *Metamorphoses*, 349.

⁵⁹¹ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.2,5. Many other names by which she is known are identified, first by Lucius (11.2), then by the goddess herself (11.5) before she reveals herself to Lucius.

⁵⁹² Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.35; 11.8.

⁵⁹³ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.13.

⁵⁹⁴ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.28. While this section makes it clear that Lucius must travel to Rome to be initiated (complete the initiation?), he also speaks of already being initiated (11.22-27) and later refers to three initiations that he had to undergo (11.29).

Although *renascor* occurs only three times in *Metamorphoses*, these three occurrences are concentrated around Apuleius' description of Lucius' journey into service for Isis. In the story, when Lucius is restored back to human form by Isis, after having suffered greatly as a donkey, he declares:

I did not know what would be most appropriate to say first, where to find opening words for my new-found voice, what speech to use in making an auspicious inaugural of my tongue now **born anew (*renata*)**, or with what grand words to express my gratitude to so great a goddess.⁵⁹⁵

Shortly thereafter in the story, the entire city is talking about the miraculous transformation of Lucius from a donkey back to a human, and they proclaim of Lucius:

He is the one who was transformed back into a human being today by the majestic force of the all-powerful goddess. How fortunate he is, by Hercules, and thrice blessed! It is doubtless because of the innocence and faithfulness of his past life that he has earned such remarkable patronage from heaven that he was in a manner **reborn (*renatus*)** and immediately engaged to the service of her cult.⁵⁹⁶

These passages clearly relate to Lucius' connection and devotion to the Isis cult. Finally, in a telling passage on the mysteries of initiation, Apuleius writes of how Lucius continually implored the high priest to initiate him to which the priest replied that the ceremony had to proceed properly for it was a serious matter:

For, he said, both the gates of death and the guardianship of life were in the goddess's hands, and the act of initiation was performed in the manner of a **voluntary death [*voluntariae mortis*]** and salvation obtained by favour. In fact, those who had finished their life's span and were already standing on the

⁵⁹⁵ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.14.3-6, emphasis mine. The Latin text reads: *quid potissimum praefarer primum, unde nouae uocis exordium caperem, quo sermone nunc renata lingua felicius auspicarer, quibus quantisque uerbis tantae deae gratias agerem*. Latin text and English translation are from Hanson, *Metamorphoses*, 316-19. Although J. G. Griffiths, ed., *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*. EPROER, no. 39 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 86-87, 316-19, maintains the more difficult reading *renatam*, he recognizes that this does not change the fact that it stems from *renascor* (51, 317).

⁵⁹⁶ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.16.6-11, emphasis mine. The Latin text reads: *Hunc omnipotentis hodie deae numen augustum reformauit ad homines. Felix hercules et ter beatus, qui uitae scilicet praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit tam praeclarum de caelo patrociniū ut renatus quodam modo statim sacrorum obsequio desponderetur*. Latin text and English translation are from Hanson, *Metamorphoses*, 322-23.

very threshold of light's end, if only they could safely be trusted with the great unspoken mysteries of the cult, were frequently drawn forth by the goddess's power and in a manner **reborn [renatos]** through her providence and set once more upon the course of renewed life.⁵⁹⁷

No other direct term of rebirth occurs in conjunction with Lucius and the Isis cult.

One other passage in Apuleius, however, is worth mentioning in the context of this discussion. This passage uses *natalis* (birthday); at the conclusion of his initiation, Lucius declares: "Next I celebrated my **birth (natalem)** into the mysteries, a most festive occasion."⁵⁹⁸ While this is the only use of *natalis* in conjunction with the Isis cult, its use, following the three occurrences of *renascor* may indicate that one's birth into the cult is another way of speaking of rebirth. That is, birth into the cult is the second birth, following one's actual, physical birth.⁵⁹⁹

Further analysis of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* reveals some interesting information as well. Apuleius uses forms of *natalis* and cognate terms: e.g. *nata*—born, daughter; *natum*—origin; *natibus*—birth, age; etc.⁶⁰⁰ some 44 times throughout his *Metamorphoses*. This compares with only 27 similar words in *all* of his other works combined. If, as has been claimed by several scholars, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* reflects the "rhetorical arts of a Sophist,"⁶⁰¹ then this explosion of words that look like, sound like or mean "birth" might not

⁵⁹⁷ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.21.24-32, emphases mine. The Latin text reads: *nam et inferum claustra et salutis tutelam in deae manu posita, ipsamque traditionem ad instar uoluntariae mortis et precariae salutis celebrari, quippe cum transactis uitae temporibus iam in ipso finitae lucis limine constitutos, quis tamen tuto possint magna religionis committi silentia, numen deae soleat elicere et sua prouidentia quodam modo renatos ad nouae reponere rursus salutis curricula.* Latin text and English translation are from *Ibid.*, 332-35.

⁵⁹⁸ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.24.18-19, emphasis mine. The Latin text reads: *Exhinc festissimum celebraui natalem sacrorum.* Latin text and English translation are from *Ibid.*, 342-43.

⁵⁹⁹ See also the discussion above (pp. 197-98) of the use of *natus* in a *graffitio* at Santa Prisca.

⁶⁰⁰ For these related terms, see *A New Latin Dictionary*, 1889 ed., s.v., "*nascor*," "*natis*," and "*natio*."

⁶⁰¹ J. Tatum, *Apuleius and The Golden Ass* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 18, uses this specific phrase. Others have also acknowledged the "brilliance" with which Apuleius crafts this novel. See, e.g., Haight, *Apuleius and his Influence*, 37; and Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*, 55-65. Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*, 58-59, notes, along with others, that Apuleius had a fondness for playing with language, one example of which are the many neologisms which occur in book 11. In his introduction Hanson, *Metamorphoses*, xii, while (continued...)

be entirely accidental;⁶⁰² Apuleius could be repeating and introducing these terms in such a way as to draw attention to (foreshadow?) his use of *renascor* and *natalis* in the latter part of the work. Moreover, within these occurrences, we find an interesting phrase *e re nata*.⁶⁰³ This phrase is found six times in *Metamorphoses* and seems to convey the action of extemporizing or improvising in various situations (i.e. giving “birth” to a new idea when old plans fail?). The question is: does this phrase function as a play on *renata*? In the *entire* Latin textual corpus, this phrase only occurs two other times.⁶⁰⁴ While certainly not conclusive, this “playing with words” may signal an even deeper connection between the story of Lucius and the idea of birth or rebirth in the mysteries of Isis than even the more explicit evidence would suggest.

Rebirth clearly has an important role in the story of Lucius by Apuleius. Although *renascor* occurs only three times, these occurrences are placed at critical junctures in the narrative. Further, if Apuleius is indeed using rhetorical techniques as a writer, this underscores the centrality of birth/rebirth to the narrative. Yet, despite all the evidence for the centrality of birth/rebirth, one seems to learn very little from Apuleius about the meaning of rebirth. In fact, the narrative is even more elusive since it states that Lucius was in a “manner” (*modo*) rebirthed, and one is left to wonder in what manner this occurred and

(continued)

acknowledging that critics differ widely in their analysis of *Metamorphoses*, regards Apuleius’ book as “a complex and carefully wrought work.”

⁶⁰² Hanson, *Metamorphoses*, xiv, whose work as a translator of Apuleius would have intimately familiarized him with Apuleius’ style, notes that “The virtues of Apuleius’ style . . . would be regarded for the most part as faults in contemporary English prose: exaggeration and repetition...” and “a translator, obliged to make orderly sense out of Apuleius’ wonderfully ordered sounds and images, too frequently corrects the faults of his Latin author in the interests of a precision and lucidity foreign to his original.” Thus, one could conclude that repetition and a unique ordering of sounds and images is an integral part of Apuleius’ style in his *Metamorphoses*.

⁶⁰³ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.3.22; 4.11.1; 4.14.12; 9.6.11; and 9.21.3.

⁶⁰⁴ Based on a search of the PHI CD-ROM of Latin texts. The other two occurrences are in Gaius Lucilius *Saturae, fragmenta* (satire, verse 962), and Publius Terentius Afer, *Adelphoe* (verse 295).

whether this pertains to what is perceived as actual rebirth by the writer, or whether it is simply like rebirth in some fashion.

Nonetheless, we do have hints that, whatever type (*modo*) of rebirth this was, there are immediate, tangible implications to this idea of rebirth. The second use of *renascor*—placed on the lips of the city’s residents—connects the idea of rebirth with immediate engagement in the service of Isis. The same is true for the third use of *renascor*—from the mouth of the priest of Isis—that places the initiate upon the course of a renewed life. Thus, while the placement of rebirth is subsequent to initiation and appears to be the result of this initiation, the language of the text directly links the language of rebirth not to the initiation ritual but to an identification with and service within the cult as the central feature of one’s new life. Like the author of 1 Peter, Apuleius highlights the relational changes tied to the idea of rebirth, while initiation rituals, if connected to rebirth, remain peripheral to this central focus.

Chapter Conclusions

I begin the conclusion by teasing out some potential implications of rebirth language in the mysteries, particularly in Mithraism and the Isis cult based upon the evidence in this chapter. One of the Mithraic inscriptions from Santa Prisca (cited above) hints at a new connection with Mithras through rebirth. This inscription receives the following translation by Vermaseren and van Essen: “Sweet are the livers of the birds, but Mithras’ care guides him who is piously reborn and created by sweet things.”⁶⁰⁵ If indeed these two lines are meant to be read together, then those who are rebirthed enter into a special relationship with the god, or, as Vermaseren and van Essen phrase it, “the material life of mankind [sic], i.e. of

⁶⁰⁵ Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 208.

the uninitiated, is set against the spiritual life of the initiates over whom Mithras himself watches.”⁶⁰⁶ Those who are (reborned?) members of the cult stand in a special relationship to the god who watches over them in *this* life.

Similarly, a special relationship with other members is implied as part of one’s initiation or new “birth” into the cult. Not only did the Mithraic cults consist of small, closed groups, but there is evidence that they invoked familial language.⁶⁰⁷ The overseer of this cult was known as the Father (πατήρ),⁶⁰⁸ and there is an indication in the Mithras Liturgy that the participant was referred to as the son (υἱός).⁶⁰⁹ Firmicus Maternus provides us a glimpse into the possible bonding that occurred within the cult when he records:

The male they worship is a cattle rustler, and his cult they relate to the potency of fire, as his prophet handed down the lore to us, saying Μύστα βοοκλοπίης, συνδέξιε πατρὸς ἀγαθοῦ (‘Initiate of cattle-rustling, companion by handclasp of an illustrious father’). Him they call Mithra, and his cult they carry on in hidden caves.⁶¹⁰

The most telling part of this passage is the quote from the Mithraic prophet (*propheta*) in which the initiate becomes a συνδέξιε πατρὸς. Here we have both the language of close

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 47, emphasizes the intimate nature of the Mithraic groups.

⁶⁰⁸ The final rank achieved by a Mithraic initiate was the Father (*pater*/πατήρ) symbolized by Mithras himself. See R. Merkelbach, “Mithras, Mithraism,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1996). The concept of “father” in the Greco-Roman world will be dealt with in chapter five.

⁶⁰⁹ *Mithras Liturgy* line 536. The Greek text reads: ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ υἱὸς. Greek text is from M. W. Meyer, ed. & trans., *The "Mithras Liturgy"*. SBLTT, no. 10 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 6. Granted, the Mithras Liturgy lies on the fringe of Mithraism, but still remains within Mithraism (see the discussion in Meyer, vii-viii).

⁶¹⁰ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum* 5.2. English translation is from C. A. Forbes, trans., *Firmicus Maternus: The Error of the Pagan Religions*. Ancient Christian writers, no. 37 (New York: Newman Press, 1970), 52. The Latin (and Greek) text reads: *Virum uero abactorem bouum colentes sacra eius ad ignis transferunt potestatem, sicut propheta eius tradidit nobis dicens: Μύστα βοοκλοπίης, συνδέξιε πατρὸς ἀγαθοῦ Hunc Mithram dicunt, sacra uero eius in speluncis abditis.* The Latin (and Greek) text is from R. Turcan, *Firmicus Maternus. L'Erreur des Religions Paiennes*. Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Société de l'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1982), 86.

companionship (συνδέξιε) and of family (πατρός). While this quote is cryptic, the use of συνδέξιε seems related to the members' regard for one another, as Roger Beck intimates in his discussion of the Mithras cult as an association.⁶¹¹ These relationships might have been viewed as the privilege of those who had been “born” or rebirthed into the cult.

Lastly, in *Metamorphoses*, not only does Apuleius connect Lucius' rebirth into the mysteries with his immediate engagement in the service of the Isis cult, but, if we accept the interpretation of Vermaseren and van Essen of the graffito in the Mithraeum at Santa Prisca, we also have evidence of someone's birth into the cult occurring through reception into service of the cult.⁶¹² The eleventh book of Apuleius' novel also hints at various changes that may have occurred once a person was “born into” the sacred mysteries. While much concerning these mysteries remains hidden, two potential concepts emerge when one examines the changes that took place after this new birth or rebirth (if, indeed, initiation were perceived as such): the initiate experiences a special relationship with the god(ess) and with the other members of the cult. Such concepts offer clues to how such terms could have been understood in the immediate (temporal) context of the initiates.⁶¹³ Ultimately, however, the exploration of such questions would take us beyond the scope of this

⁶¹¹ R. Beck, "The Mithras Cult as Association," *SR* 21, no. 1 (1992): 8, links the meaning of συνδέξιε to the organization of Mithraism into small groupings of “good friends.”

⁶¹² See the discussion above (p. 198) in conjunction with the statement by Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 208, that “one has already been born, but by one's reception into the service one is *reborn*.”

⁶¹³ This is not to say that such terms were not also understood in other ways, such as eventual ‘birth’ into the realm of the gods. See, e.g., Plato, *Phaedo* 69C, who writes: “And I fancy that those men who established the mysteries were not unenlightened, but in reality had a hidden meaning when they said long ago that whoever goes uninitiated and unsanctified to the other world will lie in the mire, but he who arrives there initiated and purified will dwell with the gods.” Translation is from H. N. Fowler, trans., *Plato: Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*, vol. 1. LCL (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 241. There is also evidence that these rites were perceived to allow one to escape from the pains of hell. See, e.g., Plato, *Respublica* 2.7, who writes: “and that there are also special rites for the defunct, which they call functions, that deliver us from evils in that other world, while terrible things await those who have neglected to sacrifice.” Translation is from P. Shorey, trans., *Plato: The Republic*, vol. 1. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 135.

dissertation into an exploration of internal cult relationships and belief systems whose connection with rebirth language is far from certain.

Overall, the position of rebirth in the ancient mysteries is both obvious and unclear. While the limited number of references encourages caution about claiming that every mystery rite in every place emphasized rebirth, sufficient direct and indirect references to a second birth or a rebirth exist that one cannot deny that the idea of rebirth was used as a part of a number of the ancient mysteries. Further, the unapologetic use of ἀναγεννάω by Sallustius at a time when its use proliferated in Christian writings supports the notion that rebirth terminology formed a significant part of certain mysteries. Not only does Sallustius help confirm the likely entrenchment of rebirth language in at least the Attis and Magna Mater cult, he is probably dependent upon an earlier textual tradition, from within the mysteries themselves. The secrecy motif prevalent throughout the mysteries supports these conclusions by offering an explanation for why there is not earlier extant evidence: these ideas, while known in generic form, were not widely publicized and the likelihood that these texts would have survived is greatly reduced.

The later evidence is compelling. The evidence from the *taurobolium* regarding the use of “birthday” (*natalis/natalicius*) in reference to sacrifices is intriguing and likely points to, at minimum, an association of some of the ceremonies with one’s birthday and, quite possibly, a view of the *taurobolium* sacrifice as a kind of “birth” (*nascor*) or “rebirth” (*renascor*) by some who participated in this rite. This latter view receives support from an inscription that actually speaks of an “eternal rebirth” in relation to a *taurobolium/criobolium* sacrifice. Nonetheless, the sporadic and late nature of this evidence strongly cautions against assuming that it permeated the *taurobolium* or that it is indicative of all earlier traditions. The language does come from somewhere and, although we are not able to unravel the complex relationship between the expanding use of rebirth in Christian writings and the use

of rebirth language in some of the mysteries, the cultic nature of the activities of the mysteries likely points to a connection with earlier traditions.

Evidence in the form of inscriptions connected with the cult of Mithras also supports the idea that rebirth was connected to different mysteries, and, more importantly, it provides evidence that the use of rebirth language was not necessarily a late development in the mysteries. These Mithraic inscriptions at Santa Prisca not only provide earlier evidence of this birth/rebirth language but may indicate that the participants regarded initiation into the cult as a kind of re-creation (*creatus*). While we do not have sufficient evidence to speculate further, these inscriptions help mark a temporal point for the moment of rebirth and may even be understood to indicate that one is born (or rebirthed) into service of the cult, thereby indicating a tangible implication for the moment of (re)birth.

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* provides not only the most substantial evidence for rebirth in conjunction with the mystery rites, but also the earliest evidence. The concept of rebirth resonates in his writing even beyond the significant number of direct references to rebirth surrounding the character's (Lucius') initiation into the Isis cult. The evidence from Apuleius links rebirth language to Lucius' identification with the goddess. Other sources confirm the perception of a new relationship with the god(dess) and also indicate the formation of special relationships with other members of the cult.

In the end, the evidence from the mysteries is relatively rich and, although the increase in expressions of rebirth may have been spurred by their increasing use in developing Christian groups, most likely it stems from within the cults themselves. The breadth of the evidence, while still limited in extant writings, likely points to early traditions developing within these Greco-Roman groups. Thus, it is a reasonable assumption that the language of rebirth had been utilized earlier by some of the cults and, possibly, that it was part of the larger cultural milieu upon which the letter of 1 Peter drew. The geographical

correlations between the *taurobolium* inscriptions, the inscriptions from Santa Prisca and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* lend further support to potential connections between the letter of 1 Peter and these mystery rites. The *taurobolium* itself originated in Asia Minor, and the second phase of the *taurobolium*—which is the period represented by the inscriptions examined above—had as its locus: Rome. The Mithraic inscriptions were found in the church of Santa Prisca, located in Rome. Moreover, the cult of Mithras itself originated in Asia Minor, and the evidence from Santa Prisca likely had ties to those origins.⁶¹⁴ Finally, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* places the character Lucius' (final) initiation in the city of Rome. Given that 1 Peter's likely origin was Rome and that it is directed to recipients in Asia Minor, these geographical correlations enhance the potential connection between the rebirth language of this letter and the rebirth language reflected in these mysteries.

It is possible, therefore, that the rebirth language of 1 Peter represents either a recontextualization or reconfiguration of the type of rebirth expressions found in these mysteries or an echo/allusion to the idea of rebirth evident in the mysteries. However, given the lack of direct evidence from the first century we cannot verify any intertextual recontextualization or reconfiguration, and, thus, it is more appropriate to conclude that the language of 1 Peter could represent cultural echo or allusion to some of the ideas of rebirth also found in the mysteries. Also, like the changes hinted at by Apuleius and two of the Mithraic inscriptions, these new relationships in 1 Peter focus on temporal time (here and now) and on the new social dynamics of this rebirth. The social implications of 1 Peter's rebirth language (also evident, albeit for a different purpose, in John's gospel as highlighted

⁶¹⁴ Betz, "Mithras Inscriptions," 63, writes regarding these cultic inscriptions at Santa Prisca: "Cultic material, however, is always tied to tradition. Greek and oriental influence is evident in the spelling, in the names of the initiates, and in the paintings. One must, therefore, come to the conclusion that the Mithraeum was instituted by way of a cult transfer." He recognizes that the Mithraism which reached the western empire was different from its origins, it, nonetheless, began and was likely created by fusion in Asia Minor (esp. 64).

in chapter three) begs an examination of the social texture of rebirth language: a topic for the next chapter.

Chapter 5

FATHERS AND CHILDREN: THE SOCIAL ROLE OF CHRISTIAN REBIRTH LANGUAGE

Introductory Comments

This chapter engages the cultural context of rebirth language in 1 Peter—a category that Robbins calls “social and cultural texture”—and will use anthropological and sociological theories to explore the social context and connections evoked by this rebirth language.⁶¹⁵ The key question in the examination of social and cultural texture is: what kind of social and cultural person lives in the “world” of this particular text?⁶¹⁶ Another way to phrase this is: how does this text encourage the letter’s recipients to live as Christians in their world?⁶¹⁷ More specific to this dissertation is the question: how does rebirth language function to shape the readers’ relationship to and outlook upon the larger culture?

The most common and generally accepted (social and cultural) analyses of 1 Peter propose that this letter reflects, and serves to further shape, a sectarian outlook. The work of Bryan R. Wilson, more than any other scholar, has directly impacted an understanding of early Christian communities as sectarian. Building upon Wilson’s work, John H. Elliott has applied the sectarian model to the recipient communities of 1 Peter. Within this sectarian framework, familial language (which includes rebirth language) is perceived as one of the

⁶¹⁵ Robbins, *Exploring*, 71; Robbins, *Tapestry*, 144.

⁶¹⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 71.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

central features. Nonetheless, despite the reasonable success at describing certain facets of early Christian actions and perceptions, the sect-church model lacks the nuances necessary for depicting the complex nature of the relationships between early Christian groups and other groups as well as society as a whole within the Greco-Roman context. While 1 Peter does contain features that seem to fit the sectarian model, it also exhibits arguments and statements that do not match the sectarian proposal, or at least are not fully explained by this model. While Wilson does critique and modify the sect-church model of Ernst Troeltsch (among others), the model itself still contains a number of significant weaknesses, and several sociologists have called for a moratorium on its use. Based upon the kind of descriptions found in 1 Peter as well as other documents and inscriptions connected to Asia Minor, it has been argued that some early Christian communities, including those addressed in the letter of 1 Peter, were much more integrated into their social contexts than has previously been acknowledged. A more nuanced method of describing such integration can be achieved through re-framing the language of assimilation (or acculturation) and developing a more comprehensive and flexible theory of assimilation and dissimulation.

Unquestionably, 1 Peter is written to shape the readers' sense of identity and to encourage some degree of separation from certain societal behaviours (which are never specifically defined). Yet, in the course of shaping the recipients' sense of identity and behavioural expectations in light of that identity, the letter's author encourages a connection to and participation in the cultural and social framework through the ongoing assimilation of key cultural behaviours and elements. The author's utilization of familial (and rebirth) language should be understood within this more positive context even though such language also functions to encourage a unique sense of identity. More specifically, the meaning

created by 1 Peter's cultural assimilation provides the readers with a distinct sense of group identity while simultaneously grounding them in the meaning systems of their social and cultural context. They are encouraged to live within their civic contexts in a manner that is appropriate to their distinct sense of identity. At the centre of this identity is the familial and rebirth language that shapes the early portions of this document. In particular, the powerful father-children cultural ideal—also utilized by various other Greco-Roman groups and associations—has been enhanced by 1 Peter's author through the addition of rebirth language.

I. Early Christian Communities as Sectarian (Bryan Wilson's Sectarian Models)

Bryan R. Wilson, who is influenced by both Max Weber's and Ernst Troeltsch's theories of the sectarian ideal,⁶¹⁸ developed some fairly extensive sect typologies. Wilson

⁶¹⁸ Wilson's work has certainly been described as "Weberian" (see, e.g., T. Robbins, "Review of Bryan Wilson, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*," *Contemporary Sociology* 6 (1977): 620), Wilson is more directly influenced by Troeltsch (e.g. E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. O. Wyon. Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992)) wrote in dialogue with Max Weber. See J. M. Bryant, "Wavering Saints, Mass Religiosity, and the Crisis of Post-Baptismal Sin in Early Christianity: A Weberian Reading of the Shepherd of Hermas," *EurJSoc* 39 (1998): 50 n.3. The parallels are quite obvious when one views the summary of Troeltsch's description of a sect in B. R. Wilson, *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study* (New York; Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 22-26. Wilson writes that in Troeltsch's view, "The sect then was depicted as an inner community . . . [y]et . . . the sect saw itself in some ways as a lay élite" (23). While Wilson ultimately concludes that Troeltsch's definitions are no longer relevant, he does acknowledge that they were valid until relatively recently (24). Moreover many aspects of Wilson's own analysis of sects include Weberian elements such as the (reborn) charismatic leader (19-20) and the exclusive and elite nature of the sectarian community (29-32). Bryant, "Wavering Saints," 50 n.3, points out that Wilson's criticisms and modifications of Troeltsch's definition of sects—because Troeltsch's concept was too limited (see B. R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 12)—connects with Weber's sect-church model, which he describes as "analytically more judicious, and cognizant of the fact that the social composition of most sects and churches is not only internally variable but also remarkably diverse when viewed in historical and comparative perspective." Moreover, Wilson's analysis of sects include key Weberian elements such as the (reborn) charismatic leader (Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 19-20). In Weber's application of the virtuosi community—which defines itself against the larger society—rebirth is presented as a central element. For Weber, rebirth is the key component of the Christian charismatic leader. Rebirth is considered to be part of the process of salvation, and, as a sudden transformation, it sanctifies or (continued...)

initially expanded church-sect typologies to study new Christian religious movements in the western world, and he then broadened his typologies for use in cross-cultural applications, which have subsequently been applied to early Christian communities.⁶¹⁹ Wilson indicates that:

The sect is a clearly defined community; it is of a size which permits only a minimal range of diversity of conduct; it seeks itself to rigidify a pattern of behaviour and to make coherent its structure of values; it contends actively against every other organisation of values and ideals, and against every other social context possible for its adherents, offering itself as an all-embracing, divinely prescribed society. The sect is not only an ideological unit, it is, to greater or lesser degree, a social unit, seeking to enforce behaviour on those who accept belief, and seeking every occasion to draw the faithful apart from the rest of society and into the company of each other.⁶²⁰

This definition contains many of the characteristics that Wilson has highlighted throughout his writings.⁶²¹ Sects maintain high boundaries regarding group membership. One's identity within the sect is conferred to the individual and must supersede all other identities.⁶²² One is "born-again" or "initiated" into the group in the course of conferring this identity and the

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purifies the individual to aid in their conduct as members of this community. It is the charismatic leader's rebirth that has assured them of their status, having provided the charisma necessary for their role. As Weber contends, "in the most consistent types of salvation religion, [rebirth] becomes a quality of devotion indispensable for religious salvation, which the individual *must acquire* and which he [*sic*] *must make manifest* in his pattern of life" (M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. E. Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 150, emphases mine). Weber presents rebirth as a necessary component for membership within the virtuosi-sect and as a key element in distinguishing its leaders (and members) from outsiders.

⁶¹⁹ Wilson, *Magic*.

⁶²⁰ B. R. Wilson, *Sects and Society: A Sociological Study of Three Religious Groups in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1961), 1.

⁶²¹ See, e.g., *Ibid.*, 326; B. R. Wilson, "Introduction," in *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements*, ed. B. R. Wilson (London: Heinemann, 1967), 14-15; Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 36; B. R. Wilson, "Sect or Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain its Identity?" *Spectrum* 7, no. 1 (1975): 34-35; and B. R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 9-10.

⁶²² B. R. Wilson, "Becoming a Sectarian: Motivation and Commitment," in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. D. Baker. *Studies in Church History*, no. 15 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 483; B. R. Wilson, "On the Fringe of Christendom," *Rationalist Annual* (1963): 40.

movement's ideology provides an interpretation for all aspects of each member's world.⁶²³

These minority movements distinguish themselves from the values of the larger society and possess a distinct "we-them" perspective.⁶²⁴ A sect, or sectarian group, according to Wilson, stands in *stark* opposition to those outside the group, be that society as a whole or another group whose values are different.⁶²⁵

Within this framework, there are, Wilson proposes, seven types of sects that are distinguishable based upon their response to "the world" and the corresponding soteriological perspective.⁶²⁶ The seven types are identified as: 1) conversionist, 2) revolutionist, 3) introversionist, 4) manipulationist, 5) thaumaturgical, 6) reformist and 7) utopian.⁶²⁷ Conversionist sects tend to withdraw from the world and seek personal transformation from within. Revolutionist sects believe in a radical transformation of society either through a return to an idealized world or through the supernatural destruction and transformation of the world. Introversionist sects focus on the group itself as the seat of all that is sacred (everything outside of the group is profane) and focus on purity and holiness within the group. Manipulationist sects seek to understand and reshape (or manipulate) their world through special insights and attitudes. Thaumaturgical sects exhibit the most fundamental religious demand for healings, miracles and magic to transform the suffering of the world. Reformist sects—which are considered rare—seek to transform the

⁶²³ Wilson, "On the Fringe of Christendom," .

⁶²⁴ B. R. Wilson, "Them Against Us," *Twentieth Century* 27 (1963).

⁶²⁵ Wilson, *Magic*, 12.

⁶²⁶ B. R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review* 24, no. 1 (1959), originally identified four types of sects: conversionist, adventist, introversionist and gnostic. He later altered and expanded his types to accommodate non-Christian groups more adequately, replacing adventist with revolutionist and gnostic with manipulationist.

⁶²⁷ Wilson, *Magic*, 18-26, offers a summary of these sects types.

world through the reformation of social institutions. Finally, utopian sects withdraw temporarily from the world in order to remake it through the construction of a society using perfectionist principles. Of all these types, the first three (conversionist, revolutionist and introversionist) are considered the most applicable to early Christian communities, but it is the conversionist type that has come to dominate the sectarian understanding of these early Christian communities, particularly those connected to the letter of 1 Peter.⁶²⁸

John H. Elliott applies Wilson's typology in his "social-scientific" examination of the communities behind the letter of 1 Peter.⁶²⁹ Elliott uses Wilson's model to characterize these Christians as a conversionist sect, and he indicates that his goal is an interpretation of the social dimension of 1 Peter.⁶³⁰ At the forefront of Elliott's analysis is his characterization of the letter's recipients as literal *πάρουκοι* (strangers/aliens), a term which he also links to the letter's use of *οἶκος* (household).⁶³¹ 1 Peter's initial community—according to Elliott—were, literally, socially displaced *πάρουκοι* who had joined the growing Christian sect in Asia Minor in order to improve their social and economic lot, only to find themselves further persecuted as part of this new religion.⁶³² Elliott argues that the letter was written to emphasize group solidarity and counter the disillusion and despair felt by the recipients. The letter emphasizes the recipients' distinct identity as a Christian household and encourages

⁶²⁸ The application of the conversionist sect label to early Christianity may also have been influenced by the classic study by A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), esp. pp. 134-37, 207-11, 27-29, along with subsequent studies on the idea of conversion in the early Christian movement.

⁶²⁹ Elliott's initial and primary analysis of the social dimension of the communities behind 1 Peter is in J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), which was republished with a new introduction as Elliott, *Home*.

⁶³⁰ Elliott, *Home*, 7-8, 77, 79-80.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 49, 130.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 83-84.

them to maintain cohesion from within as well as separation from without.⁶³³ Elliott also attempts to resolve the tension between separation from and participation in society within this letter by arguing that the conversionist sect's desire to proselytize explains the elements of the letter that encourage interaction with outsiders.⁶³⁴ While Elliott's documentation is extensive, and he has gathered a comprehensive list of resources in the course of his analysis of this letter, several aspects of the letter are not entirely accounted for by the sectarian model he uses.

II. Drawbacks to the Sectarian Model

Within the sectarian framework, rebirth has been presented as one of the core distinctives that demonstrates complete separation from others/outside. As noted above, Wilson has described rebirth (using the language of “born-again” or “initiation”) as a key means for the group to set themselves apart from the larger society.⁶³⁵ Elliott too describes rebirth as one of the central distinguishing marks in 1 Peter that separated them from outsiders and resulted in the termination of social bonds and public responsibilities.⁶³⁶ Yet, we have not seen evidence in 1 Peter that rebirth language is presented or understood in this manner.

In contrast to the use of rebirth in John, where rebirth identifies the true “kingdom” community from other communities (as seen in chapter three of this dissertation), 1 Peter does not offer rebirth as a feature that distinguishes it from any other community. In fact the

⁶³³ Ibid., 148, 200-20.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 103-04.

⁶³⁵ Wilson, "On the Fringe of Christendom," 40-50. Weber also spoke of rebirth language as central to identity within a sectarian context—see footnote 618.

⁶³⁶ Elliott, *Home*, 75-79.

author/narrator of 1 Peter emphasizes connectedness right at the moment that rebirth language is first introduced through the rare use of “we/us” language (with no corresponding “them” language offered in contrast), as seen in the narrative section of chapter two. Instead 1 Peter’s author has embedded rebirth language into familial language—closely pairing it with πατήρ (father)—and does not use such language any differently than many other Greco-Roman groups (as will be demonstrated below). The idea that rebirth merely serves a sectarian purpose requires the importation or assumption of meanings for rebirth which, as has been demonstrated in the earlier chapters of this dissertation, are not found in 1 Peter and do not readily fit the developing idea of rebirth in the first and early second centuries.

An analysis of stranger and alien language (πάρουκος, παρεπίδημος) in the text of 1 Peter illustrates this problem of importing or assuming meaning. In the second chapter of this dissertation (using repetitive-progressive texture) I noted that the use of παρεπίδημος at the beginning of this letter does not offer much in terms of either repetition or progression (repeated once and linked to πάρουκος at 2:11). Numbers, however, are only one measure of the importance or function of a term in a text; they do not measure everything. One could postulate that mention of their “alien” status even *once* indicates a clear division between the letter’s recipients and all others who are outside of that designation because of the implied meaning of such “alien” language. However, such a division should not be assumed, or, more correctly, the precise function of that division and the alien language that creates it should not be assumed.⁶³⁷ Moreover, the movement from the rhetorical thrust of such

⁶³⁷ B. H. Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity*. *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12, writes regarding such (continued...)

language to the intended reality of the social situation must be carefully negotiated.

Benjamin H. Dunning's analysis of such alien language in his *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity* urges caution in assuming that only one meaning lies behind this type of language.

Dunning has explored the use of "alien" language in a variety of first and second century Christian contexts, including its use in 1 Peter. I cannot hope to recreate or even summarize all of his findings here, but his conclusions on this topic are especially germane to our discussions of assumed meaning. After an analysis of the use of alien language by various Christian groups, Dunning concludes that we must be cautious in inferring that the use of "alien" language implies a singularity of meaning and/or social application by a Christian group.⁶³⁸ More specifically, Dunning asserts that

[i]n this narration (or employment) of early Christian history, 'alien identity' becomes not a flat historical reality or a site of irresolvable tensions, but rather, 'an imaginative space created by rhetoric', one that allowed Christians to maintain their distinctive identity—even as they situated that identity in relation to Roman society in complex ways, to varying degrees both assimilationist and resistant (as we have seen in multiple registers and with a variety of emphases...).⁶³⁹

Dunning's analysis and conclusions remind us of the complex ways in which "alien" language could be understood and applied. He also highlights the value of drawing on a variety of other sources, including inscriptional and archaeological evidence, in the course of

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language in 1 Peter, "While clearly the designation of Christians as aliens draws some sort of boundary, that boundary is not unimplicated in the norms or values of the culture being figured on the other side of the line."

⁶³⁸ Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners*, 104.

⁶³⁹ Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners*, 108. In this statement, Dunning is drawing on the work of R. L. Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

evaluating the actual function of such language in any specific situation.⁶⁴⁰ In conjunction with Dunning's conclusions regarding "alien" language, evidence both internal and external to 1 Peter—as we will see below—raises questions about the manner in which this letter's terminology (including rebirth language) has been understood in the sectarian model.

There is no question that elements of 1 Peter describe a situation that fits Wilson's general understanding of the sect as a "separate minority religious movement within the context of various dominant religious traditions."⁶⁴¹ The letter does present some Christian behaviour in Asia Minor as distinctive from some of the social expectations of the Greco-Roman world (e.g. 1 Peter 1:14-19; 4:3), a distinctiveness that resulted in some tension with the rest of their society (e.g. 3:16; 4:4). As such they can be described as having sectarian tendencies based on Wilson's general definition and Elliott's application of this model. However, questions still persist about the ability of the sectarian model to *fully* portray the complex social context of Christian groups in the Greco-Roman world, particularly (in 1 Peter) the language of the ideal state, and the encouragement to participate in one's civic context and in activities associated with imperial leadership (more will be said on these elements below). These elements, in conjunction with archaeological and inscriptional evidence from Asia Minor, can also be better explained using the theory of assimilation (and dissimilation) that will be more clearly delineated below.

L. Michael White questions the assumption that the use of (sectarian) language by one group indicates the same meaning when such language is used by another group. He

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 106. However, Dunning also reminds us that all such endeavours of historical interpretation require making choices about the evidence, and he continues to caution, as I have indicated above, about treating the language of "alien identity" simplistically.

⁶⁴¹ Wilson, *Magic*, 11.

writes specifically about the Judean origins of some early Christian language when he states that: “recognizing the sectarian origin of the movement, albeit fundamental, is not by itself an adequate explanation, either on historical or on sociological grounds, for the diverse patterns of growth and development of early Christianity in the wider framework of the Roman world.”⁶⁴² Initially, he highlights the fundamental problem of viewing first century Judaism as a monolithic institution that the Jesus sect sought to counter—an understanding that has come to be widely recognized within the scholarly world, but that seems to only be slowly impacting the descriptions and understanding of the original Christian community as sectarian.⁶⁴³ Even Wilson’s influential model, despite its foray into non-Christian contexts, White contends, is “predicated almost entirely on pluralistic tendencies within the cultural framework of contemporary Christianity.”⁶⁴⁴ He considers the application of this model to be much more difficult in first century Judaism and even more so in the complex religious world of the Greco-Roman empire.⁶⁴⁵

White acknowledges that the language of self-definition—which arose out of the Palestinian context—might have sectarian elements. He cautions, however, against

⁶⁴² L. M. White, "Shifting Sectarian Boundaries in Early Christianity," *BJRL* 70, no. 3 (1988): 7.

⁶⁴³ Significant studies since the 1970s have called into question the idea of Judaism as singular entity and have highlighted a variety of competing groups in first century Judaism. See, e.g., R. Horsley and J. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (New York: Winston-Seabury, 1985); J. MacDonald, *Samaritans and Jews* (London: SCM Press, 1975); J. Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 2d ed. (New York: KTAV, 1979); J. Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginnings of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); and M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1971). A corrective to this perspective has been proposed. In this proposal, Christianity, in its early form within the Judean context (along with other Jewish “sects”), is better understood as a “faction.” This view is highlighted in J. H. Elliott, “Phases in the Social Formation of Early Christianity: From Faction to Sect -- A Social Scientific Perspective,” in *Recruitment, Conquest, and Conflict: Strategies in Judaism, Early Christianity, and the Greco-Roman World*, ed. P. Borgen, V. K. Robbins, and D. B. Gowler. *Emory Studies in Early Christianity*, no. 6 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998).

⁶⁴⁴ White, "Sectarian Boundaries," 14.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

regarding the “re-applications” of such language as identical to its use in the original context: each (re)application of such language is a complex process of development and tension-resolution relative to its environment.⁶⁴⁶ White notes that a religious group does not entirely jettison the traditions and language out of which it comes, but, while it may use the same language, it may be creating a new symbolic world that is an “amalgam of the old symbolic universe out of which the sectarian movement arose with the new cultural environment in which it developed.”⁶⁴⁷ Dunning’s study—highlighted above—reinforces White’s concerns about assumptions regarding the meaning of various terms that are utilized in different contexts. In the end, White considers sociological theories to be unsatisfactory in their ability to describe the ancient world of early Christianity and calls for more interchange with anthropological theories, utilizing the language of “acculturation” to describe the reality of the developing Christian communities in the Greco-Roman world.⁶⁴⁸

The nuances of identity to which White refers are evident in a variety of primary materials related to early Christianity in Asia Minor. For example, Ignatius of Antioch’s letters—which have been described as supporting the idea of a clear sectarian separation from society⁶⁴⁹—also have a number of elements that do not neatly fit within the common sectarian reading of creating boundaries between insiders and outsiders. When, for example, Ignatius does talk about outsiders, he does so in a positive way, demonstrating a concern for the views of Christians by outsiders, and he even employs familial language—encouraging

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., 20-22.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 23-24.

⁶⁴⁹ H. O. Maier, *The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement, and Ignatius*. Dissertations SR, no. 1 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), 163-68.

Christians to treat outsiders as “brothers” (ἀδελφός).⁶⁵⁰ In contrast to Harry O. Maier’s description of Ignatius’ writings as the “embodiment of separation from the world,” Philip A. Harland notes that Ignatius positively uses images from local cultural life and concludes that such language is indicative that these Asian Christian groups “find their place within the *polis* and can express their identity in terms taken from this cultural context, despite their own distinctive identities in other regards.”⁶⁵¹ A similar perspective is evident in the letter of 1 Peter.

Bengt Holmberg calls for a re-evaluation of the entire sect-church typology (including Wilson’s) after an analysis of multiple sociologically-based evaluations of early Christianity.⁶⁵² While Holmberg likes some of the analyses more than others (he especially

⁶⁵⁰ I Eph 10:1-3.

⁶⁵¹ Maier, *Social Setting*, 168; P. A. Harland, “Claiming a Place in *polis* and Empire: The Significance of Imperial Cults and Connections among Associations, Synagogues and Christian Groups in Roman Asia (c. 27 BCE-138CE)” (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1999), 218. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁵² B. Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 77-108, examines studies applying the millenarian movement model to early Christianity: J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*. Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series, ed. J. P. J. Reeder and J. F. Wilson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975); R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1983); W. A. Meeks, “Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. D. Hellholm. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983); as well as studies using the church-sect distinction in analyses of early Christianity: Elliott, *Home*; M. Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*. SNTSMS (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); W. A. Meeks, “Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity’s Separation from the Jewish Communities,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us’: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); W. A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); C. Rowland, *Christian Origins: An Account of the Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect of Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985); R. Scroggs, “The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement,” in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. J. Neusner, vol. 2: *Early Christianity*. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975); R. Stark, “The Class Basis of Early Christianity: Inference from a Sociological Model,” *SocAn* 47 (1986); and F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Holmberg also evaluates the church-sect models of Ernest Troelsch, Max Weber and Bryan R. Wilson.

appreciates Elliott’s understanding of Wilson’s model), he ultimately comments that “[w]hile many exegetes are rather careful in their treatment of the New Testament source material when they apply the church-sect distinction to it, *they seem to be unaware of the problematical character of the sect model they are using.*”⁶⁵³ Further he cautions scholars against taking over a sociological model just because it comes from a sociologist and pointedly argues that: “in this case the criticism from sociologists against the church-sect dichotomy and its many refinements has been strong and persistent.”⁶⁵⁴ He highlights three major problems with using the church-sect typology: cultural limitations, analytical imperfections, and its explanatory power.

The cultural limitations that Holmberg highlights are also a critique of the model offered by Wilson: that the church-sect distinction is rather strongly limited to one cultural model, western Christianity. The typical depiction of a sect-church distinction has focused on theological differences in doctrine (sects would be outside the “norm”) and the degree of institutionalization (sects demonstrate less institutionalization). Recognizing such typical frameworks as problematic, Wilson does adapt his model by trying to eliminate many of those distinctions and focusing primarily on the sect’s response to the “world” (be that the state, a societal institution, or even another groups within that society).⁶⁵⁵ Despite having improved upon this weakness in Troeltsch’s church-sect distinction, Wilson still fails to avoid one of the major cultural limitations of this method noted by Holmberg: “the circular reasoning involved in using Christian sects of later ages to analyse and explain that very

⁶⁵³ Holmberg, *Sociology*, 108. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. See footnote 657.

⁶⁵⁵ Wilson, *Magic*, esp. 13-16.

movement that they all wanted to imitate to the best of their capacity: New Testament Christianity!”⁶⁵⁶ This, Holmberg says, is a significant methodological flaw.

In spite of Wilson’s attempts to rescue the concept of the sect from its cultural limitations by using numerous non-Christian examples, sociologists have continued to highlight other significant analytical imperfections of the model, and some have called for a moratorium on the use of church-sect typologies.⁶⁵⁷ James A. Beckford in particular offers a thorough critique of the model, and he draws special attention to the contrasting dualities (e.g. protest versus accommodation, ascetical versus materialistic lifestyle, small versus big, purity versus compromise, etc.) that run throughout most sectarian analyses.⁶⁵⁸ The application of these various dualities, Holmberg contends “offers innumerable possibilities of confusion and of using variables that are neither logically nor factually connected with each other, but vary independently” and often switch between collective and individual applications without any indication or justification of the switch.⁶⁵⁹ Moreover, the model’s ability to explain the actual character of early Christian communities varies from a renewal movement, to a sect, to a cult, sometimes employing the same term with different categories.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁶ Holmberg, *Sociology*, 110.

⁶⁵⁷ See, esp., J. A. Beckford, *Religious Organization: A Trend Report and Bibliography*, vol. 21. *Current Sociology/La Sociologie Contemporaine*, no. 21 (2) (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1973); N. J. Demerath, "In a Sow's Ear: A Reply to Goode," *JSSR* 6 (1967); A. W. Eister, "Toward a Radical Critique of Church-Sect Typologizing: Comment on 'Some Critical Observations on the Church-sect Dimension'," *JSSR* 6 (1967); E. Goode, "Some Critical Observations on the Church-Sect Dimension," *JSSR* 6 (1967); E. Goode, "Further Reflections on the Church-Sect Dimension," *JSSR* 6 (1967); and D. D. Knudsen, J. R. Earle, and D. W. Shriver, "The Conception of Sectarian Religion: An Effort at Clarification," *RRelRes* 20 (1978).

⁶⁵⁸ Beckford, *Religious Organization* .

⁶⁵⁹ Holmberg, *Sociology*, 111.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 113.

Despite being impressed by Elliott's understanding and application of Wilson's model, Holmberg notes that the conversionist sect—the most used category applied to early Christianity—“which focuses on the ambivalence between keeping the world out and wanting the world in, *is so wide that it permits all of these applications.*”⁶⁶¹ Any group that offers clear behavioural or social boundaries between itself and others within a society (along with some concept of transformation) but also encourages interaction with others could be categorized as a conversionist sect regardless of why the boundaries are set or what type of interaction is encouraged. The problem becomes especially cogent in an analysis of ancient groups like the early Christian communities. The question is: is it possible to work towards a model that provides a more nuanced analysis of early Christian interactions with society? While the sectarian model seems to account for the apparent language of distinction and separation found in such writings as 1 Peter, it categorizes these groups in such a way that the use of such terms as “stranger” or “rebirth” is assumed to function under a certain rubric. Not only are such assumptions problematic (as I have highlighted above), they also fail to adequately account for the possible ongoing assimilation of cultural values and activities in conjunction with the dissimilation of other values and activities. The meaning of these terms (assimilation and dissimilation) as well as the evidence of assimilation will be highlighted and clarified in the following sections.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

III. Working Towards a Better Socio-Cultural Model for 1 Peter

A. David Balch & Acculturation

Until recently, David L. Balch has been the main scholarly voice against the strictly sectarian depiction of 1 Peter. In his published Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Let Wives Be Submissive*, Balch notes that, immediately prior to the household code in 1 Peter, the author exhorts the recipients to good conduct among the gentiles (2:12) and encourages them that by so doing they will silence the ignorance of the foolish (2:15).⁶⁶² He argues that the author writes these words and the subsequent code in order to reduce their tension with the larger society and to advise them on how to “become socially-politically acceptable to their society.”⁶⁶³ The third chapter of 1 Peter, Balch maintains, provides further evidence of this purpose. 1 Peter 3:8-12, he proposes, summarizes the preceding code and stresses harmony in the household. He notes that the harmony highlighted in this passage is centred primarily outward—on harmony in the households to which the Christians belonged not upon inward harmony within the Christian groups.⁶⁶⁴

Balch strengthens his position in a later publication entitled “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter,” which is focussed directly against a sectarian reading of 1 Peter.⁶⁶⁵ In this essay Balch summarizes and clarifies his earlier arguments and more directly engages Elliott’s sociological assessment of the Petrine community. In the course of his essay, Balch argues that social-scientific analysis can hinder one’s analysis of

⁶⁶² Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 87.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.* He does note on the subsequent page (89) that this does not mean that Christians sought absolute harmony with the household code.

⁶⁶⁵ D. L. Balch, “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C. H. Talbert. NABPRSS, no. 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986).

ancient texts. He writes, “Sociological theory should be ‘suggestive rather than generative’. It should suggest questions and possibilities, not determine what we do or do not see in our texts. [It] should not generate early Christian movements and relationships on paper that never existed in history, which is the result when theory is utilized too rigidly.”⁶⁶⁶ While this critique is unfair to all aspects of Elliott’s model, it is good advice for any model that is applied to ancient contexts (including Balch’s): the model must be flexible enough to explain the various nuances of the complex ancient social contexts. Ultimately, Balch concludes that the sociological theory of “acculturation” best describes 1 Peter and helps to explain the aspects of the letter that do not easily fit within the sectarian models.⁶⁶⁷

While Balch’s model does have its point, he uses the language of acculturation quite negatively, in that these elements of acculturation are regarded as a necessary concession of certain distinctives in order for their ongoing survival as a Christian community. In many ways, Balch’s argument functions as a subset to Elliott’s (sectarian) model in his attempt to explain certain elements that are not as fully accounted for by Elliott, yet he never acknowledges the positive components of Elliott’s model. Unfortunately, the social-scientific analyses of 1 Peter have not moved beyond what has come to be described as the “Balch-Elliott debate.”⁶⁶⁸ I will try to move beyond this deadlock by re-framing and re-defining the (negative) language of acculturation (and accommodation)—including the way

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 79-85.

⁶⁶⁷ Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 119; cf. 93.

⁶⁶⁸ In his survey of scholarly research on 1 Peter, M. Dubis, "Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature since 1985," *CurBR* 4 (2006): 212, states that “one of the principal debates related to the study of 1 Peter has been that between Elliott and Balch.” More recently, D. G. Horrell, "Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate Towards a Postcolonial Reading of First Peter," in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, ed. R. L. Webb and B. Bauman-Martin. Library of New Testament Studies, no. 364 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), has attempted to expand the debate using postcolonial theory.

in which it is utilized by Balch—in a model that allows for a more nuanced assessment of early Christian social interaction.⁶⁶⁹

B. Evidence of Social Integration in 1 Peter and other Asia Minor Communities

Before turning to such a model, I want to explore in more detail the type of evidence that this model seeks to explain: significant elements of societal integration by some early Christian (& Jewish) communities and by the communities addressed by 1 Peter in particular. I will begin with a synopsis of recent insights into some of the descriptions found in 1 Peter and then offer brief summaries of evidence from other groups in Asia Minor around the same time period. The focus here is not on aspects of certain behaviour that was discouraged (e.g. 1 Peter 2:1, 11; 4:3-4), but on behaviour that aligned some early Christian communities with existing societal expectations (e.g. 1 Peter 2:12-18; 3:1-7, 13, 16-17; 4:15). This is the type of complex social interaction that I have alluded to above.

Scholars have noted that 1 Peter is particularly concerned with the functioning of the community within Hellenistic society. Leonhard Goppelt, in his commentary on 1 Peter, observes that this letter is shaped by the attempt “to gain for Christians a place in Hellenistic society.”⁶⁷⁰ Similarly, W. C. van Unnik argues that the exhortations to good behaviour in 1 Peter focus not on “a retreat from the world” but *how* to live in the world of which they are a part.⁶⁷¹ Much more recently, Philip Harland observes that, “[i]n certain respects the author of 1 Peter advocates the adoption or continuation of *some* Hellenistic values and practices.

⁶⁶⁹ While the language (acculturation) may be the same, this model is not intended as an extension of Balch’s argument, but a means of re-framing the argument in order to more fully assess the positive social engagement encouraged in 1 Peter and other early Christian (and Jewish) communities of Asia Minor.

⁶⁷⁰ Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 161.

⁶⁷¹ van Unnik, “Good Works,” 101.

This includes those pertaining to ‘good works’ (or benefaction) and honours for authorities.”⁶⁷² A central passage from 1 Peter illustrates the level of positive civic engagement described by Harland. In 1 Peter 2:12-17, the author writes:

Conduct yourselves honourably [τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν] among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds [τῶν καλῶν ἔργων] and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution [ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει], whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right [ἔπαινον ἀγαθοποιῶν]. For it is God’s will that by doing right [ἀγαθοποιούντας] you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor [τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε].⁶⁷³

I will explore several facets of this passage in the following paragraphs.

This use of “authority” in conjunction with the honouring of “right” versus the punishment of “evil” evident in this passage from 1 Peter sounds very similar to a statement made in the early first century by Velleius Paterculus. Velleius’ summary of the history of Rome was written to commemorate the elevation of Marcus Vinicius to the consulship in 30

⁶⁷² Harland, *Associations*, 195. Harland later states, “The possibilities for such honors were well illustrated above [in his book], including setting up an honorary inscription, dedicating a structure or building, and engaging in rituals or prayers that encompassed the emperor or other authorities in the setting of group worship. . . . As we saw clearly in the case of both associations and synagogues, participation in such honorary activities was indeed commonly viewed among the ‘good works’ that helped to maintain fitting relations within the social and cosmic order of things” (235).

⁶⁷³ 1 Peter 2:12-17 (NRSV). The Greek text reads: τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλήν, ἵνα ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἐποπτεύοντες δοξάσωσιν τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς. ὑποτάγητε πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει διὰ τὸν κύριον, εἴτε βασιλεῖ ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν ὡς δι’ αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν• ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν, ὡς ἐλεύθεροι καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀλλ’ ὡς θεοῦ δοῦλοι. πάντας τιμῆσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε. Greek text is from NA27.

CE.⁶⁷⁴ In the quote below, Velleius writes about the importance of the *pax augusta* in restoring order to the state. In the course of his description, Velleius states:

the magistrates have regained their *authority*, the senate its *honor*, the courts their dignity; rioting in the theatre has been suppressed; all have either been imbued with the wish *to do right* or have been forced to do so. *Right is now honoured, evil is punished* ... The munificence of the emperor claims for its province the losses inflicted by fortune not merely on private citizens, but on whole cities. *The cities of Asia have been restored*, the provinces have been freed from the oppression of their magistrates. *Honour* ever awaits the worthy.⁶⁷⁵

It is difficult to imagine that the passage from 1 Peter is not somehow related to this description given its focus on the importance of honouring those in authority, especially in light of the (apparently unjustified) inflictions its recipients are facing. While it is impossible to prove “dependence” (and ultimately unhelpful), both passages demonstrate typical sentiments related to the perfect state. Both passages deal with the restoration or maintenance of peace in light of (civic) disturbances. Moreover, the importance of doing “right” versus “evil” as well as the centrality of “honour” are all clearly emphasized in both texts. Recognizing this positive state-oriented language in 1 Peter reinforces the need to find a model that can fully explain such nuances in this letter.

Bruce W. Winter picks up on the use of the phrase “praise for doing right” (ἔπαινον ἀγαθοποιῶν) in this passage from 1 Peter and demonstrates that this type of language finds parallels in numerous inscriptions that deal with the public praise (ἔπαινος) of those who

⁶⁷⁴ F. W. Shipley, trans. & ed., *Velleius Paterculus Compendium of Roman History: Res gestae divi Augusti*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1924; reprint, 1961), viii.

⁶⁷⁵ Velleius Paterculus, *Res gestae divi Augusti* 2.126.2-6. Emphases mine.

practice benefaction.⁶⁷⁶ Among the evidence he cites is an inscription from Ephesus that deals with the importance of praising (ἔπαινος) benefactors:

in order that our people may continue to be seen to bestow gifts on benefactors, and that those who come in future to serve as judges ... in our city might seek to render verdicts worthy of praise (ἔπαινος) and honour, knowing that the People, both praise and honour (ἐπαινεῖ τε καὶ τιμᾷ) the fine and noble men (καλοῦς καὶ ἀγαθοῦς).⁶⁷⁷

Winter also highlights the use of “good/noble” (ἀγαθούς) in this passage in conjunction with similar cognate descriptions of benefactors, which also finds a parallel with “doing good/right” (ἀγαθοποιός) from 1 Peter.⁶⁷⁸ Further, in the introduction to his evaluation of Christians as benefactors and citizens in the Greco-Roman *polis*, Winter builds upon a passage written to exiled Judeans in the Babylonian diaspora that encourages them to “seek the welfare of the city” in which they lived and demonstrates that the idea of being “strangers” or “aliens” (πάροικος, παρεπίδημος) can be directly connected to the idea of positive engagement in the civic context.⁶⁷⁹ Although Winter may overemphasize the idea that the language of “praise for doing good” is *always* the language of benefaction, it is certainly one way to understand such an expression and ties in to further evidence in 1 Peter that encourages concrete actions—actions that can be understood positively in the social and cultural conventions of the *polis*.

⁶⁷⁶ The original publication on Rom. 13:3-4 and 1 Peter 2:14-15 of B. W. Winter, "The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Roman 13.3-4 and 1 Peter 2.14-15," *JSNT* 34 (1988), was revised and included in a more comprehensive evaluation of Christians as benefactors and citizens in the Greco-Roman *polis* in B. W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*. First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 26-40.

⁶⁷⁷ As cited in Winter, *Seek the Welfare*, 28.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

Harland also indicates that the language of doing “good” or doing “good works” is linked to benefaction as well as to the more concrete statements that follow such phrases in 1 Peter 2, including the command to “honour the emperor” and “finds analogies in some of the practices of other associations and synagogues within the polis.”⁶⁸⁰ Harland’s study offers extensive evidence that demonstrates parallels between multiple early Christian communities and other religious communities in Asia Minor, particularly Jewish communities. There is insufficient space in this chapter to summarize his arguments, but he offers a convincing array of (primarily) inscriptional materials that call into question traditional readings of numerous early Christian texts including the writings of Ignatius (as noted above), the Pastoral epistles, Paul’s letters, the Acts of the Apostles and 1 Peter. He demonstrates rather persuasively that various associations and synagogues participated in a variety of honorary activities in their civic contexts—honorary activities that are considered to be forms of the “good works” designed to develop and maintain proper social connections. Within the rubric of “good works” are various activities that fall under the description of “honouring the emperor” that we find in 1 Peter.

Of particular interest in Harland’s study is the compelling evidence he brings together. This evidence demonstrates that some Jewish groups, while revealing the same kind of “non-conformity” to certain social behaviours as the Christian, Petrine communities, also reveals more “connectedness” to cultural activities and “outsiders” than has been previously recognized. He writes that “[u]ntil recently, it was common for scholars to depict Jewish groups of the diaspora as isolated and introverted communities [i.e. sectarian] living

⁶⁸⁰ Harland, *Associations*, 234-35.

in a hostile environment, largely alien to the institutions, conventions and values of society in the Roman Empire,” and that this depiction of Jewish groups significantly influenced how Christian groups in similar contexts were perceived.⁶⁸¹ This perception of Jewish groups has begun to change, and there is mounting evidence that varying degrees of integration by some Jews into the civic context did occur without the loss of Jewish distinctiveness.⁶⁸² Harland highlights such evidence as reserved theatre seating for Jews and godfearers, *right beside* “emperor-loving goldsmiths” (Miletos), financial contributions to a dionysiac festival by a Jewish individual (Iasos),⁶⁸³ Jewish participation in gymnasium activities (Hypaipa— between Sardis and Ephesus; Iasos; Eumeneia), donations to civic institutions (Smyrna), synagogue donors who were also members of the civic council (Sardis), and affiliations with various occupational networks and associations (e.g. Ephesus & Hierapolis).⁶⁸⁴

Harland’s conclusions directly address the tradition of viewing all such groups as separated from their social and cultural environments. This type of tradition “avoids comparison because of a concern to insulate Christianity, but also Judaism, from the

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 200, 210.

⁶⁸² See the studies of J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); S. J. D. Cohen, “Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not: How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?” in *Diasporas in Antiquity*, ed. S. J. D. Cohen and E. S. Frerichs. Brown Judaic studies, no. 288 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); A. T. Kraabel, “Judaism in Western Asia Minor Under the Roman Empire, with a Preliminary Study of the Jewish Community at Sardis, Lydia” (Th.D., Harvard University, 1968); T. Rajak, “Jews and Christians as Groups in a Pagan World,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs. Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); and P. R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*. SNTSMS, no. 69 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁶⁸³ This, as Harland, *Associations*, 200-01, notes, shows a high level of assimilation which was not necessarily indicative of all Jews. There could be varying levels of participation. The point here is not to argue that all Jews (or other groups) engaged in similar activities, but that they did participate in varying degrees contrary to the common perspective of the Jewish groups as sectarian in nature. Cf. Barclay, *Jews*, 259-81, 320-35.

⁶⁸⁴ Harland, *Associations*, 201-10.

possibility of ‘influences’ or ‘borrowings’ from the cultural environment.”⁶⁸⁵ The evidence from some Jewish contexts is especially important for this study given 1 Peter’s use of Jewish/Israelite language in its description of the letter’s recipients. While the language utilized by 1 Peter may originally have had certain sectarian connotations, the argument of L. Michael White (above) reminds us that: this language need not retain all of its sectarian meaning as it is reinterpreted and applied in the context of 1 Peter. More importantly, based on the evidence from Harland and others that corresponds to statements in 1 Peter, civic participation is much more nuanced than has previously been realized. The reality is that there were degrees of separation as well as degrees of participation, and there is mounting evidence that Christian communities such as those addressed in 1 Peter were much more assimilated into their environment than has previously been maintained. This language of assimilation is related to the language of acculturation encountered in the writings of both White and Balch above, but I want to engage it from within a much different framework and offer a definition that fits within a more balanced model.

C. 1 Peter and Models of Assimilation

Traditionally, the language of acculturation and assimilation, when applied to early Christian communities, is used pejoratively.⁶⁸⁶ Martin Dibelius, for example, maintains that because the imminent hope for the *parousia* had faded, the church *acculturated* to Roman

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 210.

⁶⁸⁶ So Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 106; and White, "Sectarian Boundaries," 23-24, whose use of these terms is discussed above.

society.⁶⁸⁷ Balch uses the language of acculturation in a similar manner.⁶⁸⁸ Within this perspective, acculturation comes to be viewed as a loss of one's distinctive identity through acquiescence to other cultural values. Assimilation is used in similar ways.⁶⁸⁹ Any hint of participation in cultural-accepted activities or in the larger societal belief system is perceived as a loss of one's own boundaries and beliefs.⁶⁹⁰ These designations are not helpful when discussing the complex relationship of several early Christian (and Jewish) groups to the larger Greco-Roman society. Perhaps one of the reasons that the language of assimilation and acculturation has been used so pejoratively is that this language has not been standardized. I will define these terms within a framework that should alleviate such unnecessarily pejorative designations, and this process should provide a perspective for more clearly understanding the social role of rebirth language in 1 Peter.⁶⁹¹

Within a social-scientific framework, it is helpful to understand acculturation as a sub-process of assimilation. Assimilation can be defined as “a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies or of smaller cultural

⁶⁸⁷ As cited in Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 106. Balch maintains that because 1 Peter still had imminent hope, this was not the motivation for its acculturation. I still see this as an unhelpful use of acculturation.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ See, e.g., Barclay, *Jews*. Barclay synthesizes a variety of approaches and comes to define assimilation as “the degree to which Diaspora Jews were integrated into, or socially aloof from, their social environments” (93). Even this description is unnecessarily negative since it implies that one loses separation (and distinction) through assimilation. In his analysis he develops three levels of assimilation: low, medium, and high (93-4, 103-19, 321-32). While Barclay is rightly cautious about such designations, he, nonetheless, has shaped assimilation to indicate a range of complete separation from society to a complete loss of distinction (see, esp., 322). Cf. Elliott, *Home*, 84.

⁶⁹⁰ Such participation, within the sectarian model, can only be explained via the conversionist sectarian model, which, as was noted above, can encompass virtually every such action and lacks the nuance to explain the more significant degrees of interaction such as those encouraged in 1 Peter.

⁶⁹¹ Harland, *Associations*, 195-200, has already established an excellent framework for such language, and I will summarize and comment on the pertinent components of his discussion. Cf. P. A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 13-14, 102-04.

groups meet,” and it “can range from the smallest beginnings of interaction and cultural exchange to the thorough fusion of the groups.”⁶⁹² Recognizing this range is important. Assimilation does not or, at least, need not lead to loss of boundaries or loss of group identity. Acculturation (or cultural assimilation) “can involve the selection, adoption and adaptation of a variety of cultural traits including language, dress, religion and other cultural conventions, beliefs and values which make up the way of life and world view of particular cultural groups.”⁶⁹³ Within the process of cultural assimilation, “the patterns and values of the receiving culture seem to function as selective screens in a manner that results in the enthusiastic acceptance of some elements, [and] the firm rejection of other elements.”⁶⁹⁴ The selection and rejection of these elements is determined by the values and beliefs of the receiving group and even the elements that are accepted are transformed in the process.⁶⁹⁵

The group has control over the process based on their existing value system, and there is a range in the level of cultural assimilation (or acculturation) so that “acculturation can progress a long way without the disintegration of a group’s boundaries or existence in relation to a larger societal or cultural entity.”⁶⁹⁶ Further, in the process, the receiving group may choose to reassert and strengthen specific differences. The process is dynamic and involves conscious effort on the part of the group: they are not pawns whose choice to accept or adapt aspects of the larger culture is a slippery slope that results in their eventual loss of

⁶⁹² J. M. Yinger, "Toward a Theory of Assimilation and Dissimilation," *E&RS* 4 (1981): 249. Cf. J. W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," in *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*, ed. A. M. Padilla. AAAS Selected Symposium, no. 39 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 13.

⁶⁹³ Harland, *Associations*, 196.

⁶⁹⁴ H. G. Barnett and others, "Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation," *AmAnth* 56 (1954), as cited in Harland, *Associations*, 196.

⁶⁹⁵ Yinger, "Assimilation," 252.

⁶⁹⁶ Harland, *Associations*, 196.

identity.⁶⁹⁷ The language of assimilation need not be understood pejoratively nor should it be assumed to connote lack of control or loss of identity as various cultural elements are evaluated and either rejected or accepted, albeit with possible alterations.

The rejection of certain cultural elements, while fitting within the theory of assimilation, is more correctly referred to as “dissimilation.”⁶⁹⁸ This can include the rejection of certain elements outright or the later rejection of those elements after, initially, having assimilated them to one degree or another. The component of dissimilation, while not usually compared to sectarian theory, does account for the drawing or redrawing of boundaries by certain groups—activities that have traditionally been associated with sectarianism. The strength of the theory of assimilation, as I interpret it, is that it does not lock a group into fixed relationship with other groups or the larger society. The group can choose a stance of strong assimilation, which may later be countered by elements of dissimilation. This model, then, focuses on the actual boundaries that are created and recreated by a group without assuming that a boundary created in one area necessarily indicates boundaries in other areas. Moreover, this theory of assimilation does *not* assume the meaning of “assimilation” that is often associated with the total loss of group boundaries.

⁶⁹⁷ D. S. Barrett, "Ancient Hellenism and the Jews: A Study in Attitudes and Acculturation," in *Greek Colonists and Native Populations: Proceedings of the First Australian Congress of Classical Archaeology Held in Honour of Emeritus Professor A.D. Trendall*, ed. J.-P. Descoeudres (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 549, criticizes M. Hadas, "Review of S.K. Eddy, *The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334-31 B.C.*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 25 (1963), for presenting an oversimplified model of assimilation which is essentially a slippery slope that ceases “only when interested parties intervene to prevent assimilation” (as cited in Barrett). Instead, Barrett proposes the more beneficial model of R. E. Park, *Race and Culture: Essays in the Sociology of Contemporary Man* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), in which there is an absence of “wholesale borrowing” and a recognition of a gradual assimilation of certain elements as well as a rejection of other elements and “a willingness to borrow only what is perceived to be useful” (550); Cf. Barclay, *Jews*, 281, who cites evidence that would indicate that there were Jewish communities in Asia who were “unafraid to express their identity in social and cultural harmony with their environment” and “who made significant social contributions without compromising their Jewish identity.”

⁶⁹⁸ Yinger, “Assimilation,” 257-60.

Given the above framework, this clearly defined language of cultural assimilation is valuable in understanding 1 Peter's engagement with the values and behaviour of the larger culture of the Greco-Roman world while simultaneously establishing clear boundaries for the early Christian communities to which it is addressed. In the course of this process of cultural assimilation, Harland notes that 1 Peter drew extensively upon "Jewish ethnic identity" in order "to express their distinctiveness in relation to the surrounding society" particularly because of their distinct monotheistic beliefs that did not fit the prevailing polytheistic society that was the Greco-Roman world.⁶⁹⁹ This expression of distinction was part of the dynamic engagement through cultural assimilation whereby 1 Peter used Jewish ethnic identity to establish a value system for its recipients. The letter simultaneously encourages the recipients to remain connected to and active in their cultural milieu. One aspect of this process was the cultural assimilation of Greco-Roman familial language and values.

IV. The Role of Familial Language in the Greco-Roman World

Familial language is one important component from the cultural milieu that is assimilated by the author of 1 Peter. As was seen in chapter two, 1 Peter reveals an expanding use of familial language beginning with the repeated metaphor of God as πατήρ in the key introductory sections. Within these key opening passages, rebirth language is inextricably linked to the father metaphor, yet, as was demonstrated in the third chapter of

⁶⁹⁹ Harland, *Associations*, 197-98. By "Jewish ethnic identity" Harland simply means Jewish people who saw themselves as linked due to their shared Jewish (ethnic) heritage. In contrast, Christian groups do not share an identity based on their ethnicity but rather on their distinctive identity as "Christians"—an identity that the author of 1 Peter is seeking to shape and define.

this dissertation, such language does not find clear parallels with other rebirth language from the first century. Instead, the use of rebirth language in 1 Peter is directly connected to the father metaphor—a metaphor that finds clear links within the Greco-Roman world of the first century, both in its use by associations as well as in the imperial propaganda of Augustus. 1 Peter’s use of such fictive familial language offers parallels to these cultural uses (and perceptions) of this language—language that does not entail competition with or separation from society.

Traditionally, the use of fictive familial language by Christian groups is considered to be unique (or at least peculiar). As Harland indicates, “[i]n this view, such modes of address were not common or significant within small-group settings, organizations, or cults in the Greco-Roman world.”⁷⁰⁰ Wayne A. Meeks, in an analysis of Pauline communities, contends that familial language—including references to them as “children of God”—serves to draw a boundary between these groups and their social environment and teaches them “to conceive of only two classes of humanity: the sect and outsiders.”⁷⁰¹ In contrast to Meeks, Harland clearly demonstrates that such language was also utilized in a significant number of associations and other Greco-Roman religious contexts and is neither inherently sectarian

⁷⁰⁰ P. A. Harland, "Familial Dimensions of Group Identity: 'Brothers' (ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ) in Associations of the Greek East," *JBL* 124 (2005): 492.

⁷⁰¹ Meeks, *First Urban*, 84-89, esp. 86. Cf. Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 45; R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 324-25; and J. H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 21-25. While Meeks is primarily speaking of Pauline Christianity, his argument can be considered equally applicable to the familial language in 1 Peter. In another writing, W. A. Meeks, "'Since Then You would Need to go out of the World': Group Boundaries in Pauline Christianity," in *Critical History and Biblical Faith: New Testament Perspectives*, ed. J. T. Ryan (Villanova, PA: Catholic Theology Society, 1979), 23, does clarify that he does not view the sectarian emphasis of the (Pauline) Christian communities in the same way as that of the Qumran community which clearly withdrew from society.

nor unique to Christian groups.⁷⁰² There is no question that the familial language of 1 Peter is intended to encourage group cohesion and to stand in contrast to specific behaviours,⁷⁰³ but this need not be interpreted as evidence of complete separation from societal participation nor as a rejection of their current familial and social connections.⁷⁰⁴ More evidence of parallel familial language used by Greco-Roman groups and associations continues to be highlighted and this next section is intended to contribute to that discussion. The use of such fictive familial language was rare enough to maintain its significance, yet common enough to demonstrate the wide-spread recognition of its value.

In this section I will focus specifically on the uses of “father” given its close association with rebirth language in 1 Peter. These uses of “father” will demonstrate the unquestionable authority of the father within some groups (I can’t help but wonder, if such depictions were included in a Christian context, whether they would be portrayed as irrefutably demonstrating “the Christian rejection of all other authority” or some similar perception), reveal multiple uses of “fathers” without any indication of implied competition between/among them or separation from one’s biological “father.” Instead, the father

⁷⁰² Harland, "Familial Dimensions," 491-513; Harland, *Associations*, esp. 31-33. While Harland is speaking primarily of the use of “brother” (ἀδελφός), he also includes “mother” (ματῆρ), “father” (πατήρ) etc. Cf. J. P. Waltzing, *Étude Historique sur les Corporations Professionnelles Chez les Romains depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Chute de l'Empire d'Occident*, vol. 1 (Bologna: Forni, 1895; reprint, 1968), 196, who writes regarding the formation of associations that: "la corporation était l'image de la cité ou de la famille; elle constituait, comme la famille ou la cité, un tout, une unité vivante."

⁷⁰³ See, e.g. 1 Peter 1:17-18, where the emphasis is on avoiding past conduct or behaviour (ἀναστροφή). This term—ἀναστροφή—is used everywhere else in 1 Peter (1:15; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16) in reference to the behaviour of Christians that is described as “good” (ἀγαθός; καλός). See the discussion in W. C. van Unnik, "The Critique of Paganism in I Peter 1:18," in *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969). Interestingly, the majority of these terms occur in a context in which the author is discussing Christian behaviour that is appropriate to certain (but not all) social expectations as was discussed above.

⁷⁰⁴ Elliott, *Home*, 75, e.g., speaks about a “voluntary termination of, and conversion from, past familial, social and religious ties.”

metaphor, while clearly intended to emphasize connection and cohesion between people or within a group, is built upon societal perceptions of the importance of such language. The examples I give are not intended to be comprehensive, but to provide sufficient examples of similar language in various contexts, with a particular focus on material that has roots in either Asia Minor or Rome.

A. The Use of “Father” in various Greco-Roman Groups

The use of πατήρ by Greco-Roman groups and associations is fairly widespread and dates from the early to mid-first century and beyond.⁷⁰⁵ In the vicinity of Tomis (Moesia Inferior) around 200-201 CE, a collegium of *dendrophoroi* dedicated a monument to the imperial family because of the “gifts that have been given to us.”⁷⁰⁶ This monument contains at least 36 names with a list of offices including a priest, an *archidendrophoros*, a mother, and a father (πατήρ). On another inscription found in the same region, a *koinon*(?) of *pastophoroi* honours a certain Menekrates as both their πατήρ and as the president of their association⁷⁰⁷ Two related inscriptions from Tanais in the Bosphorus commemorate different dedications by the *synodos* and the father (πατήρ) of the *synodos*.⁷⁰⁸ In Callatis (Moesia Inferior) an inscription dated in the early to mid-first century describes a certain

⁷⁰⁵ As with the inscriptions discussed in chapter four, several of these inscriptions have links to Asia Minor that date back much earlier than the inscriptions themselves. See also some of the discussion that follows.

⁷⁰⁶ IGLSkythia II 83. I am indebted to Philip A. Harland for making available his developing database of familial language to assist in starting this research.

⁷⁰⁷ IGLSkythia II 98.

⁷⁰⁸ IPontEux II 437 & 445. Number 445 indicates that this occurs during the reign of Tiberius Julius Sauromates, and 437 indicates that this occurs during the reign of Tiberius Julius Roimetalcus.

Ariston as a benefactor, founder and πατήρ of the *thiasos*.⁷⁰⁹ The title “father of the synagogue” (πατήρ συναγωγῆ) is found on a number of Jewish inscriptions, mostly in the vicinity of Rome but at least one in Stobi (Macedonia).⁷¹⁰ More inscriptions that name the office of πατήρ for a group or association have also been found in such places as Histria,⁷¹¹ Nicopolis,⁷¹² Oxyrhynchus,⁷¹³ Piraeus⁷¹⁴ and Rome.⁷¹⁵

Ellis H. Minns, commenting on the inscriptions from Tanais, speculates that the πατήρ “seems rather to have held the position of a patron or an honorary senior than a real office.”⁷¹⁶ However, Minns offers no basis for his speculation, and his comment likely reveals uncertainty over how to perceive this title. The πατήρ was clearly a recognized office whatever its function. The importance of the πατήρ title is further accentuated in the Jewish inscriptions that name someone “father of the synagogue.” Harry J. Leon, in his analysis of these inscriptions, concludes: “[t]here are indications that the Father of the Synagogue held the position of highest honor in his congregation.”⁷¹⁷ While he, like Minns, is unsure of how to understand their role in relation to the other offices,⁷¹⁸ his observation of

⁷⁰⁹ IScM III 44. This inscription is by the same group that created an earlier inscription: IScM III 35, which helps us to understand more about this group’s ethnic make-up (particularly through the names listed).

⁷¹⁰ CIJ 88, 93, 319, 494, 508, 509, 510, 535, 537, 694. The final inscriptions listed (694) comes from Stobi.

⁷¹¹ IGLSkythia I 99 & 100.

⁷¹² IGBulg 671.

⁷¹³ PSI X 1162.

⁷¹⁴ SIG 1111.

⁷¹⁵ IGUR 77.

⁷¹⁶ E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks: A Survey of Ancient History and Archaeology on the North Coast of the Euxine from the Danube to the Caucasus* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1971), 623.

⁷¹⁷ H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, updated ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 187.

⁷¹⁸ The article by M. H. Williams, "The Structure of Roman Jewry Reconsidered: Were the Synagogues of Rome Entirely Homogeneous?" *ZPE* 104 (1994), offers some explanation for why it is difficult to ascertain the exact roles associated with these titles: there was likely a considerable degree of diversity in the different synagogue communities and thus the structures and official titulature were diverse. The πατήρ title was likely limited to select synagogue communities depending on the history of the community and the origin of its members.

the clear importance attached to such a title underscores my point above: that these references are common enough to demonstrate their fairly wide-spread recognition, yet rare enough to maintain the power of such language (and make it difficult for scholars to precisely ascertain its function).

One of the more prolific uses of the *pater*/πατήρ⁷¹⁹ title by a cult association in the Greco-Roman occurs in Mithraism. As Roger Beck notes: “[o]f all the cult associations of antiquity, that of Mithras has left the most legible footprints.”⁷²⁰ While the bulk of Mithraic evidence occurs in the form of archaeological monuments,⁷²¹ there are also a significant number of inscriptions that attest to the role and significance of the Mithraic *pater*.⁷²² The *pater*, who served as the leader of a mithraeum, was the highest grade in Mithraism with six grades below it, making the total number of grades seven.⁷²³ All mithraea had a *pater*,

⁷¹⁹ While Mithraic inscriptional evidence includes both Greek and Latin, the majority of those inscriptions are Latin, and I will use *pater* to signify both in this particular discussion.

⁷²⁰ Beck, "Mithras Cult," 3.

⁷²¹ Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*, 16-25, notes how the vast amount of iconographic evidence has led scholars to focus primarily on it in their evaluations and interpretations of Mithraism. In the end, however, he rightly acknowledges the dangers of trying to extract *meaning* using only iconographic evidence.

⁷²² The comprehensive list of these inscriptions in both Greek and Latin are: CIMRM 27bis, 54, 57, 63, 67, 76, 79, 85, 206, 215, 220, 222, 223a, 225, 233, 235, 248, 249, 282, 308, 313, 315, 317, 325, 336, 340, 351, 355, 369, 377, 378, 380, 395A, 400, 401, 402, 403, 405, 409, 410, 413a, 420a, 423, 451, 466, 473, 474, 475, 480, 485, 495, 509, 510, 511, 513, 514, 515, 516, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 527, 555, 567, 604, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 647, 688, 696, 706, 738, 739, 741, 774, 779, 781, 793, 797?, 803, 885, 888, 889, 911, 986, 987, 1027, 1243, 1315, 1434, 1438, 1531, 1598, 1717, 1819, 1821, 1913, 2250, 2296, and 2307a.

⁷²³ CIMRM 299 and 480 offer important depictions of these seven grades including their exact order. The grades in order are: Pater (Father), Heliodromus (Runner of the Sun), Persus (Persian), Leo (Lion), Miles (Soldier), Nymphus (Bride), and Corvax (Raven). For a description of these grades, see M. J. Vermaseren, *Mithras, the Secret God*, trans. T. a. V. Megaw (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 138-53. For a more detailed exploration of these grades, see R. L. Gordon, "Reality, Evocation and Boundary in the Mysteries of Mithras," *JMS* 3 (1980). For an explanation of the connection between these grades and their corresponding protectors—the planetary gods, see R. Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras*. EPROER, no. 109 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).

whether or not they had all of the other grades.⁷²⁴ The importance of the *pater* in the cult is obvious in both the descriptions and depictions of the *pater* as well as in the sheer number of inscriptional references to this grade, especially in comparison with all the other grades.⁷²⁵ The *pater* is described multiple times as the “Father of the mysteries [of Mithras]” and, in one inscription that is clearly related to the “Father of the mysteries” title, as the “worthy Father of Mithras.”⁷²⁶ He had been appointed to lead each local mithraeum as the “lawful Father”—a description that may well refer to his initiation responsibilities.⁷²⁷ In a number of instances, the *pater* is also described as *sacerdos* (priest), which has led Clauss to argue that this was “not two different roles but an association of the specifically Mithraic term *pater* with the ordinary *sacerdos*” so that the *pater* is understood to function as a priest in the mithraeum.⁷²⁸ Clauss’ proposal is tempered by the perspective of Beck who notes that “[t]erms for ‘priest’ (such as *sacerdos*) occur epigraphically, but they are sporadic and do not seem to indicate any general cult order.”⁷²⁹ Given that all of these references occur in Italy,

⁷²⁴ Beck, “Mithras Cult,” 10, comments: “The full hierarchy may of course have existed in other places—indeed, in all places—without leaving a record of the fact, but one cannot be absolutely certain that the progression through all seven grades was a necessary and defining feature of the cult *semper et ubique*.”

⁷²⁵ One need only examine the “List of Mithraic Grades” in the indices of CIMRM 1 & 2 to note the overwhelming number of references to *pater* in comparison to the six other grades.

⁷²⁶ “Father of the Mysteries” (πατήρ ... τῶν τελετῶν / *pater sacrorum*): CIMRM 76, 206, 215, 395A, 420, 423, 513, 516, 522, 523, 524, 623, 624, 885, 1243, 1438, and 2250. Admittedly, some of these “instances” of *sacrorum* are reconstructions. “Worthy Father of Mithras” (*pater dignissimus Mithrae*): CIMRM 423. Note that this last inscription—which was commemorated by the *pater* in his own verses—had earlier also used the *pater sacrorum* title. On the commemoration of this sanctuary by this *pater*, see Vermaseren, *Mithras, the Secret God*, 136-37.

⁷²⁷ “Lawful Father” (πατήρ νόμιμος / *pater nominus*): CIMRM 76, 79, 85, 739. Ibid., 153, considers this title to be related to the *pater*’s acceptance of new members and his dispensing of initiation to the various grades. In another writing, while M. J. Vermaseren, *Mithriaca III: The Mithraeum at Marino*. EPROER, no. 16 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 87-88, does not specifically mention this title, he describes the *pater*’s involvement in initiation.

⁷²⁸ See Clauss, *Mithras*, 131-32, 38-39 (the quote is taken from p. 138). See, e.g., CIMRM 235, 249, 282, 313, 511, 514, 622, 626.

⁷²⁹ Beck, “Mithras Cult,” 8 n.23. Other terms for “priest,” to which Beck refers, likely include *antistes*. See CIMRM 315.

with half of them in or around Rome—where temples and thus priests flourished—you likely have the inclusion of the *pater*'s status as a priest (outside of the mithraeum) included in some inscriptions.

In the mithraeum, the authority of the *pater*, as the earthly representative of Mithras—“the creator and father of all,” was ultimate.⁷³⁰ Interestingly, while the authority of the *pater* was ultimate, it was not necessarily exclusive; a number of inscriptions refer to multiple “Fathers” within the same mithraeum.⁷³¹ Perhaps as a means of distinguishing the status of these several Fathers, some inscriptions use the title “Father of Fathers” (in reference to the “more senior Father”?)⁷³² and, in Greek only, the title ἀντίπατρος (in

⁷³⁰ The quote describing Mithras comes from Porphyry, *De antro nympharum* 6. Clauss, *Mithras*, 137, also notes that one of the *pater*'s symbols—the Phrygian cap—reveals him as Mithras' representative on earth. Another symbol—his staff—serves much the same function. Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras*, 68, argues that, “it is the Father...whose symbol on the Felicissimus mosaic is the sceptre—for...it is the Father...who wields final authority in the cult.” Beck, “Mithras Cult,” 10, describes the Father as “the ultimate fount of authority and wisdom” and points to a fresco in the mithraeum at Santa Prisca as the indication of the Father's primacy. The fresco depicts a procession of representatives from the other grades leading up to an enthroned father; each representative is hailed in corresponding inscriptions based upon their grade. See CIMRM 480 as well as Vermaseren and Essen, *Excavations*, 155-60, who comment: “[t]he Father is the head of this community and he alone is seated whereas the other inferior grade approach him in order to offer their greetings” and offer comparisons to similar depictions of a *patronus* receiving his *clientes* as well as to the Emperor receiving the members of the Senate.

⁷³¹ CIMRM 54, e.g., is an inscription from Syria that is dedicated to the god Mithras and to two fathers. The central portion of this inscription reads: Νάμα θεῶ Μιθρα / νάμα πάτρασι Λιβει/ανῶ και Θεωδῶρω. Cf. CIMRM 400, 401, 404, 405, 473, 523, 741 and 1531. Evidence from Virunum, which lists—on a bronze *album*—six fathers who held office at one time or another, seems to indicate a practice in that Mithraeum of naming two fathers simultaneously (one senior and one junior?), perhaps in order to have a replacement when the (senior?) father died or moved away. See the discussion in R. Beck, “On Becoming a Mithraist: New evidence for the Propagation of the Mysteries,” in *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity*, ed. L. E. Vaage (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2006), esp. 189-91. The details of the *alba* from this mithraeum can be found in G. Piccottini, *Mithrastempel in Virunum*. Aus Forschung und Kunst, no. 28 (Klagenfurt: Geschichtsverein für Kärnten, 1994), 34-36.

⁷³² *Pater patrum* or πατήρ πατέρων. See CIMRM 57, 235, 336, 369, 378, 400, 401, 402, 403, 405, 520, 521, 779, and 911. Clauss, *Mithras*, 138, reasons that this title does not indicate another (higher) grade but, rather, is representative of the fact that “there could be several Fathers in one congregation, so one of them became the ‘Father of (the) Fathers’.” Not all of these references are necessarily interpreted in this manner. Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*, 98, indicates of inscriptions 400-05 (dated 357-76 CE)—which were near the end of the historic lifespan of Mithraism and mostly refer to various members of one family—that “what the mysteries were largely ‘about’ for this noble family was the noble family itself, not Mithras, not the cult brothers, but themselves.” In this particular case, (continued...)

reference to a “less senior Father”?).⁷³³ While we do not know how these multiple Fathers divided their duties within these mithraea, there is no indication in any inscriptions or monuments of competition between these Fathers. We also cannot fully say how the *pater* served as a representative of Mithras⁷³⁴ or the full meaning of this grade in the Mithraic rituals, but we can say that the honour and authority ascribed to the *pater* has no equal in the mithraea and that this use of *pater* must, on some level, reflect the value of this title (apart from its Mithraic usage) in the larger culture.⁷³⁵

These Mithraic inscriptions honouring the *pater* are scattered throughout the empire, from Syria to Gaul. However, the majority of the extant inscriptions have been found in Italy, and a significant number of those are from in and around Rome itself. While the bulk of the inscriptions are Latin, a number of Greek inscriptions have been found. More importantly, as Harland argues based upon his extensive database of both “mother” and “father” language uses throughout the empire, “[d]espite the vagaries of archeological finds and the obvious difficulties in precisely dating many inscriptions, it is important to note that the earliest datable case of parental titles in collegia (in Latin) dates to 153 CE, with the

(continued)

the title may have been used to distinguish the biological father from his son (both held the rank of *pater*) with little attention to the value of this language.

⁷³³ CIMRM 57. Vermaseren, *Mithras, the Secret God*, 153, speculates that the ἀντίπατρος is possibly a preliminary grade to that of the *pater*.

⁷³⁴ We do have *some* evidence of the *pater*'s emulation of Mithras. On a cult vessel known as the “Mainz Cup” there are scenes that depict figures from the various grades of the Mithraeum. The depiction of the *pater* shows him with bow drawn and aimed at a figure directly in front of him. According to R. Beck, “Ritual, Myth, Doctrine, and Initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New Evidence from a Cult Vessel,” *JRS* 90 (2000), esp. 147-51, this scene is enacting an initiation and the *pater* is, here, emulating the archery of Mithras.

⁷³⁵ That is to say, one would not expect the name of the highest grade to be “slave,” for example, unless some internal meaning or irony required it. One would expect, therefore, that the *pater* was a title that elicited respect and represented authority in the larger culture. On the explication of the “meaning” of these grades, I again refer to Gordon, “Reality,” .

majority dating considerably later.”⁷³⁶ He continues, “[o]n the other hand, there are cases in Greek from at least the second century BCE for Greek cities and from the early first century CE for associations specifically. There is, in fact, strong evidence pointing to the importance of such parental metaphors in the Greek cities and in local associations within these cities.”⁷³⁷ Harland’s comments clarify the importance of the father metaphor in places like Asia Minor in the first century. The Mithraic uses of *pater* clearly draw upon a cultural understanding of the role and authority of the father and provide links with both Asia Minor (the location of 1 Peter’s recipients) and Rome (1 Peter’s origin).

Several of the earlier-noted, non-mithraic inscriptions can also be closely linked to both Rome and Asia Minor. The link to Rome requires little comment given that it is the location of several of these inscriptions. The connection to Asia Minor is not as directly obvious, but there are clear connections to Asia Minor in at least two of these inscriptions. Minns stresses that the inscriptions from Tanais clearly confirm shared elements in these Bosporan societies that originated in Asia Minor.⁷³⁸ Such a link is affirmed by the inscriptions from Callatis. Commenting on these inscriptions, Martin P. Nilsson, indicates that they confirm that “people from Asia Minor when emigrating to Thrace formed a special group introducing their mysteries.”⁷³⁹ These connections reveal key links with both the

⁷³⁶ Harland, *Identity*, 86-87.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷³⁸ Minns, *Scythians*, 620.

⁷³⁹ M. P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1957), 50. Nilsson also notes that inscriptions in Rome provide similar links with Asia Minor (51, 54).

author and the recipients of 1 Peter, provide a demonstrated connection with 1 Peter's use of πατήρ and point to the value bestowed on the father title in non-familial situations.⁷⁴⁰

B. The Use of the “Father” Analogy in the Larger Culture

1. The Significance of the Family

The use of the father analogy is not only found in group inscriptions but also infused other aspects of Greco-Roman culture. The family permeated all aspects of life in the Greco-Roman world. W.K. Lacey notes regarding the Greek world, “The all-pervading role of the family has the result that there is scarcely any topic in Greek civilization in which the family is not concerned.”⁷⁴¹ The same is true of the Roman world.⁷⁴² The importance of family so pervaded the Roman perspective that Lacey comments, “[t]he Romans saw themselves *as a family*.”⁷⁴³ Similarly, Susan Treggiari writes that orators such as Cicero “assume norms of family affection and proper behaviour and deploy them in advocacy, invective, and political speeches, with audiences of all types.”⁷⁴⁴ In literature, as early as Homer, we find the application of πατήρ as a title of respect for certain strangers.⁷⁴⁵ Roman senators were

⁷⁴⁰ This link is all the more important to note given the comments by E. M. Lassen, “The Use of the Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21,” *TynBul* 42, no. 1 (1991): 133, that the Eastern provinces were more likely to draw on the image of the emperor as god rather than as father (see the discussion below). Cf. Price, *Rituals*.

⁷⁴¹ W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece*. Aspects of Greek and Roman life (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968), 9.

⁷⁴² B. Rawson, “‘The Roman Family’ in Recent Research: State of the Question,” *BibInt* 11, no. 2 (2003): 1.

⁷⁴³ W. K. Lacey, “Patria Potestas,” in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. B. Rawson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 125. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁴⁴ S. Treggiari, “Putting the Family Across: Cicero on Natural Affection,” in *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond*, ed. M. George (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9.

⁷⁴⁵ Homer, *Ilias* 9.607; 24.362; 24.507; *Odyssea* 7.28,48.

depicted as “fathers.”⁷⁴⁶ Societal leaders and benefactors were described as “fathers,”⁷⁴⁷ including a certain Razis who is described as “father of the Jews” for his good will and commitment to Judaism.⁷⁴⁸ It is clear in these writings that such familial language is not drawing on the mundane or legal expectations of the πατήρ, but on the ideal of the family, especially the father-son relationship, which is depicted as one of kindness and love.⁷⁴⁹ The father-child relationship is particularly poignant in the application of the father analogy to Roman leaders.

2. Roman Leaders as Fathers

The references to Roman leaders receiving the title “father of his country” (*pater patriae*) are well documented.⁷⁵⁰ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) was probably the first Roman to receive the title *pater patriae* for his exposure of Cataline’s conspiracy.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁶ Plutarch, *Moralia* 278D (Loeb 4: 92-93); Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 1.8.7; 1.26.5.

⁷⁴⁷ Pausanias, *Graeciae description* 8.51.7.

⁷⁴⁸ 2 Macc. 14:37.

⁷⁴⁹ Homer, *Ilias* 9.481 writes of King Peleus, “He took me to his heart and loved me as a father loves an only son” (173); *Odyssea* 1.308 writes “you have spoken to me out of the kindness of your heart like a father talking to his son” (12). In his description of the relationship between a father and his adopted child, H. S. Nielsen, “Quasi-Kin, Quasi-Adoption and the Roman Family,” in *Adoption et Fosterage*, ed. M. Corbier. De l’Archéologie à l’Histoire (Paris: De Boccard, 1999), 256, notes that a poem depicting the relationship between a father and his adopted son focuses on the emotional, not legal, aspects of the relationship and he writes that “[t]he overall emphasis of the poem is on the strong emotional bonds” between the father and his foster-son. He goes on to describe a similar relationship between a father and his foster-daughter (257). Cf. B. Rawson, *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 220-26; and T. R. Stevenson, “The Ideal Benefactor and the Father Analogy in Greek and Roman Thought,” *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992): 424.

⁷⁵⁰ See M. Reinhold and N. Lewis, eds., *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings*, vol. 2: *The Empire*. Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies. (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1955), 6, 8, 19, 62-63, 75-76, 97, 99-100.

⁷⁵¹ See the discussion and references in Stevenson, “Ideal Benefactor,” 421, who notes that there is some question as to whether Cicero was indeed the first or whether earlier heroes like Romulus, Camillus and Marius had received this honour.

Julius Caesar also received this title by a *Senatus Consultum*.⁷⁵² After Caesar's death, much stress was placed on this title by "Caesarian leaders" who used coins to continue to promote it.⁷⁵³ Most subsequent emperors were eventually given this title (if they lived long enough), but it was Augustus around whom some significant comments have been centered. These comments help us to understand how this father analogy was perceived. Although Augustus did not officially receive the title *pater patriae* until 2 BCE,⁷⁵⁴ he was described as "father of the cities" (*pater urbium*) and "father and protector of the human race" (*gentis humanae pater et custos*)⁷⁵⁵ Among other things, Augustus deprivatized his family (they became a state family) and set them up as an example for Romans to follow.⁷⁵⁶ He sought to set up the married state as the ideal state, his family was frequently portrayed on coins and reliefs, and family affairs like birthdays became public festivals.⁷⁵⁷

Augustus' emphasis on the family culminated in his reception of the title *pater patriae*, an event that is described with no little drama by Suetonius.⁷⁵⁸ Strabo gives us some insight into how this father language was understood when he describes the difficulty of administering the massive Roman Empire, a task that, he implies, could only be accomplished "by turning it over to one man, as to a father."⁷⁵⁹ This action of turning over

⁷⁵² Refer to Lassen, "Father Image," 131; and Stevenson, "Ideal Benefactor," 421, for full primary and secondary references.

⁷⁵³ Lassen, "Father Image," 131.

⁷⁵⁴ This honour/event was reflected by the creation of a statue of the emperor bearing the inscription: *pater patriae*. See N. Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*. Jutland Archaeological Society Publications. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1986), 86.

⁷⁵⁵ Horace, *Carmina* III, 24. See also the celebration of his *genius* in Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 51.19.21; Horace *Carmina* IV; and Ovid, *Fasti* 2.637.

⁷⁵⁶ Lassen, "Father Image," 132.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 58. In Suetonius' telling, Augustus twice declined the offer of the title by the Roman citizens but then accepted it, with tears in his eyes, before the whole senate.

⁷⁵⁹ Strabo, *Geographica* 6.4.2.

the country to a “father,” he asserts, resulted in peace and plenty for all Romans and their allies.⁷⁶⁰ In this passage Strabo hints at both the power and responsibility of the father—hints that are more clearly detailed by Dio Cassius. Dio Cassius writes,

Thus by virtue of the Republican titles they have clothed themselves with all the powers of the government, so that they actually possess all the prerogatives of kings without the usual title. For the appellation ‘Caesar’ or ‘Augustus’ confers upon them no actual power but merely shows in the one case that they are the successors of their family line, and in the other the splendour of their rank. The name ‘Father’ perhaps gives them a certain authority over us all—the authority which fathers once had over their children; yet it did not signify this at first, but betokened honor and served as an admonition both to them to love their subjects as they would their children, and to their subjects to revere them as they would their fathers.⁷⁶¹

In this quote we can see the cultural understanding and power of the father analogy. Dio Cassius contends that the titles like “Caesar” or “Augustus” offer no actual power. But he admits that they receive some authority or power through the title “father.” This quote (as well as the one by Strabo) illustrates the power of the father analogy in that culture. At the core of this analogy are the ideals of behaviour and responsibility in the father-child relationship.⁷⁶² As Eva Maria Lassen aptly summarizes, “[t]he Romans would not accept leaders who wore signs of a king, but they did not mind being lead by a ‘father’.”⁷⁶³

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History* I.18 as cited in Reinhold and Lewis, eds., *Roman Civilization*, 6. Similar statements are made about the emperor Trajan by Pliny the Younger who also initially declined the title until he felt worthy of it. Rawson, *Children*, 60, expresses it in this way: “This construction of identity as the modest, generous, benevolent father figure is mirrored perfectly in Pliny’s language.” In the text she describes, Pliny writes: “(Before you accepted the title of *pater patriae*) that is what we knew you to be, in our hearts and minds, and it made no difference to public loyalty what you were called, although it seemed grudging to call you emperor and Caesar rather than “father” as our experience showed you to be” (Pliny, *Panegyric* 21).

⁷⁶² See, e.g., T. E. J. Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 39.

⁷⁶³ Lassen, “Father Image,” 132.

3. Father Language as Non-Exclusionary

There is no evidence in these writings that this analogy creates any opposition to the real father-child relationship. On the contrary, the analogy's power is drawn from this relationship.⁷⁶⁴ The same appears to be true with the use of the father analogy by the Greco-Roman groups cited above. Granted, such language provided a sense of belonging to a group and distinguished it from other groups (e.g. a “father” to one group was certainly not perceived as a “father” for other groups), but that did not necessarily entail opposition between “fathers” of other groups. Certainly there is no evidence of any opposition. Further, the use of the father analogy did not negate or compete with the role of one's actual father. In fact, as has been illustrated above, the opposite was the case: one might recognize multiple people as “father.” One final illustration—from Oxyrhynchus—reinforces this latter point. In a personal letter we read:

Aurelius Dios to Aurelius Horion *my sweetest father*, many greetings. I perform the act of veneration for you every day before the gods of this place. Do not be anxious, *father*, about my studies; I am industrious and take relaxation: all will be well with me. I salute my mother Tamiea and my sister Tnepherous and my sister Philous, I salute my brother Patermouthis and my sister Thermouthis, I salute my brother Heracl ... and my brother Kollouchis, I salute *my father* Melanus and my mother Timpesouris and her son. Gaia salutes you all, *my father* Horion and Thermouthis salute you all. I pray for your health, *father*. [Addressed on the reverse:] Deliver to Aurelius Horion from his son Dios.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ Building upon this family ideal, the emperors could encourage the loyalty and obedience of the people of the empire. See, e.g., Elliott, *Home*, 178; and E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960), 69.

⁷⁶⁵ POxy 1296. Emphases mine. The Greek text reads: Αὐρήλιος Δίος Αὐρηλίῳ Ὠρείωνι τῷ γλυκυτάτῳ μου πατρὶ πολλὰ Χαίρειν. τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶ καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν παρὰ τοῖς ἐνθάδε θεοῖς. ἀμερίμνη οὖν, πάτερ, χάριν τῶν μαθημάτων ἡμῶν• φιλοπονοῦμεν καὶ ἀναψύχομεν, καλῶς ἡμεῖς]ν ἔσται. ἀσπάζομαι τὴν ἀδελφὴν μου Τνεφεροῦν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν μου Φιλοῦν, ἀσπάζομαι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου Πατεροῦθιν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν μου Θεροῦθιν, ἀσπάζομαι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου Ἡρακ(λ) καὶ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου Κολλοῦχ(ιν), ἀσπάζομαι τὸν πατέρα μου Μέλανον καὶ τὴν μητέρα μου Τιμπεσοῦρ(ιν) καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς. ἀσπάζεταιται ἡμᾶς πάντες Γαία, ἀσπάζεταιται (continued...)

The editors of this volume, uncertain on how to interpret the *multiple* references to father (as well as mother and possibly brother and sister) in this letter, state that this papyrus “provides a good illustration of the loose use of πατήρ, μήτηρ, &c., at this period.”⁷⁶⁶ There is, however, no indication that the father of Dius would be threatened by the application of the father title to another of significance within his son’s (and his) social network, nor does it seem to cause any problem between Dius and his (actual) father. Rather, the (actual) father-son bond is highlighted in this letter through the addition of the adjective “sweetest” (γλυκυτάτω) and the son’s reference to performing acts of veneration daily for his father.⁷⁶⁷ Here we find references to two fathers, yet clear indication of an appropriate father-son relationship.

C. Familial and Rebirth Language in 1 Peter

1 Peter demonstrates an awareness of the power and appropriate use of the familial metaphor, especially in light of the ideal father-child relationship. In verse 14 of the opening chapter, the author describes the letter’s recipients as obedient children (τέκνα ὑπακοῆς). The letter’s use of father language and its focus on the obedience of the recipients in its introduction has been detailed in the second chapter of this dissertation. What I want to

(continued)

ἡμᾶς πάντες ὁ πατήρ μου Ὁρίων καὶ Θερμοῦθις. ἐρρωσθαί σοι εὐχομαι, πάτερ. [On the back:] ἀπόδ(ος) Ἀ(υρηλίω) Ὁρείωνι ἀπὸ Δίου υἱοῦ.

⁷⁶⁶ B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1914-), 251.

⁷⁶⁷ Nielsen, "Quasi-Kin," 260, in his discussion of the possible difference in the relationship of foster children to one’s own children, notes the use of the epithet “sweet” as a description for a child in some epigraphs and hints that perhaps the use of the term sweet could be linked to being dutiful and could perhaps be connected to proper behaviour within one’s family. Might the use of “sweetest” in this letter is linked to proper family relationship (i.e. Dius uses it of his real father)?

highlight here is how seamlessly this description works with the powerful father analogy detailed above. The recipients' obedience (ὕπακοή) is highlighted in the letter's opening section (1:2), immediately following the first description of God as their πατήρ. The repeated use of obedience in 1:14, combined with the letter's description of the recipients as children and as rebirthed fits precisely with the cultural expectations of the ideal father-child relationship: the father loves and cares for his children, and his children obey and honour him.⁷⁶⁸ The recognition of the father's power in this relationship is crucial to the proper reception of this metaphor.

The power of a father over his children—a key factor in the father analogy—is also alluded to in 1 Peter 2:2 where the author describes the recipients as newborn babies (ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη) and exhorts them to earnestly desire the milk of the word (τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε). Mireille Corbier, in her study of child abandonment in the Roman world, examines the prerogative of the πατήρ to raise or not raise his child. The first sign of a child's acceptance, she notes, is the father's command that the child be given the breast (i.e. receive milk).⁷⁶⁹ The command by the father was an indication that the father assumed responsibility to rear and nourish that child.⁷⁷⁰ The expression in 1 Peter 2:2 may well reflect the importance of receiving milk as a sign of a child's acceptance into the

⁷⁶⁸ See, e.g., R. A. Nisbet, *Tradition and Revolt: Historical and Sociological Essays* (New York: Random House, 1968), 206; Rawson, *Children*, 220-26; and Stevenson, "Ideal Benefactor," 423-27.

⁷⁶⁹ M. Corbier, "Child Exposure and Abandonment," in *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World*, ed. S. Dixon (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 54-55. Corbier notes that Claudius' decision to expose his daughter was contrary to his previous command to breast-feed her. See Suetonius, *Claudius* 27.3.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 57. J. Huskinson, *Roman Children's Sarcophagi: Their Decoration and Its Social Significance*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 111, indicates that the father's responsibility to raise the child is linked to the more basic act of lifting the child from the ground and thinks that images showing a father holding a child may represent that symbolic act. Corbier proposes that this act can be linked to images of breast-feeding (54-55).

family. The letter's author has obviously understood the cultural importance of the father analogy and assimilated this analogy into the letter.

Chapter Conclusions

A survey of the use and nuances of the family metaphor in the Greco-Roman world clarifies the social and cultural function of rebirth language within 1 Peter. In this model, familial language— and rebirth language in particular—need not be understood as sectarian language, but, rather, as modelling the family ideal. This ideal, while used selectively, permeated the empire and was utilized by various groups and associations within their own internal structures. The importance of the father analogy in particular was understood by all citizens, and this analogy did not serve to negate the place of the father in his family, rather, its power was drawn from and dependent upon the role of the father in real families.

The description of God as *πατήρ* in 1 Peter assimilates this powerful father analogy and reinforces this metaphor through the integration of rebirth language. Rebirth language emphasizes the father-child relationship that was at the core of the father analogy in the Greco-Roman world. While the addition of rebirth language to the familial metaphor is not found in other writings of the time, and its meaning is reconfigured by 1 Peter's author (see chapters three and four above), this language fits perfectly into the larger familial metaphor and strengthens the recipients' sense of connectedness; it serves to remind the letter's recipients that God is their *πατήρ*, and their behaviour should parallel that of obedient children. More importantly, however, for the questions of social and cultural texture, such language need not be understood to negate existing family relationships. On the contrary,

the letter encourages its recipients to behave in culturally appropriate ways *in* their existing familial relationships (1 Pet 2:18-3:7).

Evidence in 1 Peter demonstrates the author's interest in maintaining existing social and familial ties and ensuring that, while the recipients' behaviour ought to reflect their new belief system, it should not produce culturally unsuitable behaviour nor incur a social withdrawal that would allow inappropriate accusations against the communities. Rather the recipients' ongoing appropriate cultural engagement should silence their accusers. Within this framework, the author uses rebirth language as part of the culturally powerful familial analogy to strengthen the recipients' sense of identity. Such language was not the language of exclusivity but rather of inclusivity—the language of belonging. We could say that the language of rebirth served to *intensify* the familial metaphor, not to strengthen separation from society, but to help firmly establish their Christian identity *in the midst of* their associations and interactions within their social context. I will say more about the broader context of this perspective in the conclusion that follows.

CONCLUSION

Previous analyses of 1 Peter reveal the ongoing need for more flexible tools to analyze the nuances of these complex ancient writings called letters. Part persuasive speech, part authoritative communication, fully both, literary letters are often a synthesis of several genres and should not be subject to a singular approach or categorized based upon a single methodological framework. Socio-rhetorical criticism affords the opportunity to study various components of 1 Peter in order to more clearly assess the role that rebirth language plays in this ancient Christian letter. The analysis reveals and highlights several crucial aspects of rebirth terminology that not only pinpoint more clearly the role of rebirth language in this letter but also call previous perspectives into question.

Regardless of whether one analyzes the opening sections of 1 Peter based on ancient epistolary or ancient rhetorical criteria, it is clear that these opening sections serve a central role in understanding the letter's overall thrust. The prescript and thanksgiving sections (which together form the opening sections) of 1 Peter are rather extensive. The extensive nature of these opening sections further confirm the importance of these sections in the letter's overall purpose and also place 1 Peter within the "familial" letter tradition, which indicates that friendly or "family" ties is a critical aspect of this type of correspondence. This is not a new revelation, but its importance for 1 Peter should not be ignored. Within the NT letter tradition, 1 Peter stands out as unique not only because of its extensive introduction

focussed almost exclusively upon the readers but also because of the role of rebirth language in these introductory portions.

The use of rebirth language in 1 Peter is one of the distinctives of this complex, carefully woven narrative. Rebirth language is a crucial part of the larger language web that shapes the readers' self-perceptions. Beginning with an announcement of the readers' "chosenness" (ἐκλεκτός), 1 Peter aims to influence the readers' Christian identity by incorporating familial and rebirth terminology very early in the opening sections of this letter, particularly, the declarations of God as πατήρ and the letter's recipients as ἀναγεννάω. The more limited, negative terms of identification (such as strangers (παρεπίδημοι), aliens (πάροικοι), and perhaps even dispersed people (διασπορά)), are important in that they serve to contrast the sense of belonging with a sense of alienation, but they serve a much lesser role in this letter than the and much more developed familial metaphor.

After describing the recipients as ἐκλεκτοί by God as their πατήρ, the author participates *with* the readers in this familial metaphor by twice including the (rare) first person plural voice to the subsequently repeated "father" metaphor in conjunction with the newly introduced description of the readers as rebirthed. Further, these descriptions, which serve as the foundation for the rest of the extended opening, categorically establish the familial metaphor as one of the keys to this letter's argument. Apart from its association with familial language, no direct clarification of this rebirth is offered nor is it tied to any initiation or rite. Rather, in the development of the familial metaphor, the readers are

described as obedient children—an obedience highlighted in the letter’s opening—and this identity is linked to their rebirth.

The narrative focus of 1 Peter, a focus directed exclusively upon the readers, is another distinctive of this letter, at least in the NT corpus. The narrator of 1 Peter significantly minimizes the authorial voice in the letter. In contrast to every other NT letter in which the authorial voice is balanced by an emphasis on either the singular (I) or plural (we) voice, 1 Peter barely contains either voice. Instead, in a feature unique to this letter, the authorial voice highlights the recipients through the overwhelmingly dominant second person plural voice (“you”). Further, after establishing the readers’ identity in the initial sections of the letter, the narrator switches to the imperative (second person plural) voice, which builds upon the foundations of the earlier sections and upon the identity of the letter’s author and places expectations upon the recipients’ behaviour. These paraenetic sections are not, however—as is often portrayed—hostile to the larger society. Instead, building upon the familial identity already established earlier in the letter, these sections call the readers to behaviour that is both appropriate to their Christian identity and appropriate to the larger cultural framework in which they live (with the exception of certain behaviours that stand in direct contradiction to their Christian identity).

Outside 1 Peter, the larger textual/inscriptional context of rebirth language is both disappointing and enlightening. The distinctive nature of 1 Peter’s rebirth language comes more clearly into focus through an examination of related terminology in the extant, first-century texts. No other writer uses the same terminology in the same way as the author of 1 Peter. More particularly, terminology (e.g. *παλιγγενεσία*) that has often been identified

with the rebirth language of 1 Peter (i.e. ἀναγεννάω), while connected in use, is different in meaning from this rebirth language. The dismantling of these long-held language associations is critical for a correct assessment of the role of rebirth in 1 Peter. There is no evidence that the author of 1 Peter is directly referencing, alluding to, or recontextualizing these other texts in the letter's employment of this language.

Even evidence in the gospel of John, which seems to offer the closest meaning parallel to the rebirth language of 1 Peter, uses the language differently. While both texts use rebirth language to provide their readers with a social or community identity and neither connects that language to the Christian rite of baptism, 1 Peter does not contrast this identity with other communities; instead, it incorporates other Christian communities within this familial structure. Moreover, rebirth language is much more prominent in 1 Peter than in John's gospel, which also does not utilize the familial framework for rebirth language. John's use of rebirth language does reveal, however, that the idea of human rebirth was not well known or accepted even by the late first century. Its meaning was in the process of being shaped.

Rebirth in the mysteries also connects to but is different from the rebirth language of 1 Peter. The extant rebirth evidence from the cults of the Magna Mater, Mithras, and Isis offers some strong correlations with the language used in 1 Peter. The most striking aspect of these connections is the temporal focus of this language. Like 1 Peter, the evidence from these mystery rites highlights one's identity based upon changed relationships with the god(dess) as well as with the other group members. Some of the groups even employ familial language when speaking of one's connection to the other members of the group.

However, initiation, which figures so prominently in the mystery rites, is nowhere to be found in conjunction with 1 Peter's presentation of rebirth.⁷⁷¹

The most consistent link between 1 Peter's use of rebirth language and other, similar terminology is geographical in nature. Like 1 Peter, the gospel of John and some of the evidence from the mysteries has connections to Asia Minor. Moreover, a solid link to Rome can be established in each of the mysteries where rebirth language is evident. Given 1 Peter's associations with both Asia Minor and Rome, these geographical connections increase the likelihood that 1 Peter's author encountered ideas of rebirth in his or in his recipients' immediate context. However, whatever ideas of rebirth existed in the social context of 1 Peter's author and/or readers, these ideas were clearly and specifically reconfigured or recontextualized in order to meet the perceived need of the letter's recipients.

Broadly speaking—and keeping in mind that the rhetorical thrust of a letter does not equal historical reality (nor is that necessarily the intention of the writer)—the letter of 1 Peter is strongly focussed upon the recipients and seeks to provide a sense of identity that is sufficient to encourage them to live according to their distinctive values and teachings (e.g. monotheism) despite the social pressures they face as a result of not participating in some of the activities of those around them. Given that the author endeavours to counter *some* established, socially accepted activities, there is a need to (argumentatively) push strongly in a different (but not necessarily opposite) direction. As a result, the author uses a variety of

⁷⁷¹ As I noted in the introduction to the dissertation, 1 Peter does reference baptism in 3:21 but does not offer any direct link to the rebirth language in the earlier sections of the letter, and one should not assume that the occurrence of βάπτισμα in this later passage is connected to rebirth language without evidence that the author of 1 Peter intended such a connection.

metaphors in order to place an emphasis (perhaps even an over-emphasis?) on the recipients' sense of identity. However, even given this emphasis, the letter also encourages the recipients to maintain other social connections and activities, using what could be described as imperial-sounding language—language that significantly links the recipients to their social context. In these sections, the author highlights the importance of obedience to authorities, reiterates the language (found in other writings) of the ideal state, utilizes the language of benefaction and directly exhorts them to be active in honouring the emperor. Thus, while the writer is primarily focussed on the identity of the recipients as a group, he is also focussed on the position or identity of that group within their social context (i.e. the *city/polis*).

Evidence outside the letter reinforces the reality that this language is indicative of significant social integration demonstrated in the language and behaviour of a variety of associations as well as some Jewish and Christian groups. While I hinted at some this evidence in the final chapter, I was not able to deal with it in any detail because such an analysis would have expanded far beyond the limits of the dissertation. However, the evidence from the rebirth within this writing indicates that rebirth, while serving to encourage the recipients' sense of unique identity, does not offer any overt encouragement to separate or withdraw from society but, rather, serves as part of the group identity *within* an integrated societal perspective. Such a group identity is not uncommon in different groups and associations in the social context of the Greco-Roman world. Any analysis of 1 Peter needs to take into account a distinction between an identity for the purpose of group cohesion and an identity for the purpose of separation from society. The evidence from rebirth language, I would argue, falls within the former distinction given its role and setting

in this letter. While there may be a temptation to assume such a distinction, the letter itself does not utilize rebirth language in this manner.

Ultimately, the author of 1 Peter used rebirth language in a distinct manner, intending it to be understood within the larger, positive cultural framework of familial language. By including rebirth language within the child-father metaphor repeatedly and early in the letter, 1 Peter's author establishes this metaphor as one of the keys to the readers' self perception. The selective placement of this group of terms within the letter is done so as to be convincing but not overpowering. The metaphor draws upon the family ideal that permeated the Greco-Roman empire and finds parallels in multiple groups throughout the empire. The author of 1 Peter uses rebirth language to reinforce the powerful father-child analogy and to encourage the letter's recipients to live in a culturally appropriate manner in order to silence inaccurate accusations against them. While the experience of the Petrine communities may have found parallels in other Christian and Jewish groups of the Greco-Roman world, 1 Peter's use of rebirth language appears to offer a unique perspective to the sense of alienation and questions of identity that confronted other groups in the Greco-Roman world of Asia Minor.

In light of this use of rebirth language in 1 Peter, the portrayal of some early Christian (and Jewish) communities should continue to be re-evaluated. Most analyses of 1 Peter perceive its language to reflect communities struggling against all aspects of the dominant evil system of the larger culture. This (negative and stereotyped) perception shapes how much of the terminology in this letter is understood and assumes antithetical social statements, beliefs and behaviour where, in actuality, only a few exist. Other studies have already begun to question such a perception and demonstrate the need for a more

wholistic and flexible analysis of the complex relationships between early Christian and Jewish groups and other groups and individuals in their varied social contexts. If this analysis is correct, it does more than free our understanding of rebirth language from its (direct) association with early Christian baptismal language; it encourages ongoing re-evaluations of the “language of separation” that is often associated with these early Christian and Jewish communities of the Greco-Roman world.

Appendix 1 Structural Diagram of 1 Peter 1:3-12

³Εὐλογητὸς

ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ

τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

ὁ ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς

κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος

εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν

δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν,

⁴εἰς κληρονομίαν

ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραινον,

τετηρημένην ἐν οὐρανοῖς

εἰς ὑμᾶς

⁵τοὺς ... φρουρουμένους

ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ

διὰ πίστεως

εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοιμὴν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι

ἐν καιρῷ ἑσχάτῳ.

⁶ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιάσθε,

ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστίν]

λυπηθέντες

ἐν ... πειρασμοῖς,

⁷ποικίλοις

⁷ἵνα ἠδοκιμαζόμενοι εὕρεθῆτε → τὸ δοκιμῶν

ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως

πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ

τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου

διὰ πυρὸς δὲ ...

→ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν

ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

⁸... οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπάτε → ἵνα

εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὀρώντες πιστεύετε

δὲ

ἀγαλλιάσθε → χαρὰ

ἀνεκκλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξαμένῳ

⁹κομιζόμενοι τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως [ὑμῶν]

σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν.

¹⁰περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν προφήται οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς

χάριτος προφητεύσαντες, ¹¹ἔραυνῶντες εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ἐδήλου

τὸν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα

καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας. ¹²οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ

δικηκόνουν αὐτά, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισμαμένων ὑμᾶς

[εἶν] πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι

παρακύψαι

Abbreviations

Epigraphical and Papyrological Abbreviations

<i>CIJ</i>	= Frey 1936-52
<i>CIL</i>	= Mommsen et al. 1893-
<i>CIMRM</i>	= Vermaseren 1956-60
<i>IScM III</i>	= Sauciuc-Saveanu 1924
<i>IGBulg</i>	= Mihailov 1958-70
<i>IGLSkythia</i>	= Pippidi and Russu 1983-
<i>IGUR</i>	= Moretti 1968-91
<i>IPontEux</i>	= Latyshev 1965
<i>POxy</i>	= Grenfell and Hunt 1914-
<i>PSI</i>	= Vitelli and Norsa 1912-57
<i>SIG</i>	= Dittenberger 1960

Periodical, Reference Work and Serials Abbreviations

AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
<i>AmAnth</i>	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AJBI</i>	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BritJSoc</i>	<i>British Journal of Sociology</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
<i>BLE</i>	<i>Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BSNTS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CurBS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
<i>Di</i>	<i>Dialog</i>
<i>Did</i>	<i>Didaskalia</i>
EPROER	Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain
<i>ErJb</i>	<i>Eranos-Jarhbuch</i>

<i>E&RS</i>	<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>
<i>EsVie</i>	<i>Esprit et Vie</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Études Théologiques et Religieuses</i>
<i>EurJSoc</i>	<i>European Journal of Sociology</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>The Expositor</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>Forum</i>	<i>Forum</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HNT</i>	<i>Handbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HUT</i>	<i>Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JMS</i>	<i>Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>The Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>The Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JChrEd</i>	<i>Journal of Christian Education</i>
<i>JRelS</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Studies</i>
<i>JSSR</i>	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>NA27</i>	<i>Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (27th ed.)</i>
<i>NABPRSS</i>	<i>National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NIBC</i>	<i>The New International Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>NICNT</i>	<i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i>
<i>NIGTC</i>	<i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSup</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum Supplements</i>

<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix</i>
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>R&T</i>	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
ResQ	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RRelRes	<i>Review of Religious Research</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie</i>
<i>ScrB</i>	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSBS	SBL Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>Semitics</i>	<i>Semitics</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SocAn</i>	<i>Sociological Analysis</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976
<i>TexQ</i>	<i>Texas Quarterly</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie</i>

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