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Exiles, Not Enemies: Petrine Self-Determination in the Face of Empire

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Abstract: Exile was part of the juridical system of the late Republican and early Imperial Rome. 1 Pet 2.11 adopts the language of exile to identify its audience's place within the world. Subsequent verses indicate a disparity between their own place and the world, or wider community, but fall short of rejecting wholesale the apparatus of the Roman state and its socio-political conventions. The apparent self-identification of the community as exiles is a potential claim for autonomy, self-determination, and high status. Claims for exile in the context of the Diaspora (1 Pet 1.1) might also embrace a claim to be considered Jewish, members of an ancient tradition protected by long precedent, and so protected from some legal threats.

Keywords: 1 Peter; exile; enmity; early Imperial Rome; Second Temple Judaism

1. Introduction

Do Christians need to define themselves as enemies of the world when they no longer fit in? 1 Pet offers an alternative answer: exiles rather than enemies. This identification may be found in treatments of exile both with Judaism and the early Roman Empire: the two cultures that frame the environment of the epistle.

2. The Environment of 1 Peter

Martin Hengel's magisterial *Judaism and Hellenism* provided a solid rationale for the need to avoid a dualistic separation of these two cultural entities, which changed the face of New Testament scholarship (Hengel 1991). Of course, that pairing needs adjustment, as Roman values and culture were also part and parcel of the broader environment that shaped emerging Christianity. Hengel provided a reminder that even documents which appear to stand within one tradition might usefully be examined for traces of both or all. Consequently, both studies of individuals, like Paul (Engberg-Pedersen 2001), and of particular themes, like the offices of the church (Stewart 2014), have been greatly enriched by the identification of possible influences from all of Judaism, Hellenism, and Romanitas on the thinking, writing, and practice of emerging Christianity. By exploding the myth of an historical dualism between the two cultures, Hengel also showed that the tendency that Jonathan Z. Smith also identified. Namely, Christian theologians from different traditions claim to be the true heirs of a primarily Judaic or Hellenistic expression of Christianity, which was frequently accompanied either tacit or blatant claims for the superiority of their own preferred theology. Such practice is no longer sustainable, if it ever had been (Smith 1990, pp. 13–34, 83).

Even a document like 1 Pet, which appears to come from a predominantly Judaic environment, should be examined against the backdrop of all the broader cultural traditions. Even the description of the intended audience as ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς (1 Pet 1.1) need not indicate a primarily Judaic constituency, but simply the appropriation of the old language to new cultural phenomenon emerging within its progenitor (Kelly 1969, p. 4). Indeed, recent debate has not resolved the question of whether the audience is

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Jewish Christians with a recent of historical experience of exile, or non-Jewish Christians who have learned the language of exile from the Jewish Scriptures, or whether a literal or symbolic understanding of exile informs their context (Watson and Callan 2012, pp. 7–8). The critique of the recipients' behaviour points to a non-Jewish audience, albeit one whom the writer considers well-versed in the terminology of the Jewish Scriptures (Horrell 2008, pp. 47–48). It is possible that the audience includes proselytes to Judaism (Seland 2005, pp. 40, 43).

Thus, despite significant elements closely linked to Judaism, a "pure" Judaic provenance cannot be assumed, even if the appropriation of language suggests that the writer may frame the key points of the letter in terminology drawn strongly from Judaism. The letter exemplifies the fact that Judaism, Hellenism, and Latinism had what might be termed "porous boundaries" (Ivanovic 2008, p. 26) and were not "discrete" (Alexander 2001, p. 69).

Nevertheless, the treatment of Diaspora Jews remains significant, given the identification of the audience with the Diaspora. This necessarily demands an engagement with Romanitas, in at least a political sense. A Roman political context lies behind it—and cannot be ignored. Put crudely, at this point in history, the Diaspora sits in the environment of Jewish–Roman relationships and politics. History suggests that such relations could be fraught: there were conflicts, clashes, and political actions to resolve issues. Some major events, which will be outlined below, were framed by imperial policy, others by local politics and rivalries. Here, evidence points towards local persecutions as being more common than official imperial policy. The Jewish Revolt of the 60s CE looms large, but did not, in some respects, mark a paradigm shift in Jewish–Roman relations. Irving M. Zeitlin notes that, whilst the Jewish War made it easier to stir up resentment, the emperor Titus rejected attempts by Antioch's Greeks to expel Jews from the city and their plan to destroy copper tablets that declared Jewish rights and privileges (Josephus, *J.W.*, 7.106–111; Zeitlin 2012, pp. 73, 81). No special or peculiar punishments were meted out: the destruction of the Temple at the end of the Jewish War (70 CE), the imposition of new taxes instead of the Temple tithe, and the renaming (after the Bar-Kochba revolt of 132–135 CE) of Judaea as Syria Palestina all had precedents in earlier Roman victories over Greek states and Carthage (Zeitlin 2012, p. 80). Nor was the place of Judaism as a venerable ancient tradition cancelled. Here, the term *religio licita* is avoided. Paula Fredriksen has noted that the term is disputed and has no ancient attestation: Jewish "exemption from public cult was ancient, traditional and protected by long precedent. Ancestral obligation, not legal precedent, was what mattered" (Fredriksen 2007, p. 33). In the aftermath of the Revolt, what would eventuate was more of a cultural and spiritual separation than a political solution (Zeitlin 2012, pp. 81–82). However, politics and spirituality tend to defy a neat distinction.

This becomes more obvious when other political considerations are added. What if the audience may themselves have been exiles resulting from Roman governmental decisions? As exiles, might they be construed as enemies of the state, with all that might entail in terms of their status within imperial contexts. Or, is an alternative political delineation possible?

Equally significant is the identification of the audience as one which has experienced suffering, which may, but need not, be linked to a geographic exile. Some have suggested that such suffering might be linked to the persecutions which arose in the Neronian period: a scenario favoured by advocates of genuine Petrine authorship. Others, favouring a pseudepigraphic source, look to the persecutions of Domitian. Here a different problem arises: the question of whether such a persecution of Christians took place. For, as J. Christian Wilson has pointed out, the "fact" of such a persecution has long been queried (Wilson 1993, pp. 589–97; Varner 2004, p. 111). A stronger case can be made for local persecutions or ostracisms of different emerging Christian groupings than for a systematic empire-wide persecution (Jobes 2005, pp. 9–10). Travis B. Williams notes that, from the Neronian period, legal charges might be brought against Christians and that martyrdom was a possibility even if "it was not a danger that was often experienced within Christian communities" (Williams 2014, p. 236). Thus, it was a potential threat for the audience of 1 Pet, given that the letter was likely composed between 65 and 90 CE (Hunt 2018, p. 528).

Whilst exile is a theme which has a strongly Judaic identity, stemming from the narrative of both Jewish scriptures and history, it also has a strong Greek and Roman history, which could equally influence the claims which are being made by Peter in asking his audience to consider themselves exiles, primarily in a spiritual sense, even if there remains a geographic dimension or history. Whilst it is convenient to break the description of exile into Latin and Judaic materials, their overlap and porous boundaries will become apparent. A valuable point is made by Torrey Seland, who wisely counsels that interpretation of the terms found in 1 Pet as engaging with proselytism "*alone*" may not be sustainable, even if this is a "relevant, though neglected field" (Seland 2005, p. 40). This is equally true of other potential semantic fields, and polyvalency always remains an option. Our study thus starts with an examination of Roman exile. Judaic expressions of exile will be explored in the reading of 1 Pet as they are self-evidently intrinsic to it.

3. Roman Exile

The phenomenon of exile has its origins in early Roman history. It was not unique to Rome, being practised in ancient Greece as an alternative, depending on circumstances, to either capital punishment or imprisonment (Rocovich 2004, pp. 13–19). However, Roman practice was linked to their thinking about state and politics and was not simply derived from Greek city-states. It was a means through which the political ideal of *concordia* ("political harmony among individuals and social classes to ensure the smooth governance of the state") might be enacted (Kelly 2006, p. 9). *Exilium* (exile) was effectively a safety valve to diffuse potentially dangerous conflicts and violence (Kelly 2006, p. 13).

Within Republican Rome, exile, particularly for members of the upper classes, offered an acceptable alternative to resorting to violence for self-preservation (Kelly 2006, p. 13). It also provided a means of avoiding capital punishment (Kelly 2006, pp. 5, 13, 19). Exile could be entered voluntarily prior to the delivery of a verdict (Kelly 2006, p. 1; Rocovich 2004, p. 20). It appears to have operated on a customary basis, rather than from a statute (Kelly 2006, pp. 20–25). The orator and statesman, Marcus Tullius Cicero, chose to enter voluntary exile in 58 BCE; so, too, at other times, did M. Livius Salinator, and P. Cornelius Sulla (Kelly 2006, pp. 5–6). In such cases, voluntary exile was rarely followed by the enactment of the death penalty: a decree of *aquae et ignis interdictio* would usually prohibit any return (Kelly 2006, pp. 1–2, 25–39). That said, some exiles, like Cicero, did subsequently return–in Cicero's case, after interventions by Pompey and Titus Annius Milo in 57 BCE. Voluntary exile also avoided the stigma of being branded a convicted criminal (Kelly 2006, p. 6), an important consideration in a society which operated on an Honour/Shame system (King 2021, pp. 22–24; Neyrey 1998, pp. 5–34; Plevnik 1998, pp. 106–15). It would not, however, given that it removed exiles from Rome and from their social networks, avoid a complete loss of status.

Involuntary exile took two forms. From the middle of the first century BCE, exile became the penalty for some criminal statutes (Kelly 2006, pp. 3, 39–45). The first certain use (*lex Tullia de ambitu*), for a charge of electoral bribery, appears to come from 63 BCE (Kelly 2006, p. 43). The other was relegation (the magisterial power "to expel any disruptive persons from a given area"). It was more commonly used for non-Romans (individuals or groups), rarely enacted against Roman citizens, and more likely a temporary measure (Kelly 2006, pp. 3, 65–67).

Roman exile may be presented as a punishment for immorality. Three cases come to mind in this regard. There is a deep irony in them involving members of Augustus' own family, given that his *Lex Julia de Adulteriis* (18 BCE) brought in the punishment of exile for adultery (Phang 2022, pp. 84–87). The first is the exile of the elder Julia, the daughter of Augustus, ostensibly for adultery and public immorality (2 CE), although a potential conspiracy, slander, and/or political intrigue are also possible reasons (Fantham 2006, pp. 85–91). The younger Julia, Augustus' grand-daughter, was exiled for adultery (8 CE), but, again, politics may again provide the real motive (Fantham 2006, pp. 110–11). Caught up with her was the poet Ovid, perhaps the most famous exile of the period. He was

banished to Tomis in Left Pontus in 8 CE (Matei-Popescu 2017, pp. 17–25), ostensibly for his erotic poetry, which did not necessarily break scandalous new ground, but did sit uneasily with the spirit of the age and made him a victim of its popularity (Fantham 2006, pp. 111–16; for no actual adultery, Thibault 1964, p. 54; for his mockery of Augustan Romanitas, Davis 2012, p. 127). A further example of adultery being used as the grounds for exile comes nearer to the time of *1 Peter*: the false charge laid against Octavia by Nero (Tacitus, *Ann*. 14.60–64; Jackson 1937, pp. 202–13; see further Fantham 2006, p. 87). One point that emerges from this history, and which will be germane to this study, is the association of exile with a standard of morality or virtue. For, whether the charges are substantiated or clearly identified or not, this perception is visible in all the examples just given.

Ovid's poems also afford a subtle analysis of power, in which exile and colonisation are inextricably bound, but his literary context always risks skewing the reporting of political reality:

> Both the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* do the important ideological work of fostering empathy for fellow Romans abroad, disdain for the non-Roman peoples who threaten the stability of the imperial system, and a patronal attitude toward those who are to be absorbed. They present dependency and subjection on the part of the Roman reader and barbarian Tomitan alike as the necessary condition for enjoyment of the benefits of the imperial system.
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> (Habinek 1998, p. 151)

Understandings of exile depend on one's place within the empire. Latin and Judaic understandings of exile resist a discrete separation. Jewish people living in the Roman Empire experienced the phenomenon of exile on several occasions, as well as a longer history of exile and disruption. The key facts of that longer history just need a brief mention: the scattering after the Assyrian conquest of Israel (722 BCE), and the deportations to Babylon (597 and 586 BCE), which would result in major Jewish communities in both Babylon and Egypt. Our attention now turns to Judaic explorations and experiences of exile (Hooker n.d.).

4. Judaic Exile

Jewish communities that had existed prior to Alexander the Great persisted in the Roman era (Rajak 1992, pp. 9–28). The phenomenon of the Diaspora in the Second Temple period demanded a theological assessment. For some, the exile from Israel was considered a punishment, repeatedly seen in writings like the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (*Test. Levi* 10.3–4; *Test. Asher* 7.2–7), *Jubilees* 1.9–13, *Psalms of Solomon* 9.1, Tbt 3.4, Jdt 5.18, and *Third Sibylline Oracle* 267–276. Verdicts of this kind continued after the Jewish War (*2 Bar.* 1.2–4; Gafni 1997, p. 24). Others viewed voluntary migrations, like those to Egypt in the early Hellenistic period, as a blessing, distancing them from the sins of the past and offering new opportunities, without the stigma of forced exile, or the loss of the land (Gafni 1997, pp. 27–28, 58–62). Philo viewed such voluntary exile as beneficial, offering a chance to focus on a higher spiritual reality (*Spec. Leg*. 4.178; *Somn*. 2.250); Josephus, in the wake of 70 CE, also presented exile as a blessing and part of a God-given destiny (*Ant.* 4.115; Gafni 1997, p. 29). A third approach combined both. Punishment had a "silver lining" or a "ray of light": their inability to assimilate provoked their scattering, but ultimately would lead to a "restoration to the Land" (Gafni 1997, p. 30). Dispersion also meant that the total destruction of Israel would be an impossibility (Gafni 1997, p. 32). After all, no matter how vengeful Rome might be, they could not eradicate a Jewish presence in territories beyond their own borders. A fourth reading of the Diaspora considered it an opportunity for a universal mission that would benefit non-Jews. Traces of this are found in Tbt 13.3–4 and 8.13 and in a typology based on Abraham (Gafni 1997, pp. 35–37).

Within a more immediate history, there were exiles of Jewish groups in the imperial period. The expulsion of Jews from Rome by Tiberius (19 CE), ostensibly for an act of fraud, was more likely aimed at curbing proselytism (Smallwood 1956, pp. 315–22). The

second was the expulsion that occurred in the rule of Claudius, which has been variously dated to 41, 49, or 52 CE, although a more precise date than between 42 and 54 CE may be elusive (Slingerland 1992). The reason for the expulsion has been muddied by the inclusion of a potential reference to Chrestus, sometimes read as indicative of a conflict between Jews and adherents of Christ (Suetonius, *Claud*. 25.4; Rolfe 1914, pp. 50–51; Gruen 2002, p. 39). More likely, though, is Claudius' conservative reforms of religion which could have been hostile to Judaism as a whole (Gruen 2002, pp. 39–41), but not to it exclusively (Jobes 2005, p. 32). Within most of the Empire, except for Alexandria, where there was long-running conflict between "Greeks" and "Jews", Jews lived without serious threat prior to 66 CE (Goodman 2007, pp. 418, 421; Gruen 2002, p. 104). At that point, in Syria and Coele-Syria, tensions between Greco-Syrians and Judaeans emerged, particularly in Caesarea, eventuating in what Josephus would call stasis, which, as elsewhere, effectively meant "a battle for control of city government", and, after the massacre of Judaeans in 66 CE, a contributing factor to the escalation of hostilities (Ritter 2015, p. 250). Such hostilities towards Jewish communities across the Empire increased after that date (Ritter 2015, pp. 260–63). Old tensions were re-ignited in Alexandria, and previous peaceful co-existence in areas close to Judaea and as far away as Antioch was lost (Goodman 2007, pp. 427–28; Ritter 2015, pp. 270–78).

The Jewish people stand within the contours delineated by Thomas N. Habinek: disdain, patronage, dependency, and subjection (Habinek 1998, p. 151). They might be considered a threat to either the local community or to the empire (Ritter 2015, p. 240). After the fall of Jerusalem, refugees from Jerusalem and Judaea sought shelter in Diaspora communities; this also could lead increasing local hostility (Goodman 2007, pp. 460–63; Gruen 2002, p. 83).

Thus, particularly if 1 Pet is dated later, alienation and even hostility from a local community might be part of Judaic identity and experience. The world had become less safe for those associated with Judaism, not only in Judaea, but in the Diaspora. They possibly seek to be identified rather with those who might be absorbed, as they may be considered harmless, than reckoned as threats, and in need of being tamed (Habinek 1998, pp. 166–69).

5. Exile in 1 Peter

With the intercultural background of exile now delineated, it is appropriate to turn to the text of 1 Pet itself, and the mentions of exile. The work stands on the cusp of Judaism and Roman identity, even if the audience is not predominantly ethnically Jewish. The first piece of business is to examine the potential semantic framework in which the text may be located given, as has already been seen, the potential for engagement with all of Hellenistic, Judaic, and Roman phenomena.

The terms used to define the identity which the author proposes for the audience are found in 1 Pet 2.11 (παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους). These may indicate actual or metaphorical exile (Hunt 2018, p. 529). 1 Pet 1.17 further uses τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον to describe the audience's current state. As these cover a range of meanings, it is first appropriate to ask whether translations which embrace the concept of exile are appropriate. The letter itself has already identified concepts which may qualify (παρεπίδημος ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας—1 Pet 1.1), indicating that they are somehow chosen or select, of the Diaspora, and in an identifiable geographical area of that Diaspora. 1 Pet 1.6 shows that this has involved suffering and trials (Elliott 2000, pp. 339–40).[1] However, it is also a temporary exile that will be resolved (1 Pet 1.4–5; Still and Webb 2014, pp. 457, 463–65 with references to Pss, Prov, Hos, and Isa).

It is the inclusion of the Diaspora which most strongly gives the potential identification as exiles, as opposed to other usages, often associated with Abraham, which would lean towards a translation like "sojourner" (πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος—Gen 23.4 [LXX]). This combination would certainly seem to indicate that the audience is to identify with Abraham: a phenomenon not uncommon in other NT writings (e.g., Rom 4; Jas 2.21). This typology

reveals new significance for him revealed in the person of Jesus, through which believers are somehow identifiable with him (Walsh 2014, p. 36). This repetition of the *Genesis* wording indicates, of course, that the reading of the text must include this Judaic trajectory and not be limited to exclusively Greek or Latin phenomena.

The frame of reference is not dictated solely by Abraham (Still and Webb 2014, pp. 459–61).[2] Israel is identified as προσήλυτοι καὶ πάροικοι (Lev 25.23 [LXX]): "urged to think of themselves in that way so that they could protect and care for aliens and strangers who were in their midst", mindful of their own experience of alienation and suffering in Egypt (Joseph 2012, pp. 101–2). Thus, the usage here may embrace a claim to be considered both a manifestation of Abraham and of Israel.

This Exodus/Israel theme then segues into the theme of exile. The pattern of the "New Exodus" discernible in Mark also appears in 1 Pet:

Exodus	Deliverance from Egypt	Journey through the desert	Sinai
Isaianic NE	Deliverance from Babylon	Journey along the 'way'	Jerusalem
1 Peter	Deliverance from the Devil	Sojourn in 'exile'	Heaven

(Mbuvi 2007, p. 32)

This pattern is further elucidated by the references to election and Babylon (1 Pet 1.1, 5.13; Mbuvi 2007, p. 32). These indicate a temporary state for the audience which is not where the believer is ultimately meant to be. Such concepts of temporary estrangement are well described as both sojourn and exile. However, the identification of the audience as Jewish may have social consequences. For, it implicitly demands that the audience continue to be identified as Jews, members of a venerable tradition, with a recognised place in society, rather than member of some new or esoteric religious movement.[3] Yet, this may have been a relatively ineffective claim for non-Jewish Christians, and we have already noted the likely non-Jewish ethnicity of at least some of 1 Pet's audience, if viewed as a marker of ethnicity rather than a spiritual or religious heritage. Later persecutions of Christians suggest it did not work in the long run (Fredriksen 2007, pp. 33–35).

However, the Jewish Scriptures are not the sole locus of meaning, as the qualification of the Diaspora (1 Pet 1.10) has revealed, not least in the subsequent explorations of themes like punishment, blessing, the "silver lining", and mission. Here, scholars have tapped into the potential analogies with Philo. These promote the understanding of the exile and not simply as a geographic or spatial alienation, but as a spiritual one.

From such a concept of a spiritual or moral exile, further layers of meaning may be added to the way in which the audience is encouraged to imagine itself. These draw on the Roman phenomenon of exile, as well as Jewish. Neither need be abstract, nor solely metaphorical or spiritual. Karen H. Jobes has argued strongly that the context of 1 Pet was likely to have included the experience of physical and/or politically motivated exile, linked to Roman colonisation and religious conservatism, most likely in the Claudian period (Jobes 2005, pp. 28–41, 63–66). However, the audience does not need to have experienced exile immediately to understand it in this way; it could be part of their recent ancestral history. They need only be familiar with its tropes. As such, they might understand exile to be a mark of enmity, a verdict declared upon them by the state. If there is any mileage in this, the author's choice of exile as a descriptor becomes significant, not least because the writer asks the audience not to be described as exiles, but to describe themselves thus. What is being claimed is a voluntary identification as exiles. If they, or their immediate ancestors, had been exiled, they now are exhorted to own that title by their own claim, not that of the state. That has ramifications for the perceived status of the audience.

Given that voluntary exile was something that could be chosen by Roman aristocrats or equestrians, this may be a subtle claim for a high status. That the exile is voluntary is in no way diminished by the passives of 1 Pet 2.10, as these are indicative of a positive transformation in which the audience are willing partners (Kok 2023, pp. 118–20). Claims for high status may be mirrored in the advice about apparel (1 Pet 3.3-6; Elliott 2000, pp. 561–65) or within the delineation of family relations (Kok 2023, p. 121).[4] This is

analogous to Roman discussions of the virtue of *pudicitia*, as seen in a lengthy discussion by Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 6.1 (Langlands 2006, pp. 1–3, 37–39). Sara Elise Phang notes that modesty was an integral part of this virtue (Phang 2022, pp. 72, 102, 246). Claims for *pudicitia* also involve honour and status, as Roman convention denied the virtue to, for example, slave women (Phang 2022, pp. 12–14, 87, 162). This suggests that some of the audience might belong to higher status groups, or aspire to be considered as such, and that these expressions of good Christian behaviour are not contrary to those of society, but rather indicative of beneficial or virtuous living.

The admonitions of 1 Pet 2.13–3.12 do not advocate disobedience to the emperor, household order, or slavery. These phenomena are a reminder that while exile may be delineated by morality, it is not necessarily caused by it.[5] Such a claim would only hold good if it could be proved that two moralities, those of the exiler and of the exiled, were opposed to each other. The common desirable elements seen here show that such a simple oppositional claim simply does not stand scrutiny.

The second point is that this exile, far from being either punitive, or a consequence of moral failing, or of disobeying earthly powers, results from doing the right thing. This is further made clear by the reminders that the audience has left aside their old lifestyle. The Balch–Elliott debate needs to be mentioned here, as the two protagonists reached radically different conclusions. Balch noted that the church was "to accommodate to the world, in order to reduce the tension between them"; Elliott suggested that "to build a distinct communal identity and resist external pressures to conform" (Horrell 2007, p. 113; see further, Balch 1981; Elliott 1966, [1981] 1990, 2000). However, the behaviours that they have rejected are not uniquely condemned by Christian moral codes, nor do they radically distance themselves from Roman society. David G. Horrell's phrase "polite resistance" gives a description of their attitude:

> The author's stance towards the empire then, and the one he commends to his readers is one in which, we might say, he 'snarls sweetly', or practices a 'sly civility', or, to echo the marvellous proverb cited by Scott, bows obsequiously, at the same time, farting silently.
>
> (Horrell 2007, p. 143)

Entertaining though the last image might be, the fart remains silent, and I am uncertain of its tone or scent. Like the proverbial tree falling in the forest, what use is a silent, odourless fart? However, Horrell is certainly right in saying their conformity or agreement has its own set of boundaries that are not identical with those of the wider society (Horrell 2007, p. 142).

So, Laura J. Hunt's identification of the paraenetic material as "obedient disobedience" seems to better capture the paradox (Hunt 2018, p. 533), given that the audience appears to be alienated for abstaining from behaviours which might well have met with significant approval of Roman moralists (Williams 2014, p. 20).

The errant behaviours of 1 Pet 1.14, 1.18, 2.1, and 2.11 are not described in detail, but likely included those criticised by contemporary Roman moralists including Seneca, Epictetus, Pliny the Elder, and Valerius Maximus. Immorality, as seen in the Roman practice of exile in the time of Octavian, was certainly not without powerful critics.

The same is also true of the points about social and political order. No Stoics, even Epictetus, who himself had been a slave (Long 2018, p. ix), advocated eradication of the institution of slavery (Griffin 1976, p. 260), even if they departed from Aristotle's description of slavery as a natural state (Fitzgerald 2010, p. 155; Manning 1989, pp. 1520–21; Rist 1989, p. 2008). Their focus was primarily on how slaves were to be treated, and this is sometimes described as "minimal" (Griffin 1976, pp. 257–58; Rist 1989, p. 2008), focussed more on the behaviour of the owner, condemning viciousness unsuited to the Stoic sage (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.13.2.; Fitzgerald 2010, p. 157). Such comments are harder, perhaps, to swallow, when uttered by philosophers from the upper classes such as Seneca (*Ep.* 47. 13–14, 19; Gummere 1917, pp. 308–9, 312–13; Griffin 1976, pp. 258–59). Roman and Greek

writers, as exemplified by Valerius Maximus, also described the virtues of Roman women in terms which are not dissimilar to those voiced in 1 Pet 3.3 (Elliott 2000, pp. 561–65), even if the example which immediately follows is that of Sarah (1 Pet 3.6), recognising that virtues, rather than adornments, were the characteristics of living well (Feldmeier 2008, p. 181). The recommended behaviour of the audience would be more than appropriate for Roman contexts, too–obedient disobedience.

6. Conclusions

1 Pet draws on Jewish scriptural and later traditions about exile and is likely, given its provenance, to also have analogues with the Roman practice and experiences of exile. Furthermore, the porous boundaries among Judaism, Hellenism, and Romanitas should introduce a note of caution by saying that only one of the three might be a formative influence.

The audience of 1 Pet has, it has been suggested, experienced estrangement, likely including suffering and trials (1 Pet 1.6), and perhaps even an historic and geographical exile. Rather than identify them as victims of persecution or enemies of the state, the writer suggests they think of themselves as exiles, an identification based overtly on Jewish understandings and experience of exile, but also capable of incorporating phenomena associated with Roman exile.

The first of these is to claim the status of exile for themselves as a voluntary exile rather than one experienced at the hands of others. This voluntary exile is then to be delineated as a spiritual exile, in which the audience is not being punished because of actions which are wrong in the sight of their neighbours. This is explicated by paraenetic sections in 1 Pet 2 and 3 that advise the adoption of behaviours which conform to Roman morality (e.g., modesty) and moderate behaviour within social institutions rather than challenges to dismantle them (e.g., slavery, the emperor). As such, their overall pattern of behaviour conforms to those of other contemporary intellectual tradition such as Epicureanism and Stoicism, which advocated ways of living will, but without threatening the status quo.

Then, the inclusion of behaviours like modesty within those recommended, as indeed does the identification with voluntary exile, send a message that the audience includes people of some substance, able to adopt behaviours which align with those of high-status Romans. The identification of the audience with Jewish exile also allows a claim for a status. They are part of a venerable tradition, albeit one whose place in the empire has been compromised by recent events. This might reduce the threat of legal action or martyrdom, if accepted as a defence by the authorities in the event of such a charge being brought. It would provide more protection that being thought members of a new or esoteric religion or cult with a notoriety spread by rumours (Fredriksen 2007, pp. 33–34).

Last, but not least, the idea that exile is temporary, again diminishes charges of being enemies or criminals, for their ultimate place, heavenly and imperishable, is more of a marker of their value than any temporary exile. But, for the moment, they are different: exiles, out of time and place, but not enemies.

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Notes

[1] Feldmeier (2008, pp. 81–83) translates *1 Peter* 1:6 as "temptation", but also considers their experience to emerge from suffering (pp. 2–13, see also 1 Pet 4:12).

[2] Carson (2007, pp. 1015–45) for a summary of OT allusions.

[3] For the legal status of Christians, see Williams (2014, pp. 235–36). This also, of course, is a rejection of a supersessionist understanding—they are still considering themselves to be Jews. Such an understanding would be an anachronism. Skarsaune (2002, pp. 105–8) argues that "the first Jewish believers in Jesus" be included within a pluralistic Judaism because of their continued recognition of the Temple as significant; Zeitlin (2012, pp. 81–82) for Jesus and Paul identifying as Jewish.

[4] My thanks to Prof Kok for bringing this analogue and his own research to my attention at the conference.

[5] I am grateful to Dr. Elizabeth Shively for pointing out this nuance at the conference.

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