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Following in the Footsteps: Exemplarity, Ethnicity and Ethics in 1 Peter

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Abstract

First Peter 1.3–2.10 weaves a new familial and ethnic identity for believers through a complex series of interlocking metaphors. How does this identity influence the ethical exhortation beginning in 2.11? The current article argues that an answer is found in the Greco-Roman structures of exemplarity. First, the article identifies four explicit markers of exemplarity discourse in 1 Peter: ὑπογραμμίος (2.21), the footsteps idiom (2.21), the term ἀντίτυπος (3.21) and the term τύποι (5.3). Next, it surveys how exemplarity functioned in the Greco-Roman world. Greek and Roman literature demonstrate a clear preference for domestic exempla. Similarly, as a new family and ethnic group, Christian believers require new exempla suited to their new Christian identity. In this light, 1 Peter's ethical instruction can be more deeply appreciated. Finally, this article investigates how exemplarity dynamics illuminate Jesus as exemplar par excellence in 1 Peter. First Peter depicts Jesus' passion with language of the Isaianic suffering servant (2.22–5). Jesus' exemplarity is given to slaves, who are implicitly held up as models for all believers. Exemplarity thus draws its strength from the past (the suffering servant, Jesus) as it challenges those in the present and future (slaves, all believers) to become like these models.

Keywords: 1 Peter; exemplarity; paradigm; imitation; ethnicity; race; ethics; suffering servant

1. Introduction

In the first half of 1 Peter, the author weaves together a complex metaphor of believers' new familial and ethnic identity. They are begotten anew (1.3, 23) with imperishable seed (1.23) into the family of God. They have become like newborn infants who crave spiritual milk (2.2–3) and are then described as a household, temple and ethnic group in 2.4–10.¹ These metaphors link together and build on one another to create an intricate narrative of familial and ethnic identity for Christian believers.

However, when the reader crosses the letter's central division point, the vocative ἀγαπητοί in 2.11, the tone shifts from identity language to practical ethical exhortation.² How do the complex, interlocking metaphors of family and ethnicity in the first half of

¹ K. Marcar, *Divine Regeneration and Ethnic Identity in 1 Peter: Mapping Metaphors of Family, Race, and Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

² J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988) xxxiv–xxxv, xxxvii, 115; P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 73, 169; J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 37B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 81, 456.

the letter relate to the practical instruction given in the second half? What is the significance of Christian familial and ethnic identity for the letter's moral exhortation?

The current article answers these questions by arguing that the Petrine extended regeneration metaphor fundamentally grounds the letter's subsequent exhortation. Namely, 1 Peter's ethical exhortation is specific to Christians' newly defined identity as a family, nation and ethnic group. In other words, the letter exhorts Christians *specifically* as members of *this* family, nation and ethnic group.

How can ethical instruction be specific to familial, national or ethnic groups? This article argues that the ethical exhortation in 1 Peter is deeply informed by the structures and conventions of exemplarity permeating the Greco-Roman world. The article seeks to demonstrate the degree to which the letter is participating in the widely recognised conventions of Greco-Roman exemplarity. It will therefore first establish the presence of four markers of exemplarity discourse in 1 Peter before examining its significance for the letter's ethical exhortation.

The common Greek terms for 'role models' or 'examples' are παράδειγμα and τύπος, which the recipient would imitate (μιμείομαι).³ Though most attention has focused on Paul's use of terms such as μιμείομαι and its cognates, Benjamin Fiore has called for a more robust assessment of the use of exemplarity discourse.⁴ The presence of these key terms is a useful indicator, but is not necessary for the discourse of exemplarity to be present.⁵

Though 1 Peter does not contain the terms παράδειγμα or μιμείομαι, the letter clearly signals the presence of exemplarity discourse in four explicit ways. The first two occur in 2.21, 'For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an *example* (ὕπογραμμόν), that you should *follow in his steps*' (ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ). It is significant that this verse contains not one, but two signals of exemplarity discourse: first, the term ὑπογραμμός, and second, the footsteps idiom. Both of these features will be analysed below to demonstrate their participation in exemplarity discourse.

The third explicit signal of exemplarity occurs in the letter's reference to baptism as the ἀντίτυπος of Noah's flood (3.21).⁶ Fourth and finally, the author exhorts the community's elders to be good examples (τύποι) to their flock (5.3).⁷ Even without these four explicit signals, it would be possible to demonstrate the presence of exemplarity discourse in a text. However, the presence of four explicit terms is a strong indication of the extent to which exemplarity structures permeate 1 Peter. Notably, all four signals occurs in the second half of the letter body where ethical instruction is concentrated. Exempla were often deployed in ethical discourse or settings designed to elicit a response.⁸ The same is true in 1 Peter.

Once the presence of exemplarity discourse has been established, this article will survey how exempla typically functioned in the Greco-Roman world, with particular

³ L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (trans. J. E. Alsup; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993; German original: *Der erste Petrusbrief*, ed. F. Hahn; MeyerK 12/1, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 204. For a thorough treatment, see B. J. Price, 'Παράδειγμα and Exemplum in Ancient Rhetorical Theory' (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1975). Cf. BDAG 651, 761, 1017–18; BrDAG 1349, 1545, 2166.

⁴ B. Fiore and T. R. Bland, 'Paul, Exemplification, and Imitation', *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, vol. 1 (ed. J. P. Sampley; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016²) 169–95, 169–70, 180.

⁵ Fiore and Bland, 'Exemplification', 349–60, 180, 182. Thus, as Osborne notes with regard to 1 Peter, even without μιμείομαι and its cognates, 'The idea is, nonetheless, present in the letter in several passages (cf. 1.15; 3.17–18; 4.1)' (T. P. Osborne, 'Guide Lines for Christian Suffering: A Source-Critical and Theological Study of 1 Peter 2:21–25', *Bib* 64 (1983) 381–408, at 393).

⁶ For more on the use of the flood narrative in 1 Peter, see K. Marcar, 'In the Days of Noah: *Urzeit/Endzeit* Correspondence and the Flood Tradition in 1 Peter 3–4', *NTS* 63 (2017) 550–66.

⁷ Due to limitations of space, the terms ἀντίτυπος (3.21) and τύποι (5.3) cannot be fully investigated here. However, this article will hopefully function a trailhead for future research.

⁸ R. Langlands, *Exemplarity Ethics in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

attention to the ways in which ethnic and familial features impacted the choice and use of exempla. At the national level, Greek, Roman and Jewish exemplarity discourse exhibited a strong preference for domestic role models. The Petrine author uses ethnic terms to declare that Christians are a γένος, ἔθνος and λαός (2.9–10).⁹ As such, they needed new *Christian* exempla, which 1 Peter supplies. At the family level, the best exemplars for young Roman elite were illustrious ancestors from within their own families. Similarly, Christians, who had become one family in the house of God, now have a host of illustrious ancestors of their own from the Scriptures and Christian tradition to aspire to and imitate, such as Sarah, Noah, Christian elders and, especially, Jesus Christ. Jesus' exemplarity will be examined in the final section of this article.

2. Following an Example: A Look at ὑπογραμμός

In 1 Pet 2.21, the author states that Christ has become an 'example' (ὑπογραμμόν) for believers. The term ὑπογραμμός, 'a model or example', is 'very rare'.¹⁰ The verb ὑπογράφειν, similarly, could be used 'for the drawing of lines by the elementary teacher in order to guide children who are learning to write'.¹¹ The first definition of ὑπογραφή, a paronym, or cognate, of ὑπογραμμός, is a written accusation, but its secondary meaning was 'a general plan, drawing, profile, outline', such as a sketch, draft or diagram.¹² Edward Gordon Selwyn identifies the closest parallel to 1 Peter as Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* 209, 'where Electra claims to recognize her brother's footprints in the sand through their semblance to her own'.¹³ The Petrine influence on the use of ὑπογραμμός in later texts is clearly felt in early Christian literature, where ὑπογραμμός is often used of Christ and becomes synonymous with τύπος.¹⁴

Why did the Petrine author use such unusual terminology? John Elliott noted the assonance and alliteration in 2.21 (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν).¹⁵ Indeed, the alliteration includes not just the υ, but also the π and μ. It is quite likely that the Petrine author used the terms ὑπογραμμός and ὑπολιμπάνω, rather than more usual exempla terminology, in order to achieve a striking alliteration, which the standard terminology would not facilitate. Though the terms are unusual, they clearly identify Christ as a model, or exemplar, for believers to imitate.

First Peter's influence on the portrayal of Christ's exemplarity is reflected and developed in the letter's reception in early Christianity.¹⁶ Clement of Rome devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of Christ's exemplarity, drawing heavily on the language and

⁹ D. G. Horrell, "'Race", "Nation", "People": Ethnoracial Identity Construction in 1 Pet. 2:9', *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (ed. J. M. G. Barclay; LNTS 394; London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 133–63.

¹⁰ Its earliest occurrence is in 2 Macc. 2.28, where it refers to an abridgement. Cf. G. Schrenk, 'ὑπογραμμός (ὑπογράφω)', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. G. Kittel; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 772–3. Cf. BDAG 1036.

¹¹ Schrenk, 'ὑπογραμμός', 772.

¹² BrDAG 2216.

¹³ Aeschylus, *Cho.* 209; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1946) 179.

¹⁴ For some examples of ὑπογραμμός used of Christ, see 1 Clem. 16.17; 33.8; Polycarp, *Phil.* 8.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.9.84.2. For the term being used of Paul, see 1 Clem. 5.7. On ὑπογραμμός as synonymous with τύπος, see Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 19.118. Cf. Schrenk, 'ὑπογραμμός', 773. Cf. Osborne, 'Guide Lines', 392. Polycarp, *Phil.* 10.1 may be relevant, but is preserved only in Latin.

¹⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 65.

¹⁶ For example, see 1 Clem. 16; Polycarp, *Phil.* 8. See further E. Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter: The imitatio Christi and the Ethics of Suffering in 1 Peter and the Gospel of Mark: A Comparative Study* (Euguen, OR: Pickwick, 2018) 167.

theology of 1 Peter.¹⁷ After an extended discussion of Christ as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, the author concludes:

You see, dear friends (ἄνδρες ἀγαπητοί), the kind of pattern (ὁ ὑπογραμμός) that has been given to us; for if the Lord so humbled himself, what should we do, who through him have come under the yoke of his grace?¹⁸

3. Following in the Footsteps: Examining the Footsteps Idiom

Believers are called to follow in Christ's footsteps in 1 Pet 2.21. The idiom 'to follow in the footsteps' occurs in some Greek texts, though not with the frequency of its Latin counterparts.¹⁹ Pindar praises Hippokleas, whose 'inborn valour hath trodden in the foot-prints of his father'.²⁰ In Plato's *Republic*, the interlocutors discuss a son who 'at first emulates his father, and follows in his footsteps'.²¹ Sirach 21.6 states, 'One who hates reproof is in the footsteps (ἐν ἴχνει) of a sinner.' Philo, speaking of the creation of man, describes a situation of unalloyed bliss where the first man, full of the divine spirit, seeks earnestly

to please the Father and King, following Him step by step in the highways (κατ' ἴχνος αὐτῷ ταῖς ὁδοῖς) cut out for virtues, since only for souls who regard it as their goal to be fully conformed to God who begat them is it lawful to draw nigh to Him. (Philo, *Opif.* 144)²²

Many of these themes also occur in 1 Peter: the status of God as begetter and father to children, the imperative for children to imitate their parents and the pursuit of virtue by following the paradigmatic behaviour of an exemplar.

In the New Testament, Paul defends himself by asserting that he and Titus followed in the footsteps (τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσιν, 2 Cor 12.18) of the super-apostles (2 Cor 12.11). In Romans, Paul holds up Abraham as an exemplar to those who 'follow the example' (τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἴχνεσιν) of faith (Rom 4.12).²³ Early Christian literature used the language of footsteps with reference to martyrs.²⁴

In Latin sources, exemplarity had an identifiable vocabulary. As Rebecca Langlands explains, 'The language of imitation and "following" is used frequently in ancient texts (with the terms *imitari*, *aemulare*, *sequi* and their cognates) to describe how exempla should be handled.'²⁵ Catherine Baroin has demonstrated that the idiom of following in one's

¹⁷ On 1 Clem., see J. Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum: The Roman Discourse of Exemplarity and the Jewish and Christian Language of Leadership* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) 150–77.

¹⁸ M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Baker Academic, 2007) 68–9.

¹⁹ The phrase κατ' ἴχνος ἐπακολουθέω, or its variants, occurs in Philo (*Fug.* 130; *Virt.* 64), Chariton (*Callirhoe* 5.2.1), Plotinus (*Enn.* 6.7.7) and, in Christian sources, Gregory of Nyssa (*Homilies on the Song of Songs* 2.67; 15.454), Eusebius (*Comm. Ps.* 184) and Gregory of Nazianzus (*Or. Bas.* 15) and Athanasius (*Sermo major de fide*, Fr. 68). The phrase κατ' ἴχνος ἀκολουθέω, or its variants, occurs in Plutarch, (*Mor.* 310 E), Lucian (*Hermot.* 73), Sostratus (*Fragmenta*, fr. 4; cf. Stobaeus, *Anthologus Anthologium* 4.20b.70), Themistius (*Or.* 5, Ὑποατικός εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰοβιανόν, 63d, 68c; Πενταετηρικός, 104a, 105b) and, in Christian sources, Athanasius (*Epistulae ad Castorem*, PG 28.888) and Epiphanius (*Homilia in Christi resurrectionem* 9).

²⁰ τὸ δὲ συγγενὲς ἐμβέβακεν ἴχνεσιν πατρὸς ἐπ. (Pindar, *Pyth.* 10.12).

²¹ Plato, *Resp.* 8 553a.

²² Trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL.

²³ Stumpff, ἴχνος, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III (ed. G. Kittel; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 402–6, at 403.

²⁴ See Ignatius, *Eph.* 12.2; *Mart. Pol.* 22.1. Elliott, *I Peter*, 527. Cf. Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 167–8.

²⁵ Langlands, *Exemplary Ethics*, 95.

footsteps was a common way of speaking about exemplarity.²⁶ Baroin writes, ‘The metaphor of footsteps expresses imitation in itself, or else it is associated with a term of the family of *imitari*.’²⁷ She observes that the idiom is found in a wide variety of sources from Cicero and Lucretius to Suetonius. The idiom was used in general pedagogy, but appears to have had a special place in the imitation of illustrious ancestors. Baroin therefore writes:

Thus, in the famous passage of *Somnium Scipionis*, in book 6 of Cicero’s *De Republica*, Scipio Aemilianus, after listening to Scipio Africanus, tells him that, since childhood, he has followed in the footsteps (*ingressus vestigiis*) of Aemilius Paullus, his (biological) father, as well as of him, the adoptive grandfather, thus imitating the most eminent members of both his original family and his adoptive family (6.26).²⁸

The idiom, and its connection to the *mos maiorum*, was well known enough to be parodied by Juvenal in *Satire* 14, which parodies the bad examples many parents are to their children.²⁹ As Juvenal laments, an exceptionally strong-willed person may escape a bad upbringing, ‘but the rest are led along in the footprints of their fathers which they should avoid, and are dragged along in the track of an ancient fault which they’ve been shown for so long’.³⁰ In fact, the danger of such hereditary vice is increased by the propensity for sons to outdo their fathers’ villainy. Juvenal continues:

Rather, your baby son should be a deterrent when you are on the point of doing something wrong. After all, if some day he does something that attracts the censor’s anger and proves himself like you not only in his body and face but your true son in his behaviour, too, in every case committing worse offences by following in your footsteps, you’ll tell him off, without a doubt, and punish him, ranting harshly – and then arrange to change your will.³¹

4. The Discourse of Exemplarity in the Greco-Roman World: Greeks, Romans, Jews and Christians

Having identified and discussed exemplarity markers in 1 Peter, let us now examine what exemplarity is and how it worked in the Greco-Roman world. Since the time of Homer, exemplary individuals were used pedagogically as foci for societal admiration and as models for competitive imitation.³² Within Greek education, these models were derived largely, though not exclusively, from poetic texts, with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* taking pride of place.³³ Exemplary figures embodied ideals that were expected to lead to

²⁶ Baroin notes that the idiom has several manifestations, such as ‘*instare vestigiis, per vestigia vadere, vestigiis ingredi*, or else *vestigial sequi, or persequi*. One also finds *sequor* on its own and the compound *consequor*, which means both “to come after” and “to equal”’ (C. Baroin, ‘Remembering One’s Ancestors, Following in their Footsteps, Being like them: The Role and Forms of Family Memory in the Building of Identity’, *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture* (ed. V. Dasen and T. Späth; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 19–48, at 32).

²⁷ Baroin, ‘Ancestors’, 32–3.

²⁸ Baroin, ‘Ancestors’, 33.

²⁹ Baroin, ‘Ancestors’, 37–8.

³⁰ Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.35. Cf. Baroin, ‘Ancestors’, 37.

³¹ Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.50–8.

³² H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. G. Lamb; London: Sheed & Ward, 1956) 10–12; C. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996) 3.

³³ Isocrates and other Greeks used historical examples. See Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 7–12.

imitation.³⁴ Though heavily modelled on Greek education, Roman pedagogy exhibited a strong and distinctive preference for historical, Roman, examples such as Horatius Cocles, Cloelia and Appius Claudius Caecus.³⁵

As Matthew B. Roller has shown, Roman discourse of exemplarity followed a regular cycle of four social operations: action, evaluation, commemoration and norm setting.³⁶

1. *Action*. ‘Someone performs an action in the public eye – that is, an action witnessed by representatives of the larger community.’³⁷ For example, Horatius Cocles’ courageous and self-sacrificial defence of Rome on the *pons sublicius*, ‘bridge of piles’, was widely cited and admired in Roman society and literature.³⁸
2. *Evaluation*. ‘These witnesses, which I shall call the “primary” audience, evaluate the action’s significance for their community, judging it good or bad in terms of one or more shared values and thereby assigning it to one or more moral categories.’³⁹ Importantly, the actor and the audience share a set of moral values. In the Roman Empire, these values defined the values of the empire, the dominant culture. For Christians, the moral systems underlying an action’s evaluation could differ significantly from imperial values.⁴⁰
3. *Commemoration*. ‘This deed – that is, the action, its performers, and the evaluation(s) it received – is commemorated via one or more monuments.’⁴¹ A monument could be a written text but need not be. Statues, commemorative inscriptions, named roads, wounds or scars, rituals and oral speech, among others, are all examples of media which could be used to memorialise a defining action.⁴²
4. *Norm setting*. ‘Audiences, both primary and secondary, are enjoined to accept the deed – now inscribed via monuments into the moral framework of the *mos maiorum* – as normative, i.e. as having a morally prescriptive or obligatory character.’⁴³ Indeed, audiences were encouraged to imitate virtues of their exempla and even to attempt to outdo historical acts with their own deeds.

Exempla permeated spoken and written discourse, in judicial, political and public speeches, as well as philosophical treatises, handbooks and letters.⁴⁴ Exempla were especially useful for persuasion and moral exhortation. Though most evidence for Roman exemplarity now exists in written texts, the cycle of exemplarity operated across all levels

³⁴ Fiore notes, ‘Imitation, entailing the copying or repetition of some quality or aspect of a model, is one component of the broader process of exemplification’ (Fiore and Bland, ‘Exemplification’, 169). Langlands identifies a schema of admiration and wonder, comparison and *aemulatio*; these are followed by further stages of modelling, cognition and discernment (Langlands, *Exemplary Ethics*, 86–8).

³⁵ For more on the heavy Greek influence on Roman education, see Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 242–54. Also Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 13–14. For more on these Roman exemplars, see M. B. Roller, *Models from the Past in Roman Culture: A World of Exempla* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 32–133.

³⁶ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 4–5.

³⁷ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 5.

³⁸ Roller notes that there are more than thirty narratives and references to Horatius as well as one surviving monument (Roller, *Models from the Past*, 32; cf. 32–65).

³⁹ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 6.

⁴⁰ James Petitfils has demonstrated that early Christians used Roman exemplarity discourse to model culturally distinct values such as love (*ἀγάπη*) and especially humility (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) (Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 141–249).

⁴¹ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 6.

⁴² Roller, *Models from the Past*, 7.

⁴³ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 8.

⁴⁴ For a survey of the use of historical exemplars in various genres in Cicero, see H. van der Blom, *Cicero’s Role Models: The Political Strategy of a Newcomer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 128–44.

of society through publicly visible events and symbols such as funeral declarations, ancestor masks and monuments, to name a few.⁴⁵ Along with the general population, early Christians would have been familiar with the use of exempla as embodiments of Roman values. This is especially true if, as most scholars believe, 1 Peter was written in Rome (cf. 5.13).⁴⁶ Anyone living in Rome would have come face to face with the monuments of exempla every day, in statues, inscriptions and the speeches and houses of the rich and powerful. Indeed, as James Petitfils has shown, Christians could use the structure of Roman exemplarity discourse while filling it with their own distinctly Christian value system.⁴⁷

Exemplarity was thus enacted in various forms of social discourse through this public cycle of action, evaluation, commemoration and norm setting. In general, this cycle took place in its various iterations in public or semi-public media. The inaugural event was usually public, like Horatius' defence of the *pons sublicius*, as were its evaluation, by primary or subsequent audiences, and commemoration (such as the placing of a statue or monument). Norm setting, by definition, was intended to instil social values within a society. Though reverence for one's individual ancestors is a near-universal human phenomenon, not just any ancestor, or any descendant, could activate the cycle. Slaves, for example, may have revered their ancestors, but their private reverence did not initiate the four-fold cycle of event, evaluation, commemoration and norm setting in public discourse.

Thus, the discourse of exemplarity was itself invested in the dynamics of power. The selection and implementation of exempla was a powerful tool for propagating social values or ideology, whether it be in the popular, judicial, political or imperial sphere.⁴⁸ The power of an exemplar, whether he be Horatius or Christ, was not politically neutral.

4.1 The Footsteps of the Ancestors: The Importance of Familial Exempla

A strong conviction existed among the Romans that the best exempla came from one's own family.⁴⁹ From a young age, young elite Romans experienced the enduring presence of celebrated ancestors in their homes through ancestral funeral masks, *imagines*, in the semi-public atriums of their homes and publicly during funeral processions and other significant occasions, ancestral busts and statues, and painted genealogical trees.⁵⁰ All of these symbols contributed to the strong continuity of the past with the present, sparking the desire of the young to live up to, or surpass, the glory attained by their ancestors.

As Roller observes, 'Within the logic of Roman exemplarity, compelling models for imitation often come from within one's own family: the idea that certain patterns of behavior or achievement do or should run in families is widespread in the Roman world.'⁵¹

⁴⁵ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 9–10; Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 32–45. On exempla and the complexity of oral tradition, see Langlands, *Exemplary Ethics*, 166–205.

⁴⁶ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 63–4; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131–4; Michaels, *1 Peter*, lxiii.

⁴⁷ Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 141–249.

⁴⁸ For a nuanced discussion of how ideology is compatible with ambiguity and participatory engagement, see Langlands, *Exemplary Ethics*, 67–85.

⁴⁹ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 54–5; Baroin, 'Ancestors'; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 87–103.

⁵⁰ For an overview, see O. Doonan, 'Family Values: Ancestral Representation and Social Reproduction in Roman Houses', *Interpretatio rerum: Archaeological Essays on Objects and Meaning by Students of R. Ross Holloway* (ed. S. S. Lukesh; Providence, RI: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, Brown University, 1999) 73–85; Baroin, 'Ancestors', 19–48.

⁵¹ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 54–5.

Genealogical links could be paternal, maternal or through in-laws.⁵² Inherited traits could be moral as well as physical.⁵³

Elite Roman youth grew up in the shadow of their ancestors.⁵⁴ The genealogical link with illustrious ancestors mandated that young elite Romans ought to know their family histories and live up to them.⁵⁵ As Catherine Baroin explains, 'It is clear that the memory of ancestors is a memory of action, a pragmatic memory.'⁵⁶ A young elite Roman was expected to know the names and titles of his ancestors. This knowledge was not passive, but exerted an active force to mould the descendant into the model of his forebears. Nature and nurture were thus complementary factors shaping the young in the image of their forebears.⁵⁷ For example, Cicero writes of Rabirius Postumus:

... although he had never seen his father, under the potent guidance of nature and the influence of constant talks in the household circle he was led to model himself after the parental pattern ... In short, by generosity as well as by his magnanimity he reproduced the life and habits of his father. (*Rab. Post.* 3–4)⁵⁸

Besides bestowing privilege and opportunity, illustrious ancestors could also present an exceedingly high and difficult standard to live up to – the metaphor of weight appears in Latin texts.⁵⁹ Thus, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* can give this instruction on how to refer to a person's family in a speech for either praise or reprehension:

External Circumstances: Descent—in praise: the ancestors of whom he is sprung; if he is of illustrious descent, he has been their peer or superior; if of humble descent, he has had his support, not in the virtues of the ancestors, but in his own. In censure: if he is of illustrious descent, he has been a disgrace to his forebears; if of low descent, he is none the less a dishonour even to these. (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.13)⁶⁰

The presence of elite ancestors was so dominant in the present that it exerted significant influence in Roman courts and, especially, elections.⁶¹ Henriette Van der Blom summarises:

In election campaigns, lineage from a family within the nobility, the possession of *nobilitas*, was one of the main arguments that candidate could employ because the qualities of a candidate were judged on the basis of the qualities of his forebears and not so much on his possible political programme.⁶²

This was a sizable barrier for 'new men' (*homines novi*) such as Cicero, who did not possess an elite pedigree. In her monograph, van der Blom argues that Cicero compensated

⁵² Baroin, 'Ancestors', 19–20, 27–9, 31–2.

⁵³ Baroin, 'Ancestors', 19–20, 37–47; S. Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues and Vices: Cicero on Nature, Nurture and Presentation', *Myth, History and Culture in Republican Rome: Studies in Honour of T. P. Wiseman* (ed. D. Braund and C. Gill; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003) 139–64, 152–5.

⁵⁴ On *domestica exempla* in non-elite families, see Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 148–49, 163.

⁵⁵ Baroin, 'Ancestors', 25–6; Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 153–5.

⁵⁶ Baroin, 'Ancestors', 30.

⁵⁷ Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 139–64; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 100–2.

⁵⁸ Cf. Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 152; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 101–2.

⁵⁹ Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 142–8. On the metaphor of weight, see Baroin, 'Ancestors', 25–6.

⁶⁰ Cf. Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 147; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 94.

⁶¹ Treggiari, 'Ancestral Virtues', 139–64; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 1–2.

⁶² Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 2.

for this disadvantage through the employment of three specific strategies: ‘that some Romans were such great men that they stood as exempla for all Romans; that past *homines novi* stood as exempla for aspiring new men; and finally, that one could choose to imitate specific historical individuals as one’s personal exempla’.⁶³ With these strategies, and his rhetorical prowess, Cicero was able to sway the electorate and achieve political success.

Cicero’s ingenuity also demonstrates the subtle malleability of exemplarity conventions. While working within a system that would otherwise have excluded him due to his lack of elite heritage, he develops a way to use the system to his advantage. The author of 1 Peter similarly takes advantage of this malleability to craft exempla for Christian believers who came from very diverse ethnic, and often very humble, backgrounds.

A farcical example of familial exemplarity is found in Plautus’ play *The Braggart Soldier*.⁶⁴ At one point, the slave Sceledrus declares:

Don’t threaten me: I know the cross will be my tomb; there my ancestors have been laid to rest, my father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather. (*Mil. glor.* 372–3)⁶⁵

The nexus of exemplarity, slavery and crucifixion was prime fodder for parody. Segal glibly explains that here we have

a special Roman joke, for legally speaking, slaves were *nullo patre*, that is, considered as having no father at all. Hence when Plautus lets Sceledrus speak of numerous ancestors, he compounds the impossibility and increases the fun.⁶⁶

The opposite of illustrious ancestors, Sceledrus’ ancestors have left him a legacy of crucifixion, a slave’s execution.

While many of the addressees of 1 Peter would have not held high status, as for example slaves, they may have nevertheless held their ancestors in high regard, even if only privately. However, for those recipients who could claim noble lineage, and all of the accompanying social entailments, the author’s words in 1 Pet 1.18–19 may have come as a shock: ‘You know that you were ransomed from the futile (*ματαιίας*) ways inherited from your fathers (*πατροπαράδοτου*), not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.’ The adjective *πατροπαράδοτος* typically referred to a positive and valued heritage in the Greco-Roman world.⁶⁷ Here, in a polemical twist, the Petrine author turns this upside down and refers to believers’ inheritance from their ancestors as ‘futile’. Believers are called to leave behind those ancestors as they embrace their new identity in the family of God. A new genealogy overwrites the old. Physical ancestors are replaced by those gained through new birth into the family of God.

In conclusion, though deceased, the ancestors of elite Romans exerted a strong influence on their descendants directly, but also, indirectly, on all Romans. Young elite Romans were born in the shadow of their ancestors and expected to aspire, or perhaps even exceed, their greatness. This continuity between past and present was both innate, commuted through the genealogical blood connection linking the generations, and instilled

⁶³ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 152.

⁶⁴ M. Hengel, *Crucifixion* (London: SCM, 1977) 52; D. W. Chapman and E. J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus: Texts and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015) 571–2.

⁶⁵ Trans. E. Segal, *Plautus: Four Comedies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁶⁶ E. Segal, *Plautus: Four Comedies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 225. Also, M. Hammond *et al.*, eds., *Plautus: Miles Gloriosus* (2nd rev. edn; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979) 111.

⁶⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370–1; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 64–5.

through social customs, symbols and pedagogy. It is into this milieu that the Petrine author forges a new genealogy for Christians in Asia Minor.

4.2 A Preference for Ethnic or National Exempla

An author's choice of exempla generally exhibited strong national or ethnic preferences.⁶⁸ Anaximenes, writing in the fourth century BCE, advises that 'the examples which we take must be closely akin to our subject and the nearest in time and place to our hearers'.⁶⁹ External exempla, he continues, should be secondary to local examples, 'in the absence of such [i.e. local] examples we must employ the most striking and known that we can find'.⁷⁰ Though Anaximenes does not explicitly frame this preference in ethnic or national terms, his advice would have this implication.

Both Greek and Latin authors formally distinguished between internal and external examples, 'οἰκεῖα vs. ἀλλότρια, or *internal/domestica* vs. *externa*'.⁷¹ Apsines thus advises:

Every paradeigm [*sic*] has its material from things that have happened, and is taken either from domestic or foreign instances (ἐξ οἰκεῖων ἢ ἐξ ἀλλοτρίων). Those from domestic ones are more useful in debate and more appropriate, and it is necessary to point this out, as in Demosthenes: 'For you need not use foreign examples of happiness but can use domestic ones.' Those taken from foreign persons are not equally appropriate but it is necessary nevertheless not to reject them. (Apsines, *Art of Rhetoric* 6.2)⁷²

As a general rule, Roman authors exhibited a strong preference for Roman examples.⁷³ Valerius Maximus, in his anthology of exempla, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, formally distinguishes between Roman and non-Roman exempla, the former being more numerous at a ratio of two to one.⁷⁴ One of Valerius' reasons for including foreign exempla was entertainment.⁷⁵ He quips:

So I will turn to external items. Put into Latin writings they have less authority, but may bring some welcome variety. (*Doings* 1.6. *ext.*)⁷⁶

Valerius Maximus' work is the only extant collection of exempla, in either Greek or Latin, but similar Greek collections must have existed, as Demoen notes, since Cicero grumbles that they only list Greek examples.⁷⁷ A preference for Roman exempla is also found in Quintilian:

⁶⁸ K. Demoen, 'A Paradigm for the Analysis of Paradigms: The Rhetorical Exemplum in Ancient and Imperial Greek Theory', *Rhetorica* 15 (1997) 125–58, esp. 140–11; Roller, *Models from the Past*, 54–5, esp. n. 53; van der Blom, *Role Models*, 128–44, 152–8; Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 24, 152–3.

⁶⁹ *De rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 32. Trans. E. S. Forster, *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. xi (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946) 1439^a.

⁷⁰ *De rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 32.

⁷¹ Demoen, 'Paradigm', 140. Also Sopater: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀμφοτέρων εὐποροῦμεν τῶν ὑποδειγμάτων, χρῆσόμεθα τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις πρὸ τῶν ξενικῶν, εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῖς ἐμπίπτουσιν (*Scholia ad Hermogenis librum περὶ στάσεων*, *Rhetores Graeci* iv, p. 731, ll. 12–13).

⁷² Greek text and translation from M. R. Dilts and G. A. Kennedy, *Two Greek Rhetorical Treatises from the Roman Empire: Introduction, Text, and Translation of The Arts of Rhetoric attributed to Anonymous Segerianus and to Apsines of Gadara* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 168–9.

⁷³ See n. 44 above.

⁷⁴ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, xv. Also Demoen, 'Paradigm', 141.

⁷⁵ Valerius includes some foreign examples for teaching purposes. See Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 89–91.

⁷⁶ Cf. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 89–91.

⁷⁷ Demoen, 'Paradigm', 141. For Cicero, see *Tusc.* 1.116.

It is still more important that we should know and ponder continually all the noblest sayings and deeds that have been handed down to us from ancient times. And assuredly we shall nowhere find a larger or more remarkable store of these than in the records of our own country. Who will teach courage, justice, loyalty, self-control, simplicity and contempt of grief and pain better than men like Fabricius Curius, Regulus, Decius, Mucius and countless others? For if the Greeks bear away the palm for moral precepts, Rome can produce more striking examples of moral performance, which is a far greater thing. (*Instit.* 12.2.29–30)⁷⁸

Speaking of Valerius Maximus and Quintilian, Clive Skidmore observes, ‘The first idea found in both authors is that the examples of great Roman heroes are more effective in forming a good Roman citizen than all the philosophy of the Greeks.’⁷⁹ Both authors articulate the pedagogical, rhetorical and civic benefits of using Roman models as exempla for imitation.

In *De divinatione* (2.8), Cicero says in reply to his brother Quintus, ‘But the thing that delights me most is the fact that you illustrated your argument with many incidents taken from Roman sources – incidents, too, of a distinguished and noble type.’⁸⁰ Though Cicero’s use of exempla varies according to factors such as genre, audience and subject matter, he can display a preference for Roman examples, especially in his speeches.⁸¹ Van der Blom suggests that this preference could be because Roman examples were better known to his audiences and also carried more authority than Greek examples, both factors contributing to their greater persuasive value.⁸²

Exempla could function at a familial or national level. Though there is a weighted bias in the use of examples by and for the Roman elite, which operated at the familial level, some Romans, such as Scipio Africanus (Aemilianus) and Cato the Elder, were nevertheless seen to be role models for all Romans.⁸³ Exempla were deployed in public speeches to the Roman electorate, which must have had cultural purchase.⁸⁴ Upholding the values of Rome, by following in the footsteps of the ancestors who secured the gods’ favour, was the task of all Roman citizens – the future success of the Empire depended upon it.⁸⁵ At the national level, exemplarity was based on a shared national identity of what it meant to be Roman. The authority of these examples for the Roman people derived from their shared identity as Romans, *not* from the perception or attribution of common descent.

At the familial level, exemplarity was grounded in the hereditary connection binding offspring to their forebears. Growing up in the shadow of their illustrious familial ancestors, elite Roman youth were invested with a strong moral imperative based on descent to continue in or exceed the trajectory set by their forebears. However, it is precisely the distinction between national and familial exempla that makes Cicero’s fourth *Verrine* speech particularly striking. In the speech, Cicero attributes putative descent from Scipio Africanus ‘not one family but the whole country’.⁸⁶ Cicero continues:

⁷⁸ Cf. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 23–4.

⁷⁹ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 24.

⁸⁰ Cf. van der Blom, *Role Models*, 140.

⁸¹ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 139–44.

⁸² Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 143–4.

⁸³ Cicero, *Mur.* 66; *Sest.* 143. For more on these texts, see van der Blom, *Role Models*, 13–14, 152–8. On the bias in sources, see also Roller, *Models from the Past*, 9–10.

⁸⁴ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 13–14.

⁸⁵ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 13–15; Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 61, 64–8, 71–2.

⁸⁶ *Verr.* 2.4.81. Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 153–4.

In this right I myself have a share, as a citizen of the empire whose proud and glorious fame is due to him; the more so because I do my best to follow him in the path where he leads the way for us all, the path of justice and temperance and strenuous endeavour, as the champion of the distressed and enemy of the wicked; and the kinship of aims and pursuits that I have with him is hardly less close than the kinship of name and blood that is so precious to yourselves. (*Verr.* 2.4.81)

Cicero concludes that his links, based on the emulation of character, are ‘hardly less close’ than those of Scipio’s physical descendants.⁸⁷ At one point, he even declares that ‘we must recognise blood-kinship between all Roman citizens’.⁸⁸ What is striking about this is the ascription of putative kinship to Roman citizens.⁸⁹ Cicero is here blurring the distinction between national and familial exempla. Familial exempla, based on heredity, are now rhetorically deployed as the inheritance, and exempla, of all Romans.⁹⁰

It is not by blood but by virtue that Cicero claims descent from Scipio. Molly Pasco-Pranger calls this phenomenon ‘virtue-based genealogy’.⁹¹ Since any Roman can lead a virtuous life, they can establish a link to noble exempla based on a virtuous life rather than descent. The ascription of putative descent therefore has a strong moral dimension: this kinship is derived from moral action, Cicero’s behaviour, and therefore ought to spur the audience to action, as Cicero emphasises.⁹² At the same time, Cicero can use Roman exempla to anchor his claims with the authority of tradition while at the same time dramatically adapting those very links to the past for his own purposes. The ancestors embody tradition, and set the standard for Roman success. It is precisely the appearance of the stability of tradition that makes Cicero’s rhetoric so persuasive – indeed, it is this, ironically, that enables him to successfully reshape the traditional categories.⁹³

Cicero is able to appeal to Cato the Elder and Scipio as ancestors of all Romans. By so doing, he is able to achieve two very significant rhetorical effects: first, to unify Romans through the ascription of common descent; and second, to issue strong moral exhortation based on that descent: this is who you are, now you must live up to this example. A similar set of rhetorical moves is made in 1 Peter.

Unsurprisingly, Jewish writings of the Second Temple period predominately feature Jewish heroes and heroines, whether biblical figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Moses, or more contemporary ones such as Judith, Susanna or Judas Maccabee.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ *Verr.* 2.4.81.

⁸⁸ *Verr.* 2.5.172. Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 155–156. Similarly, in *Phil.* 4.13, Cicero claims that virtue is the inheritance of all Roman people. Cf. Treggiari, ‘Ancestral Virtues’, 144.

⁸⁹ The novelty of concept is unclear: see van der Blom, *Role Models*, 155–6. Also Treggiari, ‘Ancestral Virtues’, 144.

⁹⁰ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 152–8.

⁹¹ M. Pasco-Pranger, ‘Finding Examples at Home: Cato, Curius Dentatus, and the Origins of Roman Literary Exemplarity’, *Classical Antiquity* 34 (2015) 296–321, at 312.

⁹² Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 158.

⁹³ Van der Blom writes, ‘Cicero taps into the discourse of the *nobiles* and their claim to the magistracies based on ancestral merit and turns it into a general claim to magistracies which can be argued even by *homines novi*. In this way, he tries to legitimize his place in the political elite in spite of his *novitas*’ (*Role Models*, 157).

⁹⁴ The literature on these topics is vast. For studies which specifically use the language of exemplarity, see H. Najman, ‘Reconsidering Jubilees: Prophecy and Exemplarity’, *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (ed. G. Boccaccini and G. Ibbá; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 229–43; A. Y. Reed, ‘The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham’, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009) 185–212; H. Najman and T. Reinhard, ‘Exemplarity and its Discontents: Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Texts and Greco-Roman Didactic Poetry’, *JSJ* 50 (2019) 460–96. See also chapter 4, ‘Moses as an *exemplum* of Native Leadership in Philo’s *De vita Moses* and Josephus’ *Antiquities* 2–4’, in Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 87–140.

Abraham, for example, was often understood in this period as the defining ancestor and exemplar of the Jewish people. In their recent volume *Abraham in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Adams and Domoney-Lyttle summarise, 'In general, depictions of Abraham are positive, with the patriarch presented as a model for emulation, the progenitor of the Jewish people, and a friend of God.'⁹⁵

Jewish authors also imbibed the structures of exemplarity, though deploying it in ethnically specific ways. Annette Yoshiko Reed has investigated exemplarity in Philo, Josephus and the Testament of Abraham, and Hindy Najman has studied it in *Jubilees* and Hellenistic Jewish wisdom texts.⁹⁶ As Reed has shown, Jews in the Second Temple period 'adapted, reapplied, and subverted' exemplarity discourse to assert their own identity.⁹⁷ For example, Reed suggests that Philo's retelling of Genesis is 'reconceived as a collection of exempla, akin to Livy's *History of Rome* or the *Memorable Works and Deeds* of Valerius Maximus – albeit surpassing them as truth surpasses mere entertainment'.⁹⁸ Just as Valerius preferred Roman examples, Philo uses the discourse of exemplarity to uphold Jewish exempla. Reed writes:

In one sense, then, the discourse of exemplarity itself exemplifies the complex cultural dynamics of Hellenization – a shared discourse in the eastern Mediterranean world, wherein elements of Greek culture were creatively appropriated for the articulation of new expressions of local pride, ethnic specificity, and cultural resistance.⁹⁹

Further research into the use of exemplarity in Hellenistic Jewish literature would no doubt prove a rich area of research.

Similar trends of an ethnic preference for exempla can also be traced in early Christian literature. With regard to 1 Clement, Petitfils has argued that early Christians conceived of Christian exempla as 'native' exempla. In support of this argument, he notes the abundance of the first-person plural genitive pronoun (ἡμῶν) used with exempla and the letter's frequent use of ancestral language.¹⁰⁰ Figures such as Jacob, Adam and Abraham are referred to as 'our father' (1 Clem. 4.8; 6.3; 31.2).¹⁰¹

Exemplarity was an adaptable medium. Though influenced by Greek traditions, Romans, Jews and Christians were able to deploy it for their own purposes. In sum, Greek, Latin, Jewish and Christian authors exhibit a strong preference to cite internal rather than external exempla. Such exempla were seen to carry more pedagogical, rhetorical, moral and/or political force, with the added likelihood of being better known to their audiences. Such internal exempla were effective at consolidating a sense of group identity and, concurrently, as a means of issuing moral exhortation based on group identity.

5. The Exemplarity of Jesus in 1 Peter

Before the books of the New Testament were composed, Jesus had already been cast as an exemplum, albeit a negative one, by the Romans through the very act of his crucifixion.¹⁰² Quintilian states explicitly:

⁹⁵ S. A. Adams and Z. Domoney-Lyttle, 'Introduction: Abraham in Jewish and Christian Authors', *Abraham in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (ed. S. A. Adams and Z. Domoney-Lyttle; London: T&T Clark, 2019) 1–8, at 2.

⁹⁶ Reed, 'Patriarchal Perfection'; Najman, 'Reconsidering Jubilees', 229–43; Najman and Reinhard, 'Exemplarity and its Discontents', 460–96.

⁹⁷ Reed, 'Patriarchal Perfection', 188.

⁹⁸ Reed, 'Patriarchal Perfection', 194.

⁹⁹ Reed, 'Patriarchal Perfection', 195.

¹⁰⁰ Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 152–3.

¹⁰¹ See Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 153. Cf. 1 Clem. 30.7.

¹⁰² Fiore and Bland, 'Exemplification', 183.

When we crucify criminals the most frequent roads are chosen, where the greatest number of people can look and be seized by fear. For every punishment has less to do with the offence than with the example. (*Decl.* 1.274)

Jesus' crucifixion was an intentional, public exhibition of the power of Rome. However, despite this, Jesus became for Christians not a negative exemplar but *the* defining exemplar of Christianity. This inversion lay at the heart of Christianity: power is found not in strength, conquest or dominance, but in weakness, humility and service. This inversion also lies at the heart of the use of Jesus as an exemplar for believers in 1 Peter.

Roller's cycle of exemplarity is initiated with the crucifixion of Jesus. The dominant Roman view of Jesus' crucifixion would have applied to all victims of crucifixion – the initial event is evaluated negatively by the public. The intended norm would be fearful obedience to the Roman Empire. Christians interpreted Jesus' death differently. For them, the event of Jesus' passion was instead, provocatively, evaluated positively.

Indeed, it is likely that from the very beginning, the cross was central to the Christian message, both in terms of salvation and discipleship. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus says, 'If any man would come after me (μου ἀκολουθεῖν), let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (ἀκολουθεῖτω μου)' (Mark 8.34; par. Matt 16.24; Luke 9.23).¹⁰³ David Horrell observes that while there are no direct verbal links between these passages and 1 Peter, the similarity of ἀκολουθέω and ἐπακολουθέω is notable.¹⁰⁴ Speaking of 1 Peter, Horrell continues:

Indeed, outside the gospels, only here and in Rev. 14.4 do we find these verbs used to denote (post-Easter) discipleship of Christ. More generally, it is worth noting how 1 Peter encapsulates concisely the connection set out in this tradition between Jesus' suffering and its significance as an exemplary pattern for discipleship.¹⁰⁵

As the Petrine author explains, Jesus' suffering death has now set the norm for the specific Christian virtue of endurance in the face of unjust suffering.¹⁰⁶ In 1 Peter, Jesus' exemplarity is first clearly articulated in the exhortation given directly to slaves (2.18–25), who are called to submit to their masters, kind and cruel alike.

The initial simplicity of this exhortation conceals a wealth of complexity which the lens of exemplarity discourse can help bring into focus. To begin with, three aspects of the exhortation to slaves are important. First, the slaves are addressed directly, in contrast to typical *Haustafeln* conventions. Second, Jesus is presented to slaves as an exemplar for them in such a way as to make their suffering an analogue to Christ's suffering. Third, the structure of the Petrine discourse exhibits the reproductive cycle of exemplarity by drawing on the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 as a literary precedent for Jesus' suffering. Fourth, and implicitly, the letter exhorts all Christians to imitate slaves as they imitate Christ. Each of these features will now be examined in greater detail.

¹⁰³ On the links between suffering and ethics in 1 Peter and Mark, see Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, esp. 255–61, on Mark 8.34–8.

¹⁰⁴ D. G. Horrell, 'Jesus Remembered in 1 Peter? Early Jesus Traditions, Isaiah 53, and 1 Peter 2.221–25', *James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) 123–50, at 133.

¹⁰⁵ Horrell, 'Jesus Remembered', 133.

¹⁰⁶ On humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) as a uniquely Christian virtue, see Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*, 174–98.

5.1 The Direct Address to Slaves

The literature on the relationship of New Testament household codes with Greco-Roman precedents is large and still in a state of flux.¹⁰⁷ Without entering into the quagmire of these debates, it is possible to make several general observations. First, outside the New Testament, *Haustafeln* are addressed to those with authority over a household – the husband, the father, the slave’s master.¹⁰⁸ The fact that the slaves are addressed directly here is a significant break from non-Christian literary precedents. Second, the direct address to slaves ascribes agency and dignity to them, values rarely attributed to slaves.¹⁰⁹ Third, by placing the slaves first in the list of specific exhortations (let alone the fact that they are included and addressed at all), the Petrine author is decisively inverting the power pyramid of Roman society.¹¹⁰ Moral exhortation begins not with those of status (slave owners are not even addressed in the letter), but with those whom society has deemed legally chattels.¹¹¹ This inversion is made more striking by the fact that slaves are not just given instruction, but that in their instruction they are given Jesus Christ himself as their role model.¹¹²

In this light, 1 Peter’s attribution of a new genealogy, with a new set of spiritual ancestors, to all Christians, especially slaves, women and those at the bottom of the social ladder, would have been revolutionary.¹¹³ As discussed above, elite Romans were imbued with the obligation to live up to the example set by their illustrious ancestors. Within this discourse, only elite Romans could play the game, since only elite Romans would have senatorial, consular or otherwise illustrious ancestors. It was an intentionally exclusive mechanism that both shaped the elite insiders of the next generation and presented a significant barrier to outsiders.¹¹⁴ The Petrine author’s choice to introduce Jesus, first and foremost, as an exemplar for slaves was thus invested with profound theological implications. Like Sceledrus, these Christian slaves also look back to a crucified exemplar. But strikingly unlike Sceledrus, for these slaves, Christ is not the butt of a tawdry joke but the source of their living hope.

¹⁰⁷ For studies on household codes and 1 Peter, see D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981); J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM, 1981); J. W. Aageson, ‘1 Peter 2.11–3.7: Slaves, Wives and the Complexities of Interpretation’, *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrew* (London: T&T Clark, 2004) 34–49; W. Carter, ‘Going All the Way? Honoring the Emperor and Sacrificing Wives and Slaves in 1 Peter 2.13–3.6’, *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 14–33; C. C. Kroeger, ‘Toward a Pastoral Understanding of 1 Peter 3.1–6 and Related Texts’, *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 82–8; M. Misset-van de Weg, ‘Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter’, *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 50–62; J. G. Bird, *Abuse, Power and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter’s Commands to Wives* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Horrell, ‘Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate towards a Postcolonial Reading of 1 Peter’, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (LNTS 394; London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 211–38.

¹⁰⁸ E. Best, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 117. For a possible Jewish precedent to addressing slaves, see D. L. Balch, ‘Household Codes’, *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (ed. D. E. Aune; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 25–50, 46. Cf. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 190.

¹⁰⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 199 n. 149; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 513; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 180.

¹¹⁰ J. H. Elliott, ‘Backward and Forward ‘in his Steps’: Following Jesus from Rome to Raymond and Beyond. The Tradition, Redaction, and Reception of 1 Peter 2:18–25’, *Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. F. F. Segovia; Fortress, 1985) 184–209, 187; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 513–14; R. Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008) 156.

¹¹¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 190–1.

¹¹² Elliott, ‘In his Steps’, 188; H. Moxnes, ‘The Beaten Body of Christ: Reading and Empowering Slave Bodies in 1 Peter’, *Religion & Theology* 21 (2014) 125–41, at 130.

¹¹³ Though 1 Peter does not describe Jesus as believers’ ancestor, his status as an exemplar for them is increased when seen in light of Roman conventions.

¹¹⁴ Van der Blom, *Role Models*, 13.

5.2 How are Slaves to Imitate Christ? The Role of Exemplarity in Exhortation

In what ways, specifically, are slaves to imitate Christ? Recipients of 1 Peter are not left to guess. As Jeffrey de Waal Dryden states, ‘Greco-Roman paraenetic authors always specify how an individual is an exemplar; they *explicitly* underline those aspects of an individual’s biography that are to foster imitation.’¹¹⁵ The exemplar’s life is thus recounted in such a way as to meet the specific needs of the literary context.¹¹⁶ Specifically, as Thomas Osborne has shown, the author used Isaiah 53 to tailor his narration of Christ’s passion so that his exhortation to slaves was specific to their situation.¹¹⁷ This means that the exemplary qualities of Jesus are narrated through the interweaving of Isaiah 53 (and Deut 21.23) into the exhortation. Since the exhortation cannot be separated from this interweaving, an examination of these intersections will be carried out below. However, a few points can be made at this stage.

First, throughout the entire section of exhortation in 2.11–3.7, ὑποτάσσω is a key word, repeatedly used by the author in his exhortations to all Christians (2.13), slaves (2.18) and wives (3.1, 5; cf. youths in 5.5).¹¹⁸ Slaves are called to submit (ὑποτασσόμενοι) in 2.18. As the dominant value in the passage, Jesus’ example is recalled insofar as it illustrates what submission looks like.

Second, before analysing this passage further, the unique identity of Jesus as both saviour and exemplar must be addressed. Many commentators have been troubled by the suggestion of *imitatio Christi* in 1 Pet 2.18–25 because it could be construed to suggest that believers are called to imitate Christ in his salvific work.¹¹⁹ Some commentators have responded by attempting to distinguish imitable from inimitable acts in 2.21–5, with unconvincing results.¹²⁰ The proponents of such interpretations misunderstand the mechanisms of exemplarity. Instead, with de Waal Dryden, it is better to see the entirety of Christ’s passion (suffering and death) as exemplary.¹²¹ Though complex, three reasons can be given for this position. First, the passage weaves together elements from Christ’s passion as a totality – the text itself does not separate salvific from non-salvific elements.¹²² Second, the exemplary nature of Christ’s suffering is further explained with reference to the suffering servant of Isaiah, of which more will be said below. Suffice it to say here that the use of Isaiah 53 as a way of understanding Christ’s suffering is most coherent when read with the entirety of Christ’s passion in mind. Thirdly and finally, an underlying argument of greater to lesser structures the passage. If Christ, who was able to bear unjust suffering to the point of death, was able to endure, so should slaves, who are presumably not being tested to such an extreme limit, endure their own suffering.¹²³

5.3 The Son, the Slaves and the Suffering Servant: Layers of Exemplarity in 1 Pet 2.21–5

The significance of Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter has rightly received a great deal of attention.¹²⁴ This section will not attempt to chart all of the complexities of these verses. Rather, it

¹¹⁵ J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 172 (emphasis original).

¹¹⁶ De Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 172; Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 393.

¹¹⁷ Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 393.

¹¹⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 506–10, 516; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 182; de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 175.

¹¹⁹ For discussion of this issue, see J. B. Webster, ‘Christology, Imitability and Ethics’, *SJT* 39 (1986) 309–26; *idem*, ‘The Imitation of Christ’, *TynBul* 27 (1986) 95–120.

¹²⁰ For a detailed overview, see de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 172–91.

¹²¹ De Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 174–91.

¹²² Michaels, *1 Peter*, 136.

¹²³ Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 391.

¹²⁴ For example, see Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 381–408; Horrell, ‘Jesus Remembered’, 123–50; Elliott, ‘In his Steps’, 184–209; O. Hofius, ‘The Fourth Servant Song in the New Testament Letters’, *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in*

will attempt the more modest goal of identifying how exemplarity ripples through the passage, from Isaianic suffering servant, to Jesus, to slaves, to all believers.

Evident in this rippling is what Roller has called the ‘looping character’ of exemplarity, which ‘always has both a retrospective and a prospective logic’.¹²⁵ First Peter draws on the past examples (the Isaianic suffering servant and Jesus’ passion) in order to exhort slaves and, secondarily, all believers, in their future behaviour. This initiates what Roller calls ‘an endless loop of social reproduction’.¹²⁶ The past, present and future are juxtaposed; the past is brought into the present, and the present is measured against the standards of past exempla with the goal of future behaviour repeating the cycle. By lifting up Jesus as exemplar, cast in the mould of the suffering servant, the Petrine author hopes to encourage the slaves to re-enact the virtues evident in Jesus’ behaviour in their own lives, which is then a model for the entire community.

Though the exhortation is addressed directly to slaves, commentators recognise that in some sense all Christians are being addressed.¹²⁷ This dual focus reflects the looping character of exemplarity. The virtues foreshadowed in the Isaianic suffering servant were embodied first in Christ, and are now embodied in the lived experience of the addressed slaves, who themselves have become exempla for all believers.¹²⁸ In this way, the addressed slaves become paradigms for all Christians to the extent that they (the slaves) are conformed to the pattern of Christ, their exemplar, who is himself following the pattern of the suffering servant. The ripples of exemplarity create complex layers of meaning.¹²⁹ The process of exemplarity thus draws examples from the past and projects them forward into the future.

In verse 21, the author asserts that Christ suffered ‘for you’ (ὐμῶν) leaving an example ‘for you’ (ὐμῖν). In verses 22–3, the Petrine author explains the content of Christ’s exemplarity with language drawn from Isaiah 53. In verse 22, Christ’s sinless-ness and purity of speech are highlighted, alluding to Isa 53.9. In verse 23, Christ’s non-retaliation is foregrounded: though being reviled, he did not revile in return. Verse 24, alluding to parts of Isa 53.4, 12 and 5, and probably also Deut 21.23, recalls Christ’s vicarious bearing of sins in his body. In pastoral language (see Isa 53.6), verse 25 describes believers as straying sheep who have returned to follow Christ, their shepherd.¹³⁰

Paul Achtemeier further argues that the Petrine author has selectively ordered allusions to Isaiah 53 (53.4, 12, 5, 6) to follow the passion narrative, first with references to the trial in verses 22–3, followed by the crucifixion in verse 24.¹³¹ This means that slaves are provided not only with Christ as exemplar, but also with the Petrine author’s casting of Christ as embodiment of the Isaianic suffering servant. Multiple layers are active at once: the suffering servant, Christ, slaves, all believers. As Elliott has written,

Jewish and Christian Sources (ed. B. Janowski and S. Peter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 163–88; de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 163–91; B. Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) 125–31; P. T. Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016) 131–52; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 93–103, 161–84.

¹²⁵ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 8.

¹²⁶ Roller, *Models from the Past*, 8.

¹²⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 514, 523; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 192, 194; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 99, 103, 180, 183.

¹²⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 523; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 99, 183; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 194.

¹²⁹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 135; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 514; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 192, 194; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 103, 183.

¹³⁰ Liebengood argues for the influence of Zechariah on the pastoral language in verse 25 (K. D. Liebengood, *The Eschatology of 1 Peter: Considering the Influence of Zechariah 9–14* (SNTSMS 157; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 79–104).

¹³¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 193. Also Horrell, ‘Jesus Remembered’, 141–4.

The Isaian portrait of the innocent suffering servant (*pais*, 52:13; *paidion*, 53:2) of God provides our author with a model for describing Jesus Christ as a similar innocent suffering servant of God who, in turn, serves as an apposite model for innocently suffering servants/slaves.¹³²

Unpacking the highly concentrated nuances of the passage would require a much bigger project than the present article permits. However, three key themes on the role of exemplarity in 1 Peter may be mapped here, which roughly correspond to sequences of verses: innocent suffering (verse 22), the importance of speech and of non-retaliation (verses 23–4) and the physicality of suffering (verse 25).

The first allusion to the servant in Isaiah states that ‘he committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips’ (ὄς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ). Jesus, like the servant before him and Christian slaves after him, was innocent before and during his suffering.¹³³ His suffering was not the result of punishment for wrongdoing, nor did his suffering cause him to sin. Neither, therefore, ought slaves’ innocent suffering cause them to sin (cf. 2.19–20). In verse 22, Jesus, seen through the prism of the suffering servant, incarnates the virtue of innocent suffering, exemplifying what slaves are to emulate in their own lives.

In verses 22–3, the themes of speech and of non-retaliation are developed. Speech is an important topic which reoccurs throughout 1 Peter and is intrinsically bound up with righteous suffering later on in the letter.¹³⁴ Isa 53.7, which states that the servant was silent ‘like a sheep before its shearers’ and that he ‘did not open his mouth’, may have influenced verse 22.¹³⁵ The recipients appear to be the objects of verbal abuse, and this exhortation encourages them not to retaliate in kind.¹³⁶ As Osborne notes, the exhortation not only to suffer for righteousness but also to refrain from reviling and reproaching would have been a difficult task for slaves.¹³⁷ Speech may have been one of the few outlets available to them. Indeed, as Halvor Moxnes proposes, silence could be interpreted positively as resistance to power.¹³⁸ Instead of reviling, slaves could understand their choice to remain silent as an active assertion to align their suffering with that of Christ.

Finally, in verse 24, the author alludes to the crucifixion of Jesus, who bore sins ‘on the tree’. It is not immediately clear how this verse connects to the exhortation to slaves. Despite the initial impression that the author has got carried away on a theological tangent, the lens of exemplarity brings several pertinent issues to the fore in three specific ways: first, the physicality of suffering; second, the element of social, public humiliation; and thirdly, the forward-looking focus on life and healing. All three of these elements would be relevant to the daily life of slaves.

The first part of verse 24, ‘He himself bore our sins’ (τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν) evokes Isa 53.4 (οὗτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει) and 11 (τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει).¹³⁹ The Petrine author now, however, specifies that Christ bore our sins ‘in his body on the tree’ (ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον), a phrase not derived

¹³² Elliott, *1 Peter*, 529.

¹³³ Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 394; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 181–2.

¹³⁴ Marcar, ‘Days of Noah’, 562.

¹³⁵ On the possible influence of Isa 53.7 on verse 22, see Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 395; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 145; Egan, *Ecclesiology and the Scriptural Narrative of 1 Peter*, 135.

¹³⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 145.

¹³⁷ Osborne, ‘Guide Lines’, 396.

¹³⁸ Moxnes, ‘Body of Christ’, 137–8. Also Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 178–179.

¹³⁹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 532.

from Isaiah 53. It is likely that this phrase is inspired instead by Deut 21.23a, 'his body shall not remain all night upon the tree (τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου), but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man (κρεμόμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου) is accursed by God'.¹⁴⁰

The Petrine author's language emphasises the physicality of Jesus' suffering.¹⁴¹ This would have been especially meaningful for slaves, whose daily life frequently included significant physical hardship. Moxnes, commenting on 1 Pet 2.18–20, notes that what is taken for granted is that slaves will be beaten – what they *can* control is whether they are beaten punitively or innocently.¹⁴²

Christ's physical suffering is developed further at the end of verse 24, 'By his wounds you have been healed' (οὗ τῶ μώλωπι ἰάθητε), a reference to Isa 53.5. Welts, or bruises, would have been normal realities for slaves. Osborne and others have noted that the Petrine author may have chosen to include this reference due to its appropriateness for slaves.¹⁴³

The effect of the Petrine author's supplementing Isaiah with Deut 21.23a is to draw attention to the public nature of Jesus' crucifixion. As the quote by Quintilian above shows, crucifixion was an intentionally public, humiliating form of execution, designed to instil fear. Furthermore, crucifixion was very commonly a slave punishment.¹⁴⁴ Even if the letter's slave recipients were not likely to suffer in this way, it was something a capricious master could choose to do on a whim, for which a slave had no recourse.¹⁴⁵ Membership in religious groups or cults was also held with suspicion, sometimes resulting in crucifixion, which made Christian slaves doubly vulnerable.¹⁴⁶ Martin Hengel writes:

It could, of course, be asked whether for slaves and *peregrini*, who had to reckon with the possibility of crucifixion as a punishment, the cross could be such a deterrent horror as to be a hindrance to the message of the crucified redeemer.¹⁴⁷

The practice of crucifixion contained features designed to humiliate, sometimes including sexual abuse. As David Tombs has shown, crucifixion could include humiliation through mockery, stripping, public nakedness, sexual violence and mutilation.¹⁴⁸ The sexual violence served a political function: it embodied the power of Rome and its domination and punishment of her enemies.¹⁴⁹

Many slaves routinely faced humiliation from their masters. This humiliation included their understood sexual availability to their masters since slaves, by definition, lacked bodily integrity.¹⁵⁰ Moxnes summarises his findings on slaves: 'Therefore, although not explicitly mentioned in the passage, we may also infer that both beatings and sexual

¹⁴⁰ Elliott, *I Peter*, 533–4; Horrell, 'Jesus Remembered', 139; Osborne, 'Guide Lines', 399–400.

¹⁴¹ Osborne, 'Guide Lines', 399–400.

¹⁴² Moxnes, 'Body of Christ', 130–1.

¹⁴³ Osborne, 'Guide Lines', 405–6; Horrell, 'Jesus Remembered', 139; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 149; Elliott, *I Peter*, 536; Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 173.

¹⁴⁴ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 51–63; Osborne, 'Guide Lines', 400.

¹⁴⁵ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 57–9.

¹⁴⁶ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 61.

¹⁴⁷ Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 61.

¹⁴⁸ D. Tombs, 'Crucifixion, State Terror, and Sexual Abuse', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 53 (1999) 89–109, esp. 100–107. More recently, see J. R. Reaves *et al.*, eds., *When Did We See You Naked? Jesus as a Victim of Sexual Abuse* (London: SCM, 2021).

¹⁴⁹ Tombs, 'Crucifixion', 92–6; Elliott, *I Peter*, 534.

¹⁵⁰ Moxnes, 'Body of Christ', 131–3.

penetration of their bodies were part of the daily existence in the slaveholder's household.¹⁵¹ It is significant that the way in which the Petrine author refers to Jesus' crucifixion draws attention to crucifixion's publicly humiliating nature, including the implicit possibility of sexual abuse, both elements which would have had special resonance with slaves.

Verse 24 also contains a note of hope, 'that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness'. The identification with Christ is so close that slaves can relate to him not only in his suffering and death, but also in his resurrected life, a life which they can share in and experience in their present situation.

In conclusion, 1 Peter makes clear that Christian slaves worship a Lord who died a slave's death in his crucifixion. In this way, Christ's passion provides a model of behaviour for slaves, and secondarily for all believers, to imitate. All of these features contribute to the alignment of Christ's suffering with the experience of slaves. Though it is clear that the Petrine author does not intend slaves to emulate Christ's salvific work, they are exhorted to emulate the exemplary behaviour Christ upheld during his salvific work. In conclusion, a deeper appreciation of Greco-Roman exemplarity dynamics sheds valuable light on how the author of 1 Peter weaves together the Isaianic suffering servant and the narrative of Jesus' passion in his address to slaves and all believers.

6. Conclusion

This article has argued that an understanding of exemplarity illuminates the way in which the extended metaphors of family, race and nation in the first half of the letter ground the ethical exhortation in the second.

Exemplarity is the social phenomenon of holding up a particular individual or event as a model for imitation. It typically follows Roller's four-fold cycle of action, evaluation, commemoration and norm setting. At the national level, societies displayed a clear bias towards internal exempla, whether they be Greek, Roman, Jewish or Christian (or some combination thereof). At the familial level, Romans clearly displayed a preference for exempla from within one's own family, broadly understood. Examples which carried the most power were often those which were well known to the audience as well as those which were closest to them, whether at the familial, national or ethnic level. The function of exempla was therefore pedagogical and ethical.

In 1 Peter, believers are bestowed a new identity – they are now members of the family of God and constitute a new race, nation and people. As a new Christian family and ethnic group, they needed their own Christian exempla. The letter uses four clear markers of exemplarity discourse – the term *ὑπογραμμός* (2.21), the footsteps idiom (2.21), baptism as the *ἀντίτυπος* of Noah's flood (3.21) and elders as *τύποι* (5.3) – to signal the presence of such discourse. The recognition of these dynamics in 1 Peter thus sheds light on the link between the identity formation in the first half of the letter and the ethical exhortation in the second.

This article then examined how an appreciation of exemplarity dynamics illuminates 1 Peter's depiction of Jesus as exemplar par excellence in the exhortation to slaves in 2.18–25. The Petrine author used the Isaianic suffering servant to recount the narrative of Jesus' passion in a way that was particularly relevant to slaves. Thus, slaves themselves become exempla to all believers. The looping character of exemplarity is therefore clearly seen in the way in which examples of innocent suffering ripple forward from the suffering servant, to Jesus, to slaves, to all believers. The past is made present through these examples and provides all believers with a template for future behaviour. Multiple layers of past, present and future

¹⁵¹ Moxnes, 'Body of Christ', 133.

interact and engage one another in a complex interplay of narrative and ethics. Thus, an appreciation of exemplarity dynamics is key to understanding the theological structure of Petrine ethics. This study therefore opens the door to future work on exemplarity in 1 Peter and other early Christian literature.

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