Acta Theologica
2013 33(2): 255-275
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/actat.v33i2.14
ISSN 1015-8758

<http://www.ufs.ac.za/ActaTheologica>

Fika J. van Rensburg

RANSOMED BY GOD INTO HIS HOUSEHOLD: INTERPRETING THE RANSOM IMAGERY IN 1 PETER WITHIN THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF ITS AUTHOR AND ADDRESSEES

ABSTRACT

1 Peter 1:18 states: "You know that you were ransomed ..." (NRSV). This article offers an interpretation of the ransom image in 1 Peter within the economic context of the author and addressees, taking into consideration the relevant structure of economics (the geography and demography of the areas identified in the address of 1 Peter) and relevant performance of economics (production, distribution and consumption) in the area where the addressees of 1 Peter lived. After the problem statement and methodological clarification (1), the economic-historic context of the addressees is constructed (2), and the epistolographic characteristics of 1 Peter is defined (3). Then the ransom-imagery in 1 Peter is analysed and the referents of this ransom-imagery determined (4). Finally the ransom metaphor in 1 Peter is interpreted within the economic-historic context of its addressees (5).

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND METHODOLOGICAL CLARIFICATION

1.1 Contribution of this article

In 1 Peter 1:18-19 the author of 1 Peter states: "You know that you were ransomed from the futile lifestyle inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish" (NRSV). This article wants to

Prof. Fika J. van Rensburg, Unit for Reformed Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. E-mail: Fika.JanseVanRensburg@nwu.ac.za

Produced by SUN MeDIA Bloemfontein

contribute towards the interpretation of the ransom imagery by interpreting it within the economic-historic context of the addressees.

1.2 View of economic history

The article takes into consideration the relevant structure of economics (the geography and demography of the areas identified in the address of 1 Peter) and relevant performance of economics (production, distribution and consumption) in the area where the addressees of 1 Peter lived (Janse van Rensburg 2011). To interpret the ransom imagery in 1 Peter within its economic-historic context it is necessary to have a construction of this economic-historic context. Linking on to the definition by Morris, Saller and Scheidel (2007:1) of the task of economic history, I view the task of constructing the relevant economic-historic context of 1 Peter as to explain the structure[1] and performance[2] of economics in the area where the addressees of 1 Peter lived – for the purpose of this article focused on the practice of ransoming.

1.3 View of imagery

An imagery is a metaphor system (Caird 1980:155), i.e. a group of metaphors linked together by their common origin in a single area of human observation, experience or activity (Van der Watt 2000:18).[3] Any metaphor drawn from or linked to (i.c.) the ransom imagery invites embellishment by the addition of other metaphors from this imagery.

1.4 View of metaphor

A metaphor consists of two lexical items of disparate meanings linked on the basis of some form of comparison, with specific semantic implications. It has the power to orientate and re-orientate readers in accordance with an author's perspective (Janse van Rensburg 2005:413). A metaphor thus presupposes a well-established use of language (the "literal" meaning)

1 To explain the "structure" means to theorize about the characteristics of society which are purported to be the basic determinants of performance (like political and economic institutions, technology, demography, and ideology of a society), with the potential of refutability.

2 To explain the "performance" means to theorize about matters like how much is produced, the distribution of costs and benefits, and the stability of production, with the potential of refutability.

3 Examples of imagery are sheep farming, family life, healing, commerce, law, warfare, weather, love, health, nature, sport, etc.

and then extends this use in a way that is novel or logically odd (Mouton 2002:41).

2. THE ECONOMIC-HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE ADDRESSEES

2.1 Introduction

One can only start understanding the power of the concepts in a text upon determining the meaning of those concepts in the period it was written (Van Unnik 1980a:203). It is therefore important to make a construction of the economic-historic context of 1 Peter, thus constructing the socio-historical ecology[4] of the ransom imagery. The method utilized for the construction of the context is the socio-historic approach, as explicated and applied by Van Rensburg (2000:564-582).

2.2 The geography of the areas identified in the address of 1 Peter

Four areas are designated in the address in 1 Peter 1:1: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. This is part of what is referred to as "The Eastern Mediterranean". Greek was the common language of the region's elite, but numerous local languages survived under the empire. The area had a variety of micro-climates, with direct implications for agricultural success and the concomitant need for exchange. This contributed to the fact that economic opportunities and options varied substantially, depending where in the region one operated (Alcock 2007:674-5). Coastal or near-coastal communities had access to water transport, with harbour complexes, for example the one at Ephesus, whilst the high tablelands of Anatolia remained relatively landlocked. The east was far more urbanized than the west, a structure resting not only on centuries of *polis*-formation and expansion, but on on-going civic foundations by Roman generals and emperors alike (Alcock 2007:677).

2.3 The demography of the identified areas

Two essential parameters govern and are governed by the workings of the economy: the number of people in a region and their distribution in

4 The socio-historical ecology of metaphors refers to the totality and inter-relatedness of the social-reality of the ancient Mediterranean world (Van der Watt 2000:139).

space (Alcock 2007:676). The four areas mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1 cover about a quarter of a million square kilometres. Estimates of the number of inhabitants during the last quarter of the first century range from four to eight million.

The topography of the area varies much and it had different nations with diverse cultures, languages, faiths and political histories (Elliott 1981:60-61). Alcock (2007:677) shows that at least Ephesus could potentially have approached 100 000 inhabitants. Most city units, however, comprised populations in the range of 10 000 – 15 000, with an additional proportion of people dwelling outside the urban centre. Mitchell (1993:243-244) concurs, arguing that relatively few of the estimated 130 cities in the various Anatolian provinces would have had more than 25 000 inhabitants.

The main source for information about Jewish communities in the Roman provinces in Asia Minor is epigraphic and archaeological material (Breytenbach 1998:332). Schürer (1973:17–38), as well as Stern (1974:153), gives evidence from inscriptions and other documents that there were Diaspora in all the areas mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1.[5] There is also evidence that during the first century there was much stability in the economies of the Diaspora-Jews in these areas (Applebaum 1976:702).

2.4 The performance of economics in the identified areas

2.4.1 Production

Alcock (2007:678-682) paints a clear picture. The mosaic of landownership was exceedingly complicated. There was a trend towards increasing stratification in the control of agricultural wealth and the external interventions worked in favour of expansive, often imperially privileged, landowners. The minor landowners, whose small-scale production continued to be important in the Roman Empire, were still operative. Tenancy, together with the periodic hiring of free labour, was a common means of organising production. In the early imperial period there was an increase in agricultural activity and intensity of production. In some areas this was linked to the market offered by a nearby conurbation, for others it might have been as a result of the stimulus of local natural resources (such as

5 Estimations range from a quarter of a million Jews out of a total population of 4 million (Reicke 1964:302–313), to one million Jews from a total population of eight million (Broughton 1938:815). A reason for the growth in numbers was that during the first century AD, proselytism experienced a boom (Stern 1974:117).

timber, ore, or marble), their exploitation and the need to feed specialist workers.

> There must have been successful surplus production of basic necessities to feed, clothe and otherwise supply and support those units (Alcock 2007:682).

2.4.2 Distribution

Alcock (2007:686-692) considers the distribution of goods in space, at the local, regional and long distance scale. "Local exchange" covers the ambit of a particular city or large village, or a close nexus of these entities. "Regional distribution" is the movement of goods across distances exceeding travelling times between neighbouring cities, yet remaining in the ambit of the eastern provinces. There is clear evidence of an increasingly vibrant network of regional interaction. "Long distance" trade refers to the distribution of raw materials or finished products either to Italy and the west, or their conveyance to (or through) the east from beyond the bounds of the empire (Alcock 2007:691).

Slave trade was part and parcel of this distribution. Alcock (2007:690) refers to slave trade as a multi-level activity, and that Thrace, western Asia Minor, Syria and – at times – Judaea were surplus producers of slaves. Various eastern cities, most famously Ephesus, served as large-scale collection and distribution centres. The main flow of bodies was towards Italy, but a degree of local and regional consumption must also be assumed.

2.4.3 Consumption

The 3rd axis, consumption, drives the dynamics of both production and distribution. Alcock (2007:692-694) gives a summary of this axis. There is a basic division between public and private, and also huge gulfs of difference between super-cities and villages, between the urban aristocracy and the rural poor. Local and regional efforts largely provided what civic populations needed to live.

There is great variety in civic access to and use of goods, as well as in the factors underlying such variation. Up and down the social scale the acquisition and utilisation of goods extended beyond the immediate local sphere. The denunciation in Revelation 18:11-13, revelling in the destruction of a great city and its material abundance, provides a list of goods that would have been typical.

2.5 Slaves and slave trade

The growing economy of the areas in which the addressees reside, would have fostered slave trade. The Greeks and Romans transformed slavery into "an institutionalized system of large-scale employment of slave labour in both the countryside and the cities" (Finley 1980:67). Thus "slave economy" is an appropriate designation for the Greco-Roman world in general (Bartchy 1996:66).

For understanding the economic contexts of the New Testament, the significance of the slaves within the households can hardly be overestimated (Bartchy 1996:69). Greco-Roman society had come to depend on persons in slavery as the basic labor force, as essential components of the imperial economy, and a normal part of the daily life of most families.[6]

Releasing slaves from legal bondage was a frequent and carefully regulated event under Jewish, Greek, and Roman laws, by which at one stroke the person in slavery ceased to be a property and became a legal person (Bartchy 1996:71). He was transformed from an object to a subject of rights, the most complete metamorphosis one can imagine (Finley 1980:97).

2.6 The addressees labelled as πάροικοι

The addressees of 1 Peter are visiting and resident foreigners, people who had formerly been pagans. Most of them had probably had an intermediate state as "God-fearers", having joined the Synagogue. Their πάροικοι status impacted negatively on their economic situation. It is possible that many of them shared the economic realities which faced οἰκέται. They may have been so poor that they were drawn to theft. However, there are indications that (some of) the households could afford more than the bare necessities, evidenced by the fact that women had access to luxuries like hair braiding, gold ornaments and fine clothing, as is evidenced in 1 Peter 3:3. All of this indicates that the ransom imagery would have communicated well with the addressees.

6 Bartchy (1996:68) is correct in arguing that neither the growth of the early Christian movement nor its impact on persons in slavery in the NT period can be understood apart from the study of the ubiquitous social arrangement now referred to as the "extended household". The central, dominating figure was the father, the *paterfamilias*, who in all NT cultures exercised total legal control (Latin: *potestas*) over both his children and the slaves in his household. According to Roman law, this *potestas* even included the power over life and death.

2.7 Mere foreigners becoming Christian foreigners

When these foreigners became Christians, it had positive and negative social consequences. On the positive side: they became part of a Christian group and were no longer isolated individuals or small groups. Those who had been God-fearers and could not become full Proselytes, no longer were second class members in the new Christian group. The new Christians, however, also had to cope with negative consequences as a result of their new alliance. The unjust suffering which they had to endure as foreigners, became even more severe, since now one more dimension has been added to their "otherness": the fact that they aligned themselves with an obscure foreign sect. This resulted in further and more intense ostracizing and discrimination, with the inevitable economic consequences.

2.8 The addressees' status before God as having been re-begotten by him

The author uses the letter to persuade the addressees of their status before God, of his loving care, and of Christ's vicarious suffering and subsequent glory and supreme power. He exhorts them to have a "good" lifestyle (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ... ἔχοντες καλήν, 2:12) and to persevere in doing good (ἐν ἀγαθοποιΐᾳ, 4:19), even amidst and in spite of their own suffering. In this way they must live up to their status as persons of whom it is said that God has re-begotten them (ὁ θεὸς ... ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς, 1:3). This means that, whatever their economic status, they could cope, since they knew that God has ransomed them, and that they had an inheritance kept in heaven.

2.9 Conclusion

This construction of the economic-historic context of the addressees of 1 Peter entails that the ransom imagery the author uses, would have communicated successfully.

3. FIRST PETER AS LETTER

It is necessary to share my view of 1 Peter as letter; since this impacts on the spatial and temporal issues involved in interpreting the ransom-imagery in 1 Peter.

3.1 The date and authorship of 1 Peter

Research has given no persuasive arguments that Peter the apostle could not have written the letter, having dispatched it from Rome.[7] Therefore I take the self-identification of the author as a matter of fact, as do a number of scholars.[8] This viewpoint implies that the letter is to be dated before 70 AD.[9]

3.2 The argument of 1 Peter

3.2.1 The macro argument of 1 Peter

I take as frame of reference for the identification and interpretation of the relevant portions in 1 Peter the argument of this letter as proposed by Janse van Rensburg (2011:2). According to this interpretation the basic statement in 1 Peter is that the Father has begotten anew the first readers (πατὴρ ... ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς, 1:3) (1:3-12). This statement about God who has re-begotten the addressees functions as the basis for four exhortative inferences:

- Set your hope fully on the grace, and therefore be holy (1:13-25)
- The obligation of a "new" child of God to grow individually as well as together with fellow-believers (2:1-10)
- Code of conduct for πάροικοι and παρεπίδημοι (2:11-4:19)
- Code of conduct within the church (5:1-11).

7 The origin of the letter is not disputed; scholars generally agree that it was sent from Rome, e.g. Van Unnik (1980b:81) and Achtemeier (1996:64).

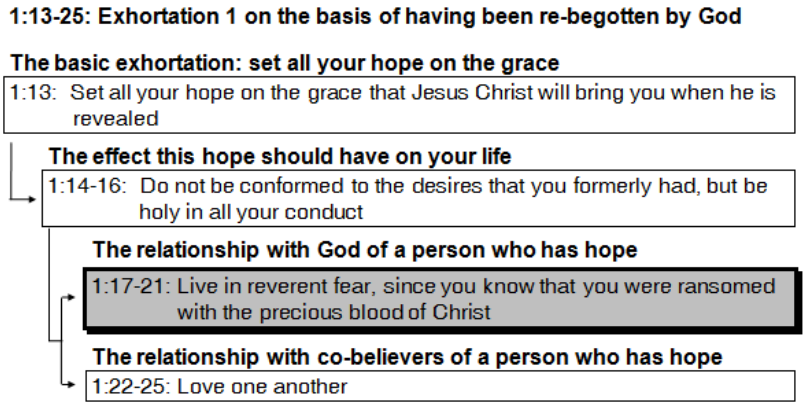
8 For example Selwyn (1952:27-33), Thurén (1989:25-28), Van Unnik (1980b:80), and Guthrie (1970:792-796).

9 Elliott (1981:87) dates the letter 73-92 AD; the dates proposed by three standard commentaries are: Selwyn (1952:62) 63 AD, Goppelt (1978:64-65) 65-80 AD, and Brox (1979:38-41) 70-100 AD; Balch (1981:138) dates it 65-90 AD, and Van Unnik (1980b:70): "before the year 70". Others date the letter late in the first century and view it to be pseudonymic (see e.g. Aune 1987:218, Beare 1953:48, Achtemeier 1996:49-50, and Feldmeier 1992:199).

3.2.2 The place and function of 1 Peter 1:18-19 in the argument

The pericope 1:13-25 can be divided into three sub-pericopes: 1:14-16, 1:17-21, and 1:22-25. The section 1:14-16 is an asyndetic[10] inference, a "Result" in a "Reason" ↔ "Result" relation with 1: 13 as "Reason". The sub-pericope 1:17-21 is marked by καί[b] (...ἀναστράφητε) as "Result" in a "Reason" ↔ "Result" relation with 1:14-16 as "Reason".[11] The asyndeton in 1:22 (...ἀγαπήσατε) (interpreted as "Result" in a "Reason" ↔ "Result" relation with 1:14-16 as "Reason") suggests 1:22-25 to be the second "Result" of the execution of the exhortations in 1:14-16.

The inter-relationship of the three sub-pericopes of 1:13-25, and therefore the place and function of 1:17-21, can be represented in the following way:



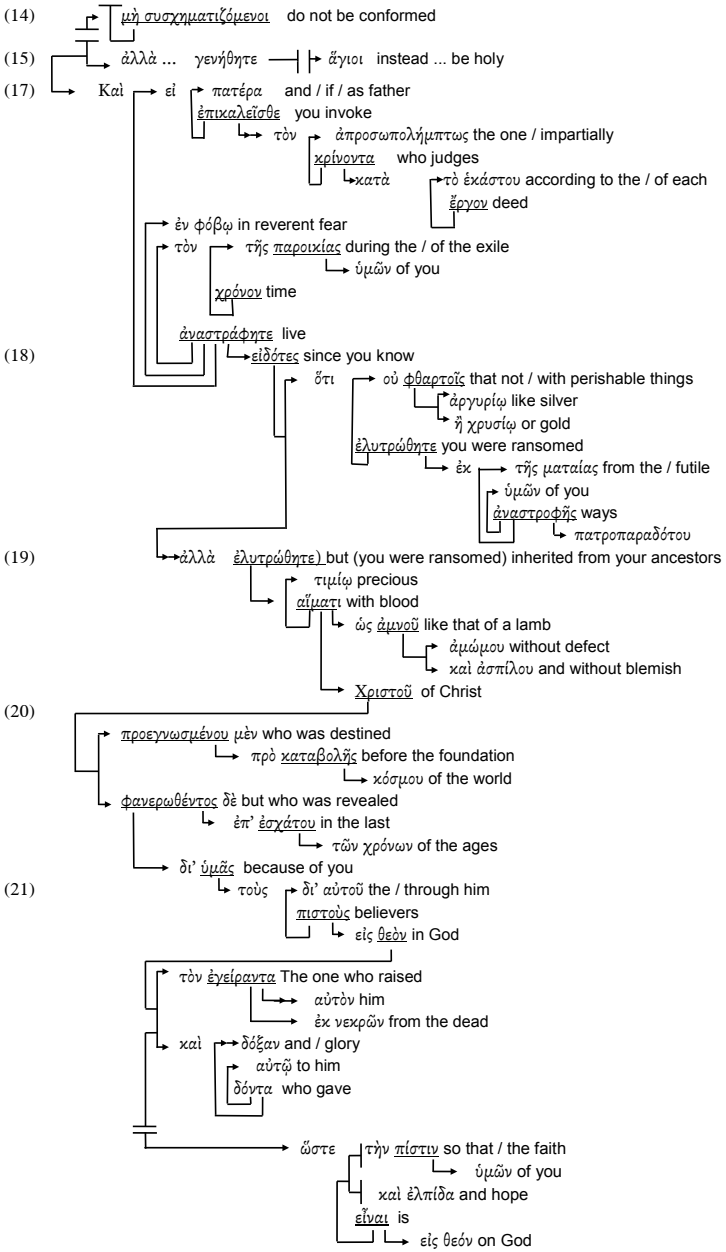
10 *Asyndeton* refers to the phenomenon that Greek sentences sometimes do not have a relation particle (cf Blass, Debrunner & Funk 1961:225). Cf also Poythress (1984:318) and Denniston (1966:xliii).

11 Louw & Nida (1996, I:789-790) defines καί [b] as a marker of a sequence of closely related events.

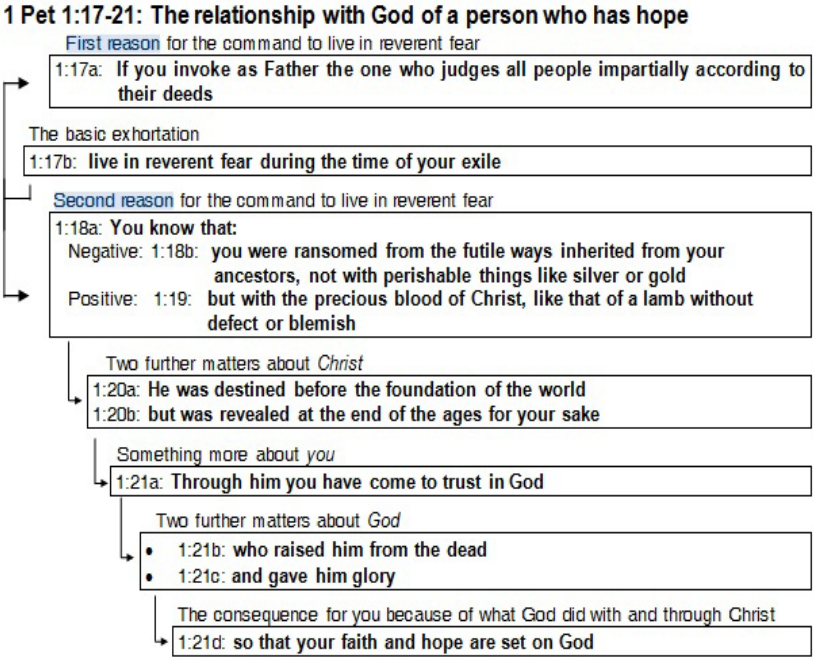
3.2.3 The local argument of 1:17-21

The main verb of the whole of 1:13-25 is Διὸ ... ἐλπίσατε (***Therefore ... set your hope!***) in 1:13. The subsection 1:17-21 has as main verb καὶ ... ἀναστράφητε (***and ... live***) in 1:17. As has been stated above (3.2.2) – the subsection 1:17-21 is marked by καί[b] (...ἀναστράφητε) as "Result" in a "Reason" ↔ "Result" relation with 1:14-16 as "Reason". Therefore καὶ ... ἀναστράφητε is linked to μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι (do not be conformed) and γενήθητε (***be [holy]***) in 1:14-15.

In the representation on the following page parts of 1:14-15 have been included to make the inter-relation evident:


(14) μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι do not be conformed
(15) ἀλλὰ ... γενήθητε ἅγιοι instead ... be holy
(17) Καὶ εἰ πατέρα and / if / as father
ἐπικαλεῖσθε you invoke
τὸν ἀπροσωπολήμπτως the one / impartially
κρίνοντα who judges
κατὰ τὸ ἑκάστου according to the / of each
ἔργον deed
ἐν φόβῳ in reverent fear
τὸν τῆς παροικίας during the / of the exile
ὑμῶν of you
χρόνον time
ἀναστράφητε live
(18) εἰδότες since you know
ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς that not / with perishable things
ἀργυρίῳ like silver
ἢ χρυσίῳ or gold
ἐλυτρώθητε you were ransomed
ἐκ τῆς ματαίας from the / futile
ὑμῶν of you
ἀναστροφῆς ways
πατροπαραδότου
(19) ἀλλὰ ἐλυτρώθητε) but (you were ransomed) inherited from your ancestors
τιμίῳ precious
αἵματι with blood
ὡς ἀμνοῦ like that of a lamb
ἀμώμου without defect
καὶ ἀσπίλου and without blemish
Χριστοῦ of Christ
(20) προεγνωσμένου μὲν who was destined
πρὸ καταβολῆς before the foundation
κόσμου of the world
φανερωθέντος δὲ but who was revealed
ἐπ' ἐσχάτου in the last
τῶν χρόνων of the ages
δι' ὑμᾶς because of you
(21) τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ the / through him
πιστοὺς believers
εἰς θεὸν in God
τὸν ἐγείραντα The one who raised
αὐτὸν him
ἐκ νεκρῶν from the dead
καὶ δόξαν and / glory
αὐτῷ to him
δόντα who gave
ὥστε τὴν πίστιν so that / the faith
ὑμῶν of you
καὶ ἐλπίδα and hope
εἶναι is
εἰς θεόν on God

This interpretation of the local argument of 1:17-21 can be represented on a more macro level as follows:



3.2.4 The argument of 1:18-19, as embedded within the ransom imagery

The intentional function of the statement εἰδότες ὅτι ... ἐλυτρώθητε ("since you know that you were ransomed") within the argument of 1 Peter is twofold: (1) to remind them that their salvation has already been effected, and (2) to persuade them that they have the obligation to "live in reverent fear during the time of your exile" (1 Pet 1:17). This is done by switching to a new metaphor in 1:18: in 1:17 it was the "father – child" metaphor, and in 1:18 the author introduces the ransom metaphor.

4. AN ANALYSIS OF THE RANSOM-IMAGERY AND ITS REFERENTS IN 1 PETER

4.1 Introduction

~~For~~ constructing the economic-historic context of the addressees of 1 Peter, Janse van Rensburg (2011:6) categorized the relevant portions in 1 Peter into four main sections: (1) the πάροικοι καὶ παρεπιδήμοι label that the author gives the addressees; (2) teachings and exhortations concerned with economic matters; (3) mention of the precious metals silver and gold; and (4) the metaphoric use of economic concepts and terminology. It is this fourth category that is relevant for this article. This category can be sub-categorized in the following way (Janse van Rensburg 2011:6):

1. Financial/judicial terminology
   1.1 Ransom
   1.2 Heir / inherit
   1.3 Debt
2. Slavery
3. Household

For the interpretation of the ransom imagery in 1 Peter the following metaphors are relevant: ransom (ἐλυτρώθητε, 1:18), slavery (ἐλεύθεροι / θεοῦ δοῦλοι, 2:16), and the household (τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:17; οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, 4:10).[12]

4.2 Ransom

The referent of the ransom metaphor in 1 Peter 1:18 has been interpreted as liturgical and with a primary reference to the liberation of Israel out of Egypt.[13] The construction of the economic historic context of the

12 The ransom imagery can also be approached from a soteriological stance. Janse van Rensburg (2005:432) identified three soteriological imageries: (1) The saved as family, with God as father; (2) The saved as a flock of sheep having been returned to Christ as (chief) shepherd; (3) The saved as having been healed by Christ's wound. This categorization entails that the ransom imagery forms part of the imagery "the saved as family, with God as father", in the sub-category "The saved as ransomed by God into his household, with the precious blood of Christ as 'currency'."

13 E.g. Davids (1990:71); Schreiner (2003:84); Tuckett (1996:520); and Caird (1980:156). Caird states that for the author the surface significance of the term is that it belongs to Exodus language. Although the concept of redemption in the ancient world applied to a variety of contexts (Marshall 1991:54), including

addressees makes it much more viable that the referent is Greco-Roman slave trade.[14] Although Peter's language resonates with the Greco-Roman custom of manumission, the idea of redemption by the blood of a lamb is clearly – as Jobes (2005:117) puts it –

> rooted in the OT, most frequently found in Leviticus, Psalms, Exodus, and Isaiah – the very books from which Peter so often quotes.

Jobes (2005:117) adds:

> The thought of manumission is not unique to Greco-Roman culture. It is also found in Ps. 34:22 (33:23 LXX), a psalm that Peter also subsequently alludes to (1 Pet. 2:3) and quotes (3:10-12). The psalmist writes, 'the Lord will redeem the lives of his slaves; none of those who hope in him will go astray' (Ps. 33:23 LXX).

Accordingly the different elements of the ransom imagery are the following:

4.3 The ransom payer

The ransom payer is God. This is not explicitly stated, but can undoubtedly be deducted for the immediate textual context, and by interpreting the passive as the *passivum divinum*.

---

the emancipation of slaves from their masters and the release of prisoners of war, 1 Peter's reference to Babylon (5:4) and his labelling of the readers as being in the *diaspora* (1:1) are named as motivation for the possibility that the author wants to call to mind how God set his people free from bondage in Egypt and brought them out to live in freedom in the Promised Land. These arguments, however, do not persuade.

14 Williams (2011:85) is in full agreement: "... this word-group was readily employed before, during, and after the time of the New Testament to denote release from some form of captivity by the payment of a ransom price". He adds that "it is difficult to see how else Peter's addressees would have understood his language in 1:18-19". Cf also Jobes (2005:116); Donelson (2010:46); Michaels (1988:64); Selwyn (1952:145); and Marshall (1991:85). It is interesting that Chrysostom (Bray 2000:79) in his sermon on this portion also interprets it as a slave ransom image.

4.4 The ransom payment

The price is explicitly named. God values the addressees so much that he paid the highest price: the "precious blood of Christ" (τιμίῳ αἵματι ... Χριστοῦ, 1:19).[15]

4.5 The ransomed

In the metaphor the ransomed are the addressees. This ransom image likens them to slaves who have been ransomed. They have been the slaves of a person, not specified in the metaphor, probably since it is not important for the argument of the author.

The profile of the slaves in the metaphor fits well with what Howe (2006:202) calls "debt slaves". She argues that many slaves in the first century were "debt slaves", who in order to pay off their own debts, agreed to a period of servitude. Temporary enslavement to one's creditor for the purpose of working off one's debt was a legitimate and even honourable aspect of the social system. Bartchy (1996:67) shows that Greek law recognized the validity of self-sale into slavery, often with a contract limiting the duration of the enslavement. Such sales were frequent in the eastern provinces in imperial times.

The metaphor pictures the addressees as slaves to the futile ways inherited from their ancestors (ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 1:18). Because the ransom has been paid, they have now become slaves of God (θεοῦ δοῦλοι, 2:16), and thus part of the household of God (τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:17). Being slaves of God gives them a new status:[16] they can live as free people (ἐλεύθεροι, 2:16), while honouring their obligation to their new master in his household – to live in reverent fear during the time of their exile (ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε, 1:18) and to be stewards of the manifold grace of God (οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, 4:10). Slavery under this new master is "freedom" – freedom from enslavement to the futile ways inherited from their ancestors (1:17), freedom from the

15 1 Peter 1:18 contains an implicit allusion to Isaiah 52:3 (so also Schutter 1989:38) (... you shall be redeemed without money). The connection is the concept ἐλυτρώθητε →← λυτρωθήσεσθε →← תִּגָּאֲלוּ, and the idea of being ransomed without money οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ →← οὐ μετὰ ἀργυρίου →← וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף תִּגָּאֲלוּ).

16 Slaves' individual honor, social status, and economic opportunities were entirely dependent on the status of their respective owners (Bradley 1987:15). So also Bartchy (1996:70).

overwhelming burden of debt too deep to pay, freedom for service to others in the name of the new master (Howe 2006:205).[17]

Different metaphorical moves occur within the ransom imagery, aptly described by Howe (2006:284).

- Christians are slaves but also free persons.
- God is the household master (*paterfamilias*).
- Some of the "slaves of God" are literally, in real life, slaves of some other actual masters, but probably the majority of the "slaves of God" are not literally slaves. The addressees are being asked to live by the metaphor "Christians are God's slaves", to use it to shape how they think about their relationship to God and to other people, allowing it to guide their everyday experience and actions, their thoughts and choices.
- At the same time the addressees are to understand their status and identity by another metaphor, "Christians are free persons – even if they actually are, in everyday life, slaves in someone's household".[18]

There are thus literal slaves and metaphorical slaves in 1 Peter, and the moral exhortation pertains to them all.

4.6 The previous owner of the slaves and his household

The previous owner is not identified in the metaphor. His household is also not explicitly mentioned, although the ethos of this household can be deducted from the fact that the addressees were ransomed "from the futile ways inherited from their ancestors" (ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 1:18). Since the addressees have been ransomed out of this household, they no longer have any obligation to their earlier owner or his household, and they are free to live within their new household.

17 Calvin (1976:272) in this regard coined the phrase: "In short, it is a free servitude, and a serving freedom".

18 Van Houwelingen (1997:96) aptly says this paradox shows "dat een onafhankelijke positie tegenover mensen alleen mogelijk is in afhankelijkheid van God."

5. CONCLUSION: INTERPRETATION OF THE RANSOM IMAGERY IN 1 PETER

The ransom imagery entails the following system of metaphors, although not in every case explicitly linked by the author:

- The addressees were the slaves of a person, not specified in the metaphor in 1 Peter. They have been ransomed by God (ἐλυτρώθητε, 1:18), and now they are free (ἐλεύθεροι, 2:16)!
- They were slaves to an empty way of life handed down to them from their forefathers (ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 1:18), but now they are slaves of God (θεοῦ δοῦλοι, 2:16), having been ransomed by God into his household (τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:17)! In this household they function as stewards of the manifold grace of God (οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ, 4:10).
- They were worthless and would not fetch a price. However, God values them so much that he paid the highest price: the "precious blood of Christ" (τιμίῳ αἵματι ... Χριστοῦ, 1:19).
- Knowledge about this fact serves as motivation for them to live in reverent fear (ἐν φόβῳ ... ἀναστράφητε, 1:17) in their new household, ready to fulfil the will of their new Owner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACHTEMEIER, P.J.
1996. *1 Peter. A commentary on First Peter.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

ALCOCK, S.E.
2007. The Eastern Mediterranean. In: I. Morris, R. Saller, & W. Scheidel (eds.), *The Cambridge economic history of the Greco-Roman world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 671-697.

APPLEBAUM, S.
1976. The organization of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora. In: S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish people in the first century: Historical geography, political history, social, cultural and religious life and institutions.* (Assen: Van Gorcum), pp. 464-503.

AUNE, D.E.
1987. *The New Testament and its literary environment.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

BALCH, D.L.
1981. *Let wives be submissive: the domestic code in 1 Peter.* Chicago: Scholars Press. Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 36.

BARTCHY, S.S.
1996. Slavery in the New Testament. The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Volume 6.

BEARIE, F.W.
1953. *The First Epistle of Peter,* 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.

BLASS, F., DEBRUNNER, A. & FUNK R.F.
1961. *A Greek grammar of the New Testament and other early Christian literature.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

BRADLEY, K.R.
1987. *Slaves and masters in the Roman Empire: A study in social control*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BRAY, G.
2000. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Downers Grove, Illionois: InterVarsity Press.

BREYTENBACH, J.C.
1998. Facets of Diaspora Judaism. In: A.B. du Toit (ed.), *Guide to the New Testament, Volume II: The New Testament milieu* (Pretoria: NGKerk Boekhandel), pp. 327-374.

BROUGHTON, T.R.S.
1938. *Roman Asia Minor.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.

BROX, N.
1979. *Der erste Petrusbrief.* Zürich: Benziger.

CAIRD, G.B.
1980. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

CALVIN, J.
1976. *Hebrews and I and II Peter*. (Translated by William B Johnston). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

DAVIDS, P.H.
1990. *The First Epistle of Peter*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

DENNISTON, J.D.
1966. *The Greek Particles.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

DONELSON, L.R.
2010. *I & II Peter and Jude. A Commentary*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.

ELLIOTT, J.H.
1981. *A Home for the Homeless. A sociological exegesis of 1 Peter, its situation and strategy*. Philadelphia: Fortress.

FELDMEIER, R.
1992. *Die Christen als Fremde. Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1.Petrusbrief.* Tübingen: JCB Mohr.

FINLEY, M.I.
1980. *Ancient slavery and modern ideology.* New York: The Viking Press.

GOPPELT, L.
1978 (8th ed.). **Der erste Petrusbrief.** Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

GUTHRIE, D.
1970. *New Testament Introduction.* London: Intervarsity Press.

HOWE, B.
2006. *Because you bear this name: Conceptual metaphor and the moral meaning of 1 Peter*. Leiden: Brill.

JANSE VAN RENSBURG, F.
2005. Metaphors in the soteriology in 1 Peter: Identifying and interpreting the salvific imageries. *Novum Testamentum Supplements* 121:409-436.

JANSE VAN RENSBURG, F.
2011. Constructing the economic–historic context of 1 Peter: Exploring a methodology. *HTS Theological Studies* 67(1), Art. #939, 11 pages. DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.939.

JOBES, K.H.
2005. *1 Peter*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.

LOUW, J.P., & NIDA, E.A.
1996. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains.* New York: United Bible Societies. Electronic edn. of the 2nd edn.

MARSHALL, I.H.
1991. *1 Peter*. Leicester: Intervarsity Press. (The EVP New Testament Commentary series).

MICHAELS, J.R.
1988. *1 Peter.* Waco: Word Books.

MITCHELL, S.
1993. *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MORRIS, I., SALLER, R. & SCHEIDEL, W. (EDS.).
2007. *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MOUTON, E.
2002. *Reading a New Testament Document ethically*. Leiden: Brill.

POYTHRESS, V.S.
1984. The use of the intersentence conjunctions 'de', 'oun', 'kai' and asyndeton in the Gospel of John. *Novum Testamentum* 26:312-340.

REICKE, B.
1964. *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude.* Garden City: Doubleday.

SCHREINER, T.R.
2003. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman.

SCHÜRER, E.
1973. *The history of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)*, 3 vols., translated and edited by Gesa Vermes, Fergus Millar, & Matthew Black. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

SCHUTTER, W.L.
1989. *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter.* Tübingen: JCB Mohr.

SELWYN, E.G.
1952. *The First Epistle of St. Peter*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

STERN, M.
1974. The Jewish Diaspora. In: S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish people in the first century: Historical geography, political history, social, cultural and religious life and institutions*, vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum), pp. 117-183.

THURÉN, L.
1989. "Imperative participles" and the rhetorical strategy of 1 Peter. PhD Thesis, University of Uppsala.

TUCKETT, C.M.
1996. Atonement in the New Testament. In: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol 1.

VAN DER WATT, J.G.
2000. *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*. Leiden: Brill.

VAN HOUWELINGEN, P.H.R.
1997. *1 Petrus: rondzendbrief uit Babylon.* Kampen: Kok.

VAN RENSBURG, F.J.
2000. Dekor of Konteks? Die verdiskontering van sosio-historiese gegewens in die interpretasie vir die prediking en pastoraat van 'n Nuwe Testamentteks, geïllustreer aan die hand van die 1 Petrus-brief. *Skrif en Kerk* 564-582.

VAN UNNIK, W.C.
1980a. Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti. In: C.K. Barrett (ed.), *Sparsa collecta: The collected essays of W.C. van Unnik* (part 2) (Leiden: Brill), pp. 194-214.

[1942] 1980b. The redemption in 1 Peter i 18-19 and the problem of the First Epistle of Peter. In: C.K. Barrett (ed.), *Sparsa collecta: The collected essays of W.C. van Unnik* (part 2) (Leiden: Brill), pp. 3-82.

Williams, M.
2011. *The doctrine of salvation in the First Letter of Peter.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keywords

1 Peter

Ransom

Ancient economy

Metaphor

Trefwoorde

1 Petrus

Loskoop

Antieke ekonomie

Metafoor