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LIKE A LION: MAPPING THE LEONINE METAPHOR IN 1 PETER 5:8

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Abstract: *This article examines the conceptual backgrounds of the lion metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8. Utilizing the framework for mapping leonine metaphors in the Old Testament by Troy W. Martin, it compares the Jewish background with the Greco-Roman background proposed by Boris A. Paschke, who argues that the* ad bestias *execution informs the metaphor. In contrast to the tendency to offer highly particularized interpretations of the metaphor by drawing from one background, the synthesized view offered here argues that the text draws simultaneously from both backgrounds and centers on the metaphorical transfer of ferociousness. This focus on ferociousness avoids overspecification of the metaphor, heightens the urgency of shepherding the flock in 1 Peter 5:1–5, and broadens the imperatives of 1 Peter 5:8–9 beyond the ultimate concern for apostasy to include the variegated threats of the devil against Christians.*

Key words: *metaphor, lion, roaring, ferocious,* ad bestias, *arena, devil, 1 Peter 5:8*

Rather than shunning suffering, "Christianity embraces the theme of suffering at the very heart of its belief system."[1] This theme permeates 1 Peter, where one of the author's primary purposes is to link his audience's suffering with that of Christ.[2] Scholars have noted that while the author has portrayed suffering as the result of human agency throughout 1 Peter 1:1–5:7,[3] the reader encounters an "unexpected" climax in 1 Peter 5:8 when the author traces the origin of this suffering to a singular entity, namely, "your adversary, the devil" (ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος).[4] After sol-

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[1] Lucien J. Richard, "Suffering," in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 1234.

[2] William J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6*, 2nd ed., AnBib 23 (Rome: Pontifico Istituto Biblico, 1989), 123.

[3] J. Ramsey Michaels notes the prevalence of human opponents throughout the letter, such as "the 'disobedient' of 2:7–8 and 4:17, the 'Gentiles' of 2:12, 'the foolish' in 2:15, the cruel masters of 2:18, the unbelieving husbands of 3:1, 'those who denounce your good conduct' in 3:16, the 'blasphemers' of 4:4b, [and] the indefinite 'they' in 3:14 and 4:14." J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 298.

[4] All translations are taken from the NASB unless otherwise noted. Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 173. Cf. Earl Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RNTS (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 217; Duane F. Watson and Terrance Callan, *First and Second Peter*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 120–21. The climax in 5:8 regarding the devil may be viewed in relation to 5:10–11, wherein the "themes orchestrated throughout the letter crescendo in a triumphant and sustained chord." Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, SP 15 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 151.

emnly warning his reader with dual imperatives to be on guard against this entity, the author embeds his description of this adversary in the language of metaphor, writing that he "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν).[5] Determining the meaning of this metaphor, however, naturally depends on locating the conceptual world from which the author draws his imagery, and it has traditionally been understood that the OT and Qumranic literature is the predominant, if not exclusive, background for the metaphor. More recently, however, scholars have argued that the leonine imagery of 1 Peter 5:8 draws instead from the Roman *ad bestias* executions,[6] a view that despite finding further substantiation and expansion to include the broader milieu of Greco-Roman leonine imagery,[7] has nevertheless been widely overlooked in recent treatments of the epistle.[8] The prevalent tendency of scholarship on 1 Peter 5:8 has thus been to privilege either the Jewish or Greco-Roman background over against the other, rather than seek an explanation for how both backgrounds may work cooperatively to inform the meaning of the metaphor.[9]

The present study seeks to assess the background and the meaning of the leonine metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 in four steps. First, utilizing Troy W. Martin's framework for mapping leonine metaphors in the OT, with Royal Lion and Ferocious Lion metaphors representing "two very different trajectories," the significance of the imagery in 1 Peter 5:8 is considered against the backdrop of the OT

[5] The imperatives are νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert" (5:8a).

[6] Boris A. Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution as a Possible Historical Background for 1 Peter 5.8," *JSNT* 28.4 (2006): 489–500.

[7] D. G. Horrell, Bradley Arnold, and Travis B. Williams, "Visuality, Vivid Description, and the Message of 1 Peter: The Significance of the Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8)," *JBL* 132.3 (2013): 697–716.

[8] Cf. Dominique Charles, "'Votre adversaire le Diable rôde comme un lion rugissant' (1 P 5,8)," *RB* 120.3 (2013): 405–22; Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, BTNT 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); Douglas Karel Harink, *1 and 2 Peter*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009); Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007); Green, *1 Peter*; Richard B. Vinson, Richard F. Wilson, and Watson E. Mills, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2010); Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010); D. A. Carson, "1 Peter," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Dennis R. Edwards, *1 Peter*, SGBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017); Daniel A. Keating, *First and Second Peter, Jude*, CCSS (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

[9] While scholarship has regularly posited "Jewish" and "Greco-Roman" or "Hellenistic" backgrounds as a dichotomy, with such conventions cautiously adopted in the present paper, scholars have nevertheless been right to warn against creating an artificial division that "places Judaism at odds with Hellenism, as if one were the cultural opposite of the other," noting that "the question 'Jewish or Hellenistic?' is far more complex." David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters, and Theology*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 33. Thus, while the present work adopts the broad categories, it also recognizes the Hellenistic influences on various "Jewish" sources including, *inter alia,* the LXX, which many have seen as the source for 1 Peter's OT quotations and allusions. Further, this interrelationship between the "Jewish" and "Hellenistic" backgrounds in Asia Minor supports the notion of a broader reference to the imagery in 1 Peter 5:8, as will be argued in this paper.

and Qumranic literature.[10] Second, the theory developed by Boris A. Paschke, and later expanded by D. G. Horrell, Bradley Arnold, and Travis B. Williams, that situates the 1 Peter 5:8 metaphor in the Roman *ad bestias* executions as well as the broad milieu of leonine imagery, is analyzed.[11] Third, an evaluation of objections to both the Jewish and Greco-Roman backgrounds is considered and a synthesis of both backgrounds centering on the metaphorical transfer of the quality of ferociousness is proposed in view of the mixed audience of the epistle.[12] Finally, this article explores how a recognition of the dual background to 1 Peter 5:8 may bear upon the interpretation of the text. The present study finds that, rather than drawing on precise terminological or intertextual connections leading to highly particularized interpretations, the author employs a variety of conventional and broad descriptions operative in both contexts to highlight the ferociousness of the devil and to warn not only against apostasy, but more comprehensively against all the variegated threats the devil poses to the body of believers.

I. JEWISH FEROCIOUS LION METAPHORS AS THE BACKGROUND OF 1 PETER 5:8

Regarding the literary character of 1 Peter, Martin notes, "Metaphors permeate 1 Peter from the very beginning, where the Christian recipients are described as 'elect sojourners of the Diaspora,' to the end, where the sender and his community are identified as the 'co-elect [Diaspora] of Babylon."[13] In George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's seminal study on metaphors, they have noted that "the primary function of a metaphor is to provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience."[14] Thus, 1 Peter 5:8 seeks to understand an experience with the devil through a prior familiarity the audience possesses regarding lions. Metaphor studies have employed the language of "source domain" and "target domain" when analyzing how metaphors relate these experiences to each other, wherein the former represents the conceptual pool from which the metaphor draws, and the latter represents the entity the author is seeking to elucidate via the

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[10] Troy W. Martin, "Roaring Lions among Diaspora Metaphors: First Peter 5:8 in Its Metaphorical Context," in *Bedrängnis und Identität: Studien zu Situation, Kommunikation und Theologie des 1. Petrusbriefes*, ed. David S. du Toit (Göttingen: de Gruyter, 2013), 171.

[11] As will be seen, Horrell, Arnold, and Williams buttress Paschke's argument by rooting the author's technique in ἔκφρασις, which "was understood as a way of exploiting this mental visual library through evoking images connected to a web of cultural associations," in which the *ad bestias* scenario is argued to be a pervasive cultural association for the audience. Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 697.

[12] As Abson Prédestin Joseph observes, "There is general agreement that the audience was mixed but opinions vary vis-à-vis which ethnic group was in the majority." Abson Prédestin Joseph, *A Narratological Reading of 1 Peter*, LNTS 440 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 26. Cf. note 64 below.

[13] Troy W. Martin, "Christians as Babies: Metaphorical Reality in 1 Peter," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, RBS 77 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 99. For a suggestion of how 1 Peter is structured in metaphor clusters, see especially Troy W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

[14] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 154.

metaphor.[15] Thus, in the statement "Man is a wolf," "man" represents the target domain and "wolf" the source domain wherein "the reader has at his or her disposal a body of culturally conditioned common knowledge (which may or may not be true) about wolves, and it is this body of knowledge … that the reader mines in order to comprehend the statement."[16] In regard to 1 Peter 5:8, therefore, Martin notes that the source domain is a roaring lion and the target domain is the devil, and thus ascertaining the background of the lion imagery becomes crucial, since readers will draw from this in order to understand the author's message.[17] Martin notes, however, that mapping the leonine metaphor is complicated by the diversity of these metaphors in antiquity and by the fact that two fundamental characteristics, namely, nobility and ferociousness "provide two very different trajectories for lion metaphors."[18] Though the OT has a long tradition of both "Royal Lion" and "Ferocious Lion" metaphors, the use of the devil as the target domain of the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 precludes seeing the royal trajectory as operative in this instance.[19]

Much more applicable to the description of the devil is the Ferocious Lion metaphor that in the OT is applied to Yahweh, his people, and the enemies of his people and evokes "an image of extreme danger, menace, or enmity."[20] It may apply to Yahweh destroying his enemies (Isa 31:4, Jer 49:19–20) and dealing with his own people (Job 10:16; 16:12; Isa 38:13; Lam 3:10–11; Hos 5:14; 13:7–8; Amos 5:19), and it is also employed in describing Yahweh's people themselves (Gen 49:9; Deut 33:20; Num 23:24; 24:8–9; 1 Chr 12:9 [ET 12:8]; Mic 5:7 [ET 5:8]).[21] In con-

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[15] Humberto Casanova, *Imagining God: Myth and Metaphor* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 4.

[16] Peggy Day, "Metaphor and Social Reality: Isaiah 23:17–18, Ezekiel 16:35–37 and Hosea 2:4–5," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. H. B. Huffmon, John Kaltner, and Louis Stulman (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 64–65.

[17] Martin, "Roaring Lions," 171.

[18] Martin, "Roaring Lions," 171. Though not citing Martin, Craig R. Koester advocates essentially the same position, that "the lion imagery has two main meanings," namely, "power" and "kingship." Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 38A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 375. Cf. Carson, "1 Peter," 1044.

[19] Martin, "Roaring Lions," 174. On the Royal Lion metaphor in the OT, Martin examines, in order of appearance, Prov 30:30–31; 1 Kgs 7:29, 36; Ezek 41:18–19; 1:5, 10; Exod 25:17–22; 1 Kgs 6:23–28; 10:19–20; 1 Sam 17:34–36; Gen 39:9–10; Ezek 19:1–9; 2 Esdr 11:36–46; 12:31–35; 1 Macc 3:4; 2 Sam 1:23, and he also notes the appearance of Jesus as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" in Revelation 5:5. Indeed, Koester calls Jesus "the royal Lion of Judah." Koester, *Revelation,* 616. For an extensive examination of lion imagery in the OT and ANE, see especially Brent A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, OBO 212 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

[20] Martin, "Roaring Lions," 172. The target domain is also described by ἀντίδικος, which means "accuser/plaintiff" or more broadly "enemy/opponent," and διάβολος, which means "one who engages in slander" and often in the NT with the specific sense of "the principal transcendent evil being," the devil/slanderer. BDAG, 88, 226. For discussion, see John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 854–56. Because ἀντίδικος elsewhere in the NT refers to "antagonist in a lawsuit" (e.g., Matt 5:25), Michaels suggests the term might have been chosen because the audience was "facing formal charges in courts of law," but he concludes that since the setting is not judicial, a more general sense of "enemy" is intended. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 298. Cf. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 190.

[21] References in this section are drawn from Martin, "Roaring Lions," 172–74.

trast, this metaphor also describes entities that threaten Yahweh's people, such as the enemies of the psalmist (Ps 7:3 [ET 7:2]; 10:9; 22:14 [ET 22:13; LXX 21:14], 22 [ET Ps 22:21; LXX 21:22]; 57:5 [ET 57:3; LXX 56:5]; 58:7 [ET Ps 58:6; LXX 57:7]), and the empires of Assyria and Babylon (Isa 5:13, 26, 29; Jer 2:15; 4:7; 5:6, 51:38; Amos 3:12, Nah 2:10–12).[22] The psalmist beseeches Yahweh, "Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me, or he will tear my soul like a lion, dragging me away, while there is none to deliver" (7:2).[23] Similarly, the DSS often employ the metaphor to describe those who oppress Yahweh's people (1QHa 13:9; 13–14; 18–19; 4QpNah 1:5–7; 4QpHos 1–2), and 1QHa 13:6 captures the ferociousness associated with "lions, appointed for the sons of guilt, lions which grind the bones of strong men, and the bl[ood] of heroes."[24]

Particularly notable, however, is Psalm 22:13, where the psalmist laments concerning his enemies who "open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion" (LXX: ὡς λέων … ὠρυόμενος) that arguably resembles most closely the language in 1 Peter 5:8 of the devil "as a roaring lion" (ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος). Consequently, this psalm has frequently been seen as "the apparent source of Peter's imagery,"[25] with some such as Peter H. Davids more confidently asserting that "the image is *surely* drawn from Ps 22:13," though not all have been persuaded of this connection.[26] Charles Bigg has suggested that 1 Peter 5:8 is a composite refer-

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[22] Martin, "Roaring Lions," 172–74. On Israel's enemies as lions, Elliott draws attention to the Targums on Isa 35:9; Jer 4:7; 5:6; Ezek 19:6, and he also notes Jos. Asen. 12:9–11; 1 En. 89:65–66; 2 Tim 4:17; Heb 11:33. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 857n745.

[23] On the identity of "the enemies" in Psalms, Kraus notes that while they "are beyond all doubt people," the image of the enemy is "regularly transcendentalized" to identify "'the primal image' of all that is evil … all that separates from Yahweh." Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Continental Commentary*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 98–99. A similar transcendentalizing of "the enemy" is present in 1 Peter, moving from human opponents to the archetype of evil, the devil. Yet, instead of being helpless as in Psalm 7:2, the reader is instructed, "Resist him, firm in your faith" (1 Pet 5:8a). Cf. Jas 4:7; Eph 6:11–12.

[24] J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1969), 210; Carson, "1 Peter," 1044; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 360n11. Translation taken from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Translations)*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[25] Michaels, *1 Peter*, 298. Cf., e.g., Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 210; Watson and Callan, *First and Second Peter*, 121; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 168. On the descriptor ζητῶν καταπιεῖν, Michaels has suggested that "if Peter indeed has the language of [Ps 22:13] in mind, then the participial phrase ζητῶν καταπιεῖν, 'ready to swallow' (lit. 'seeking to swallow'), interprets the ἁρπάζων, 'ravening,' of Ps 21:14 [22:13]." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 299.

[26] Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 190, emphasis mine. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 857; Vinson, Wilson, and Mills, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 241; David A. deSilva, "1 Peter," in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John's Gospel, Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2005), 312. Against this, however, see Benjamin Sargent, who considers a number of factors that "[cast] doubt on the possibility of an allusion here" and suggests that instead of citing Psalm 22:13, the author may simply be using "scriptural language to describe the devil." Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 142–43. Notably, even among scholars who stress the Jewish background of the text, there is disagreement regarding whether the language draws from Psalm 22:13, Job 1:7, Daniel 7:4, Ezekiel 22:25, or other OT texts. Likewise, though 1 Peter does draw from Psalms, as well as Isaiah and other OT sources, the posited allusion to Psalm 22:13 in 1 Peter 5:8 is categorically

ence, drawing partly from the prowling lion in Psalm 22:13 and the prowling slanderer of Job (e.g., chap. 1–2; cf. διάβολος in 1:6, 7, 9, 12).[27] If so, the roaming of ὁ διάβολος in 1 Peter 5:8 (περιπατέω) would mirror the roaming of ὁ διάβολος in Job 1:7 (περιέρχομαι; cf. διαπορεύομαι in 2:2) and in both texts God's sovereignty would be upheld even when he permits trials from the devil for the testing his servants.[28] Alternatively, Craig S. Keener identifies Ezekiel 22:25, 28 as "the passage that most likely provides some of the wording here" wherein the false prophets "were, as here, *like a roaring lion* devouring lives."[29]

Though disagreement about the Jewish and Gentile nature of the audience complicates the question of the source domain the author employs for any given metaphor, it nevertheless remains the fact that "1 Peter is permeated with OT themes and allusions," leading the majority of scholars to locate the source of leonine imagery in the Ferocious Lion metaphors of the OT.[30] Should this background be seen as operative, what qualities does the author intend to transfer via the employment of the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8? Though most agree that by drawing from the Ferocious Lion metaphor the quality of ferociousness is thus applied to the devil, others are more ambitious in their identification of the metaphorical freight carried by this background. John H. Elliott, for example, posits the application of the leonine metaphor to human enemies in Psalm 22:13 "makes it likely that the Petrine author *in similar fashion* associated the threatening lion with human agents under the Devil's power."[31] Likewise, for Earl Richard, what is transferred in the metaphor is not only the quality of ferociousness, or, like Elliott, a description of the oppressor, but a highly particularized description of the *victims* of the oppressor. Thus, he writes regarding Psalm 22:13 that the "choice of this imagery can be explained as the author's attempt, *under the influence of the psalm cited,* to characterize

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different from other clear citations. See for example the taxonomy of OT citations and allusions in Elliott, *1 Peter*, 13. In descending order, he notes clear citations with an introductory formula (e.g., γάρ and the directly quoted material in the use of Psalm 34:13–17 in 1 Peter 3:10–12), as well as clear citations with a preceding term (e.g., ὅτι; cf. Proverbs 3:34 in 1 Peter 5:5), and clear citations without a preceding term (e.g., Psalm 118:22 in 1 Peter 2:7). Even less certain are posited allusions that reproduce "sufficient quantity of text to indicate a reference to a specific OT text," such as Psalm 55:22 in 1 Peter 5:7. In a category even less certain, which includes only "possible allusions" that have "insufficient quantity to indicate with certainty one of several possible OT sources," Elliott lists the possible allusion of Psalm 22:13 in 1 Peter 5:8. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 14. The aforementioned factors resist conclusions that rest entirely on the uncertain foundation that Psalm 22:13 is the proper reference point for 1 Peter 5:8.

[27] Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 192. Thus, Bigg writes, "Ὠρυόμενος is probably taken from Ps. 21(22):14 … [and] περιπατεῖ, probably from Job 1:7" (192).

[28] Green, *1 Peter*, 175. Bigg notes that as in Job, "so here [1 Peter 5:8] the Devil is the author of persecution." Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 192. For others who see a connection with Job, see, Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 361n12; Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 209; Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 190; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 2:239; Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 385.

[29] Keener, *1 Peter*, 388, emphasis his. Cf. Senior and Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 147.

[30] Grant R. Osborne, "Hermeneutics," *DLNT* 480. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 12; cf. pp. 12–41 for an overview of "Sources and Affinities" in 1 Peter.

[31] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 857, emphasis mine. "This likelihood is further supported," he writes, "by other associations of *antidikos* and *Devil* with the enemies of God's people (cf. 1 Kgdms 2:10; Isa 41:11; Sir 36:6; Ign. *Rom.* 5:3; *Mart. Pol.* 2:4) and by other NT instances of lion imagery as well" (857, emphasis his).

the addressees again as *innocent sufferers*, in the manner of the OT Psalmist or Jesus during his passion, at the hands of the unrighteous."[32] What is often advocated by those who stress the Jewish background of 1 Peter 5:8, therefore, is that this background is not only the exclusive background to the text, but that it also informs, if not determines, a highly particularized meaning of the metaphor.

II. ROMAN *AD BESTIAS* EXECUTIONS AS THE BACKGROUND TO 1 PETER 5:8

Acknowledging that most commentators understand the lion metaphor, especially as informed by a Jewish background, to represent either "the Christian believer's human enemies" or "ungodly world systems under the Devil's power," Paschke has argued instead for "a more literal explanation," namely, that the Roman *ad bestias* execution should be seen as a possible background to 1 Peter 5:8 and that this would help to answer the question of how Christians may be considered "swallowed" by the devil.[33] Though Paschke traces this view to as early as 1911, he finds that earlier treatments failed to substantiate this interpretation with evidence from ancient sources.[34] Paschke thus undertakes this task by considering (1) the audience and provenance of the composition of 1 Peter, (2) whether *ad bestias* executions actually occurred when 1 Peter was composed, and (3) whether during the time of composition Christians had a reason to fear *ad bestias* execution.[35] If the latter two questions are answered affirmatively, Paschke considers it "possible" if

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[32] Richard, *1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 220, emphasis mine. Regarding the relation between Psalm 22 and the Passion, it may be noted that "as this psalm was used often in the Passion narratives (Matt 27:35, 39, 43, 46; Luke 23:34; John 19:28; 20:25), the image would be particularly apt for the messianic woes." Grant R. Osborne and M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, CBC 18 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 262. Cf. Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 237.

[33] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 489.

[34] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 489. Richard Perdelwitz is cited as "[knowing] of exegetes who held to this view" as early as 1911, and Paschke gives Roger M. Raymer in 1983 as his earliest example of a named scholar who advocated this position (490). However, R. C. H. Lenski in 1966 likely provides a better reference point than the Raymer citation provided by Paschke. Regarding the word "devour," Lenski writes, "The suggestion is that of drinking the victim's blood. Did Peter think of martyrs in the arena who were driven out from the dungeons to face actual lions? He must have thought at least of bloody death." R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966), 226. Even earlier than Lenski is C. A. Beckwith in 1916 who notes the literal interpretation of "escaped the mouth of the lion" in 2 Timothy 4:17 in close proximity to 1 Peter 5:8, though Beckwith is less direct than Lenski. C. A. Beckwith, "Lion," in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1916), 703. For recent scholars who consider the Greco-Roman arena background, yet without reference to Paschke's work, see Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies*, 2:236; Catherine Gunsalus González, *1 and 2 Peter and Jude*, Belief (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 149. Cf. John W. Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Lion, 1999), 444.

[35] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 489. For the purposes of the present article it is not necessary to maintain, as Paschke does, that Christians specifically were being condemned *ad bestias* during the composition of the epistle. Rather, the mere existence of *ad bestias* executions, regardless of the victim, and the depiction of these events in the literary and material culture, would have generated vivid associations between lions and ferociousness for any inhabitant of first-century Asia Minor.

not "probable" that the Roman *ad bestias* imagery was in the mind of the author when generating the leonine metaphor of 1 Peter 5:8.[36]

Though the discussion of whether *ad bestias* occurred during the time of 1 Peter involves the intractable problem of dating the composition of the epistle, Paschke nevertheless argues that an *ad bestias* background is possible even if one accepts the minority position that the letter was composed by Peter prior to 67/68 CE.[37] Further, this possibility may be upgraded to probable if the majority view is accepted that 1 Peter was pseudonymously composed in the final years of the first century CE.[38] In establishing that this practice occurred during Peter's lifetime, Paschke notes that "it is especially important to notice the evidence for *ad bestias* executions under the emperors Caligula [37–41 CE] (Suetonius, *Cal.* 27.3; Dio 59.10.3), Claudius [41–54 CE] (Gellius 5.14.7–11; Dio 60.13.4), and Nero [54–68 CE] (Suetonius, *Nero* 29.1; Seneca, *Clem.* 1.25.1)."[39] Similarly, both literary and non-literary sources testify to the presence of *ad bestias* executions after the death of Peter during the Flavian emperors (69–96 CE).[40]

In addition to establishing the existence of the practice during the lifetime of Peter, Paschke also provides evidence for the claim that Christians stood in danger of being condemned to the lions and that this potentiality turned into actuality.[41] Based on the weight of the evidence he suggests that the *ad bestias* execution is a "possible," or, given a post-64 CE date, "perhaps probable historical background."[42] Thus the imagery of "swallowing," "prowling," and "roaring" in 1 Peter 5:8 would draw from the imagery of lions executing Christians in the arena. When evaluating how this Greco-Roman background informs the metaphor of 1 Peter 5:8, however, Paschke, like Elliott and Richard, offers a highly particularized meaning: since "the Devil is compared to such a lion, he then would be seen as responsible for what was going on in the arena at the *ad bestias* executions of Christians."[43]

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[36] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 490–91.

[37] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 491. For a recent survey on the date of composition, see Keener, *1 Peter*, 29–30.

[38] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 491. For an overview on authorship, see Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 5–19, with a catalog of scholars holding either position (19).

[39] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 492–93. Dates the emperors reigned are added in brackets.

[40] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 493–94. See also Josephus's testimony regarding Herod the Great (32–4 BC) throwing condemned criminals to death via lions in the amphitheater: "There was also a supply of wild beasts, a great many lions.… When the practice began of involving them in combat with one another or setting condemned men to fight against them, foreigners were astonished at the expense and at the same time entertained by the dangerous spectacle" (*Ant.* 15.273–74 [Thackeray, LCL]). As Victor Saxer notes, *ad bestias* executions were "a favorite entertainment of the ancients." Victor Saxer, "Damnatio Ad Bestias," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, 3 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 1:665.

[41] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 495.

[42] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 498. Evidence that Paschke finds for "a clear 'Yes!'" to questions (2) and (3) above in the event of a post-64 CE date includes Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.1; 1 Clem 1:1; 6:2; Ignatius, *Eph.* 1.2; *Tral.* 10; *Rom.* 4–5; *Smyrn.* 4.2.

[43] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 498.

Though Paschke helpfully draws attention to this Greco-Roman background, what is lacking in his analysis is (1) any meaningful discussion of the relevant Jewish literature; (2) why the Greco-Roman background should be the privileged, and apparently exclusive, background to the text; and (3) why the arena background requires his particular interpretation of the metaphor, rather than broadly picturing the ferociousness of lions in the arena that emphasizes the ferociousness with which the devil operates in his variegated activities.

Further substantiation for Paschke's position has been found in a 2013 article co-authored by David G. Horrell, Bradley Arnold, and Travis B. Williams, who argue that 1 Peter 5:8 should be seen as an instance of the rhetorical technique of ἔκφρασις that allows the speaker to "achieve a vivid description that evokes a visual image in the listeners' minds, which can stir their emotions and lead them to respond in a particular way."[44] They find plausible Paschke's argument that one of the primary visual images evoked would have been that of the *ad bestias* executions and they have sought to offer further substantiation for his claims. In particular, whereas Paschke provided temporal justification to show the presence of *ad bestias* executions in the Roman Empire in the first century AD, they found further geographical justification was needed to show why first-century Christians in Anatolia would have had reason to connect the 1 Peter 5:8 metaphor to this scenario and to see this scenario as potentially a threat to their own lives.[45] The answer to this question, for which they provide ample evidence, "lies in the pervasiveness of lion imagery across a variety of media in the ancient world."[46] Assessing evidence from sculptures, public buildings, mosaics, signet rings, necklaces, medallions, stamp seals, balance weights, mirrors, vases, lamps, figurines, children's toys, and other ancient media, they conclude that "it would have been virtually impossible for an inhabitant of the Greco-Roman world to avoid exposure to the leonine imagery that pervaded the ancient material culture."[47] Paul Finney also agrees that that "lion iconography was ubiquitous" in the ancient world in a large variety of geographical and cultural contexts, including Anatolia.[48]

In addition to demonstrating the ubiquity of leonine imagery in general preserved in material sources, Horrell, Arnold, and Williams also point to numerous descriptions in literary sources that connect these images with the realities of the arena (e.g., Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 5.14; Martial, *Ep.* 2.75, 8.55; Suetonius, *Nero* 53).[49] They find that it was with these arena scenarios that lions were most commonly associated, a conclusion that is strengthened by the fact that during the Roman Empire, "Romans imported lions primarily for games in the arena," and only

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[44] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 703. Cf. Theon, *Prog.* 118.6.

[45] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 705. Regarding the geographical destination of the letter as Anatolia, see Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 3; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 84; Green, *1 Peter*, 191.

[46] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 705.

[47] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 705; on the material evidence, see the extensive footnotes spanning pages 705–8.

[48] Paul Corby Finney, "Lion," in *Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*, ed. Paul Corby Finney, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 2:65.

[49] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 708.

secondarily as "pets and display animals."[50] Paschke references Seneca, *Clem.* 1.25.1, to show that "the lion even was the *ad bestias* animal par excellence."[51]

Further addressing the geographical question, Horrell, Arnold, and Williams also survey the epigraphical and archaeological evidence from Ancyra and Pessinus to show the popularity of gladiatorial contests and wild animal hunts in Asia Minor in the first century AD and thus reasonably posit that the vast majority of readers would have been familiar with these scenarios and associated images.[52] Given all these factors, they ultimately conclude that the leonine imagery of 1 Peter 5:8 most likely would have evoked the lions associated with Roman *ad bestias* executions in the arena.[53] However, they emphasize that rather than forcing "an interpretive choice between either the *ad bestias* scenario or a metaphorical reference to the devil," it is better to see the author as employing the *ad bestias* imagery "as a vivid way to depict the 'spiritual' threat represented by the devil and the risk of losing faith and salvation."[54] Similar to Paschke, however, they downplay the Jewish context, concluding that "even though leonine imagery does appear in the Hebrew Bible and other Second Temple literature," it is the visual media in general, and the *ad bestias* executions in particular, that represents the most likely imagery to be evoked in the minds of the readers.[55]

III. AN EVALUATION OF PROPOSED JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUNDS TO 1 PETER 5:8

What may be noticed about the two broad groups attempting to explain the leonine metaphor is that their success in arguing that their proposed context constitutes a legitimate background for 1 Peter 5:8 has not been matched by equal success in arguing that the alternate context constitutes an illegitimate background to the text. In other words, the abundance of positive evidence and absence of negative evidence suggests that a view that allows both backgrounds to mutually influence the metaphor should be preferred. Regarding the Greco-Roman background, though a formidable body of positive evidence, grounded in both literary and material culture, has been presented, this evidence has largely been overlooked rather than refuted. Since the publication of Paschke's work in 2006, a number of treatments either fail to mention the view, or if the view is given as an option it appears without reference to the substantiation provided.[56] Likewise, the handful of at-

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[50] Finney, "Lion," 2:65; Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 708.

[51] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 494.

[52] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 711–12.

[53] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 712. They also argue that this scenario would have been a legitimate threat to some Christians, which though possible, is not an essential component to the thesis of the present article. Cf. note 35.

[54] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 716.

[55] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 709.

[56] On this point, see notes 8 and 34 above. Notable is the absence in the 2013 publication by Charles ("Votre adversaire") specifically on the leonine metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8. Paschke's work and the potential Greco-Roman background are also not mentioned in Martin's work seeking to place "1 Pet 5:8 in its metaphorical context." In part, this is because Martin has on other grounds identified "the Diaspo-

tempts that do mention the view provide no meaningful refutation for why the background does not apply. Christopher Byrley, for example, remarks that the arguments of Paschke and of Horrell, Arnold, and Williams are "possible, but ultimately unnecessary," yet this scarcely functions as a counterargument to the literary and material evidence adduced, and it wrongly implies that backgrounds are determined by interpretive "necessity" rather than historical actuality.[57] Also unpersuasive is Byrley's argument that the lion imagery "naturally fits as a reference to human opponents" since the leonine language can also be said to "naturally" fit as a reference to actual lions.[58]

B. J. Oropeza also posits shortcomings in Paschke's view, namely that the cited data primarily points to Rome rather than Asia Minor as the location and wild dogs rather than lions as the animals (e.g., Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44).[59] However, the geographic justification, the evidence for the ubiquity of leonine imagery, and the prominent role of the lion in the *ad bestias* executions adduced by Horrell, Arnold, and Williams subsequent to Oropeza's work would appear to address his concerns, who otherwise sees the view as "possible."[60] More recently, Keener has raised the possible Greco-Roman background, but he largely downplays it by writing, "Some envision here a backdrop of lions in the arena, to whom Christians could be fed, though the biblical background … is likelier dominant here."[61]

While it has not been adequately argued why the milieu of Greco-Roman leonine imagery should not serve as an operative background to the 1 Peter 5:8 metaphor, neither can it be said that the Jewish background has been effectively argued against. Notable in Paschke's article is the absence of any real engagement with the Jewish literature widely understood as informing the metaphor. Instead, an underlying assumption appears to be that establishing *a* Greco-Roman background estab-

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ra as the controlling metaphor of the letter" and thus has focused on the imagery of roaring lions in Diaspora metaphors. Even so, given the hellenization of Diaspora Judaism, a greater consideration of this Greco-Roman imagery could have been given as part of the "Diaspora images" possibly influencing this passage. Martin, "Roaring Lions," 171, 178. A rare voice of support for the Greco-Roman background comes from Jason A. Whitlark who cites Paschke positively. Jason A. Whitlark, *Resisting Empire: Rethinking the Purpose of the Letter to "the Hebrews,"* LNTS 484 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 127. Cf. Annang Asumang, "'Resist Him' (1 Pet 5:9): Holiness and Non-Retaliatory Responses to Unjust Suffering as 'Holy War' in 1 Peter," *Conspectus* 11 (2011): 26.

[57] Christopher Byrley, "Persecution and the 'Adversary' of 1 Peter 5:8," *SBJT* 31.3 (2017): 93.

[58] Byrley, "Persecution," 94. While Byrley is right to point out "Peter's frequent use of the OT throughout the epistle" and the various Jewish texts that shed light on the leonine metaphor, again it may be noted that this does not argue against a possible Greco-Roman background (93–94).

[59] B. J. Oropeza, *Churches under Siege of Persecution and Assimilation: The General Epistles and Revelation*, Apostasy in the New Testament Communities 3 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 127–28.

[60] Oropeza, *Churches under Siege*, 128. The three lines of evidence Oropeza advances for the traditional view is that (1) περιπατέω suggests an open pasture rather than a closed arena, (2) καταπίνω suggests more than physical death, and (3) the wilderness imagery in 1 Peter matches more closely a metaphorical lion hunting down its prey (126–28).

[61] Keener, *1 Peter*, 385. Keener cites Robert H. Mounce and Paschke for this view; he does not refer to the work of Horrell, Arnold, and Williams. Keener does, however, provide an abundance of Jewish and Greco-Roman references to lions, sheep, predators, etc., but he identifies Ezekiel 22:25, 28 as the most likely source for the language of 1 Peter 5:8 (388).

lishes *the* background to the metaphor.[62] This tendency is similarly present in the work of Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, who provide no significant assessment or objection to the Jewish background. They differ from Paschke in positing that the meaning of the metaphor need not be limited to the threat of execution in the arena, but that the concrete scenario helps to portray the spiritual threat posed by the devil.[63] This assessment approaches the view adopted in this article, except that it nevertheless still largely denies a space for the Jewish imagery to be operative in informing the meaning of the metaphor.

IV. A SYNTHESIZED READING OF 1 PETER 5:8 IN VIEW OF ITS DUAL BACKGROUND

The present study proposes that an understanding of the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 that draws simultaneously from Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts, rather than forcing a choice between the two, is to be preferred. This is supported first, by the abundance of evidence arguing for the existence of each context and the paucity of evidence arguing against the existence of either of the contexts. Second, if as most scholars have recognized, the author wrote to a mixed audience of both Jews and Gentiles, then it is reasonable to posit that the author would have chosen imagery intelligible in both contexts.[64] Elliott notes that whereas the OT unquestionably features heavily in 1 Peter, the author nevertheless employs "various forms of diverse traditions" whose "liberal use and combination in the letter suggests that our author was attempting to appeal to an audience of diverse and mixed backgrounds, Israelite and Hellenistic, in citing tradition with which they were familiar and to which they could resonate."[65]

Third, various texts in 1 Peter contain metaphors that draw from and resonate with both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. For example, Paul J. Achtemeier has observed how the metaphor of the gold refined by fire in 1:7 draws on already common imagery operative in both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts.[66] Accordingly, a Jewish audience might draw on imagery in texts such as Ps 66:10; Prov 17:3; 27:21; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:3; Wis 3:4–6; Sir 2:5; Jdt 8:25–27, and Herm. Vis. 4.3, 4, whereas for the Greco-Roman audience the theme was likewise common and reflected in texts such as Pliny the Elder, *Hist. nat.* 33.19.59, and Seneca, *Prov.*

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[62] For example, other than noting in passing that "most commentators point to Ps. 21.14 (LXX) where lions are used as a picture for the believer's human enemies," no further reference is made to this psalm nor an argument given why this or any other Jewish imagery should not apply to the text. Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 489.

[63] Horrell, Arnold, and Williams, "Roaring Lion," 716.

[64] Joseph, *1 Peter*, 26. Cf. Selwyn, *First Epistle of St. Peter*, 44; Keener, *1 Peter*, 31; Vinson, Wilson, and Mills, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 140. Some, however, have seen the Gentile audience as dominant: the epistle was "written to a Gentile, not a Jewish audience." Michaels, *1 Peter*, 236. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 39. Alternatively, Witherington argues the author wrote "largely to Hellenized Jewish Christians." Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 2:27.

[65] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 37; cf. pp. 12–17 on 1 Peter's abundant use of the OT.

[66] Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 101–2.

1.6; 5.10.[67] Similarly, a number of other metaphors, such as the rebirth imagery in 1:3 and the crown imagery in 5:4, may equally be seen as being informed not by an exclusive background, but by both in a cooperative fashion.[68]

As a result, and in contrast to highly particularized readings of the passage, the present article posits that the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 draws simultaneously from Jewish and Greco-Roman backgrounds to transfer from the source domain of the roaring lion to the target domain of the devil the attribute of ferociousness, which he displays in his manifold activities against Christians. As Klyne Snodgrass reminds interpreters regarding metaphors, "the important point is knowing when to stop interpreting. Not all aspects of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain."[69] One interpretive consequence of embracing the dual background of the passage, then, is that it resists the overspecification of the metaphor that occasionally results from drawing from only one background, such as Richard's explanation of 1 Peter 5:8 exclusively against the background of Psalm 22:13 wherein the author's purpose is not only to characterize the devil, but even to "*characterize the addressees as innocent sufferers*, in the manner of the OT Psalmist or Jesus during his passion, at the hands of the unrighteous."[70] One need not deny, of course, that "the focus of this letter is the innocent suffering of Christian believers."[71] However, while it is clear that 1 Peter 5:8 may be read in light of this theme articulated elsewhere in the epistle, what is less clear is that the notion of Christians as innocent sufferers is intrinsic to the employment of the metaphor itself.

Recentering the metaphor more broadly on the aspect of ferociousness also does justice to how the source domain was primarily understood in both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. It is axiomatic that ferociousness was the primary feature of the Ferocious Lion metaphors in Jewish Literature; as Oded Borowski notes, the lion was "considered the most ferocious" of all animals (cf. Judg 14:18).[72] Similarly, Keener observes that in Greco-Roman contexts "lions are a conventional image of … strength, *savage ferocity*, and the object of fear."[73] Correspondingly, one

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[67] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 101–2. Cf. Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary on the Shepherd of Hermas*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 96; Senior and Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 32; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 94. To Achtemeier's references could be added Plato, *Resp.* 1.3.413e, 2.6.503a; Hippocrates, *Decent.* 4.

[68] "The notion of being begotten or regenerated by God is found in both Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions." Senior and Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 31. Achtemeier notes that the idea of a crown as a reward "was widespread in the ancient world"; for Greco-Roman references, he cites Martial, *Epig.* 2.2, Pliny, *Hist. nat.* 15.5, Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.15, and for Jewish references he cites Prov 4:9; 12:4; 14:24; 16:31; 17:6; Wis 5:16; Sir 1:11, 18; 6:31; 15:6; 25:6; 1QH 9.25. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 329.

[69] Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 263. Cf. Carson, "1 Peter," 1044.

[70] Richard, *1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 218, emphasis mine. This is true also of Paschke's interpretation of 1 Peter 5:8 exclusively in terms of a Greco-Roman background, where he writes that because "the Devil is compared to such a lion, he then would be seen as responsible for what was going on in the arena at the *ad bestias* executions of Christians." Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 498.

[71] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 104.

[72] Oded Borowski, "Lion," *NIDB* 3:670.

[73] Keener, *1 Peter*, 388, emphasis mine; for ancient references see notes 63–66. To these qualities, Keener also lists "courage," though this is unlikely to be applicable for the present purposes.

function of emphasizing the sheer ferocity of the devil's activities in 5:8 is that it serves to retroactively provide added urgency to the imperatives embedded throughout 1 Peter 5:1–11. For example, the initial charge to the elders to shepherd God's flock (5:2) is framed with general instructions such as not exercising oversight "under compulsion" or "for sordid gain" (5:2) and making sure to "be examples to the flock" (5:3), with no specific indication of the danger posed to this flock. The function of the metaphorical transfer of ferociousness in 5:8 serves not only to indicate the reason for the immediately preceding imperatives in 5:8a, but also to embed additional urgency for the need for faithful shepherds of God's flock in 5:2.

The connection between the lion of 5:8 and the shepherd and flock of 5:2 has, of course, been recognized by commentators, yet often overspecified, by drawing exclusively on one background. Karen Jobes, for example, suggests that because Daniel and Revelation employ fierce animal imagery "to symbolize world systems deformed by the powers of darkness and sin," Peter may therefore "be implying with the lion imagery that satanic powers are at work in the sociopolitical system of the Roman Empire, under which his readers are suffering," which then serves to help interpret "the shepherd-flock motif in 5:1–5."[74] However, the proposed connection to Daniel is faint at best and fails to consider whether such a notion would have been understood by the Gentile audience in a Greco-Roman context. Further, that the author intends instead a broader warning against all the devil's activities is suggested by the similarly broad commands in the immediately preceding verses, to "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" (5:6) and to "cast all your anxiety on Him" (5:7). Elliott notes how 5:7 adapts and broadens the original quotation of Psalm 54:23 and changes "your anxiety" (τὴν μέριμνάν σου) to "all your anxiety" (πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν), and thus "the thought is extended in comprehensiveness."[75] This relinquishment of anxiety is said to occur "under the mighty hand" of God who "cares for you" (5:7), which also provides a fitting contrast to the image of the ferocious predator seeking to destroy the flock in 5:8.

Within the text of 5:8 itself, the broader quality of ferociousness and the broader warning against all the devil's activities resonate with the variety of terms present in the text, such as the two broad imperatives "be of sober spirit" (νήψατε), and "be on the alert" (γρηγορήσατε), and the image of a lion prowling (περιπατεῖ), roaring (ὠρυόμενος), and seeking someone to devour (ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν). It should be noted that all these items convey broad and popular descriptions of lions specifically and predators in both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts, and thus drawing a precise connection between any one description and a corresponding interpretation represents a dubious enterprise.[76] For example, Davids claims, noting

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[74] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 313–14. Later she writes that "in Peter's understanding of their suffering, God is using the threat that Satan presents through the hostility of society and government to prove those who are truly God's," citing influence from Job 1:6–12 and the imagery of "pacing" (314). On the Daniel connection, compare Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 360.

[75] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 851. Cf. Keener, *1 Peter*, 380; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 339; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 296.

[76] The image of prowling may be indicated by περιπατέω specifically, as in the present verse, or by other related terms. For example, Green finds the Devil's prowling (περιπατέω) in 1 Peter 5:8 to be equivalent to his prowling in Job 1:7 (περιέρχομαι) and Job 2:2 (διαπορεύομαι). Green, *1 Peter*, 175. For

in part the description of the lion as "roaring" (ὠρυόμενος) and "devouring" (καταπίνω), that in 1 Peter 5:8 "the *open mouth* of the lion is a metaphor for the *open mouth* of the one slandering or opposing them in court, which shows the danger of the legal process."[77] Not only does this require taking "the devil" (διάβολος) and "the adversary" (ἀντίδικος) as fundamentally legal terms in 1 Peter 5:8, which remains highly disputed, but Davids provides no evidence for why "roaring" and "devouring," would necessarily evoke primarily the image of the lion's "open mouth," which then would be metaphorically understood in a forensic context as indicating false testimony.[78] In contrast, it is better to see these terms as fundamentally conjuring the image of ferocity, as is often found in ancient literature. For Lucretius (c. 99–55 BC), for example, the roaring is a function of the ferocity of the lion; after speaking of "those creatures whose bitter hearts and angry minds easily boil up in wrath," he writes that "a notable instance of this is the violent fury of the lion, which so often bursts his breast with roaring and growling."[79]

It may be proposed, therefore, that the author in 1 Peter 5:8 accumulates common terminology, namely "roaring," "prowls," and "devour," which had the function of describing ferocious lions, and employs them in a cumulative fashion to stress the parallel ferocity of the devil in his schemes against Christians. That the author accumulates these terms, not to draw precise intertextual links with freighted theological significance, but to more broadly emphasize a singular feature, finds some support, for example, in the fact that the two imperatives in 5:8 "be of sober spirit, be on the alert" (νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε) pleonastically articulate the same point.[80] The same is true of the four verbs in 5:10, "perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish" (καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει), where

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the imagery of lions and other predators prowling, see Seneca, *Herc. Ot. 1–29*, Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 35.36.109; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 40.17; 55.1; Virg., *Georg.* 3.242–283; *Aen.* 9.75; 10.970; Ovid, *Metam.* 3; Prudentius, *Cathem.* 3; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 24. Dio Cassius, for example, speaks concerning Druses that "wolves were prowling [περινοστοῦντες] about the camp and howling [ὠρύομαι, "roaring"] just before his death" (*Hist. rom.* 55.1 [Cary, LCL]). On lions roaring, see Virgil, *Aen.* 7.5; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 22.16.16; *Hom. Hymn*., 5.156–159; Seneca, *Troad.* 718–850. The connection between ferociousness and roaring is indicated clearly in Lucretius, *Nat.* 3.288–306. Note also dread regarding the god who "changed into a dreadful lion … and roared loudly" in *Hom. Hymn*., 7.40–49 (Evelyn-White, LCL). Philo writes that roaring is most characteristic of a lion: "For as neighing is peculiar to a horse, and barking to a dog, and lowing to a cow, and roaring to a lion, so is speech and reason itself to man" (*Dreams* 1.108 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]). On this point, see also *Hist. Aug., Ant. Geta* 5.4–8: "the lamb bleats, the pig squeals, the dove coos, the hog grunts, the bear growls, the lion roars" (Magie, LCL). On lions devouring, see Homer, *Il.* 17.540–542; *Od.* 22.398–418; Virg., *Aen.* 9.469–470; Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.3.5; Ovid, *Metam.* 4.139; 14.311. For examples of Jewish backgrounds to this imagery, see the various references provided in Keener, *1 Peter*, 381–88; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 853–59; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 340–42.

[77] Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 155. Elsewhere Davids himself disputes the lawcourt connection in 1 Peter 5:8, "since no reference to a court scene appears in this passage." Davids, *First Epistle of Peter*, 190.

[78] Davids's claim also appears in part to depend on Psalm 22:13, where opponents "open wide their mouth at me," yet see note 26 for problems with this connection; likewise, it is not clear that the open mouths of Psalm 22:13 are related to forensic concerns. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 155.

[79] Lucretius, *Nat.* 3.288–306 (Rouse, LCL).

[80] See Elliott's comment that they "are virtually synonymous in meaning." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 853. Cf. Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014), 176; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 167.

"there is no need to distinguish carefully between the meaning of the verbs, for together they emphatically make the same point."[81] The dual background of the metaphor in 5:8 coupled with the manner in which the author employs his terminology suggests that various proposed links drawing on one exclusive background should be viewed as tentative, at best, and that the author instead offers a broad warning against the devil's ferocious activities that would have drawn from imagery simultaneously available and understandable in both contexts.

Scholars have, of course, observed a specific goal, namely the apostasy of the suffering Christian, which represents the ultimate aim of the devil, evidenced in part by the use of "devour" (καταπίνω) in 5:8 and in part by 5:9, which exhorts the readers to "resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."[82] Michaels thus posits that "being 'swallowed' by the devil refers not to physical death but to spiritual death, i.e., to renounce one's allegiance to Christ."[83] Elliott, however, has objected that various social implications of 1 Peter 5:8, such as the Gentile persecution of Christians, are ignored when the threat is limited to spiritual death.[84] Whether Elliott's proposal is accepted or not, one may nevertheless affirm with him that the tendency to make 1 Peter 5:8 exclusively an exhortation against apostasy neglects the way in which the metaphor functions as an exhortation more broadly to resist the devil in any of his activities. While warning of the presence of a roaring, prowling lion seeking to devour may ultimately be a warning against being devoured entirely, it nevertheless encapsulates a warning to be alert to any degree of maiming or injury the predator might inflict.

The suggestion that a broader warning is envisioned in the metaphor of 5:8 and the command to "resist" the devil in 5:9 finds support in the fact that the only two other places in the NT where the reader is likewise exhorted to "resist" the devil are James 4:6–10 and Ephesians 6:11–13, both of which demonstrate considerable similarities with 1 Peter and both of which envision a broad resistance to the devil's schemes. In James 4:7, the exhortation to "resist the devil" occurs after a discussion of a variety of evil impulses that plague believers: "quarrels," "conflicts," "pleasures," "lust," "murder," "envy," "wrong motives," and "friendship with the world" (4:1–4). Davids notes that this verse unveils the underlying theology of James, since previously he had identified that testing arose from the evil impulse, as

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[81] Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 245. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 867; Keener, *1 Peter*, 390–91; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 172.

[82] Leonhard Goppelt thus represents a widespread view that "'Devoured,' utterly destroyed, is the person who under the pressure of the situation surrenders faith." Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter*, 361. Cf. Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, 192; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 150; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 242; Green, *1 Peter*, 174; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 341.

[83] Michaels, *1 Peter*, 299. See, however, Paschke who finds that being "swallowed" does refer primarily, if not exclusively, to physical death in *ad bestias* executions. Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 498. Similarly, Scot McKnight writes that "the devil's roaring and devouring is possibly to be connected with insults (cf. 2:11–12; Ps. 21:14), or, more probably, with assaults aimed at physical death (2 Tim. 4:17)." Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 278. McKnight acknowledges, however, that "Christians resist Satan by refusing to succumb to his temptations to deny the Lord and to be faithless and fearful in the midst of suffering" (278).

[84] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 858.

in James 1:13–15, but "now he reveals (as in 3:3, 15) that behind the evil impulse lies the devil: suprapersonal forces of evil are behind personal evil."[85] Resisting the devil, therefore, involves resistance to the variety of impulses with which he tempts believers.[86] Similarly, Ephesians 6:11 commands putting on the armor of God in order "to stand firm against the schemes [μεθοδεία] of the Devil." These "schemes" include, for example, the false teachers in Ephesians 4:14 where the same term μεθοδεία is used, yet Clinton Arnold aptly observes that "given the broader context of Paul's thought, it would seem prudent to see an expansive variety of ways that the devil hatches his attacks," such as temptation, physical trials, or "any of a limitless array of intelligently designed plots."[87]

That the command to resist the devil in 1 Peter may function more broadly, as do the similar commands in Ephesians and James, is suggested by the close similarities scholars have found between the books as a whole, as well as the isolated texts particularly.[88] The relationship of 1 Peter 5:8–9, James 4:6–10, and Ephesians 6:10–18 suggests, therefore, that while aspects of their exhortations are no doubt shaped by their particular historical and literary contexts, with apostasy as a particular threat in the case of 1 Peter 5:8, the command to resist the devil nevertheless retains a fundamentally broad application in alignment with the similar broad depiction of the devil as a lion ferociously threatening Christians in a variety of ways.[89] Within the larger context of 1 Peter, this might include, for example, the temptation of accepting leadership positions for financial gain (5:2), of employing authoritarian tactics as church leaders (5:3), or embodying attitudes of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander (1:22; 2:1; 3:8–9).[90] Likewise, there is the temptation to be ashamed of one's faith (4:16), to give in to "fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul" (2:11), to partake in vengeance when mistreated (2:12), to fall back into

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[85] Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 166.

[86] Dan G. McCartney, *James*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 217.

[87] Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 445. Cf. Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 592; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 443.

[88] On the "striking," "noteworthy," and "tantalizing" connections between 1 Peter 5:5–9 and James 4:6–10, see Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 347. Cf. David G. Horrell, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 23; see the bibliography in his note 96. Similarly, on the "remarkable similarities" between 1 Peter and Ephesians broadly, and 1 Peter 5:8–9 and Ephesians 6:10–18 particularly, see Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 10 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 34. Cf. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 21–22.

[89] Ferocity as characteristic of Satan is seen in Cyril of Alexandria's reference to him as a "fierce and arrogant barbarian." Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke, Homily 144* in *Luke*, ed. Arthur A. Just, ACCS 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 336. This characteristic appears in Revelation, where the description of the devil as a dragon "expresses the extreme ferocious, murderous, beastly, cruel power with the connotation of horror for men." R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), 364. As Susan R. Garrett summarizes, "In the New Testament, Satan is depicted as the ferocious archfiend of God and God's people." Susan R. Garrett, *No Ordinary Angel: Celestial Spirits and Christian Claims about Jesus*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 135.

[90] Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 58.

"sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries" (4:3), or to succumb to any of the host of ways in which the devil might seek to threaten God's flock.[91]

V. CONCLUSION

Given the abundance of evidence for both Jewish and Greco-Roman backgrounds for the leonine metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8, the absence of any substantive argument against either background, and the mixed audience of the epistle, the present study posits that a view that allows both backgrounds to mutually influence the metaphor should be preferred. In particular, it has been argued that the author draws from "culturally conditioned common knowledge" latent in both contexts wherein ferociousness was viewed as a premiere quality of lions and that the fundamental function of the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 is to transfer this quality from the source domain of the roaring lion to the target domain of the devil.[92] Centering the metaphor on the aspect of ferociousness provides methodological clarity regarding how the imagery is functioning, and it also has the interpretive consequence of cutting against many claims regarding the function of the metaphor that depend on drawing from an exclusive and particularized context. For example, it demonstrates as problematic the claim of Davids that the metaphor is fundamentally forensic, that it describes specifically Christians being slandered in the court of law, and that the central function of the metaphor is to "[show] the danger of the legal process."[93] Similarly dubious are interpretive claims that the metaphor describes "the sociopolitical system of the Roman Empire,"[94] "human agents under the Devil's power,"[95] that it identifies the readers as "innocent sufferers,"[96] or that it shows that the devil was "responsible for … the *ad bestias* executions of Christians."[97] It may of course be true that the devil influenced the Roman Empire or that the readers were innocent sufferers, but these specific claims cannot be proved by the existence of such an unspecific metaphor. Further, it has been proposed that in addition to this focus on the broader quality of ferociousness helping to guard against overspecification of the metaphor, it may also heighten the urgency of the imperatives regarding shepherding the flock in 1 Peter 5:1–5 and broaden the imperatives in 5:8–9 beyond the ultimate concern for apostasy to include the ways in which 1 Peter as a whole portrays Christians as vulnerable to the devil's influences. And while this ferocious lion does represent a terrifyingly lethal threat, the vulnerable Christian is called not to fearfulness but to wakefulness; the proper response is not to flee or cower or tremble, but to "resist him, firm in your faith" (5:9a).

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[91] Keener, *1 Peter*, 346; Harink, *1 and 2 Peter*, 74; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 20.
[92] Day, "Metaphor and Social Reality," 64.
[93] Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 155.
[94] Jobes, *1 Peter*, 314.
[95] Elliott, *1 Peter*, 857.
[96] Richard, *1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 220.
[97] Paschke, "The Roman *ad bestias* Execution," 498.