

BENEFITING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH GOOD WORKS?
THE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF CIVIC BENEFACTION IN 1 PETER

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Introduction

The ancient convention of civic benefaction (or euergetism) is a topic that has grown increasingly popular within recent New Testament studies. In some cases, scholars have even suggested that the convention is crucial for understanding the social history of early Christianity in its Greco-Roman environment. According to these interpreters, the beneficent practices of elite Christians were meant (by some New Testament authors) to overcome or alleviate many of the negative perceptions held by popular society. Although support for this idea has been drawn from a variety of New Testament texts, the epistle of 1 Peter has played a prominent role in this theory's postulation.

As far back as the early twentieth century, scholars associated the 'good works'¹ mentioned in 1 Peter with beneficent acts of municipal elites who contributed to the welfare of their civic communities.² It was not until the

1. Examples of the 'good works'/'doing good' theme in 1 Peter include: τὴν ἀναστροφὴν...καλήν (2.12); τῶν καλῶν ἔργων (2.12); ἀγαθοποιός (2.14); ἀγαθοποιέω (2.15, 20; 3.6, 17); ποιησάτω ἀγαθόν (3.11); τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταί (3.13); τὴν ἀγαθὴν...ἀναστροφὴν (3.16); and ἀγαθοποιία (4.19).

2. See, e.g., J.H.A. Hart, *The First Epistle General of Peter* (The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), p. 60; Rudolf Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä* (KEK, 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), p. 107; Hermann Gunkel, *Der erste Brief des Petrus* (Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), p. 271; James Moffatt, *The General Epistles: James, Peter and Judas* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), p. 122; Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1947; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), pp. 170, 173; W.C. van Unnik, 'The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter', *NTS* 1 (1954–55), pp. 92–

work of Bruce W. Winter, however, that a fully-articulated form of this theory took shape.³ In his initial treatment of the subject, Winter set forth the specific procedures behind the convention of civic euergetism in the Hellenistic world and then applied his discoveries to the text of 1 Pet. 2.14-15. Citing various parallels in the terminology of Greek honorific inscriptions and the text of 1 Peter, he argued that the ‘good’ for which Christians would be praised and that would ultimately silence their detractors was nothing other than beneficent works that were performed on behalf of the larger citizen body. These benefactions, according to Winter, may have included acts such as supplying grain during times of

110; repr. in *idem*, ‘The Teaching of Good Works in I Peter’, in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik*. II. *1 Peter; Canon, Corpus hellenicum generalia* (NovTSup, 30; Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 83-105; C. Freeman Sleeper, ‘Political Responsibility according to 1 Peter’, *NovT* 10 (1968), pp. 270-86 (282-83); Francis W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 3rd edn, 1970), pp. 142-43; Madelynn Jones-Haldeman, ‘The Function of Christ’s Suffering in First Peter 2:21’ (ThD diss.; Andrews University, 1988), pp. 141-76 (who argues that the ‘good’ in 1 Pet. 2.14-15 refers to exceptional acts of civic responsibility, while the ‘good’ in 2.20 refers to distinctively Christian acts).

3. Bruce W. Winter, ‘The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13.3-4 and 1 Peter 2.14-15’, *JSNT* 34 (1988), pp. 87-103, the content of which is essentially reproduced and further elaborated on in his *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 12-40. Those who have followed Winter’s benefaction proposal include: I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (IVP New Testament Commentary Series, 17; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), pp. 84-85; D. Edmond Hiebert, *First Peter* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2nd edn, 1992), pp. 166-67; Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter* (SBLDS, 160; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 112-14; Chu Luan Eileen Poh, ‘The Social World of 1 Peter: Socio-Historical and Exegetical Studies’ (PhD diss.; King’s College, London, 1998), pp. 130-34; Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), pp. 234-35; Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 106-107; Ben Witherington, III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians. II. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), pp. 35, 144-45; Stephen Ayodeji A. Fagbemi, ‘Transformation, Proclamation and Mission in the New Testament: Examining the Case of 1 Peter’, *Transformation* 27 (2010), pp. 209-23 (215-16), seems to follow Winter’s proposal; Jennifer G. Bird, *Abuse, Power and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter’s Commands to Wives* (LNTS, 442; London: T. & T. Clark, 2011), p. 82.

famine, erecting, adorning, or refurbishing public buildings, constructing roads, or even embarking on embassies in order to gain privileges for the city.

Despite what appears to be strong explanatory merit arising out of firm support from the epigraphic record, the theory of civic benefaction in 1 Peter, as set forth by Winter, has often been criticized within Petrine scholarship. The objection that is consistently raised is the applicability of the exhortation to *all* members of the congregations (cf. 1 Pet. 2.12, 20; 3.6, 11, 13-17; 4.19). Most point out that Winter's proposal 'would presume that the author considered all the Christians to have the resources for such benefactions', which would be problematic because 'it was only members of the elite that could afford such duties'.⁴ But, of course, this objection begs the question: Was it economically feasible to ask members of the Anatolian congregations to contribute toward civic benefaction? How wealthy did one need to be in order to perform beneficent acts such as grain distribution and the refurbishment of public buildings? Would any members of the Petrine congregations have possessed this level of wealth?

Questions like these are crucial for judging the validity of the benefaction position. What is noteworthy (and seriously problematic), however, is that neither those who object to Winter's proposal nor any of the adherents of the benefaction position have offered quantitative economic data from the Greco-Roman world that might establish or refute the theory's claims.⁵ Until this type of work is performed, all

4. Torrey Seland, *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (BIS, 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 179. Cf. J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 109; Ernest Best, *1 Peter* (NCB Commentary; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 114; William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (WUNT, 2.30; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1989), p. 16 n. 72; Steven R. Bechtler, *Following in his Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter* (SBLDS, 162; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), p. 89 n. 153; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 491; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter; Jude* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), pp. 129-30; Warren Carter, 'Going All the Way? Honoring the Emperor and Sacrificing Wives and Slaves in 1 Peter 2.13-3.6', in A.-J. Levine (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 14-33 (21 n. 42); Joel B. Green, *1 Peter* (Two Horizons New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 75.

5. In his defense, Winter does acknowledge the problem of varying economic

suggestions remain speculative. Therefore, in what follows I will attempt to test the validity of Winter's proposal by determining whether civic benefaction would have been economically feasible for the readers of 1 Peter. This endeavor, if successful, will hold important implications not only for the study of 1 Peter, but also for the socio-economic history of early Christianity.

In order to determine whether the beneficent acts prescribed by the theory were a realistic option, there are two points of interest on which we must gain a relatively detailed understanding. First, we must be able to establish the *affordability of euergetism* in Roman Anatolia. How much did it cost, for instance, to erect a public building or to establish a civic festival? What was the level of wealth needed to perform such beneficent acts? Secondly, it is necessary to determine the *economic conditions* among the Christian communities of first-century CE Roman Anatolia. For example, what was the financial situation of the members of these churches? Would they have been able to contribute any economic surplus towards civic benefaction, and if so, how much?

The Affordability of Civic Benefaction in Roman Anatolia

The Cost of Civic Benefaction

Before we can judge the feasibility of euergetism for the readers of 1 Peter, we must first determine its cost. This is an extremely important matter, for despite the fact that benefaction is regularly declared to be an expensive undertaking—and thus out of the reach of average citizens—the prices involved have yet to be discussed in any Petrine literature. What is needed, therefore, is a quantitative analysis that calculates the costs of various beneficent acts in the Greco-Roman world. In doing so, we will be able to determine where projects ranked in terms of expense and if certain euergetistic endeavors might be within the reach of ordinary

status within the Christian community. His solution to the problem is to limit benefaction to a select few among the congregations: 'The cost of a benefaction was very considerable and would be beyond the ability of some, if not most, members of the church' (Winter, 'Public Honouring', p. 94). In this way, the entire Christian group would (presumably) benefit from the civic actions of a handful of members. This is certainly a valid suggestion and one that has not received due consideration from opponents of the position. But it still leaves us to ask, would civic euergetism have been a feasible conflict management strategy even for the wealthiest members of the Christian congregations?

inhabitants.

Our examination will begin with the most expensive form of civic benefaction, *viz.*, public building. In Greek and Roman antiquity there was no better way to leave a legacy of philanthropy towards one's community than through public works. But, of course, an esteemed reputation was not cheap, and fortunately for the modern historian, these costs have been well-preserved in the epigraphic record. The most expensive structure in a local community was usually the aqueduct system that transported fresh water into the city. The price tag on these structures was normally a few million *denarii*. Because of its exorbitant cost, an aqueduct was often funded by proceeds from the city treasury or, in some cases, by the Roman government. For instance, during the governorship of Pliny the Younger, the city of Nicomedia is said to have invested HS 3,329,000 (= 832,250 *denarii*) into a faulty system (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.37).⁶ On rare occasions, however, private citizens stepped forward to assume this large financial burden. One such prominent citizen was Titus Claudius Erymneus from the city of Aspendus. He spent 2 million *denarii* on an aqueduct for the city (*IGR* III no. 804).⁷ Another example comes from Alexandria Troas,

6. HS = *sestertius*, pl. *sestertii*, a form of Roman currency valued at 1/4 of a denarius.

7. The following abbreviations for inscriptional sources are used in this article: *AE* = René Cagnat *et al.* (eds.), *L'Année épigraphique: Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1888–); *TAM* II = Ernst Kalinka (ed.), *Tituli Lyciae linguis graeca et latina conscripti* (3 vols.; Vienna: Alfredi Hoelder, 1920–44); *IG* = *Inscriptiones graecae*; *IGR* = René Cagnat *et al.* (eds.), *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes* (4 vols.; Paris: Leroux, 1906–27); *CIG* = Augustine Boeckh (ed.), *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum* (4 vols.; Berlin: Reimer, 1828–77); *OGIS* = Wilhelm Dittenberger (ed.), *Orientalis graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum sylloge inscriptionum graecarum* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Hirzel. Reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1960); *MAMA* = Josef Keil *et al.* (eds.), *Monumenta Asiae minoris antiqua* (*JRS* Monographs; 10 vols.; London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1928–); *CIL* = Theodor Mommsen *et al.* (eds.), *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* (17 vols.; Berlin: Reimer, 1853–); *ILS* = Hermann Dessau (ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* (3 vols. in 5 parts; Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916); *LW* = Philippe Le Bas and William Henry Waddington [eds.], *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure. Fait par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1843 et 1844*. III. 5ème partie: *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Grèce et en Asie Mineure* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1870); *RMR* = Robert O. Fink (ed.), *Roman Military Records on Papyrus* (Philological Monographs, 26; Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1971); *SEG* = Pierre Roussel *et al.* (eds.), *Supplementum epigraphicum graecum* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1923–).

where the cost of an aqueduct was 7 million *drachmae*, which was 4 million *drachmae* over the original estimate. To free the community of this encumbrance, the prominent senator Herodes Atticus agreed to cover the unexpected expenses (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 2.1).

Although aqueducts performed an important utilitarian function in local communities, they rarely received the attention that benefactors paid to more popular undertakings such as Greek and Roman theaters. It was through the building of these massive structures that local citizens could ingratiate themselves to the masses. Alongside aqueducts, theaters were one of the most expensive structures in the civic community. During the time of Pliny, the city of Nicaea had spent HS 10 million on a theater that was poorly constructed and, at the time, still incomplete (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.39). But the Nicaean structure would not have even been considered one of the more expensive theaters in the ancient world. Frank Sear estimates that the theaters of Marcellus and Pompey would have cost HS 20,384,758 and HS 30,958,387 respectively.⁸ This high cost may have been the reason why theater-construction took so long to complete.⁹ It might also explain why collective benefactions were so common, especially in the Greek East. When it came to the building of the theater, benefactors usually only contributed to certain portions of the building's construction, or in many cases, they gave towards its embellishment. In Tlos, for instance, many people donated to the building of the theater. The inscription that records the names of the contributors is incomplete, but the existing list includes over fifty benefactors who gave some 27,100 *drachmae* to the project, with the sums ranging between 100 and 3,000 *drachmae* (*TAM* II nos. 550-551).¹⁰

8. Frank Sear, *Roman Theatres: An Architectural Study* (Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 19-23. Other less expensive theaters, according to Sear, include: Madaurus (HS 375,000); Herculaneum (HS 1,544,713); Iguvium (HS 3,325,120); Leptis Magna (HS 7,992,939); Sabratha (HS 9,056,169).

9. The theater at Delos took 60 years to build (Félix Durrbach *et al.* [eds.], *Inscriptions de Délos* [7 vols.; Paris: Champion, 1926-72] nos. 157, 270, 290, 291 A, C, D), while the large theaters at Ephesus and Aphrodisias took over 150 years, a period over which many additions, repairs, and embellishments were made (see Sear, *Roman Theatres*, pp. 16-17). On the other hand, in those instances where money was no object, a theater might be constructed relatively quickly. The theater of Herod at Caesarea Maritima, for instance, was begun in 19 BCE and completed ten years later (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.136).

10. Other examples of donations to the construction, repair, or embellishment

But theaters were not the only buildings to which benefactors contributed. Most of the public structures in a city were funded by the private contributions of wealthy elites. What is more, it is not uncommon to find citizens donating entire buildings to a given community. This was the case with C. Iulius Demosthenes, a prominent benefactor from the city of Oenoanda, who constructed a food market for the city at a cost of 15,000 *denarii* (*SEG* 38 [1988] no. 1462).¹¹ In Nais (Phrygia), C. Octavius donated a temple and porticoes, costing 100,000 *drachmae*(?) (*IGR* IV no. 1700). The emperor Hadrian donated 1,500,000 *drachmae* to the city of Smyrna for a grain market, temple and gymnasium along with many columns of Synnadic and Numidian marble and porphyry (*IGR* IV no. 1431, but cf. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 1.25, which lists the total at 1,000,000 *drachmae*). At Sagalassus, 13,000 *denarii* was given by P. Ael. Aquila for a macellum (*IGR* III no. 351).

Due to the excessive cost of donating an entire structure, benefactors often limited themselves to certain portions of a building project. In the city of Aphrodisias, for example, M. Ulp. Carminius Claudianus and his wife donated 105,000 *denarii* as a foundation for public works, and from this, 10,000 *denarii* was reserved for seats in theater (*Iaph2007* no. 12.1111 = *CIG* no. 2782). Likewise, at Philadelphia, Aur. Hermippus provided 10,000 *denarii* for the awning of the theater (*IGR* IV no. 1632). A further

of theaters include: Opramoas of Rhodiapolis gave 10,000 *denarii* for the theater at Limyra (*TAM* II no. 905 XIX C) and 60,000 *drachmae* for the theater at Tlos (*IGR* III no. 679 = *TAM* II no. 579). In the city of Myra (Lycia), 10,000 *denarii* was promised for the theater by Jason of Cyaneae (*IGR* III no. 704). M. Ulpius Carminius Claudianus donated 10,000 *denarii* to the theater at Aphrodisias to pay for the seating (Joyce Reynolds, Charlotte Roueché, and Gabriel Bodard [eds.], *Inscriptions of Aphrodisias* [2007], online: <<http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007>> [= *Iaph2007*] no. 12.1111 = *CIG* no. 2782). In the city of Iasos, Sopater, son of Epicrates, dedicated the *analemma*, a *kerkis*, and the *bema* to Dionysos and the people (Wolfgang Blümel [ed.], *Die Inschriften von Iasos* [Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 28.1-2; Bonn: Habelt, 1985] [= *I.Iasos*] no. 249 = *CIG* no. 2681), while another inscription from the same city records the donations to the theater (ranging from 100 to 200 *drachmae*) which were given by six other men (*I.Iasos* no. 206). An inscription from Philadelphia records a donation of 10,000 *denarii* given by Hernippus, the president of an athletic association, for equipping the theater with a *petasos* (*IGR* IV no. 1632).

11. For the full text and commentary, see Michael Wörrle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien: Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oinoanda* (Vestigia, 39; Munich: Beck, 1988), although note the corrections and further discussion by Stephen Mitchell, 'Festivals, Games, and Civic Life in Roman Asia Minor', *JRS* 80 (1990), pp. 183-93.

consideration that served to shape the munificence of public building was the fact that existing civic structures were normally sufficient for the daily operation of community life. As such, contributions were usually limited to the decoration or repair of present structures. But even these restoration projects were not cheap. A sum of 264,174 *denarii* was given by Attalus as a foundation to adorn the area around the gymnasium and to create a perpetual gymnasiarch (*I Aph 2007* no. 12.1007), and in Prusias ad Hypium, 50,000 *denarii* was contributed by M. Aur. Philippianus Jason to repair the agora (*IGR III* no. 66).¹²

If public building was the marquee gift of civic benefaction, the donation of games and local festivals was only a small step behind. The popularity of these events meant that they were well worth their high price tag for any wealthy citizen looking to establish a reputation for munificence. Since these events were meant to be regular occurrences in the life of

12. Other examples of donations to public building in Asia Minor include: A priest of Dionysius and his wife gave 9,000 *drachmae* to rebuild a storehouse (Georges Cousin, 'Inscriptions du sanctuaire de Zeus Panamaros', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 28 [1904], pp. 20-53 [30-31], no. 12B). At Sagalassus, 30,500 *denarii* was donated by Gbaimus, the priest, for repairing the temple of Apollo and for the Clareian and Vareian festivals along with their prizes (Karl Lanckoroński [ed.], *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens: Unter Mitwirkung von G. Niemann und E. Petersen. II. Pisidien* [Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1892] no. 201). Aurelius Delitrianus contributed 1,750 *denarii* to the city of Poglæ (Lycia) for public works (*IGR III* no. 407). In the city of Heraclea Pontica, 20,000 *denarii* or more was given to repair a public building (Lloyd Jonnes [ed.], *The Inscriptions of Heraclea Pontica* [Inscripfen griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 47; Bonn: Habelt, 1994] no. 54). One of the most prestigious citizens and benefactors recorded in the epigraphic record was Opramoas of Rhodiapolis who, among other donations, gave 18,000 *denarii* to Patara for double stoas, 30,000 *denarii* to Xanthos for the restoration of the theater, 5,000 *denarii* to Pinara for the restoration of buildings, 60,000 *denarii* to Tlos for public buildings, 35,000 *denarii* to Telmessus for a bath and exedra, 10,000 *denarii* to Oenoanda for a bath, 7,000 *denarii* to Choma for a stoa and Augusteum, over 100,000 *denarii* to Myra for public buildings, more than 20,000 *denarii* to Limyra for a theater, and 8,000 *denarii* to Gagæ for a bath (*IGR III* no. 739). In Ephesus, the father of M. Aur. Metrodorianus donated 20,000 *denarii* to clean the harbor and to pave the square in front of the prytaneum (Hermann Wankel *et al.* [eds.], *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* [Inscripfen griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 11.1-17.4; Bonn: Habelt, 1979-84] [= *I.Ephesos*] no. 3071). From the same city, Celsus and his family paid for the construction of the library and provided the facility with 25,000 *drachmae* for books and fittings (*I.Ephesos* no. 5113). For the costs of buildings in the provinces of Africa and Italy, see Richard P. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1982), pp. 90-93, 157-62.

a community, benefactors often established capital foundations for the purpose of funding. On the annual (or biennial or quadrennial) occurrence of the games/festival, the interest from these foundations would go to cover the costs. If these capital sums were set at a 6-9 per cent annual yield,¹³ then a local festival or civic contests would presumably require a few hundred to tens of thousands of *denarii*. From the ancient source record we find both extremes. On a small scale, C. Iulius Demosthenes donated 4,450 *denarii* for penteteric musical contests to the city of Oenoanda (*SEG* 38 [1988] no. 1462), while 3,000 *denarii* was given for a festival in Aspendus by Zeno, the architect of the theater (LW nos. 1381-83). Ordinarily, however, these capital sums tended to be quite large (often in the tens of thousands of *denarii*), since the events themselves were financed on accumulated interest.¹⁴ In Ephesus, for instance, 21,500 *denarii* was donated to a capital foundation by C. Vibius Salutaris in order to establish a festival (*I.Ephesos* no. 27). Similarly, in the city of Pergamum the son of Metrodorus contributed 70,000 *drachmae* for the Traianeia games.¹⁵

13. In the late Hellenistic period, interest rates ranged from 16% in the city of Korfu (Günther Klaffenbach and Klaus Hallof [eds.], *IG IX, Inscriptiones Graeciae septentrionalis voluminibus VII et VIII non comprehensae. I. Inscriptiones Phocidis Locridis Aetoliae Acarnaniae insularum maris Ionii*. Fasc. IV: *Inscriptiones insularum maris Ionii* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2nd edn, 2001] no. 798 [second century BCE]) to 10% in Amorgos (Jules Delamarre [ed.], *IG XII,7. Inscriptiones Amorgi et insularum vicinarum* [Berlin: G. Reimer, 1908] no. 515 [second century BCE]) all the way down to 6 and 2/3% in Delphi (Klaus Bringmann and Hans von Steuben, *Schenkungen hellenistischer Herrscher an griechische Städte und Heiligtümer. I. Zeugnisse und Kommentare* [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995] no. 94 [160 BCE]). In the imperial period, these rates seem to have decreased slightly, and in Roman Anatolia the range appears to be in the neighborhood of 6% to 9% (see T.R.S. Broughton, 'Roman Asia Minor', in T. Frank [ed.], *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome. IV. Africa, Syria, Greece, Asia Minor* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1938], pp. 499-918 [900] for the evidence).

14. In Aphrodisias, the capital sums donated by Flavius Lysimachus had to accrue to a minimum of 120,000 *denarii* before his designated musical games could be held (*I Aph2007* no. 12.538 = *OGIS* no. 509 = *CIG* no. 2741; cf. *I Aph2007* no. 11.21 = *CIG* no. 2759 = *MAMA* VIII no. 420).

15. Max Fränkel (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Pergamon* (Altertümer von Pergamon, 8.1-2; Berlin: W. Spemann, 1890-95) no. 270 = *CIL* III no. 7086 = *IGR* IV no. 337. Other examples of donations for festivals and games include: A capital sum of 30,000 *denarii* was contributed to an unknown city by Septicia (*Dig.* 50.12.10). An *ecdicus* from Kibyra named Veranius Philagrus donated 54,000 Rhodian *drachmae* to finance

Grain supply is another munificent act that was sometimes performed by civic benefactors. But here too there is some cost fluctuation. Given the differing needs of civic communities, there was no standard amount that was universally assumed to cover the cost of grain. For this reason, we find even small contributions to the city's grain supply. An inscription found outside the village of Kesme (Pisidia) records a gift of 500 *denarii* donated to the grain supply by Cleon, the architect.¹⁶ Ordinarily, however, the gifts that appear most frequently in the epigraphical record are much larger. For example, in Philadelphia, Heliodoros(?) gave 550,000 *denarii* for grain supply (*IGR* IV no. 1632), and in Nacoleia, P. Ael. Onesimus contributed HS 200,000 (= 50,000 *denarii*) to the city, with the interest being used to purchase grain for three years and then subsequently to be used for a distribution to the citizens on the emperor's birthday (*CIL* III no. 6998 = *ILS* no. 7196 = *MAMA* V no. 202).¹⁷

Contributions to public building, the establishment of games and festivals, and donations to the local grain supply are just a few of the many beneficent acts performed by prominent citizens. The ancient source record is filled with ways in which wealthy benefactors enriched their cities. For example, it was not uncommon for local elites to donate oil for the gymnasium. In the city of Gytheion, Phaenia Aromation gave 8,000 *denarii* to provide free oil for the gymnasium in perpetuity; whereas a certain Theopompos, son of Archedemos, contributed an even greater amount of 40,000 *drachmae* to provide oil for the city of Eretria (Euboia).¹⁸ Often benefactors would establish foundations for perpetual

the Caesareian games for several years (*I.Kibyra* no. 41 = *IGR* IV no. 914), and in Philadelphia, Heliodoros donated 10,000 *denarii* and 3,000 *denarii* for a public banquet (*IGR* IV no. 1637).

16. Pierre Paris and Georges A. Radet, 'Inscriptions de Pisidie, de Lycaonie et d'Isaurie', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 10 (1886), pp. 500-14 (500 n. 1).

17. Other examples of quantified amounts contributed to the grain supply include: In the city of Assos, someone donated 10,000 *denarii* for the purchase of grain (Reinhold Merkelbach [ed.], *Die Inschriften von Assos* [Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 4; Bonn: Habelt, 1976] no. 25). From the city of Chios, we learn that Apollonius gave 10,000 *drachmae* to the grain supply during his stephanephorate (*IGR* IV no. 941). A slightly smaller donation of 2,000 *denarii* was given to the grain supply in the city of Adada (Pisidia) by Aur. Hoplon (J.R.S. Sterrett, *Wolfe Expedition to Asia Minor* [Papers of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 3; Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1888], p. 293, no. 414).

18. For Phaenia Aromation: Walter Kolbe (ed.), *IG* V,1. *Inscriptiones Laconiae et Messeniae* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1915), no. 1208 = *SEG* 13 (1963), no. 258 (cf. *IG*

civic offices at their own expense. This was the case in Kibyra where Q. Veranius Philagrus donated 400,000 Rhodian *drachmae* to the city for a perpetual gymnasiarchy (*I.Kibyra* no. 42A = *IGR* IV no. 915).¹⁹ Another frequent occurrence in the epigraphic record is the monetary distributions given to various citizen groups. In Stratonikeia, for instance, 10,000 *denarii* was given by Jason, son of T. Flavius Aeneas Theophanes, for distributions to citizens.²⁰

When all of this evidence is examined, it is clear that the role of a civic benefactor was not cheap. In some cases, prominent citizens gained the reputation as a ‘good and noble man (or woman)’ by donating millions of *denarii* to their local communities.²¹ Yet not every recorded benefaction

V,1 no. 970). For Theopompos, son of Archedemos: Erich Ziebarth (ed.), *IG* XII,9. *Inscriptiones Euboeae insulae* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1915), no. 236.

19. Other examples of benefactors establishing perpetual offices include: A sum of 20,000 *denarii* was given to the city of Synaus (Mysia or the Troad) by Demosthenes and his wife to found a perpetual stephanephorate (LW no. 1006). In Magnesia under Sipylus, more than 10,000 *denarii* was given for a perpetual stephanephorate by P. Aelius and his son (*IGR* IV no. 1342).

20. M. Çetin Şahin (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia* (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 21–22.1-2; Bonn: Habelt, 1982–90) no. 205. Other examples of monetary distributions to various civic groups include: In Myra (Lycia), Jason of Cyanea contributed 10,000 *denarii* for distributions to the citizens (*IGR* III no. 704). A doctor named Kyros donated 1,000 *drachmae* to the gerousia in Lampsakos (Peter Frisch [ed.], *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos* [Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 6; Bonn: Habelt, 1978] no. 12 = *IGR* IV no. 182 = *CIG* no. 3643). C. Stertinius Orpex, a freedman from Ephesus, provided annual distributions to the council, gerousia and various others, with the amount totaling about 8,000 *drachmae* (*I.Ephesos* no. 4123). In the city of Aphrodisias, a number of distributions are recorded: 3,000 *denarii* was given to both the council and the gerousia for perpetual distribution (*I Aph2007* no. 12.317 = *MAMA* VIII no. 524), Zeno gave 5,000 *denarii* for perpetual distributions (*I Aph2007* no. 11.403 = *CIG* no. 2836b), Aur. Ammia donated 2,370 *denarii* to the council for perpetual distribution (*I Aph2007* no. 12.534 = *CIG* no. 2774), and Aur. Myrtus contributed 2,545 *denarii* to the council for the same purpose (*I Aph2007* no. 15.333 = *CIG* no. 2817).

21. E.g. Ti. Claudius Erymneus of Aspendus donated 2 million *denarii* to the city for an aqueduct (*IGR* III no. 804), while three people, Opramoas of Rhodiapolis (*IGR* III no. 739; *TAM* II nos. 578-579; for a full treatment of the inscription, see Christina Kokkinia, *Die Opramoas-Inschrift von Rhodiapolis: Euergetismus und soziale Elite in Lykine* [Antiquitas, 3, Band 40; Bonn: Habelt, 2000]), Menodora of Sillyon (Pamphylia) (*IGR* III nos. 800-802; Karl Lanckoroński [ed.], *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens. Unter Mitwirkung von G. Niemann und E. Petersen. I. Pamphylien* [Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1890] nos. 58-61), and Publia Plancia Aurelia Magniana

consisted of hundreds of thousands or even tens of thousands of *denarii*. Many, if not most, gifts were relatively modest in scope. In fact, out of a collection of some 530 benefactions (all from Roman Asia Minor) in which the total donation was recorded, Arjan Zuiderhoek estimates that approximately 60 per cent would qualify as ‘small’ gifts (i.e. less than 1,000 *denarii*).²² But even at these prices, it seems appropriate to ask how many individuals (or families) within a provincial community would have been able to make these kinds of contributions.

Civic Benefaction and Municipal Elites

In Roman Anatolia, relatively few families would have been ascribed an elite status by the wider civic community. The most prominent individuals normally served as members of the local civic council (βουλή). In order to gain entrance into this select group, one had to meet certain requirements such as a minimum age, a property qualification, or the prior performance of civic magistracies.²³ The standard property qualification that each councilor (or decurion) had to meet was HS 100,000 (= 25,000 *denarii*).²⁴ Although the size of councils varied from

Motoxaris of Selge (Johannes Nollé and Friedel Schindler [eds.], *Die Inschriften von Selge* [Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 37; Bonn: Habelt, 1991] no. 17, with Riet Van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* [Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, 15; Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1996], pp. 100-103, 109) each donated approximately 1 million *denarii* to various communities around Asia Minor.

22. Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Greek Culture in the Roman World; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 29.

23. In Pontus-Bithynia the *lex Pompeia* stipulated that a man had to be at least thirty years old before entering the council. Yet this age was lowered to twenty-two by Augustus (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80). It would seem that the same qualification was also used in the provinces of Asia (Dio Cassius 37.20.2) and Galatia (see Travis B. Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering* [NovTSup, 145; Leiden: Brill, 2012] p. 86). On the performance of prior magistracies, see Pliny, *Ep.* 10.79-80.

24. See Friedemann Quaß, *Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens: Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1993), p. 343 n. 1464. The evidence for this figure derives primarily from the correspondence of Pliny. In a letter to Romanus Firmus (*Ep.* 1.19), Pliny describes the decurion requirements for the city of Comum as HS 100,000. Other sources are regularly drawn upon to substantiate the

city to city, an average decurion *ordo* during the late first century CE was probably around 100 members.²⁵ If we assume that the urban population in an Anatolian city would have been around 7,000 people,²⁶ then on

claim. Confirmation is often sought in a passing reference in Petronius's *Satyricon*. After a freedman named Ganymede complains about a certain aedile's corruption while in office, he hints that he may have acquired his census qualification illicitly: '*iam scio unde acceperit denarios mille aureos*' (*Satyr.* 44.14). Many have viewed this passage as a reference to a municipal census requirement (so, e.g., Philipp E. Huschke, *Über den Census und die Steuerverfassung der frühern römischen Kaiserzeit: Ein Beitrag zur römischen Staatswissenschaft* [Berlin: Gebauer, 1847], pp. 94-95 n. 194; and Joachim Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung* [Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer, 4-6; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 2nd edn, 1881-85; repr. New York: Arno, 1975], p. 1:180 n. 4, who also lists Catullus 23.26), but given that the reference is to an aedile, questions could be raised about its actual correspondence to decurion qualification. Another piece of evidence that is sometimes employed in this discussion is the fact that Domitian provided the philosopher Flavius Archippus with HS 100,000 in order to purchase a farm near his native town of Prusa (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.58). But again this evidence appears to be only circumstantial. A final piece of evidence that is sometimes brought into the discussion is P.Oxy. 3175, which lists a fee of 10,000 *drachmae* for entrance into the civic council. If the minimum qualification in the city were 100,000 *drachmae*, the argument goes, this entrance fee would be an understandably symmetrical 10%. But, again, this data cannot provide any firm basis for a standard census requirement.

25. The number of decurions in the average Anatolian city is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty. Some of the available numbers include: 50 as the interim limit for the city of Tymandus (*CIL* III no. 6866 = *ILS* no. 6090); 500-650 at Thyatira (*IGR* IV no. 1222); 100 at Prusa (Dio Chrysostom, *Def.* [*Or.* 45.]7); 500 at Oenoanda (*IGR* III no. 492); 100 at Halicarnassus (William R. Paton and Edward L. Hicks [eds.], *The Inscriptions of Cos* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891; repr., Hildesheim/New York: G. Olms, 1990], no. 13; cf. Georges Cousin and Charles Diehl, 'Inscriptions d'Halicarnasse', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 14 [1890], pp. 90-121 [95-97, no. 3]); 450 at Ephesus (C.T. Newton [ed.], *The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874-1916], no. 481). For the numbers in other portions of the Roman Empire, see Wilhelm Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900), pp. 229-30 n. 5; Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 283-87; and J. Nicols, 'On the Standard Size of the *ordo decurionum*', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 105 (1988), pp. 712-19.

26. Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*. I. *The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 244 (following Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 259-87), projects that the majority of Anatolian cities possessed a total population between 5,000 and 15,000, listing an average of approximately 7,000.

average decurions (or wealthy elites) would have made up about 1 per cent of the population of a provincial city.

But even among this group of prominent citizens, there were certain limitations on the types of benefactions that could be undertaken. For the councilor who only possessed the minimum census requirement (HS 100,000), the average annual income (on 5 per cent interest from landed property) would have been approximately 1,250 *denarii*. So even a ‘small’ donation of 1,000 *denarii* would require almost an entire year’s earnings. As such, even many of those considered to be elite members of the community would have been unable to perform frequent, large-scale munificence.²⁷ These kinds of contributions, which included donating entire buildings or complete public festivals, were reserved for those who were exceptionally wealthy. It goes without saying then that these types of municipal elites were few and far between. Consequently, to assume that any members of the Christian community could perform such large-scale tasks seems to stretch the limits of probability. But to know for sure, we must examine the economic conditions in the Anatolian congregations.

Economic Conditions in the Anatolian Congregations

The epistle of 1 Peter affords us with only a few brief glimpses into the socio-economic status(es) represented in the Anatolian congregations. Nevertheless, when this information is read against the backdrop of the economic conditions prevalent across first-century CE Asia Minor, it is possible to produce a tentative reconstruction of the readers’ economic situation. This, in fact, is something that I have already attempted in a previous study, and it will be from those results that our discussion will proceed.²⁸

Many of the recipients of 1 Peter would have lived at or near the subsistence level; that is, they would have engaged in a daily struggle just to procure enough calories to maintain basic human existence.

27. Cf. Arjan Zuiderhoek, ‘The Icing on the Cake: Benefactors, Economics, and Public Building in Roman Asia Minor’, in S. Mitchell and C. Katsari (eds.), *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005), pp. 167-86 (170-71).

28. See Williams, *Persecution in 1 Peter*, pp. 96-127. Cf. also David G. Horrell, ‘Aliens and Strangers? The Socioeconomic Location of the Addressees of 1 Peter’, in B. Longenecker and K. Liebengood (eds.), *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 176-202.

As such, they would have possessed no financial surplus by which to perform civic benefaction. Among this group would have been the οἰκέται ('slaves') who are specifically addressed in the epistle (1 Pet. 2.18-25). Strangely enough, it is this group that the author admonishes with the following exhortation: 'If you endure when suffering for doing good (ἀγαθοποιούντες), this finds favor with God' (2.20).

This is one of the places where the benefaction position runs into problems. What the theory fails to adequately account for is the range of individuals who are specifically instructed to 'do good'. If, as the theory proposes, we are to understand 'doing good' to mean performing beneficent acts for the local civic community, then it is difficult to explain why this strategy is expected from 'slaves' (οἰκέται) in 1 Pet. 2.20.²⁹ It is true that some οἰκέται may have been able to accumulate a small financial surplus.³⁰ But evidence of slaves serving in the capacity of public benefactor is very rare.³¹ One of the few examples of munificent practices by a slave comes from the town of Balboursa (Lycia). It was here that during the middle of the second century CE, Onesimus, a δημόσιος ('public slave'), erected a temple of Nemesis, including the associated cult-images, and an exedra with statues of the *demos* and *boule*.³² However, what distinguishes this example from the situation in 1 Peter is the nature of Onesimus' position. Ordinarily, the designation δημόσιος

29. Aside from the matter of financial capability, the more serious problem for the benefaction position is the fact that a master might respond to the 'good deeds' with hostility: 'If you endure when suffering (πάσχοντες) for doing good (ἀγαθοποιούντες), this finds favor with God' (1 Pet. 2.20).

30. One example is the group of οἰκέται who worked on the Appianus estate in the Fayum district of Roman Egypt (see Dominic Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-century A.D. Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], pp. 106-16).

31. In *Ben.* 3.18-20, Seneca does argue that a slave can confer benefits upon his master (see Philip H. Towner, 'Can Slaves Be their Masters' Benefactors? 1 Timothy 6:1-2a in Literary, Cultural, and Theological Context', *Current Trends in Scripture Translation* 182/183 [1997], pp. 39-52), but what he does not suggest is that slaves (normally) functioned in the capacity of carrying out public benefactions in the sense described in this study.

32. A discussion of the archaeological evidence can be found in J.J. Coulton *et al.*, 'Balboursa Survey: Onesimos and Meleager, Part 1', *Anatolian Studies* 38 (1988), pp. 121-45. The inscription from the exedra reads, 'Onesimos the public slave (δημόσιος) dedicated the Boule and Demos of Balboursa his own masters, to whom he also made over towards the corn-dole 352 modii a year' (*CIG* no. 4380k² = *LW* no. 1228; trans. adapted from Milner).

referred to a civic archivist, a post that drew a salary from the city.³³ In 1 Peter there is no indication of such a privileged position.

Apart from the few examples involving those in the service of the civic community or high-ranking officials, there is little evidence that slaves were financially capable of fulfilling the role of civic benefactor. This is understandable because euergetism was normally performed by wealthy elites, not by those of a servile status. A passage from Lucian's *Navigium* illustrates this well.³⁴ Here one of the characters, Adimantus, who himself was not rich (22), describes what he would do if he were to receive a limitless fortune (12-25). Aside from that which would be spent on his own person, he notes, 'For the city this would be my allocation: by way of doles, a hundred drachmas to every citizen per month, half of this to a resident alien; and for the general public theatres and baths to beautify the city; the sea brought up to the Dipylon and a harbour in that region with water brought up by a deep canal, so that my ship may anchor nearby in full view of the Ceramicus' (Lucian, *Nav.* 24; trans. Kilburn [LCL]). What is important to recognize about this hypothetical scenario is that, for Adimantus, civic benefaction was something that he would practice only *after* gaining a fortune, not before.³⁵ Slaves, of

33. Cf. Aeschines, *Tim.* 54, which describes Pittalacus, a public slave (δημόσιος οἰκέτης τῆς πόλεως) who is said to have plenty of money, and *CIL* XV no. 7247, which refers to a slave on the staff of a *procurator aquarum* making the pipe that goes into the Baths of Agrippina in Rome, a work that could be considered a benefaction (see Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* [Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999], p. 315).

34. A similar chronological sequence is followed in a horoscope from Vettius Valens. The text describes the opportune fortunes of a man who stumbled into an inheritance and began to partake of munificence: 'He had many ups and downs in his first period of life and lived in debt although the property of his parents was good. Then later, getting an inheritance and improving his means by shrewd enterprises, he became ambitious, dominant, and munificent (δωρηματικός) and popular and a friend of kings and governors, and he provided temples and (public) works (ἔργα), and gained perpetual remembrance' (Vettius Valens 2.21; trans. adapted from Otto Neugebauer and Henry B. Van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes* [Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 48; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1959], p. 97). What stands out about this biographical summary is that munificence and public works did not begin *until* the man gained an inheritance and ambitiously sought to confirm his privileged status.

35. On a more prescriptive level, the poor were not even encouraged to serve as benefactors. As Aristotle put it, 'the poor man cannot be magnificent (μεγαλοπρεπής), since he has not the means to make a great outlay suitably; the poor man who attempts

course, rarely found themselves in this position.

In light of difficulties like this, some proponents of the benefaction position have suggested that the author of 1 Peter had something more in mind than the individual performance of public munificence. They seek, instead, to interpret this passage in accordance with a kind of corporate benefaction wherein members of the Anatolian congregations pooled their (meager) resources together in an effort to accumulate a much more sizeable donation. One advocate for this view argues that ‘Peter might have envisaged the Christian community as a whole performing acts of public benefaction, rather than a few individual rich members’. Thus, ‘[i]n the same way that members of voluntary associations could perform acts of public benefaction corporately, so members of Christian communities could do good in a way that would secure the praise of the people’.³⁶ This approach allows adherents of the benefaction position to sidestep the problem of a collective encouragement toward ‘good works’ in 1 Peter.

While this suggestion is only occasionally discussed in the secondary literature, on the surface, it appears to be a plausible solution. In the average Christian community, there were varying levels of economic prosperity (see below). The pecuniary situations of some members would have allowed for the accumulation and subsequent distribution of financial surplus. Furthermore, this suggestion does find support in the euergetic practices of the Hellenistic world. On occasions, benefaction was performed not by an *individual* but by a *group*.³⁷ A case in point is

Magnificence is foolish, for he spends out of proportion to his means, and beyond what he ought, whereas an act displays virtue only when it is done in the right way. But great public benefactions are suitable for those who have adequate resources derived from their own exertions or from their ancestors or connexions [*sic*], and for the high-born and famous and the like, since birth, fame and so on all have an element of greatness and distinction’ (*Eth. nic.* 4.2.13-14; trans. Rackham [LCL]).

36. Poh, ‘Social World of 1 Peter’, p. 134.

37. The epigraphic record from Roman Anatolia contains a number of instances where euergetism is performed through small donations from multiple individuals. For example, in Tlos, a theater was constructed through private donations, with the individual sums ranging from 3,000 *drachmae* down to 100 *drachmae* (*TAM* II nos. 550-551). Likewise, in the city of Cadyanda, a number of contributors gave for the construction of a public building, with the gifts ranging from 100 to 600 *drachmae* each (*TAM* II no. 650). In most cases, however, the contributors appear to only have a loose connection to one another. Further examples of this type of euergetic scheme include: a temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias (Joyce M. Reynolds, ‘Inscriptions and the Building of the Temple of Aphrodite’, in C. Roueché and K. T. Erim [eds.], *Aphrodisias Papers: Recent Work on Architecture and Sculpture, including the Papers Given at*

the association of Ephesian fishermen and fish-dealers who dedicated a customs house for fishery toll, which they built at their own expense (*I.Ephesos* no. 20).³⁸ The stele that marked the dedication provides an inscription of some 100(?) names of donors, with each being listed in descending order according to the level of contribution. The amounts range from four columns to 5 *denarii*.³⁹

the Second International Aphrodisias Colloquium Held at King's College London on 14 November 1987 [Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series, 1; Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1990], pp. 37-40); a building in Mostene from multiple contributors (Josef Keil *et al.*, *Bericht über eine Reise in Lydien und der südlichen Aiolis, ausgeführt 1906 im Auftrage der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* [Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 53.2; Vienna: A. Hölder, 1908], p. 7, no. 14); contributions to various public works in Smyrna donated by groups and individuals, ranging from 70,000 to 4,500 *drachmae* (*IGR* IV no. 1431); multiple contributors to a building in Iasos (*I.Iasos* no. 253); and at Hierapolis, multiple individuals gave to the building and decoration of the theater (Walther Judeich [ed.], 'Inschriften', in Carl Humann *et al.* [eds.], *Altertümer von Hierapolis* [Jahrbuch des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Ergänzungsheft, 4; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1898], pp. 67-202 [68-69, no. 4] = *IGR* IV no. 808).

38. For a more complete discussion of this text, see G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. V. Linguistic Essays with Cumulative Indexes to Vols. 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 95-114.

39. This type of corporate benefaction is also evident in the construction a Jewish soup-kitchen in Aphrodisias. An inscription recording the group's generosity reads: 'God help us. Donors to the soup kitchen (πατέλλα). Below are listed the members of the decany of the students of the law, also known as those who fervently praise God, who erected, for the relief of suffering in the community, at their personal expense (ἐξ ἰδίῳ), this memorial (building)' (*I.Aph2007* no. 11.55, ll. 1-8 = *SEG* 36 [1986] no. 970, ll. 1-8 [early third century CE]; trans. Reynolds and Tannenbaum). This is followed by a list of donors, but without reference to the amount of each individual gift. For a discussion of this text, see Joyce M. Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary. Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim* (Cambridge Philological Society Supplementary Volume, 12; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Angelos Chaniotis, 'The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002), pp. 209-42. Similarly, an inscription from the city of Ilion lists a number of *agonothetes* who contributed varying amounts of silver (presumably) to the games (Peter Frisch [ed.], *Die Inschriften von Ilion* [Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 3; Bonn: Habelt, 1975], no. 103 = *IGR* IV no. 210). Finally, on the imperial estates at Pisidian Antioch, the members of an anti-Christian group called the Tekmoreian Guest-friends (third century CE) gave varying sums for different religious purposes associated with the worship of and

Compared with other benefaction projects in the ancient world, the donations involved in the Ephesian customs house—both individual and collective—seem rather meager. Yet this type of small-scale benefaction was not uncommon. On a stele from the city of Halicarnassus, which dates to the second or possibly the early first century BCE, we find an illustration of corporate euergetism on an even smaller scale. The inscription engraved on the stele contains a list of nineteen (or twenty-six, if we count the names of those on whose behalf donations were given) men who contributed to the digging and monumentalization of a well (φρέαρ) connected to the sanctuary of Aphrodite.⁴⁰ Of the sums that are listed, the largest monetary donation amounted to 10 *drachmae*, with the lowest being 2 *drachmae*. Along with this, various numbers of workmen and craftsmen were given to carry out the construction. The total sum of all contributions (including the monetary value of the workmen and craftsmen) would have only been somewhere around 150 *drachmae*.⁴¹

Of course, evidence like this still begs the question of whether even small scale corporate benefaction would have been economically feasible for the early Christian communities of Asia Minor,⁴² especially since most

service to the emperor (see William M. Ramsay, ‘The Tekmoreian Guest-Friends: An Anti-Christian Society on the Imperial Estates at Pisidian Antioch’, in W.M. Ramsay [ed.], *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire* [Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1906], pp. 303-77).

40. Adolf Wilhelm, ‘Inscripfen aus Halikarnassos und Theangela’, *Jahreshefte des Osterreichischen Archäologischen Instituts* 11 (1908), pp. 53-82 (61-63, no. 4). In the *editio princeps*, Wilhelm maintained that the stele originated from the city of Theangela, a proposal that most subsequent scholars have tended to adopt. However, serious problems prevent this suggestion from being a viable option. The more natural provenance of the stele is the city of Halicarnassus (see G.E. Bean and J.M. Cook, ‘The Halikarnassian Peninsula’, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 50 [1955], pp. 85-171 [115]; followed by Signe Isager, ‘Halikarnassos and the Well of Aphrodite: On EM 199, Text and Provenance’, in K. Ascani *et al.* [eds.], *Ancient History Matters: Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on his Seventieth Birthday* [Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, 30; Rome: ‘L’erma’ di Bretschneider, 2002], pp. 153-58).

41. The sum of all monetary amounts, including those for which the reading must be restored, is 97 *drachmae*. Added to this total, there are 5 craftsmen and 30 workmen, with another quantity of workmen missing (see further Léopold Migeotte, *Les souscriptions publiques dans les cités grecques* [Hautes études du monde gréco-romain, 17; Genève: Droz, 1992], pp. 251-53).

42. We must recognize that there is (presumably) an important distinction between this example of small-scale euergetism and the type of benefaction that would be

commentators have concluded that the Petrine communities consisted (primarily) of the poorer members of Anatolian society.⁴³ If the Christians in these congregations wanted to donate to public works, how much could they afford to contribute? To answer this question, we will need to reconstruct the approximate amount of financial surplus that could be generated by the average first-century CE Christian community.⁴⁴ This will involve an

practiced by the Petrine congregations in Roman Anatolia. When we find examples of small contributions in the Greek inscriptional record, this is not necessarily an indication of a lack of disposable income. Simply because a person donated 10 *denarii* to a building project, does not mean that he or she was not capable of giving much more. On the other hand, most Christians (as we will demonstrate below) would not have possessed the financial resources to contribute large amounts to beneficent activities. So the varying levels of contribution *would* be indicative of the donors' economic situations.

43. See, e.g., Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB, 37; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2nd edn, 1964), p. 73; Kelly, *Epistles of Peter*, p. 5; John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, its Situation and Strategy, with a New Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), pp. 63, 67-73; Armand Puig i Tàrrach, 'Le milieu de la première épître de Pierre', *Revista catalana de teologia* 5 (1980), pp. 95-129, 331-402 (395-97); P. Duane Warden, 'Alienation and Community in 1 Peter' (PhD diss.; Duke University, 1986), pp. 161-99; Marie-Louise Lamau, *Des chrétiens dans le monde: Communautés pétriniennes au Ier siècle* (LD, 134; Paris: Cerf, 1988), pp. 7-99; Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition*, p. 11; Scot McKnight, *1 Peter* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 24-26, 47-52; Fika J. van Rensburg, 'Constructing the Economic-Historic Context of 1 Peter: Exploring a Methodology', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67 (2011), pp. 1-11.

44. One of the most natural points of comparison is Paul's collection for the poor saints of Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16.1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9; cf. Acts 24.17). This act of benevolence reveals that Christian communities throughout Greece and Asia Minor could generate some amount of financial surplus. This was true of even the poorer congregations (2 Cor. 8.1-5). Two points make using this collection as a point of comparison extremely problematic, however. First, we are never given any specific amounts contributed by the Pauline congregations. This fact alone would seem to rule out its applicability. Secondly, it is difficult to reconstruct the situation based on the need alone (i.e. the number of poor members of the Jerusalem church and the amount of funds required to alleviate the problem), because there is disagreement over the accuracy of the figures provided in the book of Acts (e.g. 3,000 people baptized [Acts 2.41]; 5,000 members [4.4]). Furthermore, even if the poverty totals in the Jerusalem church could be ascertained with a high degree of certainty, it would still be difficult to judge the appropriateness of a financial gift. For instance, did Paul hope to provide the church with enough funds to alleviate the problem for a week? a month? a year?

investigation into areas such as living expenses and wages in the Greco-Roman world, the economic stratum represented in the congregations of 1 Peter, and even more basic questions like the number of Christians in each Anatolian city. It is this final point that we will consider first.

Counting the Christians in Anatolian Cities

The average number of Christians in a given Greco-Roman city is difficult to calculate given the scarcity of the evidence. This might explain why so few historians have attempted to quantify the earliest Christian movement. But despite the hesitancy of some, informed hypotheses are possible and quite necessary if we are to determine the economic feasibility of civic benefaction in 1 Peter. If we were to assume that a house church comfortably accommodated some 30 to 40 people,⁴⁵ and if there were only a handful of these groups per city,⁴⁶ then we might conjecture that

It is impossible to determine which of these would have been an acceptable gift, and, of course, each would produce drastically different calculations.

45. Most scholars tend to place the capacity of early house churches at somewhere between 20 and 40 people, with an uncomfortable maximum being 50 (see Vincent P. Branick, *The House Church in the Writings of Paul* [Zacchaeus Studies; Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1989], pp. 30-40; Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2nd edn, 1994], p. 35; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St Paul's Corinth: Text and Archaeology* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 3rd edn, 2002], p. 182; Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], p. 290). Some have argued for a much greater capacity based on a few of the larger homes that have been uncovered (so, e.g., Bradley Blue, 'Acts and the House Church', in D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf [eds.], *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. II. The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], pp. 119-222 [175, cf. 142-43]; Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997], pp. 32-35, 201-203). But while it is true that some houses were very large and able to accommodate hundreds of people, these types of mansions were owned by the highest echelon elites whose wealth far surpassed that of even the lower level decurion. So it is problematic to use these residences as a standard by which to measure the average Christian meeting-place.

46. In the city of Corinth, there may have been six or more house churches during the time of Paul (cf. L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians* [ASOR Library of Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990], pp. 105-106). Yet the entire church (ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας) at Corinth is said to have been able to fit in the home of Gaius (Rom. 16.23; cf. 1 Cor. 14.23; see James

within the cities in which late first-century CE Christianity had taken root, the total number of believers may have ranged anywhere from 10 to 200 members,⁴⁷ with the average tending to be somewhere on the lower end of this spectrum.⁴⁸

For the purposes of our inquiry, we will construct a model of the typical Christian community using what would seem to be a reasonable estimate of an average-sized, first-century congregation: 50 members. What is important to recognize, however, is that not all 50 members would have been able to contribute to the financial strategies of the group. Because this number would include women, children and slaves who would not have contributed directly to the collective fund, it is best to calculate according to families, or better yet, household units. Out of some 50

D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* [WBC, 38B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988], pp. 910–11). Taking into account those Corinthians who are specifically named in the New Testament and allowing for members that are unmentioned (e.g. spouses, children, slaves, etc.), Murphy-O'Connor, *St Paul's Corinth*, p. 182, estimates some 40 to 50 Christians in the city of Corinth during the mid-first century CE.

47. In the city of Ephesus, Mikael Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus: A Textual Analysis of Early Christian Identity Formation in a Local Perspective* (WUNT, 242; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), p. 47, proposes a total of 500 to 2,000 Christ-followers by end of first century CE. This figure, however, seems incredibly high (cf. Paul R. Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* [WUNT, 166; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], p. 73, who only postulates a total of about 60 members during the time of Paul).

48. The reason why the average would be low is because the gospel would have penetrated some of the areas listed in the prescript of 1 Peter only recently; thus, we might assume an average of 20–30 Anatolian Christians per city during the late first century CE. Such figures would be slightly higher than those proposed by Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 6–7. In his calculations, Stark conjectures that in the year 40 CE, there were approximately 1,000 Christians in the Roman Empire. With an average growth rate of 40% per decade (or 3.42% per year), the group would have amassed a total of 3,842 members by the year 80 CE. In other words, Christians would have made up 0.0064% of the Empire's population (assuming a total population of 60 million). According to Stark's figures, in a large city like Ephesus, whose population was approximately 200,000, the number of Christians in the year 80 CE would be approximately 13. Of course, this projection reveals the limitations of Stark's proposal. Since he seeks the percentage of Christians across the Empire (and thus his calculations are unable to account for the fact that some cities may have had a large concentration of Christians, while others may have been without any at all), they are slightly less useful for determining the average number of Christians in a given community.

members, we might assume a total of 10 households. The next step then would be to determine the levels of wealth represented among these household groups.

Economic Conditions in 1 Peter

In a previous study, building on the works of Steven J. Friesen and Bruce W. Longenecker,⁴⁹ I attempted to evaluate the socio-economic status(es) of the Petrine audience using a reconstructed economic scale of urban centers across first-century CE Asia Minor (see Figure 1). Using this same data (with a few slight alterations), I will now seek to determine the economic feasibility of collective benefaction by quantifying the levels of financial surplus that could be contributed among the Anatolian congregations.

Figure 1. *Economic Scale for Urban Areas of First-century CE Anatolia*

	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>%</i>
ES1	Unlimited Surplus	provincial elite (senators[?]; equestrians; a few decurions)	1*
ES2	Substantial Surplus	municipal elite (most decurions, which may include: some veterans, a few ‘high-yield’ artisans, and a few traders; a few others who possibly did not serve on the βουλή)	4
ES3	Moderate Surplus	many veterans, most ‘high-yield’ artisans, a few traders, those connected to the elite (e.g. <i>apparitores</i>)	10
ES4	Small, Stable Surplus	some ‘high-yield’ artisans, some ‘low-yield’ artisans (esp. large business owners), some traders, regular wage earners	27
ES5	Meager, Unstable Surplus	some traders (esp. those employed by others), many ‘low-yield’ artisans (small business owners, those who are employed by others), skilled/unskilled laborers	33
ES6	No Surplus	unattached widows, orphans, beggars, disabled, unskilled day laborers	25

*Note: The figure for ES1 is likely lower than this, but for the sake of maintaining whole numbers, I have rounded up the percentage of provincial elites to 1%.

49. Steven J. Friesen, ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus’, *JSNT* 26 (2004), pp. 323-61; Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, ‘The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire’, *JRS* 99 (2009), pp. 61-91; Bruce W. Longenecker, ‘Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity’, *JSNT* 31 (2009), pp. 243-78; *idem*, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

As we move from the economic scale of Anatolian urban centers to the composition of Christian communities, it is important to recognize that economic levels among Christian communities (more or less) mirrored the structure/percentages of the wider urban context. One key difference, however, would have been the lack of provincial elites (E1) among the earliest Christian groups. Moreover, one might also debate whether municipal elites (E2) should be numbered among the members of Christian congregations. Given these reservations, we might do well to purposefully exclude any potential contributions from elite members of Christian churches (E1, E2). What makes this strategy attractive is that it would afford us the opportunity to test the collective benefaction proposal discussed above. In doing so, we would be able to determine whether the benefaction position can be sustained apart from the assumption that each congregation contained at least one member who possessed substantial wealth.

With these considerations in mind, we offer the following calculations. In a city where the Christian population numbered some 50 members (or 10 households), the (approximate) economic levels represented therein might be as follows:⁵⁰

Figure 2. *Economic Levels of Early Christian Households*

<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Number of Households</i>
25%	No Surplus	3
33%	Meager, Unstable Surplus	3
30%	Small, Stable Surplus	3
12%	Moderate Surplus	1

But these percentages still do not tell us how much each household could contribute. The key will be whether or not we are able to quantify designations like ‘meager’ surplus and ‘moderate’ surplus. In the section

50. I have changed the percentages from the previous study slightly due to the fact that (in my opinion) most Christian congregations would not have contained provincial elites, and only very rarely would they have contained those with a substantial financial surplus.

that follows, therefore, we will sketch a detailed portrait of the financial situation of a household located within the middle strata of the ancient economy, comparing the differential between annual costs and annual income. These figures, in turn, will give us some indication of the amount of disposable income available to Christians along the mid-level economic stratum.

Calculating the Disposable Income of Anatolian Christians

While the scarcity of economic data makes quantifying the disposable income of a first-century Anatolian household a difficult task, from the limited amount of extant data a composite picture can be constructed that can (tentatively) inform our discussion. An important point of methodological clarification is that our investigation will seek to reconstruct the economic conditions of a household in the *middle strata* of the economic hierarchy. This decision is based on two considerations. First, the poorest members of the community, who were struggling just to meet necessary subsistence requirements, would have lacked the financial means of achieving any kind of economic surplus. Secondly, on the other end of the spectrum, few (if any) early Christian communities would have contained members of the provincial/municipal elite; therefore, the economic surplus that could be amassed by this group need not be factored into our equation. With this consideration in mind, we turn to the economic data.

Expenses of a Mid-Level Anatolian Household: We will begin at the most basic level: the size of an Anatolian household. From the census returns of Roman Egypt, Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier calculate the average size of principal resident families at 4.3 persons.⁵¹ This number

51. Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time, 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 67-69. While this figure may seem too small, it is not as implausible as it first appears. The crucial factor in keeping the number low, as Bagnall and Frier point out, is the high mortality rate. Under this condition, average family size rarely exceeds five persons (see Ansley J. Coale, 'Estimates of Average Size of Household', in A.J. Coale *et al.* [eds.], *Aspects of the Analysis of Family Structure* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965], pp. 64-69; Thomas K. Burch, 'Some Demographic Determinants of Average Household Size: An Analytic Approach', in P. Laslett [ed.], *Household and Family in Past Time: Comparative Studies in the Size and Structure of the Domestic Group over the Last Three Centuries in England, France, Serbia, Japan and Colonial North America*,

increases slightly, however, when all the members of a given household (e.g. aged parents, slaves, extended family) are taken into account. In urban areas across Roman Egypt, the size of the average household was approximately 5.31 persons.⁵² This latter figure most closely approximates the needs and costs of the average Anatolian family, because it accounts for all of the financial dependents in a familial group. Therefore, it will be the household size from which our study works. Our average Anatolian household will include five members: an adult female (60-69 years old), an adult male (20-39 years old), an adult female (20-39 years old), a male child (13-15 years old), and a female child (10-12 years old).

The cost of food, which normally served as the largest expense, will be our starting point.⁵³ Here our focus will be on basic calorific intake needed to sustain human life. The nutritional requirements necessary for maintaining human existence have been repeatedly and carefully examined by numerous researchers. From these studies, a variety of projections have been made.⁵⁴ For the purposes of the present study, however, we have chosen to adopt the figures drawn up by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.⁵⁵ Applied to our five-member household, the projections

with further Materials from Western Europe [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], pp. 91-102).

52. This estimate can be compared with other approximations from this same area, e.g. Marcel Hombert and Claire Préaux, *Recherches sur le recensement dans l'Égypte romaine (P. Bruxelles Inv. E. 7616)* (Papyrological Lugduno-Batava, 5; Lugdunum Batavorum: Brill, 1952), pp. 154-55 (5.8 persons); Keith Hopkins, 'Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), pp. 303-54 (5.1 persons). In Egyptian villages, Deborah W. Hobson, 'House and Household in Roman Egypt', *Yale Classical Studies* 28 (1985), pp. 211-29, estimates an average of 7.3 persons per household.

53. It has been estimated that in pre-industrial societies, the urban poor (which would have included the majority of the readers) spent approximately 60-80% of their income on procuring food (Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy 1000-1700* [London: Routledge, 3rd edn, 1993], p. 24).

54. E.g. Judith Wills, *The Food Bible* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 12, gives figures of 1,940 calories for women under 50 and 2,550 calories for men; Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 19-20, suggests a diet consisting of 1,625 to 2,012 calories per day.

55. *Energy and Protein Requirements: Report of a Joint FAO/WHO ad hoc Expert Committee, Rome, 22 March-2 April 1971* (FAO Nutrition Meetings Report Series, 52; Technical Report Series [WHO], 522; Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization

are as follows:

1. adult female (60-69 years old) = 1,947 calories/day
2. adult male (20-39 years old) = 3,337 calories/day
3. adult female (20-39 years old) = 2,434 calories/day
4. male child (13-15 years old) = 3,237 calories/day
5. female child (10-12 years old) = 2,350 calories/day

When these numbers are added up, our average Anatolian household would require a total of 13,305 calories (or 2,661 calories per person/day) in order to sustain human existence.

In the Greco-Roman world, the primary food source through which most of these calories would be consumed was wheat.⁵⁶ But how much wheat was necessary to meet these minimum calorific requirements (using the metrological calculation 1 standard Roman *modius* = 8.6185 liters,⁵⁷ holding 6.65 kg⁵⁸ of Italian wheat)? One feasible solution to this question

of the United Nations, 1973). One of the primary reasons for choosing these figures is because they allow for the active lifestyles of those under consideration. While lower projections might provide bare minimum subsistence allowances, they would not allow individuals to adequately carry out necessary lifestyle functions for very long.

56. In classical antiquity, the only other food grain consumed on a substantial scale was barley. But during this time, the importance of barley was decreasing, and there was a clear preference for wheat (Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 3.113A; Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 717-718; see Naum Jasny, 'Competition among Grains in Classical Antiquity', *American Historical Review* 47 [1942], pp. 747-64; *idem*, *The Wheats of Classical Antiquity* [Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 62.3; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944]). In fact, the dislike for barley was so great that it was sometimes issued to slaves and soldiers as punishment (F. Orth, 'Gerste', in A.F. von Pauly *et al.* [eds.], *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* [Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1910], VII.1. pp. 1275-84).

57. See Richard Duncan-Jones, 'The Choenix, the Artaba and the Modius', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 21 (1976), pp. 43-52 (51-52). Compare this calculation with other previous proposals, e.g. Vicente Vázquez Queipo, *Essai sur les systèmes métriques et monétaires des anciens peuple, depuis les premiers temps historiques jusqu'à la fin du khalifat d'Orient* (2 vols.; Paris: Dalmont et Dunod, 1859), II, p. 444, who suggested 8.67 liters; and Friedrich Hultsch, *Griechische und römische Metrologie* (Berlin: Weidmann, 2nd edn, 1882), pp. 122-26, who calculated the volume at 8.75 liters.

58. A range of figures is used to estimate the volume of dry wheat per standard *modius*. Some work from a measurement of 6.5 kg of wheat (so, e.g., Willem Jongman, *The Economy and Society of Pompeii* [Dutch Monographs on Ancient

has been proposed by Peter Garnsey. He suggests that the average wheat consumption needed to maintain human existence would have been 230 kg/person/year.⁵⁹ Support for this figure is found in the Athenian grain-tax law of 374/373 BCE, which provides the weight and volume ratios of wheat and barley: one *choenix* of (dried) barley weighed 545 grams; one *choenix* of (dried) wheat 655 grams (*SEG* 48 [1998] no. 96, ll. 21-25). If a *choenix* was the daily ration for one individual, then a yearly total of wheat would be 239 kg (655 grams = 0.655 kg/day or 239 kg/year). This number is nearly equivalent to that proposed by Garnsey.

A somewhat higher projection, and one that is probably closer to the actual levels of consumption by mid-level households in Asia Minor, is that of Colin Clark and Margaret Rosary Haswell.⁶⁰ On the assumption

History and Archaeology, 4; Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1988], p. 195 n. 2). Others prefer the slightly higher figure of 6.55 kg (so, e.g., M.I. Rostovtzeff, 'Frumentum', in von Pauly, *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, VII, pp. 126-87 [149]; Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence*, p. 4 n. 3). Many work from the calculation of 6.75 kg of wheat per *modius* (so, e.g., Raymond W. Goldsmith, 'An Estimate of the Size and Structure of the National Product of the Early Roman Empire', *Review of Income and Wealth* 30 [1984], pp. 263-88 [266]; Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 263 n. 33; Dennis P. Kehoe, *The Economics of Agriculture on Roman Imperial Estates in North Africa* [Hypomnemata, 89; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988], p. 15). The number has even reached as high as 6.8 kg (so, e.g., Dominic Rathbone, 'Earnings and Costs: Living Standards and the Roman Economy (First to Third Centuries AD)', in A.K. Bowman and A. Wilson [eds.], *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems* [Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], pp. 299-326 [301]). Yet, if one liter of wheat weighed approximately 0.772 kg, as Lin Foxhall and H.A. Forbes ('Σιτομετρία: The Role of Grain as a Staple Food in Classical Antiquity', *Chiron* 12 [1982], pp. 41-90 [43-44]) have shown, then 8.6185 liters (the volume of one standard *modius*) would hold 6.653482 kg (or 6.65 kg, if rounded down) of wheat (cf. Barbara Levick, *The Government of the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook* [London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 2000], p. xix).

59. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, p. 104. Cf. Scheidel and Friesen, 'Size of the Economy', p. 65 n. 16.

60. Colin Clark and Margaret Rosary Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture* (London: Macmillan, 3rd edn, 1967), pp. 53-77. Cf. Keith Hopkins, 'Rome, Taxes, Rents, and Trade', *Kodai* 6/7 (1995/96), pp. 41-75; reprinted as 'Rome, Taxes, Rents, and Trade', in W. Scheidel and S. von Reden (eds.), *The Ancient Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 190-230 (197-98), who proposes 250 kg of wheat equivalent. For comparison, in mid-fifteenth-century Florence, wheat consumption has been estimated at 250 kg (or 39 *modii*) per person (see William Roscoe, *Life of*

of a minimal extraction rate of 10 per cent (i.e. in the process of removing part of the bran, 1 kg of wheat will be milled down to 900 grams),⁶¹ the authors projected that in order to meet the minimum calorific requirements necessary to sustain life, a person would need between 190 and 235 kg of unmilled grain per year. But considering that even among the most impoverished societies there is a desire for variety, Clark and Haswell increase these numbers slightly to account for the acquisition of nutritionally less efficient food such as fruits and vegetables.⁶² This additional factor takes the level of subsistence to 250-300 kg of wheat equivalent per person/year.⁶³

Lorenzo de Medici, Called the Magnificent [London: Routledge, 1883], p. 406 n. 1, drawing from the unpublished work 'Inventiva d'una impositione di nuova gravezza' by Lodovico Ghetti).

61. For *triticum* and unmoistened *siligo* the normal extraction rate appears to have been almost 10%; see Naum Jasny, 'Wheat Prices and Milling Costs in Classical Rome', *Wheat Studies of the Food Research Institute* 20 (1944), pp. 137-70 (154); Ludwig A. Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), pp. 184-209.

62. On foods that might supplement the grain-heavy diet of classical antiquity, see John K. Evans, 'Plebs rustica. The Peasantry of Classical Italy. II. The Peasant Economy', *American Journal of Ancient History* 5 (1980), pp. 134-73. In some cases, peasants would collect wild plants to provide a free supplement (see Joan M. Frayn, 'Wild and Cultivated Plants: A Note on the Peasant Economy of Ancient Italy', *JRS* 65 [1975], pp. 32-39).

63. When these figures are applied to our average Anatolian household, the following distribution seems appropriate: (1) adult female (60-69 years old) = 250 kg; (2) adult male (20-39 years old) = 300 kg; (3) adult female (20-39 years old) = 270 kg; (4) male child (13-15 years old) = 290 kg; (5) female child (10-12 years old) = 260 kg. These totals average out to about 275 kg/person. Similar numbers are found in the annual allowances for Roman soldiers (cf. Polybius, *Hist.* 6.39.12-14). Each soldier received 3.5 bushels of unmilled grain (7.5 kg per bushel) per month, which comes out to an annual allotment of 315 kg of grain (Peter Herz, 'Finances and Costs of the Roman Army', in P. Erdkamp [ed.], *A Companion to the Roman Army* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2007], pp. 306-22 [315]), or to put it terms of *modii*, the basic ration for a soldier was 4 *modii* (or approximately 319 kg) of unmilled grain per month, an equivalent of 319 kg per annum (Dominic Rathbone, 'Warfare and the State: Military Finance and Supply', in P. Sabin *et al.* [eds.], *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare. II. Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], pp. 158-76 [169-70]). These projections find further support in the living allowances cited in Roman legal sources (see Bruce W. Frier, 'Subsistence Annuities and per Capita Income in the Early Roman Empire', *Classical Philology* 88 [1993], pp. 222-30) and in the rations apportioned for slaves

Across the Roman Empire, the price of wheat varied according to location and the productivity of local harvest. In Judea, during the late first century CE to the early third century CE, the price ranged between HS 4 and HS 16 per *modius*.⁶⁴ Some of the lowest prices in the Empire could be found in the land of Egypt. Collections of numerous texts from the first three centuries CE show an average price range of HS 2 to HS 2.5 per *modius*.⁶⁵ In Italy, the price of a *modius* of wheat during the first century would have been around HS 4.⁶⁶ The only explicit reference to the price of wheat in first-century CE Asia Minor can be found in an inscription from Pisidian Antioch (93/94 CE). After a winter shortage, the Roman governor ordered surplus wheat to be sold at no more than 1 *denarius* (= HS 4) per *modius*. Prior to this point, the price had been 8 or 9 *asses* (= HS 2 to 2.25) per *modius* (*AE* [1925] no. 126b).⁶⁷ Based on

(Cato, *Agr.* 56; see also Heinrich Michaelis, 'Kritische Würdigung der Preise des Edictum Diocletiani vom nationalökonomischen Standpunkte aus', *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 53 [1897], pp. 1-29 [4]). What is interesting is that, according to Sallust (*Hist.* 3.48 Mb), Roman prisoners received a little less than 5 *modii* per month.

64. These figures come from rabbinic texts discussed by Daniel Sperber, *Roman Palestine, 200–400: Money and Prices* (Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture; Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2nd edn, 1991), p. 102. The price is based on the assumption that one *se'ah* = one *modius*. If one *se'ah* = one *modius castrensis* (or 1.5 standard *modii*), as argued by F.M. Heichelheim, 'Roman Syria', in T. Frank (ed.), *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome. IV. Africa, Syria, Greece, Asia Minor* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1938), pp. 121-257 (181), then the range would be HS 2.67 to HS 10.67 per *modius*.

65. See the evidence discussed by Richard Duncan-Jones, 'The Price of Wheat in Roman Egypt under the Principate', *Chiron* 6 (1976), pp. 241-62; *idem*, *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 143-55; and Dominic Rathbone, 'Prices and Price Formation in Roman Egypt', in J. Andraeu *et al.* (eds.), *Economie antique: Prix et formation des prix dans les économies antiques* (Entretiens d'archéologie et d'histoire, 3; Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges: Musée archéologique départemental, 1997), pp. 183-244.

66. Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 345-47.

67. This example from the small colony of Pisidian Antioch illustrates the effect of location on the cost of wheat. Much like the rest of the Empire, larger urban areas tended to create higher prices; whereas prices seem to be lower in smaller cities. According to Dio Chrysostom (*Tumult.* [Or. 46.]10), the price of wheat at the small town of Prusa (Bithynia) was less in times of crisis than that of some other cities when costs were at their lowest. This would explain why the price of bread in a large city like Ephesus was so high (note, e.g., *I.Ephesos* nos. 910, 923, 938). Cicero, in fact, notes that the grain prices in the city (Ephesus) were much higher than those in the

these prices, ancient historians tend to calculate the average cost of wheat during the first century CE at HS 3 per *modius*.⁶⁸ If we assume that this was the price paid by our average Anatolian household, then the annual cost of wheat would have been HS 563.91 to 676.68 (= 140.98 to 169.17 *denarii*).⁶⁹

Aside from wheat (and barley), there were a variety of foodstuffs that had become staples in the diets of antiquity. One of these substances was olive oil. Since oil could be used for a variety of purposes (e.g. as foodstuff; in preparation of medicines, unguents, and perfumes; as a cleansing agent if rubbed on the body; burned in lamps for light; as all-purpose lubricant), it was a common expense in most ancient budgets. It has been estimated that in antiquity the average annual consumption rate of olive oil was 20 liters per person.⁷⁰ While this figure might be somewhat

smaller community of Philomelium (*Verr.* 2.3.191). Evidence from a later period also seems to confirm this disparity between the prices in large and small communities. In the mid-fourth century CE, the cost of wheat in the city of Syrian Antioch (one of the largest cities in the Empire) was double the normal price in Egypt (Julian, *Misopogon* 369).

68. So, e.g., Rostovtzeff, 'Frumentum', p. 149; Eugène Cavaignac, *Population et capital dans le monde méditerranéen antique* (Publications de la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, 18; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 136; Geoffrey Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), pp. 144-55; Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 50-51, 145-46, 345-56; Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Early Principate: Augustus to Trajan* (New Surveys in the Classics, 15; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 15.

69. The calculations are as follows: 250-300 kg of wheat equivalent/person/year × 5 people = 1,250-1,500 kg/year ÷ 6.65 kg (the volume of 1 *modius*) = 187.97-225.56 *modii*/year at HS 3/*modius* = HS 563.91-676.68 (= 140.98-169.17 *denarii*) per year.

70. David J. Mattingly, 'First Fruit? The Olive in the Roman World', in G. Shipley and J. Salmon (eds.), *Human Landscape in Classical Antiquity: Environment and Culture* (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, 6; London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 213-53 (239); J. Theodore Peña, *The Urban Economy during the Early Dominate: Pottery Evidence from the Palatine Hill* (British Archaeological Reports British Series, 784; Oxford: Archaeopress, 1999), p. 20. Divergent figures have been proposed for classical Athens. For instance, Marie-Claire Amouretti, *Le pain et l'huile dans la Grèce antique: De l'aire au moulin* (Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, 328; Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne, 67; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1986), pp. 177-96, has suggested an average of 15 to 28 liters/person/year in classical Attica, while Lin Foxhall, *Olive Cultivation in Ancient Greece: Seeking the Ancient Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 85-95, estimates that wealthy Athenian households used approximately 200 to 330 kg (= 220 to 363 liters) of olive

low, especially if we are concerned with the expenses of middle income households, it is generally accepted as a basic standard, and so it will be the number adopted here.⁷¹

If, then, we assume that the average (five member) Anatolian household would require approximately 100 liters of olive oil per year, what would be the total cost? One projection comes from Tenney Frank's work on prices in the Roman Republic. According to Frank, during the third and second centuries BCE, the price of oil can be located somewhere around 0.4 *denarius* per liter. In the late first century BCE, however, there was a slight inflation as prices increased to 0.5-0.75 *denarius* per liter.⁷² These calculations appear to find validity in an episode recounted (twice) by Josephus. In *War* 2.591-592, Josephus tells the story of a man from Gischala named John, son of Levi, who purchased olive oil at the price of 1 *denarius* per amphora (presumably holding 25.9 liters) in Galilee and then sold it for eight times that price (or 0.31 *denarius* per liter) to the Judeans dwelling in Syria.⁷³ However, this same story is recounted in his *Life*, with slightly different figures. In this later account, Josephus says that John purchased the oil at a price of 2.4 *denarii* per amphora from the town of Gischala and then sold it to Judeans living in Caesarea Philippi at an inflated cost of 24 *denarii* per amphora (or 0.93 *denarius* per liter) (*Life* 74-75).⁷⁴ If we take these projections (0.5-0.75 *denarius* per liter) as

oil (for food, bathing, and lighting) per year.

71. If compared with data from elsewhere, the number falls somewhere in the middle. When we consider that in modern Methana, the average rate of olive oil consumption is 50 kg (= 55 liters) per person/year (H.A. Forbes, 'Strategies and Soils: Technology, Production and Environment in the Peninsula of Methana, Greece' [PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1982], p. 177), then the projection seems fairly low. However, evidence from the Mishna tends to situate this figure on the high side. According to the *m. Ket.* 5.8, the minimum amount of oil with which a husband was required to supply his wife was half a *log* per week. Therefore, each person was apportioned a minimum of 26 *logs* of oil annually. If 1 *se'ah* = 24 *logs* = 8.54 liters, then each person would need 9.26 liters per annum (see Zeev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* [London/New York: Routledge, 1994], pp. 125-26).

72. Tenney Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*. I. *Rome and Italy of the Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933), pp. 200, 220. Cf. H.H. Scullard, *A History of the Roman World: 753 to 146 BC* (London: Routledge, 5th edn, 2003), p. 357.

73. Ordinarily, olive oil was not considered to be a large-profit investment in classical antiquity (see Pliny, *Nat.* 18.38; cf. Cato, *Agr.* 1.7).

74. According to Josephus (*Life* 75), the free-market rate at which John purchased oil was 1 *sextarius* for 0.05 drachma/*denarius*, while his selling rate was 1 *sextarius*

a standard price range in the first century CE, then our average Anatolian household would spend approximately 50-75 *denarii* per year on olive oil.

Another food item that would have been a staple in the diet of mid-level Anatolian households is meat. It is not uncommon for scholars to claim that in antiquity meat was a luxury item that only the wealthy could afford.⁷⁵ The inadequacy of this perspective has, nonetheless, been demonstrated time and again from the ancient source material.⁷⁶ From the biblical texts alone, we discover that meat was consumed regularly enough to create problems within early Christian congregations (see Rom. 14.1–15.6; 1 Cor. 8–10). The more pertinent questions then are: how much meat was consumed, and what was the total cost?

In the Roman army, it has been estimated that each soldier consumed about one-half a pound (163 grams) of meat per day.⁷⁷ The price is more

for 0.5 drachma/*denarius*. Given that 1 *sextarius* = 1/48 amphora and 1 amphora = 25.9 liters, then 1 amphora (at 0.05 drachma/*denarius* per *sextarius*) would cost 2.4 *denarii* (or 0.09 *denarius* per liter) and 1 amphora (at 0.5 drachma/*denarius* per *sextarius*) would be sold at 24 *denarii* (or 0.93 *denarius* per liter).

75. So, e.g., Magen Broshi, 'The Diet of Palestine in the Roman Period: Introductory Notes', *Israel Museum Journal* 5 (1986), pp. 41-56; repr. in *idem*, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* (JSPSup, 36; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 121-43 (132-33). In earlier scholarship, this was also a common claim made about the Roman army, based on texts such as Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.24 and Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 7.17 (see, e.g., H.M.D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928], p. 220; cf. also Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* [trans. J.H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982], p. 126). This supposition has proved to be untenable, however. Meat was clearly a part of the average Roman soldier's diet throughout the imperial period (Plutarch, *Cat. Maj.* 4.3). For a discussion, see Roy W. Davies, 'The Roman Military Diet', *Britannia* 11 (1971), pp. 122-42 (138-41); Paul Erdkamp, *Hunger and the Sword: Warfare and Food Supply in Roman Republican Wars (264–30 B.C.)* (Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, 20; Amsterdam: Gieben, 1998), pp. 31-33; Jonathan Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 B.C.–A.D. 235)* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, 23; Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 27-32.

76. A. King, 'Diet in the Roman World: A Regional Inter-Site Comparison of Mammal Bones', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12 (1999), pp. 168-202. Cf. also Mireille Corbier, 'The Ambiguous Status of Meat in Ancient Rome', *Food and Foodways* 3 (1989), pp. 223-64; Justin J. Meggitt, 'Meat Consumption and Social Conflict in Corinth', *JTS* 45 (1994), pp. 137-41.

77. Roth, *Logistics of the Roman Army*, p. 32. A late Roman papyrus from Egypt lists a soldier's ration as either 1 or 1/2 *libra* of meat per day (CPL no. 199 [398 CE]). The problem is that the precise figure depends on one's interpretation of the text.

difficult to discern because of the lack of pertinent data.⁷⁸ Some of the few actual figures that are preserved in the source material come from second-century CE Palestine. Here different carcasses of cattle range between 4 to 50 *denarii* (*m. B. Qam.* 3.9; *b. B. Qam* 34b). In the absence of any specific prices, we might tentatively place the annual cost of meat for a mid-level household at somewhere between 75-100 *denarii*. But, of course, we recognize that this is the most speculative of our projections.

A final consideration when calculating average household costs is the price and consumption of wine by a given family. In the city of Rome, André Tchernia has estimated wine consumption at 146 to 182 liters (= 5.64 to 7.01 amphora) per person/year.⁷⁹ This is well below the figures supplied by Cato the Elder, whose field hands were apportioned 7 to 10 amphora (= 181.3 to 259 liters) of wine per person/year (Cato, *Agr.* 57). Given that our concern is with an average household (including individuals of varying consumption needs), the suggestion by Tchernia appears to be a reasonable approximation that could be applied to the population of Asia Minor.

Calculating the cost of wine is a little more difficult, however. What one discovers is a large disparity between prices across the Empire. In a city like Pompeii, the price of wine, which varied according to quality, ranged from HS 12 to HS 24 to even HS 48 per amphora (*CIL* IV no. 1679). These numbers seem to be slightly higher in the city of Herculaneum (*CIL* IX

78. Little quantitative data from the early imperial period has survived. From the Later Roman Empire, we know that Valentinian III fixed the price at 270 pounds per *solidus* for Numidia and Mauretania, and in 452 CE, a guild of butchers in Rome sold pork at 240 pounds per *solidus* (see A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* [2 vols.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964], I, p. 446). Prior to this we also have Diocletian's *Edict on Maximum Prices*, which sets the cost of meat from 8 *denarii* for a pound of beef to 12 *denarii* for a pound of pork all the way up to 24 *denarii* for a pound of sow's matrix (*Edict on Maximum Prices* 4).

79. André Tchernia, *Le vin de l'Italie romaine: Essai d'histoire économique d'après les amphores* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 261; Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1986), pp. 21-27, 58-60. An average rate of consumption of 100 liters/person/year is assumed by Greg S. Aldrete and David J. Mattingly, 'Feeding the City: The Organization, Operation, and Scale of the Supply System for Rome', in D.S. Potter and D.J. Mattingly (eds.), *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 171-204 (195), but this seems a little too low. In modern Methana, adult males drank over 1 liter of homemade wine per day (Foxhall and Forbes, 'Role of Grain as a Staple Food', p. 68).

no. 2689: HS 24, HS 36, HS 48, and HS 54 per amphora). But the highest prices, of course, came from Rome. During the mid-second century CE, wine prices in the capital ranged from HS 61 to HS 88 per amphora (*CIL* VI no. 10234 = *ILS* no. 7213; cf. *AE* [1937] no. 161).⁸⁰ The inflated prices of Italy were not representative of the entire empire, however. Based on an inference from customs dues, Tenney Frank calculates the price of wine in Spain, which was known to have much lower prices than Italy (Polybius, *Hist.* 34.8.6; cf. Martial, *Epig.* 12.76), at somewhere between HS 8 and HS 12 per amphora.⁸¹ These figures afford us with the basic materials for approximating the cost-range of wine for the average Anatolian family. Based on an estimated wine consumption at 146 to 182 liters (= 5.64 to 7.01 amphora) per person/year,⁸² an average household of five in a large urban area like Ephesus might spend HS 338.4 (= 84.6 *denarii*) to HS 420.6 (= 105.15 *denarii*) per year on cheap wine (HS 12). In smaller urban communities such as Prusa in Bithynia, this same family might pay anywhere from HS 225.6 (= 56.4 *denarii*) to HS 280.4 (= 70.1 *denarii*) for cheap wine (HS 8) per annum.

Clothing is another expense that all households would have to include in their annual budget. Each year, or possibly every other year, members of the household would require shoes and various garments. This expenditure can clearly be seen in the living costs that Cato the Elder provided for the slaves on his farm. Every other year, he supplied each slave with a tunic, a blanket, and a pair of wooden shoes (Cato, *Agr.* 59). For those who resided at a mid-level economic position, other accessories might also be added to this list (e.g. jewelry and other forms of ornamentation).⁸³

The prices of these items, of course, varied depending on the article

80. See Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 364-65.

81. Tenney Frank, 'On the Export Tax of Spanish Harbors', *AJP* 57 (1936), pp. 87-90. Columella (*Rust.* 3.3.10) says that in Nero's time the cheapest wine sold at wholesale (on the farm) at HS 300 for 40 urns (525 liters).

82. For clarification purposes, we are using the following measurement conversions: 1 amphora = 1 quadrantal = 25.9 liters; 1 sextarius = 1/48 amphora.

83. The author of 1 Peter clearly expected some of his readers to own, or at least be able to own, jewelry and costly apparel (1 Pet. 3.3). Even for those who could not afford to spend extravagant sums on ornamentation (as seen in Suetonius, *Jul.* 50.2; Pliny, *Nat.* 9.58; Petronius, *Satyr.* 67), there were nevertheless cheaper alternatives. Manufacturers often copied the designs of expensive pieces of jewelry using cheaper metals (see A.T. Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion* [Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2000], p. 114).

and its quality. In Rome, a new pair of shoes is said to have cost HS 9-12 (Seneca, *Ben.* 7.21.2); whereas a toga might range anywhere from HS 12, for one of lesser quality (Martial, *Epig.* 9.100), to more than HS 120, for one whose quality was much higher (Martial, *Epig.* 4.26). In first and second-century CE Roman Palestine, a Jewish *tallith* (inner garment) could cost as little as 8 *denarii* for a small (children's?) size, but ordinarily these garments would have averaged around 20 to 25 *denarii*, with some even being priced as high as 50 *denarii*.⁸⁴ Likewise, with the outer garment (*chaluk*), one might pay 8 *denarii* for a smaller (children's?) size, but on average the price normally ran somewhere from 12 to 25 *denarii*.⁸⁵ From this same area, a good slave suit was priced at 30 *denarii* (*m. 'Arak.* 6.5). If we apportion a total of 20 *denarii*/year for each household member, then the annual clothing costs would amount to 100 *denarii*.⁸⁶

Part of the expenses of any Anatolian household would have included the payment of taxes. In the Roman Empire, inhabitants were subject to both direct and indirect taxation. The latter, which made up the bulk of imperial tax income, involved tax on persons and property (*tributum capitis/soli*).⁸⁷ Consequently, its greatest affect was on those in rural communities, leaving urban dwellers (in principle) exempt from many of

84. Examples of Jewish *tallith* prices include: 8 *denarii* (*t. Me'il.* 2.10); 12 *denarii* (*m. Me'il.* 6.4); 20 *denarii* (*t. Bek.* 6.13; *t. 'Arak.* 4.2); 25 *denarii* (*t. B. Meş.* 3.14); 50 *denarii* (*t. Šeq.* 2.8; *t. Me'il.* 1.23).

85. Examples of Jewish *chaluk* prices include: 8 *denarii* (*t. Me'il.* 2.10); 12-25 *denarii* (*m. Me'il.* 6.4); 20-24 *denarii* (*t. B. Meş.* 3.16); 24 *denarii* (*t. Me'il.* 2.10).

86. An annual allotment of 20 *denarii* seems to be a reasonable sum. We might compare this figure to annuity payments left by a certain Aurelius Symphorus (*Dig.* 34.3.28). According to the jurist Scaevola, Symphorus had served as personal surety on behalf of the tutor of two brothers, both minors. Subsequently, in his will, Symphorus left a legacy for each boy that included HS 5,000 upon reaching the age of fourteen plus a small annuity until then. The annuity consisted of monthly payments of 6 *denarii* each for maintenance and a yearly payment of 25 *denarii* each for clothing (cf. *Dig.* 10.2.39.2 [25 *denarii*/year]; 34.1.20.3 [50 *aurei*/year]; 34.4.30 [125 *denarii*/year]).

87. Lutz Neesen, *Untersuchungen zu den direkten Staatsabgaben der römischen Kaiserzeit (27 v. Chr.–284 n. Chr.)* (Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte, 32; Bonn: Habelt, 1980). In previous periods, we also hear of direct taxation on the people of Asia Minor: M. Serge, 'Iscrizioni di Licia. I. Tolomeo di Telmesso', *Clara Rhodos* 9 (1938), pp.181-208 (190, poll tax); Michael Wörrle, 'Epigraphische Forschungen zur Geschichte Lykiens. III. Ein hellenistischer Königsbrief aus Telmessos', *Chiron* 9 (1979), pp. 83-111 (83, artisan tax).

these costs. However, since peasants in the countryside had difficulties producing the cash reserve needed to make these payments, the bill was usually the responsibility of cities, and at times, wealthy benefactors stepped in and paid much (or all) of the dues.⁸⁸ Indirect taxation involved payment on transactions such as inheritance, manumission of slaves, and the import/export of goods. But, again, given the frequency of their occurrence, an urban household might not be greatly affected.⁸⁹ Given these considerations, a reasonable approximation for taxes each year, as suggested by Keith Hopkins, is HS 15 per person (or almost 20 *denarii* total).⁹⁰

A further cost in the overall budget of the average Anatolian household would be housing rental. Since few families would have been wealthy enough to own a home, we must consider the cost of leasing a room(s) in one of the apartment buildings located in various cities. But again, much as is the case with other areas of economic quantification, we are forced to work from a very meager amount of data. When it comes to basic rental prices of mid- to low-income families in Roman society, no accurate statistics have survived. Nevertheless, based on a small amount of evidence from lease payments procured by wealthy elites, Bruce W. Frier suggests that a decent rental house may have cost HS 500 (= 125

88. *IGR* IV nos. 181, 259; cf. *ILS* no. 6960; Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen (ed.), *IG XII,5. Inscriptiones Cycladum* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1903-1909) no. 946.

89. Concerning export/import taxes, Mitchell (*Anatolia I*, p. 257) notes, 'It is hard to believe that more than about 10 per cent of goods that circulated in the cash economy crossed the boundaries of customs'. Part of this was due to the fact that in the time period with which we are concerned (late first century CE), the Anatolian economy was still in its infancy. Increased mass-production and long-distance trade developed sometime later. The production of olive oil is one example. During the early Principate, production seems to have been designed around the needs of local markets, especially in the inland portions of the continent. It was not until the later Roman Empire that production and large-scale distribution increased (see Stephen Mitchell, 'Olive Cultivation in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor', in S. Mitchell and C. Katsari [eds.], *Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor* [Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005], pp. 83-113).

90. Keith Hopkins, 'Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C.–A.D. 400)', *JRS* 70 (1980), pp. 101-25 (120). Hopkins's notion of a low tax-rate is seriously called into question by P.A. Brunt, ('The Revenues of Rome', *JRS* 71 [1981], pp. 161-72 [170-71]), based on the numerous complaints referred to in the ancient sources. As such, our projected expenditure on taxes might need to be increased. But it is difficult to assess how urban traders and merchants would have been affected by these tax burdens compared to rural farmers.

denarii) per year.⁹¹ A slightly lower projection is offered by Frank, who proposes an annual cost of HS 360 (= 90 *denarii*).⁹² Although these figures are merely educated conjectures, they could serve as a basic price range for mid- to low-income housing.⁹³ As such, they would reveal the high cost of accommodation in the Roman world.

In order to cover all expenses not included in the previous categories, we have added a section for miscellaneous costs. This allows us to account for things like business expenses (e.g. buying or repairing equipment), household appliances (e.g. dishes, pots, etc), payments for the bathhouse, or any of the other variety of costs that may have arisen for an average Anatolian household. The total that we have designated for this category of expenses is 25 to 50 *denarii* per year.

When all of the expenses of the mid-level Anatolian household are calculated, the following totals are generated. On the low end of the scale are those who live in urban areas with a small population and whose spending limits only rise slightly above the basic needs of the family. In this case, an Anatolian household might expect to spend approximately 557 *denarii* annually.⁹⁴ On the other end of the spectrum, are those who are located in large urban centers and whose spending greatly exceeds minimum levels of subsistence and necessity. The total yearly expenditure for this household would be around 744 *denarii*.

Income of a Mid-level Anatolian Household: The problem that one runs into when calculating the income of the average Anatolian family is that

91. Bruce W. Frier, 'The Rental Market in Early Imperial Rome', *JRS* 67 (1977), pp. 27-37 (34). For an examination of the social and economic aspects of housing rental, see *idem*, *Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 21-47.

92. Frank, *Rome and Italy of the Republic*, p. 385 (although cf. p. 189, where 100 *denarii* are apportioned for rent).

93. From first- and second-century CE Roman Palestine, there are two references to house rentals that provide a much broader price-range. In *t. B. Meş.* 4.5, the cost of rent is said to be 48 *denarii* per year, while *t. B. Meş.* 8.31 records a price of 240 *denarii* annually. Between these two extremes, a price of 100 *denarii*, which is much closer to the projections above, is found in *y. B. Meş.* 4.2 (9D11).

94. Cf. Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (trans. O.C. Dean, Jr; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), pp. 80-85, who propose 600-700 *denarii* as the annual cost of subsistence living for an urban family of four. This figure seems much too high for a minimum subsistence level.

the wages found in the extant source material are mainly those of common laborers from rural areas, with most deriving from the second century CE or later.⁹⁵ Therefore, in many cases we are only able to surmise the earnings of mid-level professions (i.e. those whose earnings placed them in an economic situation between abject poverty and extreme wealth) in the urban environments of the first century CE. Yet, even though precise information is lacking, it is still possible to offer an informed hypothesis.

There are two possible methods by which this information could be attained. First, one could reconstruct the financial situation of urban laborers based on the salary of a close economic counterpart: the Roman soldier. Since ‘[t]he [soldier’s] basic rate of pay from Julius Caesar to Domitian...seems to lie in the middle range of civilian earnings’,⁹⁶ an analysis of a soldier’s wages could be instructive. During most of the first century CE, the salary (*stipendium*) of a Roman legionary soldier was HS 900 (= 225 *denarii*) per annum.⁹⁷ This total was increased to HS

95. A few of the more helpful studies on wages in Greek and Roman antiquity include: János Szilágyi, ‘Prices and Wages in the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire’, *Acta antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 11 (1963), pp. 325-89; Mireille Corbier, ‘Salaires et salariat sous le Haut-Empire’, in *Les ‘devaluations’ à Rome: Époque républicaine et impériale (Gdansk, 19-21 octobre 1978)* (Collection de l’Ecole Française de Rome, 37.2; Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1980), pp. 61-101; and Rathbone, ‘Earnings and Costs’.

96. Rathbone, ‘Earnings and Costs’, 311.

97. Evidence for the exact pay-rate of legionary soldiers is sparse, Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.17, Suetonius, *Dom.* 7.3 and Dio Cassius 67.3.5 being some of the few sources that provide actual monetary figures (although cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 49.2; Dio Cassius 54.25.5-6; M. Alexander Speidel [ed.], *Die römischen Schreibtasseln von Vindonissa: Lateinische Texte des militärischen Alltags und ihre geschichtliche Bedeutung* [Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa, 12; Brugg: Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa, 1996], nos. 64-66). Very often documents from Egypt are brought in to supplement the literary record (e.g. Jules Nicole and Charles Morel [eds.], *Archives militaires du Ier siècle: Texte inédit du papyrus latin de Genève no. 1* [Geneva: H. Kündig, 1900] [= P.Gen.Lat.] = Robert Cavenaile [ed.], *Corpus papyrorum latinarum* [Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1956–58], no. 106 = *RMR* no. 68 [81 CE]; P.Gen. Lat 4 = *RMR* 69 [c. 84 CE]; and Hannah M. Cotton and Joseph Geiger [eds.], *Masada II: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965: Final Report. The Latin and Greek Documents* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989], no. 722 [72/75 CE]). Each of these texts is a financial account of a Roman soldier, with a record of various amounts being credited to the individual and certain camp expenses being deducted. Because the money paid into the accounts of the soldiers closely approximates the rates discussed elsewhere, historians regularly interpret these figures as full salaries of Roman soldiers. Yet, given the lack of exact correspondence between these numbers

1,200 (= 300 *denarii*) in 85 CE⁹⁸ under the reforms of Domitian.⁹⁹ But even this raise did not propel them into the upper echelons of provincial society. Those who were single may have been left with a small amount of disposable income,¹⁰⁰ but for those who had to support a family, these wages would have produced very little net profit.¹⁰¹

and those in the literary records, this evidence might not reveal as much as some have assumed (cf. Richard Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History* [London: Routledge, 1995], pp. 104-105).

98. Some have argued that these reforms occurred during or after the revolt of Saturninus (88-89 CE) (so, e.g., J. Brian Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 BCE–AD 235* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984], p. 185; Johan van Heesch, ‘Some Aspects of Wage Payments and Coinage in Ancient Rome, First to Third Centuries CE’, in J. Lucassen [ed.], *Wages and Currency: Global Comparisons from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* [International and Comparative Social History; New York: Peter Lang, 2007], pp. 77-96 [86-87]).

99. On the pay of Roman soldiers, see P.A. Brunt, ‘Pay and Superannuation in the Roman Army’, *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950), pp. 50-71; G.R. Watson, ‘The Pay of the Roman Army: The Auxiliary Forces’, *Historia* 8 (1959), pp. 372-78; Jorma Kaimio, ‘Notes on the Pay of Roman Soldiers’, *Arctos* 9 (1975), pp. 39-46; Ramsay MacMullen, ‘The Roman Emperors’ Army Costs’, *Latomus* 43 (1984), pp. 571-80; Joachim Jahn, ‘Zur Entwicklung römischer Soldzahlungen von Augustus bis auf Diokletian’, *Studien zu den Fundmünzen der Antike* 2 (1984), pp. 53-74; M. Alexander Speidel, ‘Roman Army Pay Scales’, *JRS* 82 (1992), pp. 87-106; Richard Alston, ‘Roman Military Pay from Caesar to Diocletian’, *JRS* 84 (1994), pp. 113-23.

100. From Augustus to Domitian (84 CE), legionary forces grossed HS 900 per annum. The Roman army made the following deductions from this total: HS 240 for rations, HS 36 for boots, and HS 30 for hay. This left a net income of HS 594 (= 148.5 *denarii*). But even then soldiers had other expenses. As Pecennius had previously pointed out, with this money ‘they had to buy clothes, weapons and tents, bribe the bullying centurion and purchase a respite from duty’ (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.17). However, despite these costs, a soldier without any other financial commitments could accumulate a modest savings. For instance, in *RMR* 68, two soldiers are said to have deposited an excess of 206 Egyptian *drachmae* (= 51.5 *denarii*) and 166 Egyptian *drachmae* (41.5 *denarii*) respectively in a given year. If this rate of savings continued, and if each soldier received a large cash grant (*missio nummaria*) following an honorable discharge from military service (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 16; Dio Cassius 54.25.5; see Gabriele Wesch-Klein, ‘Recruits and Veterans’, in Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, pp. 435-50 [439-49]), then he could retire with a considerable sum.

101. There were laws against Roman soldiers entering into recognized marriages (*Dig.* 23.2.63), but co-habitation along with the bearing and raising of children were still common; see Richard P. Saller and Brent D. Shaw, ‘Tombstones and Roman

The salaries of higher ranking military officials, on the other hand, were much more generous. For instance, a centurion of the Roman legions earned HS 13,500 (= 3,375 *denarii*) per year during much of the first century CE, and this rate was increased to HS 18,000 (= 4,500 *denarii*) under the reforms of Domitian (84 CE). Three positions of greatest interest for our purposes, however, come from the Roman auxiliary forces: the *centurio cohortis*, the *decurio cohortis* and the *decurio alae*. Each of these officers earned a slightly smaller salary than his legionary counterpart, and it is these wages that would appear to be closer to a mid-level urban profession. From Augustus to Domitian (84 CE), each officer earned an annual salary of HS 3,750 (= 937.5 *denarii*), HS 4,500 (= 1,125 *denarii*), and HS 5,250 (= 1,312.5 *denarii*) respectively. These wages were subsequently increased by one-third following the Domitianic reforms.

From these figures, it might be possible to draw some conclusions about the income of mid-level professions in the urban centers of first-century CE Asia Minor. But, upon further investigation, we discover that these salaries are somewhat beyond mid-level earnings and much closer to the fortunes of provincial elites. Take, for instance, the annual income of a decurion who possessed only the minimum census requirement for council membership (HS 100,000 = 25,000 *denarii*). If his fortune is invested in landed property which yields a total of 5 per cent interest, his annual earnings would be 1,250 *denarii*. This figure closely approximates the salaries of Roman military officials. Therefore, it might be best to seek a different point of comparison.

An alternative, although in many respects an essentially supplementary, method of calculating the financial yield of mid-level professions is through a basic comparison with the daily maximum wages set by the edict of Diocletian (301 CE). While it is true that there was considerable disparity between the prices and wages during the first century CE and those set forth in the edict of Diocletian, the latter could serve as a helpful guide for differentiating between the financial yield of various professions. By comparing the maximum earnings for various occupations in the Roman world (even those from a later period), we are afforded at least some idea about the financial stratification that existed and where certain jobs ranked in terms of economic output. To make such a comparison,

Family Relations in the Principate: Civilians, Soldiers and Slaves', *JRS* 74 (1984), pp. 124-56; Sara E. Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C.–A.D. 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, 24; Leiden: Brill, 2001).

however, it is necessary to first gain a better understanding of the common laborer's wage during the first century CE.

The most abundant sources of information on wages in antiquity are the papyri from Roman Egypt.¹⁰² Despite the fact that much of the evidence is outside of the timeframe with which we are concerned, the papyrological sources do provide us with a few glimpses into first-century CE earnings.¹⁰³ The problem, aside from the fact that the salaries derive mainly from rural areas, is that Egyptian wages (and prices) are much lower than for other areas around the Empire; thus, it is difficult to project comparable earnings in Asia Minor. Other areas, however, appear much more promising. From Roman Palestine, there are various sources that estimate an average daily wage for a common laborer at 1 *denarius* (= HS 4).¹⁰⁴ The evidence from Italy suggests a similar earning scheme.¹⁰⁵

102. For a complete list of wages (mostly from rural areas) in Roman Egypt, see Louis C. West, 'The Cost of Living in Roman Egypt', *Classical Philology* 11 (1916), pp. 293-314 (304-305); Daniel Sperber, 'Costs of Living in Roman Palestine, II', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9 (1966), pp. 182-211 (187-90); Hans-Joachim Drexhage, *Preise, Mieten/Pachten, Kosten und Löhne im römischen Agypten bis zum Regierungsantritt Diokletians* (Vorarbeiten zu einer Wirtschaftsgeschichte des römischen Agypten, 1; St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae, 1991), pp. 412-39.

103. E.g. cultivation of a piece of land for 3 years (112.5 *denarii* or 37.5 *denarii*/year, BGU 1123 [13 BCE]); shepherds and foreman (6 *denarii*/month, P.Lond. 1171 [8 BCE]); assistant shepherd (3 *denarii*/month, P.Lond. 1171 [8 BCE]); weaver (1/7 *denarius* per day, P.Oxy. 737 [31-38 CE]); conductei (1/6 *denarius* per day, P.Oxy. 737 [31-38 CE]); magister (1/4 *denarius* per day, P.Oxy. 737 [31-38 CE]); household servant (1/10 *denarius* per day, P.Oxy. 736 [first century CE]); pruner (5/24 to 7/24 *denarius* per day, P.Lond. 131 [78 CE]); boys weeding and gathering leaves (1/12 *denarius* per day, P.Lond. 131 [78 CE]); farm workers (1/8 *denarii*, 1/7 *denarii*, 1/6 *denarius* per day respectively, P.Lond. 131 [79 CE]); bricklayer (1/4 *denarius* per day, P.Lond. 131 [79 CE]); laborer (4 obols per day, P.Oxy. 985 [90 CE]); guard (10 *denarii* per month, P.Lond. 701 = Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (eds.), *New Classical Fragments and Other Greek and Latin Papyri* [Greek Papyri, 2; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897], no. 43 [92 CE]); guard (1 drachma, 5 obols per day, P.Oxy. 390 [89-96 CE]).

104. Mt. 20.4; *b.* 'Abod. Zar. 62a; *y.* Šeb. 8.4; *b.* B. Bat. 86b-87a; René Dussaud, 'Comptes d'ouvriers d'une entreprise funéraire juive', *Syria* 4 (1923), pp. 241-49. Yet smaller daily wages are not uncommon, e.g. 1/2 *denarius* per day (*b.* Yom. 35b); 1/4 *denarius* per day (*Lev. R.* 1.17); 1/24 *denarius* (*m.* Šeb. 8.4).

105. During the Republic, a laborer could earn HS 3 per day (Cicero, *Rosc. com.* 28), and in the fields, HS 2 would pay for one man's labor plus a yoke of oxen for a day (Cato, *Agr.* 22.3). Seneca (*Ep.* 80.7), writing in the early Principate, reports that

Consequently, this figure tends to be viewed as a basic standard within modern scholarship.¹⁰⁶

What is more uncertain is the total number of days (per year) these wages would be earned. Because there is no direct evidence concerning the average work calendar in Greek and Roman antiquity, we can only surmise the frequency with which work would be commenced. Over the years, scholars have proposed a range of solutions, but none has been able to rise above the status of an educated guess.¹⁰⁷ A reasonable projection, which takes into account holidays, the lack of employment, and the effects of slack season in agriculture, might be that the average laborer in the early imperial period worked a total of 225 days per year.¹⁰⁸ According to this calculation, the annual income of a common day-laborer would be approximately 225 *denarii*.¹⁰⁹

a slave's wage was five measures of grain and five *denarii* (presumably) per month. According to Martial (*Epig.* 3.7), clients in Rome were given a measly 1.5 *denarii* per day by their patrons. Compare also two inscriptions from Pompeii, which give the figures of five *asses* and one *denarius* (plus bread) (*CIL* IV nos. 4000, 6877).

106. So, e.g., Heichelheim, 'Roman Syria', pp. 178-88, esp. 180; Ulrich Kahrstedt, *Kulturgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bern: Francke, 2nd edn, 1958), pp. 210-11. For a discussion of the literary and epigraphic evidence (with daily averages ranging from HS 1 to 6.5), see Marcus Prell, *Sozialökonomische Untersuchungen zur Armut im antiken Rom: Von den Gracchen bis Kaiser Diokletian* (Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, 77; Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1997), pp. 173-74.

107. E.g. Colin Clark, *The Conditions of Economic Progress* (London: Macmillan, 3rd edn, 1957), pp. 664, 678 (300 days); Goldsmith, 'Estimate', p. 269 (200-250 days); Robert C. Allen, 'How Prosperous Were the Romans?: Evidence from Diocletian's Price Edict (AD 301)', in A.K. Bowman and A. Wilson (eds.), *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems* (Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 327-45 (337), gives 250 days. Richard Duncan-Jones, 'Two Possible Indices of the Purchasing Power of Money in Greek and Roman Antiquity', in *Les 'Dévaluations' à Rome, époque républicaine et impériale (Rome, 13-15 novembre 1975)* (Collection de l'École française de Rome, 37; Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1978), pp. 159-68 (160), surveys the range of possibilities.

108. For comparison's sake, an Irish cottier in the early nineteenth century is said to have worked approximately 200 days per year (George A.T. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* [London: Longmans, Green, 1921], p. 19). Furthermore, based on his personal experience, Arye Ben-David, *Talmudische Ökonomie: Die Wirtschaft des jüdischen Palästina zur Zeit der Mischna und des Talmud* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1974), pp. 65-69, 292, estimates that agriculture workers in Palestine might only find work 200 days out of the year due to weather conditions.

109. Interestingly, this was the exact same yearly wage as a Roman legionary soldier prior to Domitian's pay increase (see above). Further confirmation on the

With this information, we can now compare first century CE wages with those in place during the time of Diocletian. In his edict on prices and wages in the Roman Empire, the emperor Diocletian set the maximum earnings of a general laborer at 25 *denarii communes* per day, while a carpenter could earn 50 *denarii communes/day* and a wall painter 75 *denarii communes/day* (*Edict on Maximum Prices* 7.3a, 8). If we convert these percentages to the known wages of the first century CE, we might conclude that while a day-laborer, on average, could make about 1 *denarius* per day, a carpenter and a wall painter might earn 2 and 3 *denarii* per day respectively.¹¹⁰ This would mean that someone in the profession of carpentry could earn an annual salary of approximately 450 *denarii*; whereas a painter might bring home an even greater amount of 675 *denarii* per year.

Based on this reconstruction, we can draw some general conclusions and offer a tentative projection concerning the amount of disposable income possessed by the readers of 1 Peter. First, it is important to recognize that the amount of surplus that any given household might accumulate would depend on the level of lifestyle depreciation that they were willing to undergo. Just because one was employed in a high-yield profession does not mean that a large surplus would necessarily be attained. In some cases, a household might only earn just enough to cover the cost of their middle strata lifestyle. In order to accumulate a financial surplus, a household would have to make a concentrated effort to limit all unnecessary expenses. However, there is no indication in the epistle

viability of this projection comes from an alimentary foundation created by Pliny the Younger. Upon his death, Pliny left HS 1,866,666 to provide for 100 freedmen (*CIL* V no. 5262 = *ILS* no. 2927). Assuming a 6% return on landed property (see Duncan-Jones, *Economy of the Roman Empire*, pp. 33, 132-36), each freedman would receive HS 1,120 (= 280 *denarii*) annually (cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974], p. 183 n. 1, who suggests that it would take a minimum of '250 *denarii* per year to support a laborer and small family in poverty').

110. I am unaware of any explicit references to the earnings of carpenters and wall painters from the first century CE. Therefore, it is possible that, for some reason or another, these specific projections may be inaccurate. Nevertheless, whether or not these were the actual salaries of the designated professions is unimportant. The key is that *some* professions—whatever they may have been—would have put their participants in a middle economic position within the local community, and it is this economic situation that I wish to represent.

that the author is calling his readers to this type of financial strategy.¹¹¹ Secondly, even among those with mid-level earning capabilities who decided to make dramatic cuts to their regular expenses, the economic surplus that could be accumulated was far from the totals donated by elite benefactors. If, for example, a wall painter chose to limit all unnecessary expenses and was thus able to lower the budget of his household to 400 *denarii* per year, his annual net profit would still only be around 275 *denarii*. What is more, this figure would represent an entire year's worth of disposal income. Therefore, it is unlikely that the whole sum would be donated.

Figure 3. *Possible Financial Contributions of an Average Anatolian Congregation*

<i>% of Congregation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contribution per household</i>	<i>Total Contributions</i>
25	No surplus	0 <i>denarii</i>	0 <i>denarii</i>
33	Meager, unstable surplus	5 <i>denarii</i>	15 <i>denarii</i>
30	Small, stable surplus	25 <i>denarii</i>	75 <i>denarii</i>
12	Moderate surplus	50 <i>denarii</i>	50 <i>denarii</i>
	<i>Total = 140 denarii</i>		

With these considerations in mind, we offer the following projection on the financial contributions of the average Anatolian congregation. For more than half of the congregation, accumulating excess financial surplus would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Many of these Anatolian Christians would have survived on a meager and unstable economic surplus. Included in this group would have been those whose earnings were equivalent to a common day-laborer (1 *denarius*/day). On an annual salary of 225-250 *denarii*, the opportunity to set aside financial excess would have been rare, and any savings would have been very small. Nevertheless, we have assumed a generous contribution of 5 *denarii* per household from this group. Moving up the economic ladder, we come to those whose earnings put them slightly above the previous group and into

111. The warning against 'wearing gold and fine clothes' in 1 Pet. 3.3 would not qualify as a strategy of financial frugality. Being a standard *topos* within ancient moral exhortation, the statement is certainly meant to disparage opulence and excess, but it is hardly a call for the whole community to practice deprivation and miserliness.

a more stable position. An illustration of someone in this group might be a carpenter with an annual salary of 450 *denarii*. These increased wages result in both a higher standard of living and a greater amount of disposable income. Therefore, from this group we have apportioned a total of 25 *denarii* per household. The largest contribution comes from a skilled artisan in a high-yield profession (e.g. a wall painter). With a salary of 675 *denarii* per year, this household is able to donate 50 *denarii* to the collection. Altogether, apart from the assistance of any wealthy elites, this average Anatolian church might therefore collect a total of 140 *denarii* in a given year (see Figure 2).¹¹²

Conclusion

Based on these quantified projections, we are in a better position to assess the economic feasibility of benefaction in 1 Peter. As a point of concession, we must state up front that collective benefaction would have always remained a possible option for the Christian congregations of first-century CE Asia Minor. Due to the fact that small-scale benefaction projects did occur in the ancient world, we cannot rule out the possibility completely. With that being said, however, it is doubtful that the type of euergetism available to Christian congregations would have produced the outcome anticipated by proponents of the benefaction position. Even if all the Christian households in a given community combined their financial resources, it is highly unlikely that they could have accumulated a large enough donation to perform the types of services that would have ingratiated the populace (e.g. erecting public buildings, establishing

112. Admittedly, each of the figures that factor into this equation (e.g. size of congregations, percentages in each stratum, etc.) is (inevitably) somewhat speculative; nevertheless, some such reasoned assumptions are necessary to pursue this analysis. What is important to recognize, however, is that the picture that emerges would not be altogether different, even if the numbers and percentages were significantly altered. For instance, a large congregation that pooled its resources might be able to accumulate a more substantial amount. In a church containing 200 members, the following financial contributions might be possible: No surplus (0 *denarii*); Meager unstable surplus (65 *denarii*); Small, stable surplus (300 *denarii*); Moderate surplus (200 *denarii*). The total contribution of this congregation would be 565 *denarii*. This would obviously be a much more respectable sum. But even here, we run into the same problems: (a) this amount would still be well short of the sums necessary for large-scale benefaction projects, and (b) this type of giving could not be reproduced with any degree of frequency.

festivals and games, etc.). Aside from this lack of euergetic magnitude, the collective benefaction of Christian communities would have also been hampered by a lack of frequency. These projected contributions (140 *denarii*) consist of the financial surplus of Anatolian households over the span of an entire year. Since many would be making sacrificial contributions by giving above and beyond their means, we would assume that an extended period of financial recuperation would be necessary after only one act of collective benefaction; hence, even this small-scaled euergetism could only have been carried out at very distant intervals.¹¹³

To this point we have purposefully excluded contributions from any potentially wealthy members of the Anatolian churches in order to show that, despite attempts to spread around the costs through collective benefaction, without at least one elite family in the congregation any attempt at civic benefaction would have been woefully deficient.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, the benefaction position can only be sustained on the assumption that each congregation contained at least one member who possessed substantial wealth. But even then, how much wealth would have been necessary in order to accomplish the social aims involved in the benefaction position, and how likely is it that these types of families would have been included in a local Anatolian congregation?

Based on previous calculations regarding the cost of benefaction and the number of those who might be able to perform such acts (see above), we would have to conclude that it is unlikely that a Christian congregation contained a super-wealthy, provincial elite. In an average Anatolian city, there were approximately 100 local decurions, and from this group there

113. In order for Christians in a given city to accumulate a lump sum for benefaction purposes, each house-church would have to agree to the strategy of benefaction as a relief for suffering and would have to agree on how the money would be spent. This might be a problem if there were strong divisions among these groups (cf. 1 Cor. 1.10-17). What would happen, for instance, if one house-group wanted to donate to the construction of a theater, while another was offended by the theater and thus refused? Admittedly, this is by no means an insurmountable obstacle, but it is an obstacle nonetheless.

114. Since civic benefaction would have been (almost solely) dependent upon the initiatives of the wealthy members of the congregations, one wonders why the author of 1 Peter would not have simply exhorted the rich to perform benefaction. Elsewhere, wealthy members of congregations are specifically addressed (cf. 1 Tim. 6.17-19), and the author of 1 Peter seems to have no problems with singling out particular groups within the communities for specific instructions (e.g. 1 Pet. 2.18; 3.1, 7; 5.1, 5).

may have only been a couple of families capable of frequent, large-scale donations. So, based on statistics alone, the chances are very slim that any of these individuals belonged to Christian congregations. The chances that a Christian community may have included a city councilor is slightly greater; but even this was no guarantee that they could produce munificence on a scale that might attract public acclamation or civic praise. With just the minimum property qualification, a councilor might only have an income (on 5% interest from landed property) of 1,250 *denarii* per year, of which 250 *denarii* would be a very generous donation. Added to the collective total (140 *denarii*), this would take the potential donation up to 390 *denarii*. This amount would, of course, be sufficient for small-scale benefaction, but still far short of large-scale projects.

In conclusion, then, there are two points that weigh against the economic feasibility of benefaction in 1 Peter.¹¹⁵ First, there are instances in the epistle where the benefaction theory simply does not seem applicable. Given that slaves (οἰκέται), who ranked at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, are specifically admonished to ‘do good’, it would appear that ‘good deeds’ refer to something other than beneficent activities. Secondly, in most cities where Christianity had taken root, even the collective contribution of the entire Christian population (c. 50 members per city) would not have been enough to accumulate a recognizable donation. The costs of the beneficent acts proposed by Winter (e.g. erecting/adorning public buildings, constructing roads, etc.) would have been outside the financial reach of most communities. What is more, even if the Christian communities were large enough to

115. Aside from the economic (non-)feasibility, there are other factors that weigh heavily against the benefaction position in 1 Peter. One problem, which has been overlooked by adherents of the theory, is the socio-political feasibility of euergetism in 1 Peter. It is assumed that the citizens of these Anatolian communities would have gladly received any and all beneficent contributions—even from a group as despised as the Christians—because without such donations civic communities could not operate successfully. Yet both of these assumptions (*viz.*, the indiscriminate acceptance and indispensability of munificence) are spurious. Foremost among the difficulties faced by the benefaction position, however, is the fact that the author expects the ‘good works’ of the readers to be met with hostility rather than praise (1 Pet. 2.20; 3.14, 16-17; 4.19). These reasons (and more) suggest that the ‘good deeds’ in 1 Peter refer to something other than civic euergetism. On the further problems with the benefaction theory, see Travis B. Williams, *Good Works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social Conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) that further details the problems with the benefaction theory.

contribute a sizeable amount (c. 1,000 *denarii*), these donations could not have been made with any degree of frequency. The only way for the apologetic strategy of the benefaction position to work would have been through the financial assistance of at least one super-wealthy family, a prospect that involves serious improbability.