

JOHN-CHRISTIAN EURELL

Peter's Legacy
in Early Christianity

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

561

Mohr Siebeck

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John-Christian Eurell

Peter's Legacy in Early Christianity

The Appropriation and Use of Peter's Authority
in the First Three Centuries

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This book is a slightly revised version of my thesis that was defended at Stockholm School of Theology in January 2021. Doctoral research is always a laborious endeavour. For me, a great deal of labour was spent before even being able to enter the research programme. With a first degree from a rather obscure institution, my path in the academy was all but self-evident. In this process I am most grateful to the support of Professor James A. Kelhoffer (Uppsala) as well as my former teacher Docent Anders Gerdmar (Scandinavian School of Theology) for encouraging me to pursue further study and research. I am very happy that Professor Thomas Kazen admitted me to the master's programme¹ at the Stockholm School of Theology and some years later also to the brand-new doctoral programme at this institution. The Stockholm School of Theology has proven to be a dynamic research environment with a broad competency in biblical studies. The interest for this study was sparked when I wrote my master's thesis on Peter in the Matthean redaction in 2013, and Peter has been a significant part of my thought world ever since.

For the completion of this study, I am grateful for access to the Carolina Rediviva library in Uppsala, which has provided the necessary library resources of this project. I am also thankful to Docent Jörgen Magnusson (Mid Sweden University) for inviting me to join his course in Coptic with short notice.

A number of competent people have commented on my thesis and helped me improve it in many regards over the years. The comments of my supervisor Docent Rikard Roitto (Stockholm) have always been initiated and well-reflected and the same can be said of my secondary supervisor, Professor James A. Kelhoffer (Uppsala). I am also thankful for the comments from the biblical studies faculty at Stockholm School of Theology: Professor Thomas Kazen, Docent Rikard Roitto, Dr. Hanna Stenström, Dr. Carl Johan Berglund, Docent Åke Viberg, Dr. Josef Forsling, and Dr. Miriam Hjälms as well as my fellow doctoral students Sara Häggström, Lisa Plantin, and Jessica Alm. Parts of the material have also been presented in Uppsala, Lund, Reykjavik, and Leuven and my arguments have been sharpened by the responses. I also owe thanks to Docent Tord Fornberg (Uppsala) for his careful and detailed examination of my text in connection to the final review of my thesis, which resulted in several significant

¹ I am also thankful to Professor Samuel Byrskog and Docent Tobias Hägerland who arranged for such an opportunity also in Lund.

improvements. Finally, the comments of the respondent at my dissertation defense, Docent Outi Lehtipuu (Helsinki) as well as the other members of the grading committee: Professor Marianne Bjelland Kartzow (Oslo), Docent Mikael Tellbe (Örebro), and Docent Joel Halldorf (Stockholm), have contributed to making the argument of this book more coherent and convincing than the original thesis.

As the latter part of my research process has been defined by a global pandemic and working from home, digital tools have played a significant role in the completion of this work. Both the final review and the defence of the thesis could only be completed due to Zoom. In this digitalised environment, I am especially thankful for the fellowship with my children John-David, Jonas, and Lydia and my lovely wife Cecilie. Despite the advances in digital communication, they have provided my closest research fellowship in the final stages of this project.

Storvreta in August 2021

John-Christian Eurell

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, Second edition (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014). In addition to this, the following abbreviations are also used.

AASFDHL	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum
ADAIK	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Koptische Reihe
AFLNWG	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein- Westfalen, Geisteswissenschaften
ARGU	Arbeiten zur Religion und Geschichte des Urchristentums
<i>ASE</i>	Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi
BCNHE	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section études
BCNHT	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section textes
BENT	Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neue Testament
BHR	Bibliothèque historique des religions
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter
BThSt	Biblich-Theologische Studien
BibW	Bibleworld
CBib	The Century Bible
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum
CopIS	Copenhagen International Seminar
EAA	Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité
<i>EAJT</i>	East Asia Journal of Theology
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
EHPR	Études d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses
<i>Exp</i>	The Expositor
FENTK	Forschungen zur Entstehung des Urchristentums des Neuen Testaments und der Kirche
<i>FT</i>	Feminist Theology
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien
<i>GFA</i>	Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
<i>IKZ</i>	Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift
ITL	International Theological Library
JCTC	Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies
<i>JECH</i>	Journal of Early Christian History
<i>JLA</i>	Journal of Late Antiquity

KAL	Kommentare zur apokryphen Literatur
KAV	Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern
KNT	Kommentar till Nya testamentet
KNT(Z)	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Theodor Zahn
MBCB	Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava
<i>MJK</i>	Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies
<i>NKT</i>	Ny kyrklig tidskrift
NTAp	Neutestamentliche Apokryphen
NThG	Neue Theologische Grundrisse
NTR	New Testament Readings
PS	Patristica Sorbonensia
<i>RHR</i>	Revue de l'histoire des religions
<i>ROC</i>	Revue de l'Orient Chrétien
SAAA	Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles
SESJ	Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisu
SF	Studia Friburgensia
SH	Subsidia hagiographica
SK	Schriften zur Kultursoziologie
SKCO	Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients
SPNT	Studies on Personalities of the New Testament
<i>STh</i>	Studia Theologica (Czech Republic)
TA	Theologische Arbeiten
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TBT	Theologische Bibliothek Töpelmann
TH	Théologie historique
TrC	Tria Corda. Jenaer Vorlesungen zu Judentum, Antike und Christentum
<i>TZTh</i>	Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie
UaLG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christiana

Introduction

Peter is one of the most famous characters in the history of Christianity. He is the most well-known of the disciples of the earthly Jesus and – not least through the account in Acts – has a central role in common conceptions of Christian origins. The significance of Peter for Christian beginnings was a theme already in early Christian literature. The evidence available strongly suggests that Peter was a significant character for the formation of Christianity, albeit not in a uniform manner. Whereas some believers would emphasise their Petrine heritage in order to argue their legitimacy as transmitters of authentic Jesus tradition, others would seek to undermine Peter's credibility in favour of a different approach to what should be a legitimate interpretation of the Jesus tradition. In such discussions, the commonly believed characteristics of the historical Peter were assumed, but the historical Peter was not a part of the discussion himself. This study does not deal with the historical Peter, but with the conceptions of this apostle in early Christianity. Peter was used to bring legitimacy and authority to certain teachings and movements but was also slandered in order to discredit communities that claimed legitimacy through Peter. Already at the time of the earliest extant reference to Peter in Galatians, written during Peter's lifetime, Jesus himself appears to have become a more or less mythological character, and the question for the Jesus-believers was not whether Jesus was right, but rather how to access accurate and legitimate Jesus tradition.¹ In this study, I will examine the emergence of Peter as an authoritative figure for the purposes of legitimation during the first three centuries C.E.

The studied time period contains a great variety of sources and situations. The canonical New Testament contributes with a great deal of evidence for the study of Peter in this period, but also extra-canonical texts, not least Nag-Hammadi documents, make a significant contribution. There is also a significant number of documents that in various ways claim Petrine origin that are of importance. Also some scattered references in church fathers give insight into the discussions pertaining to Peter as an authoritative figure. A number of questions arise as one approaches the Peter-images of early Christian writings. Who are they describing, how are they describing him, and why are the portraits of Peter so different?

¹ Pauline Christology indicates that Jesus had already become a more or less mythological figure, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 98–153.

In this study I wish not only to point out the differing conceptions of Peter in early Christian texts, but also discuss the possible objectives of the various authors for portraying Peter as they do.

A. History of Research

The role of Peter as an authoritative figure in early Christianity has been an important issue in significant turning-points in Christian history. The role and legitimacy of the Roman papacy as successors of Peter has been a significant parameter in large ecclesial controversies such as the Great Schism of 1054 and the Protestant reformation in the sixteenth century. However, speaking of a papacy in the first three centuries would be an anachronism. Nevertheless, discussions of Peter as an authoritative figure were present long before one could speak of a papacy. Earlier research has often interpreted these discussions through the lens of either the modern papacy or in order to understand the historical Peter. The present study does not aim at solving any of these problems, but instead has the purpose to understand early Christian discussions on legitimacy and authority, and the significant role played herein by the prevalent Peter-image.

I. Critical Research Prior to Cullmann

The modern quest for understanding Peter as an authoritative figure in early Christianity began with the Tübingen School under the influence of Ferdinand Christian Baur. Inspired by Hegelian dialectics, early Christianity was divided into two branches: one Hellenistic, headed by Paul, and one Jewish, headed by Peter.² The main idea was that the antitheses of Pauline and Petrine Christianity would eventually merge into the synthesis of *Frühkatholizismus*.³ This synthesis was often viewed as a degeneration of Christianity from a Lutheran perspective.⁴ For Baur, the point of departure was the dispute between Peter and Paul that he claimed to be present in the *Kerygmata Petrou*, a hypothetical source of the *Pseudo-Clementines*. This was used as interpretative key for analysing the

² Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paulus: Der Apostel Jesu Christi: Sein Leben und Werke, seine Briefe und seine Lehre. Ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristentums*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Fues, 1866–1867), I:290–343.

³ A contemporary critic of Baur was Bernhard Weiß, *Der petrinische Lehrbegriff: Beiträge zur biblischen Theologie, sowie zur Kritik und Exegese des ersten Briefes Petri und der petrinischen Reden* (Berlin: Schutze, 1855).

⁴ Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1912), 83–178. See also Ferdinand Hahn, *Exegetische Beiträge zum ökumenischen Gespräch. Gesammelte Aufsätze I.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 39–75.

Corinthian correspondence, and ultimately early Christianity at large.⁵ The Paulinism/Petrinism dichotomy was appropriated *in absurdum* by Gustav Volkmar who argued among other things that Mark was a biography of Paul and that Revelation was a distinctively anti-Pauline (and thus Petrine) Apocalypse.⁶ Despite the outdated use of Hegelian dialectics, the Tübingen School made contributions relevant to contemporary research. Albert Schwegler's conclusion from the 1840s that the traditions about Peter swelled way beyond the historical records from the second century and onwards is well illuminated in the present study.⁷ A more extreme view of the development of Peter as an authoritative figure was argued by Arthur Drews, who questioned whether Peter had ever existed as a historical person, and suggested that he was the result of mythical fiction with the purpose of defending the Roman papacy.⁸ This was a part of Drew's reaction to the first quest for the historical Jesus, and he suggested that Jesus was an entirely mythological figure with no historical precedent.⁹ He argued that Christianity was merely a development within Gnosticism.¹⁰ The ideas of the Tübingen School were revived by Michael Goulder in the 1990s, and at times appear to lie behind unconscious presuppositions of various scholars, but have no greater outspoken following by the contemporary scholarly community.¹¹

⁵ Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des paulinischen und petrinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *TZTh* (1831): 61–206. For a thorough discussion on Baur's methodological contribution combined with an analysis of his flaws, see Werner Georg Kümmel, *Das Neue Testament: Geschichte der Erforschung seiner Probleme* (Freiburg: Alber, 1958), 145–258; Anders Gerdmar, "Baur and the Creation of the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy," in *Ferdinand Christian Baur und die Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, ed. M. Bauspeiss et al., WUNT I/333 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 107–28.

⁶ Gustav Volkmar, *Die Religion Jesu und ihre erste Entwicklung nach dem gegenwärtigen Stande der Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1857) 119–83.

⁷ "Die kirchlichen Ueberlieferungen über Petrus, im Laufe des zweiten, dritten, vierten Jahrhunderts zu ziemlichen Umfang angeschwollen, verdanken ihren Ursprung zum Theil der Sage." Albert Schwegler, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter in den Hauptmomenten seiner Entwicklung*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Fues, 1846), 1:131.

⁸ Arthur Drews, *Die Petruslegende: Ein Beitrag zur Mythologie des Christentums* (Frankfurt a.M.: Neuer Frankfurter, 1910).

⁹ See Arthur Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, 2 vols. (Jena: Diederichs, 1910–11).

¹⁰ Arthur Drews, *Die Entstehung des Christentums aus dem Gnostizismus* (Jena: Diederichs, 1924). Although Drew's position is largely forgotten today, it received enough attention in its day for Albert Schweitzer to discuss it in *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913), 483–97, and Drew's book on Peter was published in English in 2007.

¹¹ Michael Goulder, *St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994); idem, *Paul and the Competing Mission in Corinth* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001).

II. Oscar Cullmann and the Ecumenical Debate

The most influential study of Peter of all times was published by Oscar Cullmann in 1952, and the latest English edition of his work was printed in 2011.¹² Cullmann sought to enable a broader ecumenical debate concerning Peter, including both Protestant and Catholic scholars, as well as secular historians, by meeting the standards of modern historiography.¹³ Although Cullmann's work is still the main reference work for Petrine questions, it is methodologically outdated. The use of exclusively canonical material is unacceptable for historical reconstruction when other relevant material is also available, and the treatment of the differences between the sources as simply differing access to traditions concerning the historical Peter rather than results of editorial tendencies of the authors became untenable already in the 1950s. Thus, a study of Peter as an authoritative figure written in the twenty-first century cannot credibly have Cullmann's study as its point of departure.

Cullmann's hope to stir an ecumenical debate concerning Peter was indeed realised in the decades following his publication. Paul Gaechter published a book on Peter in 1956, which partially gave a catholic response to Cullman's work.¹⁴ Protestant scholarship on Peter was also evaluated from a Catholic perspective by Franz Obrist.¹⁵ The key point of controversy was the interpretation of Matt 16:18–19. In America, Catholic and Protestant scholars wrote a book on Peter in the New Testament together.¹⁶ Whereas this development from the protestant perspective meant the abandonment of a consciously anti-Petrine discourse, from the Catholic viewpoint it led to an increased focus on the ecumenical significance of the papacy.¹⁷ Although Catholic and Protestant scholars increased their

¹² Oscar Cullmann, *Petrus: Jünger – Apostel – Märtyrer* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1952). References to Cullmann in the footnotes refer to the second edition of the work from 1960.

¹³ An often overlooked, yet rather ambitious work is that of Karl Gerold Goetz, *Petrus als Gründer und Oberhaupt der Kirche und Schauer von Geschichten nach den altchristlichen Berichten und Legenden: Eine exegetisch-geschichtliche Untersuchung*, UNT 13 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1927), which treats Peter as an authoritative figure not only in the canonical New Testament, but also other early Christian texts which were available at the time.

¹⁴ Paul Gaechter, *Petrus und seine Zeit: Neutestamentliche Studien* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1958).

¹⁵ Franz Obrist, *Echtheitsfragen und Deutung der Primatstelle Mt 16, 18f in der deutschen protestantischen Theologie der letzten dreißig Jahre*, NTAbh 21 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1961).

¹⁶ Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1973). See also Albert Brandenburg and Hans Jörg Urban, eds., *Petrus und Papst: Evangelium, Einheit der Kirche, Papstdienst*, 2 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1977–78).

¹⁷ Heinrich Stirnimann and Lukas Vischer, eds., *Papsttum und Petrusdienst, Ökumenische Perspektiven 7* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lembeck/Knecht, 1975); Joseph Ratzinger, ed., *Dienst an der Einheit. Zum Wesen und Auftrag des Petrusamts* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1978); PHEME

agreement concerning the life of the historical Peter, the problem of Peter's relation to the papacy remained unresolved. Rudolf Pesch used an apologetic approach to prove that the Catholic claims of papal primacy are clearly ascribed to Peter in the New Testament,¹⁸ whereas Peter Dschulnigg preferred to speak of a legitimate post-biblical development on basis on Peter's central role in the New Testament.¹⁹

In Protestant scholarship, there was an increased interest in Peter both as historical figure but also as narrative character.²⁰ More recently, Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado have edited an anthology titled *Peter in Early Christianity*, which introduces various problems and themes related to Peter and discusses them briefly.²¹ However, the chapters are too brief and general to deal in depth with the question of Peter as an authoritative figure in early Christianity. On the Catholic side, Regis Burnet published a study on the twelve apostles and their reception history that deals with the Peter-image of many of the texts that will be examined in this study.²² Also the recent *Petrusliteratur und Petrusarchäologie: Römische Begegnungen* discusses a number of questions related to Peter's development as an authoritative figure,²³ as does the recent *The Reception and Appropriation of the Apostle Peter: The Anchors of the Fisherman*.²⁴ Furthermore, the proceedings of the 2019 Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense bear the name *Peter in the Early Church: Apostle – Missionary – Church Leader*, which clearly alludes to the title of Cullmann's classic work *Petrus: Jünger – Apostel –*

Perkins: *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994). It is also worth mentioning a significant orthodox contribution to this ecumenical discussion of Peter, John Meyendorff, ed., *The Primacy of Peter: Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992; First ed. 1963).

¹⁸ Rudolf Pesch, *Simon Petrus, Päpste und Papsttum 15* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1980); idem, *Die biblischen Grundlagen des Primats* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001).

¹⁹ Peter Dschulnigg, *Petrus im Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996).

²⁰ Some notable examples are Bertil Gärtner, *Simon Petrus – människan och ledaren* (Göteborg: Församlingsförlaget, 2003); Martin Hengel, *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Jürgen Becker, *Simon Petrus im Urchristentum*, BTS 105 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2011); Christfried Böttrich, *Petrus: Fischer, Fels und Funktionär*, BG 2 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013).

²¹ Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado, eds., *Peter in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

²² Regis Burnet, *Les douze apôtres: Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 131–256.

²³ Jörg Frey and Martin Wallraff, eds., *Petrusliteratur und Petrusarchäologie: Römische Begegnungen*, Rom und Protestantismus 4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

²⁴ Roald Dijkstra, ed., *The Early Reception and Appropriation of the Apostle Peter (60–800 CE): The Anchors of the Fisherman*, Euhormos 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

Martyrer.²⁵ Gene L. Green has attempted at constructing a theology of Peter based on Mark, First Peter, and the Petrine speeches in Acts.²⁶ Despite multiple endorsements, the academic credibility of this study is miniscule as the presupposition that these sources originate with the historical Peter is beyond the bounds of likelihood.

III. The Development of Peter-Images

A shortcoming in the research reviewed thus far is the lack of discussion of the development of the image of Peter. Although this perspective was present already at the time of the Tübingen School, it was lost in the debate following Cullmann's study, apart from the discussion of whether or not the development from the "biblical" Peter to the Roman pontiff was legitimate. In 1985, Terence V. Smith made a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of the Peter-image as he studied attitudes toward Peter in the first two centuries, with special emphasis on polemic contexts.²⁷ In the 1990s, Christian Grappe made a more thorough study of Peter-images in the first two centuries that essentially confirmed Smith's results.²⁸ The significance of the development of Peter-images was also noted by Joachim Gnilka.²⁹ Markus Bockmuehl has studied the memory of Peter in early Christianity, thus contributing to our knowledge of the development of Peter-images over time.³⁰ However, it is somewhat problematic that Bockmuehl is satisfied with treating Peter-traditions as "memories" that can be put together into a larger picture. As time evolves, we might expect that the Peter-character is exploited for various purposes, and that an adding up of "memories" does not necessarily make accurate representation of the historical Peter.

²⁵ Judith M. Lieu, ed., *Peter in the Early Church: Apostle – Missionary – Church Leader*, BETL 325 (Leuven: Peeters, 2021).

²⁶ Gene L. Green, *Vox Petri: A Theology of Peter* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019).

²⁷ Terence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity. Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries*, WUNT II/15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985).

²⁸ Christian Grappe *D'un Temple a l'autre. Pierre et l'Église primitive de Jérusalem*, EHPR 71 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992); idem, *Images de Pierre aux deux premiers siècles*, EHPR 75 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995).

²⁹ Joachim Gnilka, *Petrus und Rom: Das Petrusbild in den ersten zwei Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg: Herder, 2002).

³⁰ Markus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*, WUNT I/262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); idem, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012).

IV. The Peter-Images of Various Early Christian Texts

Parallel to the more overarching studies of Peter, there have been numerous studies on the images of Peter in various books. These studies are significant since they show that the Peter-image did not only develop from the second century and onwards, but already in the first century. Georg Strecker studied Peter's role in light of the Matthean redaction in the 1960s and concluded that Peter is a typological figure that illustrates what it means to be a Christian and was followed by Rolf Walker.³¹ Reinhart Hummel disagreed with their conclusion, and instead argued that Matthew reflects a development within contemporary Judaism that makes Peter into a kind of "supreme Rabbi," and was in turn followed by Günther Bornkamm and Christoph Käbler.³² In response to these developments in German-speaking scholarship, Jack Dean Kingsbury developed an intermediate position arguing that the primacy of Peter was of exclusively salvation-historical importance, i.e. Peter was the first to be called, but his calling did not differ in any other way from those of the other disciples.³³ More recently, Arlo J. Nau has argued that Matthew has a very negative view of Peter.³⁴ Robert H. Gundry goes even further and suggests that the Matthean Peter is an apostate who is "headed for hell."³⁵ This position is not very convincing and seems to be driven mainly by an anti-Catholic sentiment, and, in the case of Gundry, a desire for a pre-70 dating of Matthew.³⁶ To the contrary, David C. Sim argues that Paul "lost" the dispute at Antioch (Gal 2), and that Peter established a community practicing "Christian Judaism" which is ultimately responsible for Matthew's Gospel.³⁷

³¹ Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit*, FRLANT 82 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962); Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, FRLANT 91 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

³² Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, BEvT 33 (München: Kaiser, 1963); Günther Bornkamm, "The Authority to 'Bind' and 'Loose' in Matthew's Gospel: The Problem of Sources in Matthew's Gospel," *Perspective* 11 (1970): 37–50; Christoph Käbler, "Zur Form- und Traditionsgeschichte von Matth. Xvi. 17–19," *NTS* 23 (1976): 36–58.

³³ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel as a Theological Problem," *JBL* 98 (1979): 67–83.

³⁴ Arlo J. Nau, *Peter in Matthew: Discipleship, Diplomacy, and Dispraise*, GNS 36 (Collegeville, PA: Liturgical, 1992).

³⁵ Robert H. Gundry, *Peter – False Disciple and Apostate according to Saint Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 104.

³⁶ See discussion in John-Christian Eurell, review of *Peter – False Disciple and Apostate according to Saint Matthew* by Robert H. Gundry, *SEÁ* 83 (2018): 231–33.

³⁷ David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998). The thesis of Matthew as anti-Pauline is also developed by Gerd Theißen, "Kritik an Paulus im Matthäusevangelium? Von der Kunst verdeckter Polemik im Urchristentum," in *Polemik in der frühchristlichen Literatur*, ed. O. Wischmeyer and L. Scornaienchi, BZNW 170 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 465–90.

Thus, the research efforts on the Matthean Peter-image cannot be said to have reached anything near a consensus.

Although Matthew has received the most attention in relation to Peter due to its significant Petrine *Sondergut*, the Peter-image has also been studied in the other Gospels. Ernest Best has studied the composition of Mark and concluded that whoever wrote the Gospel redacted his sources in order to portray Peter as positively as possible.³⁸ Wolfgang Dietrich studied Peter in Luke and Acts and concluded that he has a very special leading position in this text corpus.³⁹ The Fourth Gospel has received somewhat more attention, as it has previously been considered as having an anti-Petrine bias.⁴⁰ Kevin Quast argued in favour of the significant role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel.⁴¹ This view was further developed by Richard Bauckham and Tom Thatcher.⁴² However, these studies treat Peter as one character among many in the Fourth Gospel. More recently, John's Peter-image has been discussed in his own right by Bradford B. Blaine, Judith Hartenstein, and Tanja Schultheiß.⁴³ Significant contributions to the understanding of the Peter-image of the Fourth Gospel have also been made by Michael Labahn and Fredrik Wagener.⁴⁴

³⁸ Ernest Best, "Peter in the Gospel According to Mark," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 547–58.

³⁹ Wolfgang Dietrich, *Das Petrusbild der lukanischen Schriften*, BWANT 14 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972).

⁴⁰ See Alv Kragerud, *Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium* (Oslo: Osloer Universitätsverlag, 1959), 53–66; Arthur H. Maynard, "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 30 (1984): 531–48; G. F. Snyder, "John 13:16 and the Anti-Petrinism of the Fourth Gospel," *BR* 16 (1971): 5–15. See discussion in Rudolf Schnackenburg, "On the Origin of the Fourth Gospel," *Perspective* 11 (1970): 223–46; Raymond F. Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel – II," *DRev* 94 (1976): 118–32. See also D. H. Gee, "Why did Peter Spring into the Sea? (John 21:7)," *JTS* 40 (1989): 481–89.

⁴¹ Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis*, JSNTS 22 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989).

⁴² Richard Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 21–44; Tom Thatcher, "Jesus, Judas, and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 153 (1996): 435–48.

⁴³ Bradford B. Blaine, Jr., *Peter in the Gospel of John. The Making of an Authentic Disciple*, SBLAcBib 27 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Judith Hartenstein, *Charakterisierung im Dialog: Maria Magdalena, Petrus, Thomas und die Mutter Jesu im Johannesevangelium im Kontext anderer frühchristlicher Darstellungen*, NTOA 64 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Tanja Schultheiß, *Das Petrusbild im Johannesevangelium*, WUNT II/329 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

⁴⁴ Michael Labahn, "Simon Peter: An Ambiguous Character and His Narrative Career," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. S. A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and R. Zimmermann, WUNT I/314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 151–67; Fredrik Wagener, *Figuren als Handlungsmodelle: Simon Petrus, die samaritanische Frau, Judas und Thomas als Zugänge zu einer narrative Ethik des Johannesevangeliums*, WUNT II/408 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 219–340.

There are also a number of studies that discuss the Peter-image in all four canonical Gospels. Most well-known is the dissertation of Timothy Wiarda, which deals primarily with aspects of Peter's personality such as enthusiasm and self-confidence in order to survey Peter's psychological traits.⁴⁵ A narrative-critical analysis of Peter in the Gospels has been made by Richard J. Cassidy.⁴⁶ Also Finn Damgaard deals with the Peter-image in all four Gospels. He presupposes the Farrer hypothesis and that John knew and used all Synoptics and treats the Gospel tradition as a form of "rewritten Bible."⁴⁷ He argues that Matthew connected Mark to Peter, but wanted his Gospel to supersede Mark, and therefore modified the portrait of Peter in his Gospel. Damgaard argues that Matthew portrays Peter ironically, in order to show his flaws and thus discredit Mark. He suggests that Luke is not satisfied with Matthew's "ironic" image of Peter, and thus restores more of a positive image of Peter in his Gospel. Damgaard goes on to argue that John added the beloved disciple to the Synoptic Peter-passages in order to portray him as the only reliable witness to the stories of both Jesus and Peter. Damgaard's study is speculative, but rightly draws attention to the consciousness of Peter-images of the respective Gospels.

Peter-images are rarely discussed for texts other than the canonical Gospels, although there is in fact a multitude of texts for which such inquiry is justified. Although Peter is discussed in relation to First and Second Peter, these discussions rarely go further than discussing the plausibility of Petrine authorship and the possible existence of a Petrine school. Peter is not analysed as a literary character and his role as an authoritative figure is not treated in detail, despite these issues being of crucial importance for understanding the original purpose and message of the texts.⁴⁸ When one exceeds the limits of the Christian canon one finds a large number of pseudepigraphic texts that are connected to Peter and significant developments in the understanding of Peter as an authoritative figure. A number of the Nag Hammadi texts have been argued to imply controversy between Petrine and other groups in early Christianity.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Timothy Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels: Patterns, Personality and Relationship*, WUNT II/127 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

⁴⁶ Richard J. Cassidy, *Four Times Peter: Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi*, Interfaces (Collegeville, PA: Liturgical, 2007).

⁴⁷ Finn Damgaard, *Rewriting Peter as an Intertextual Character in the Canonical Gospels*, CopIS (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁴⁸ An exception to this is Lutz Doering, "Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering: Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter" in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. J. Frey et al., WUNT I/246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 645–82.

⁴⁹ Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), suggests controversy between Johannine and Thomasine groups, and could perhaps be expanded to include also Petrine groups. Similar issues are also discussed in Hartenstein, *Charakterisierung im Dialog*. It is also possible to argue for a controversy with a Petrine group from e.g. Gos. Mary. However, to move from textual

B. The Purpose of This Study

The Peter-images in the Christianity of the first three centuries indicate that conceptions of Peter as an authoritative figure were often presupposed and discussed in relation to questions of authenticity, legitimacy, and dismissal of opponents. The purpose of this study is to map the various ways in which Peter is perceived as an authoritative figure in various early Christian texts and discuss possible implications of our understanding of early Christianity. I will not only map the various perspectives, but also discuss how they relate to each other and how they might apply to early Christian discourses on authenticity, legitimacy, and opposition. As a result, we will gain an increased understanding of the ecumenical dynamics of the diverse early Christian movement. Some themes will be reoccurring, e.g. the significance of Peter as a follower of the earthly Jesus, but others will be related to a more specific context. The time frame which will be treated is Christianity in the first three centuries C.E., i.e. the New Testament but also other significant early Christian texts of various variants of Christianity. We will first deal with Peter as an authoritative figure in the Pauline epistles and Acts, and then turn to the canonical Gospels. Thereafter, we will discuss texts that are attributed to Peter in one way or another, canonical or not. Finally, we will discuss references to Peter as an authoritative figure in other early Christian texts.

C. Means for Assessing the Evidence

Before we engage directly with the texts, we must discuss the theoretical and methodological tools with which we will engage with the texts. A significant presupposition for this study is the diversity of early Christianity. Neither early Christianity, nor the canonical New Testament is one streamlined movement or collection of texts but shows a significant variety of thought. Thus, by simply “adding up” all information about Peter in early Christian sources, one does not necessarily obtain a portrait of the view of Peter in early Christianity. As different understandings of Peter as an authoritative figure emerge from the texts, these must be contrasted against each other. This will result in some similarities, but also significant differences. Both the similarities and the differences are relevant for understanding the image of Peter as an authoritative figure in early Christian imagination.⁵⁰

references to constructions of opposing early Christian groups is a hazardous endeavour that will be avoided in this study due to its speculative nature.

⁵⁰ On the problems involved with using early Christian texts for historical reconstructions, see Jens Schröter, “Konstruktion von Geschichte und die Anfänge des Christentums: Reflexionen zur christlichen Geschichtesdeutung aus neutestamentlicher Perspektive,” in *Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit: Beiträge aus geschichtstheoretischer, philosophischer und*

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