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# Kerygma Petrou

Michael Cameron

*University of Portland*, [cameronm@up.edu](mailto:cameronm@up.edu)

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Aaron Moldenhauer

## Kerygma Petrou

The *Kerygma Petrou* purports to transcribe the preaching of the apostle Peter. Scholarship dates its writing to the first half of the 2nd century (Strecker: 34), possibly in Alexandria (Heine: 36). Though lost, fragments survive in citations found only in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who firmly believed that it came from the historical Peter. Clement reports that “Peter in his *Preaching*” refers to Christ as both “the Law” and “the Word,” and cites in parallel Isa 2:3, “Out of Zion will go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (*Ecl.* 58; *Strom.* 1.29.182–183; 2.15.82). Clement says that when Peter referred to “the first-begotten Son,” he accurately understood Gen 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (*Strom.* 6.5.39–41), perhaps anticipating Origen’s link between “the beginning” and Christ (cf. John 8:25; Heine: 35). In the longest citation, Clement uses the *Kerygma Petrou* to combat the disordered worship of Jews and Greeks, after the manner of Rom 1–2. Christians alone worship God truly as a “third race,” he writes, that is, spiritually, according to the new covenant prophesied in Jer 31:31 (*Strom.* 6.7.58).

Origen quotes one passage of the *Kerygma*, found also in Clement, that had been quoted by the Valentinian Heracleon. But he has little of Clement’s confidence in Petrine authorship (*Comm. Jo.* 13.104). Some identify the *Kerygma Petrou* with a book that Origen rejects in *First Principles* called “The Teaching of Peter” (*Princ.* pref. 8; *pro.* Heine: 35; *contra.* Strecker: 36–7).

Biblical links in Clement come from the Alexandrian writer rather than the *Kerygma Petrou* itself. Nevertheless, Clement also quotes the document’s defense of its prophetic reading of Scripture. “We know that God enjoined these things,” declares the *Kerygma*, “and we say nothing apart from the Scriptures” (*Strom.* 6.15.128).

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Michael Cameron

## Kesu Das

The painter Kesu Das (also known as Keshav Das; fl. ca. 1570–ca. 1595) was one of the greatest artists working in India for the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), a man known for his intellectual and artistic curiosity. Aware of the Portuguese colony at Goa on the western coast of India, Akbar sent emissaries with the request that they send him “two learned priests who should bring with them the chief books of the Law and the Gospel, for I wish to study and learn the Law and what is best and most perfect in it” (MacLagan: 24). In 1580, the First Jesuit Mission, under the direction of Father Rudolf Aquaviva, arrived at the imperial court at Fatehpur-Sikri. There they presented Akbar with seven volumes of the *Royal Polyglot Bible*, printed in Antwerp by Christopher Plantin between 1568 and 1573. The illustrations (engravings) in those volumes, along with additional images brought to court as didactic tools, were studied by the emperor’s painters, who – like Akbar himself – were intrigued by the novel subjects, compositions, and techniques they displayed. The discussions that Akbar held with the Jesuits were considered events important enough to be illustrated by his artists (Bailey: fig. 3).

Kesu Das was immediately affected by these unfamiliar images. He made close copies and adaptations of the European scenes, for he recognized that these provided new means to accomplish the close observation and “naturalism” that Akbar was already demanding from his artists. In a painting of St. Matthew dated 1587–88 (Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms. Douce Or. A1, f. 41v, *see* → plate 3), he closely copied the central figures in an engraving by Philip Galle, after Martin van Heemskerck (Beach: fig. 2), but inventively extended the composition, changed the spatial arrangement, added architecture, and provided brilliant color (perhaps with the advice of the Jesuits). While many of his colleagues were equally involved with European imagery (which became even more accessible with the arrival in 1593 of the Third Mission, led by Father Jerome Xavier), Kesu Das’ early work was of great importance for introducing into Indian painting a sense of spatial depth, and for mastery of the techniques of modeling both flesh and cloth to give a sense of weight and texture, with the result that, as Akbar’s personal historian wrote, “even inanimate objects