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Late Fourth Century Icons Discovered

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June 24, 2010

Late Fourth Century Icons Discovered

One of our readers, Carmen Siebold, has pointed us to an exciting [story in the Washington Post](#) about the use of lasers to restore the earliest known icons of Peter and Paul. This fresco restoration is indeed of significance in that there are many other areas in the catacombs where the technique may be used. This could give us a significant set of new fourth century material to illustrate both burial practices and devotional allegiances in the post-Constantinian Roman environs.

The suggestion made in the article that this may give us insight into earliest Christian devotion, however, is misleading. Late fourth century is still quite early, but it is still three hundred years after the first Christian writings that we have extant: the letters of Paul. Even the gospels were written not long after Paul's writing. So, as significant as these pictorial finds are, they really do not qualify as representations of earliest Christian devotion.

Posted by [John W. Reeve](#) on June 24, 2010 in [Archaeology](#), [Church History](#) | [Permalink](#)

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