

A Small Bronze Group of St. Peter and St. Paul

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THIS little bronze (height 4 in.) was recently found in Rome, possibly in the neighbourhood of the Tombs of the Apostles, where excavations have been going on. It obviously represents St. Peter and St. Paul standing side by side with the ✠ monogram, in its early form, behind in the space between their heads.



Bronze group of St. Peter and St. Paul ($\frac{2}{3}$).

It came into the hands of Messrs. Durlacher from Rome without any precise statement of origin. I am very much obliged to them for permitting me to bring it under the notice of the Society. The two little figures evidently formed the back part of a bronze lamp. Other lamps of about the fifth century A.D., published in Garrucci's *Archaeologia Christiana* (pl. 435, and especially, pl. 471, fig. 2), show how the figures stood in relation to the lamp. It is possible that the remainder of the lamp may yet be discovered in Rome. The figures are dumpy in proportion, but possess a certain naïve charm. They were not made to be an independent sculptured group, but to serve a decorative purpose, and for that they are well enough adapted. Both stand in the same attitude. Each holds a scroll

in his left hand and raises his right in blessing. The right hand of St. Peter has been broken off and the break is an old one.

It will be observed that the well-known types of the two apostles are already clearly marked, Peter with a square beard and Paul with a pointed one. The eyes appear to have been inlaid but are now empty sockets. Numerous representations of Peter and Paul together have come down to us from Early Christian times. We can cite examples on bronze medallions, bronze plaques, gilt glass, and so forth. An interesting bronze medallion of the two heads facing one another in profile was published among the papers of the British School at Rome (vol. ix, pl. 16). It appears to be of earlier date than our group and the types are less clearly indicated, though St. Peter is already recognizable. A bronze *repoussé* plaque, published in the *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* (1887, p. 130, pl. 10), is attributed to the fourth century. The types in it are yet less developed, and though one beard is longer than the other, both seem to be pointed. In Deville's *Histoire de l'art de la Verrerie* (pl. 29 B) both apostles have pointed beards and similar hair; only the names inscribed behind the heads enable the subjects to be identified. Other gold glasses might be cited to illustrate the gradual differentiation of the type between the two apostles. In our bronze the differentiation is complete and the types that were destined to endure throughout the Middle Ages are fully developed. We may, therefore, probably assign it to about the beginning of the fifth century A. D.

DISCUSSION

MR. DALTON thought the bronze of earlier date: it was an example of a style that spread rapidly in the fourth century, and arose from the application of oriental principles of flat decoration to figure sculpture of Hellenistic or Roman origin. The bodies were flat and treated in a linear manner; the heads were in higher relief and strongly characterized, through the increasing interest in the individual in the early Christian centuries, as opposed to the generalized types of pagan art. The change was in the main attributed to Syrian influence, but there was a similar tendency towards realism at Rome, as is seen from the portrait sculpture of later imperial times. The reliefs on the base of the obelisk of Theodosius at Constantinople showed the influence of the same principles, and the form of the Chi-Rho (usually before 400) suggested an earlier period than the date given in the paper.

The PRESIDENT had seen the group in Paris last autumn, and was struck with its artistic peculiarities which had been further brought out by Mr. Dalton. In such cases the date could only be ascertained by evolutionary methods. In returning thanks to the author, he would include Messrs. Durlacher who, not for the first time, had allowed the Society to inspect an interesting exhibit.