Vatican Scavi - Tomb discovered in Necropolis



In 1939, while reconstruction work was taking place inside St. Peter's Basilica, workers made an unexpected and stunning discovery. They had found a mausoleum underneath the floor of the church. On further inspection ... an entire necropolis (city of the dead) was excavated. That area is now called the Vatican Scavi.

This image depicts the first tomb which was rediscovered. Toynbee and Perkins included the photo in their 1957 book - *The Shrine of St. Peter* - and provided this background information:

> *Tomb F was the first mausoleum to be cleared by the recent excavators. Its roof has gone; but its facade, which stands to a height of 4.50 metres, overtops those of all other tombs in the excavation and pierces the floor-level of the new lower church above.*
>
> *There, in the south aisle, a low, box-like structure encases the topmost surviving portion of this facade; and if the visitor is lucky and the lights are turned on below, he can crouch down, pep through the grating in the side of this protective box, and see something of the building which first gave away the secret of the Vatican necropolis.*

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

Image online, courtesy Saint Peters Basilica.org

Quoted passage from *The Shrine of St. Peter*, by Toynbee and Perkins, Pantheon (1957).

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