

# Building a Great Catacomb Library

## The gifts and legacy of John Harvey Treat to Harvard University

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The International Catacomb Society (ICS) directors and staff have made extensive use of the libraries of Harvard University over the years. We are fortunate to have so readily accessible a great number of rare and obscure works on catacombs from the personal libraries of Giuseppe Marchi, Giovanni Battista de Rossi, Orazio Marucchi, and many of their colleagues whose signatures are still legible in faded ink on the covers. (Figures 1–2) Our fortune, we have now discovered, is due to the efforts and generosity of a Harvard University alumnus, who, a century ago, began to make Harvard’s collection of works about catacombs “the most comprehensive anywhere.” The legacy of Mr. John Harvey Treat (Harvard A.M., 1861) continues to provide Harvard today with the financial means necessary to acquire works on the catacombs for its library collections.

The extraordinary story of how this Lawrence businessman actively promoted the excavation and preservation of the ancient cemeteries in Rome is a worthy precursor to ICS founder Estelle Shohet Brettman’s mission—or, as Treat would define it, “cause”—of gathering information about these archaeological sites for their use in Boston by students from all over the world.<sup>1</sup>

John Harvey Treat was born in 1839 in Pittsfield, New Hampshire, to an old Colonial family that had been one of the first to make a fortune in the mill industry in Lawrence, Massachusetts, during the early nineteenth century. After attending Pittsfield Academy, Phillips Academy Andover, and Harvard College, Treat joined his father at James A. Treat & Co., the family’s mill supply and hardware company in Lawrence. He spent the next forty years working for his father’s business until his retirement in 1892. A life-long bachelor, Treat moved from state to state and country to country with great ease, spending various periods of the year at a “villa” in Cupasuptic, Maine, and another house in Florida. His other, less isolated, retreats were Europe and the Middle East, where he cultivated his interests in antiquity and genealogy. He referred in his letters to such pursuits as “hobbies,” but after many years, Treat possessed a collector’s eye and passion for artifacts and other historical remains.

While still at Harvard, Treat compiled and translated works of the Church Fathers “on various points of Christian doctrine and antiquities” in addition to writing his own polemical treatise against the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> The Harvard class notes for 1862 remember Treat as a bibliophile, able to “scent from afar” a rare old book to acquire for his personal library, which he had begun to assemble while still an undergraduate. In 1869, a few years after his graduation and the American Civil War that had claimed the lives of many Harvard classmates, Treat visited England, France, and Italy with his family. The itinerary included the first of many visits to Rome and its catacombs. Years later, Treat would vividly recall the on-going destruction of catacomb galleries next to the semi-hypogaeal Church of Saint Lawrence Outside the Walls for the enlargement of Rome’s modern cemetery in the Campo Verano (Figure 3):

In our own times, the catacombs of Cyriaca at the Church of Saint Lawrence have been almost totally destroyed to build the modern Campo Santo, the cemetery for the city of Rome. . . . I saw the desecrated galleries in 1869 . . . [The catacomb’s] galleries and chapels, covered with unopened loculi and paintings, exposed on the side of the hill . . . were being destroyed by workmen.<sup>3</sup>

The American thought it surprising that Pope Pius IX had not intervened in the matter, while work continued on the pope’s own lavish tomb behind that of Saint Lawrence inside.<sup>4</sup> Treat also saw in retrospect that the condition of the catacombs did not improve after Italian troops took Rome in 1870. The first explorers in the catacombs, he thought, could be excused for believing that the galleries would soon collapse and be lost forever below the deserted Roman countryside, but the rapid growth of modern Italy’s new capital created a far more serious threat to the ancient monuments of Rome.<sup>5</sup>

While in Rome during the year 1870, Treat also witnessed the final stages of another conflict, that between the Papacy and the *Risorgimento* movement over the creation of a secular Italian State. Perhaps the fervid political climate of the

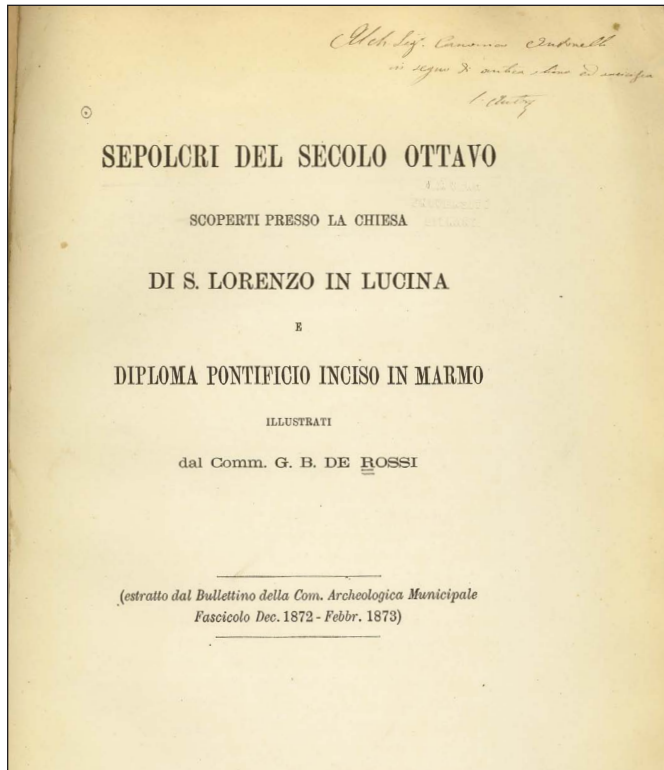


Figure 1. Autograph of G. B. de Rossi with dedication “al ch. sig. Canonico Antonelli - un segno di antica stima ed amicizia.” Purchased with the Treat Fund for Harvard University. Courtesy of Harvard University Libraries

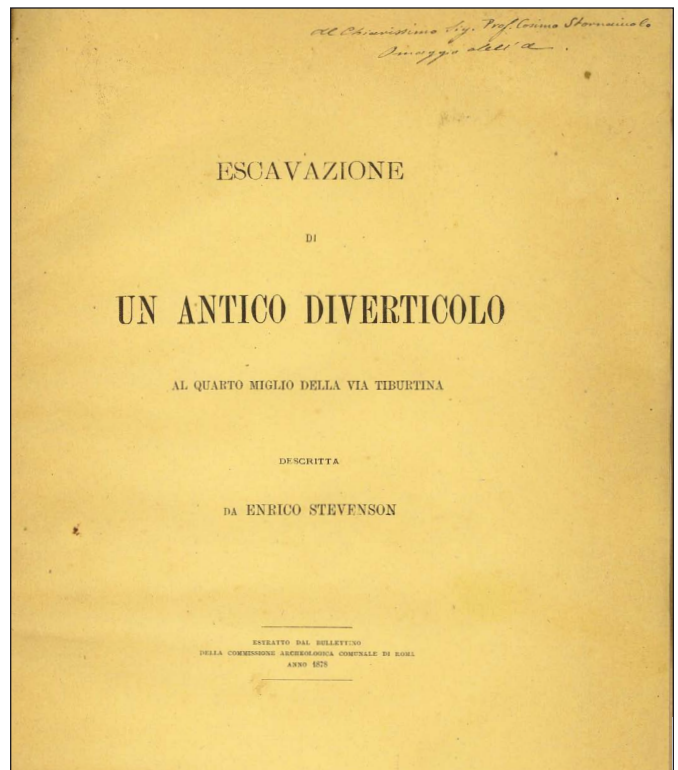


Figure 2. Autograph of E. Stevenson with dedication to Prof. C. Stornaiuolo. Purchased with the Treat Fund for Harvard University. Courtesy of Harvard University Libraries.



Figure 3. “Landslip in the Cemetery of Cyriaca” from R. Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, Boston, 1899, p. 351.

time concerning the modern relationship between Church and State inspired Treat, a life-long Episcopalian, to publish upon his return to America some of the observations and notes “of a polemical, theological character,” which he had started to compile while still an undergraduate.<sup>6</sup> These notes were apparently critical of the Catholic Church and its recent Vatican Council, but included a short treatise on ancient inscriptions which Treat—nurturing a passion for epigraphy—had compiled while abroad.<sup>7</sup> The pamphlets, printed on Treat’s own press, remained anonymous and were distributed privately. Treat would also create an imaginary exchange of letters between a “Catholic” and “Barney Flanagan” about the “purity and integrity of the Roman Catholic Church,” circulated by a local newspaper, *Lawrence’s Journal and Citizen*, again without naming Treat as their author.

In June 1875, Treat made his way to the Middle East as Assistant Engineer with the American Palestine Exploration Expedition on its mission to chart and photograph many Bib-

lical sites east of the Jordan River.<sup>8</sup> Treat fell ill during the journey, “coming near to dying on the banks of the Jordan, but, to the disgust of doctors, beat the fever.”<sup>9</sup> He returned to America with “many relics from the East,” particularly Greek, Roman, and Semitic coins. The memory and effects of his illness or an increased workload may have kept him from his travels for many years thereafter, as biographical notes do not mention any further voyages to Europe or the Middle East until his retirement.

Treat worked on many different projects during the 1880s. These were in a wide range of subjects, from the invention of a portable canvas canoe, which he used on his estate in Maine, to the publication of his Harvard manuscripts on Roman Catholic doctrine and an eight-volume work on *Notes on the Rubrics of the Communion Office: Illustrating the History of the Rubrics of Various Prayer-books and their Bearing on the Use of Vestments, Altar Lights and the Eastward Position, Wafer Bread and the Mixed Chalice*. Another book, *Truro Baptisms from 1711 to 1800* (1886), was a genealogical work in preparation for his extensive history of the Treat family published in 1893: *The Treat Family: a genealogy of Trott, Pratt, Tratt and Treat for fifteen generations, and four hundred and fifty years in England and America, containing more than fifteen hundred families in America*. Treat was also a correspondent and reviewer for several American and British publications, and belonged to a long list of organizations for history and genealogy.<sup>10</sup>

Treat’s involvement with many projects and causes was driven not only by his passions but also by his generosity. After surrounding himself with valuable books and artifacts collected over the course of a lifetime, he began to find new homes for these objects in the organizations whose interests were most similar to his own. His first bequest of ancient coins from the Palestinian expedition was to the New England Historical Genealogical Society in 1887, but thereafter Harvard would obtain the largest share of Treat’s collections and legacy.<sup>11</sup> In 1888, Treat gave Harvard College what he called his “library”: numerous books on “Ritualism and Doctrinal Theology” that he had started collecting in his student days. An inventory of this library was compiled by William Coolidge Lane, who would figure largely in Treat’s future donations to the Harvard Library.<sup>12</sup> That same year, the Peabody Museum (Department of Comparative Zoology) received a separate gift of over 3,000 specimens of insects that had belonged to Treat and his brother.<sup>13</sup>

Treat resumed his travels in Europe and the Middle East after retiring from James A. Treat & Co in 1892. A journey in 1897 took him to Egypt, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Athens. His first-hand knowledge of the Crusader sites in these lands made him a willing partner in Harvard’s bid to purchase the private library of noted Crusader historian Count Paul Edouard Riant, which was up for sale in Paris in

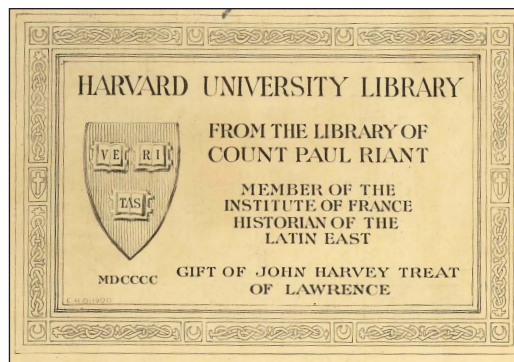


Figure 4. Harvard University Library bookplate for Riant Collection. Courtesy of Harvard University Libraries.

1899.<sup>14</sup> Riant’s estate, described at the time as “probably the most valuable collection of books that the [Harvard] library has ever received,” consisted of 7,649 volumes, 1,162 pamphlets, and rare manuscripts and documents relating to the Crusades and other studies on the Middle East and Europe, including works on Christian churches and catacombs in Rome.<sup>15</sup> Writing from Rome, Treat agreed to back the purchase of these sections of the Riant collection, a large part of which eventually went to Harvard’s Divinity School.<sup>16</sup> A special bookplate was issued with the University crest and date (1900) beside the names of Count Paul Riant and “John Harvey Treat of Lawrence.” (Figure 4)

Treat continued to provide the means for the growth of his library now on Harvard’s shelves. In 1901, a year after the Riant purchase and another trip to Europe, he offered the sum of \$300 to the Harvard College Library “to purchase every book on Roman catacombs and Christian antiquities in Italy.”<sup>17</sup> This gift was “gratefully accepted” by the Harvard Corporation during a meeting of the President and Fellows on May 27, 1901.<sup>18</sup> In succeeding years before his death in 1908, Treat made an annual donation to his catacomb book fund, while continuing to enrich his own library and photographic collection on the subject.<sup>19</sup>

Treat’s letters to Coolidge Lane explain in part this growing interest in Christian Antiquities in Rome and his desire that Harvard should be kept well provided on the subject. Treat, a favored guest in Rome and well-nourished on contemporary literature of early Christian piety and practices, was one of many eager travellers to the city’s early Christian sites. These he interpreted with a distinctly Victorian mixture of piety and real scientific curiosity: “the catacombs are the Christian Pompeii: the buried Church that illustrates the life, the rites, and the beliefs of the early followers of Christ.”<sup>20</sup>



This intensity made Treat a demanding visitor: most people, he wrote, regard the catacombs “as one of the things to be seen in Rome” and are just as satisfied when larger crowds force guides to shorten the tour. Treat found the times when the catacombs were the least crowded, and listened with polite skepticism to any “pious opinions” on traditions not explicitly found in the Church literature with which he was well familiar. Treat evaluated all material evidence against that which was written, for he believed that “archaeology rests upon documents and does not accept anything without good proof.”<sup>21</sup> Treat, however, like the vast majority of his contemporaries, refused to consider evidence that the catacombs had been originally pagan sites. He declared that “they were the work of Christians alone” or, in the case of the Jewish catacombs on the Vigna Randanini, “very similar to the Christian catacombs.” The latter he judged to be the work of a group of Hellenizing Jews, since the Jewish catacomb contained “pictures of human beings and animals forbidden by Jewish Law.”<sup>22</sup> Treat knew of a second, smaller Jewish catacomb nearby, probably that of the Vigna Cimarra; both, he declared, “were worth a visit.”<sup>23</sup> (Figure 5)

The American’s wariness of “pious frauds” would be natural for a non-Catholic who found the practices of the early Christians inconsistent with the rites of the modern Roman Catholic Church. Yet Treat would receive a true epiphany on catacombs while attending Mass in the large hall known as the “Cryptoporticus” in the catacomb of Priscilla on the via Salaria. He described the experience in a letter to Coolidge Lane of July 1st, 1902,<sup>24</sup> and more fully in an article reprinted in his book on the catacombs in 1907:

On May 22, 23d and 24th (1902), in the Church of St. Pudentiana, the oldest church in Rome, traditionally erected over the house where St. Pudens entertained the apostles, a solemn *triduo* was celebrated in honor of the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the body of the martyr Saint Philomena in the catacomb of St. Priscilla. It was announced that on Sunday, May 25th, Masses would be celebrated in that catacomb at 7:30 and at 10 a.m. and that the litany with a procession would be said at 5 p.m. I attended the Mass at 10. . . . The modern entrance to the catacomb, created by the Commission for Sacred Archaeology, is directly from the street (via Salaria). The passage inside, leading to the crypt, was ornamented with festoons of box, and, as were all the other galleries, illuminated with candles so that you could easily find your way about. . . . In the crypt was a recumbent marble statue of St. Philomena, an altar with its lights, and a cross in the Greek form instead of the crucifix. The priests in their vestments stood behind the altar, facing the people. . . . A choir of young men with a cabinet organ was at one side of the Greek Chapel. . . . Seldom, or perhaps never since the ninth century, has such an event as this taken place here. The service was most interesting to me, and I seemed to be transported back to the times of the early church, to the times of the martyrs. . . . All day long, a day never to be forgotten, we could wander through the ancient and venerable catacomb at our leisure and be carried back in thought to the earliest days of the Christian church.”<sup>25</sup>

Treat attended another Mass at the Catacomb of Domitilla on May 14, 1905, celebrated by the Society of the Cul-



Figure 5. “Entrance to the Jewish Catacombs,” from the *Illustrated London News*, January 27th, 1872, p. 96.

tores Martyrum in the presence of the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry de Val. On this occasion, Treat was seated inside the recently rebuilt catacomb basilica dedicated to the Saints Nereus and Achilleus. He reflected that “it is not often that one has such an opportunity” to hear the “same old sermon which was delivered some one thousand three hundred years ago by Gregory the Great in this very place.”<sup>26</sup> More than the many tours he had taken of the public catacombs in Rome, these experiences made him feel a witness to a revival of early Christian worship at these sites. (Figure 6)

After the service, Treat listened to a lecture delivered in French and then in Italian by Professor Orazio Marucchi of the Pontifical Commission of Sacred Archaeology.<sup>27</sup> A disciple of Giovanni Battista de Rossi and prolific author of studies on the Christian and Jewish catacombs of Rome, Marucchi (1852–1931) was then considered the foremost living authority on catacombs.<sup>28</sup> The professor met with Treat after the service, and would later escort the American through his new excavations of the so-called baptistery inside the catacomb of Priscilla and basilica of St. Sylvester overhead.<sup>29</sup> With the intervention of the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III, the Commission for Sacred Archaeology was soon able to expropriate these sites and rededicate the basilica on the Feast of Saint Sylvester, December 31, 1907.<sup>30</sup> Treat had provided generously for this project, in the hope that Marucchi would become an important ally for “the cause” of building up Harvard’s collection of materials on catacombs.<sup>31</sup> In his 1908 publication on the basilica of St. Sylvester, Marucchi would recall the financial assistance of certain individuals “who wish to remain anonymous”; Treat’s obituaries in the United States, however, remember that he had received “public recognition” for his hand in the affair.<sup>32</sup>

Treat sought out publications on the catacombs in booksellers’ stalls all over Rome, finding that works on the subject were increasingly in demand but always leaving his name or Harvard’s address should new material become available.<sup>33</sup> He forwarded books, tracked the imminent publication of studies and journals (particularly those with articles by Marucchi), and requested the receipts of books Harvard had acquired with his gift.<sup>34</sup> On periodic visits to Boston, Treat would then visit Harvard’s library to inspect any new additions to the collection. Given Treat’s order to “get everything that can illustrate the subject,” Harvard, in turn, contacted one of its young graduates living in Rome, Harry Nelson Gay, A.M. 1896, Coolidge Lane’s agent in Rome and Paris for the Harvard Library.<sup>35</sup> After meeting with Treat in Rome in 1903, Gay negotiated the purchase of hundreds of treatises on the catacombs from book dealers like Nardecchia and Spithover.<sup>36</sup> Treat was pleased with the results. In 1905, he had dreamed



Figure 6. Catacomb of Domitilla, Basilica of Saints Nereus and Achilleus, pre-1912. From O. Marucchi, *Guida del Cimitero di Domitilla*, Rome 1902, p. 16.

of Harvard possessing “the best library in the world” on the subject of catacombs. Two years later, in 1907, he wrote in the preface to his book, *The Catacombs of Rome with a History of the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul*, that “the Library of Harvard College contains a very fine collection of books on the catacombs, the largest in the country and one of the best anywhere, a gift of the author.”<sup>37</sup> (Figure 7)

Aside from his book on catacombs, Treat issued one additional publication on *The Ancestry of Colonel John Harvey* in 1907.<sup>38</sup> He died in Pittsfield, N.H., on November 8, 1908. A copy of his will, written out on stationery of the Essex Institute in Salem, Mass. (Treat had been a member), is dated to December 1908. Aside from several small bequests, including a gift of \$10,000 to the New England Historical Genealogical Society and a family portrait to the Masonic Temple in Boston, Harvard College received the remainder of Treat’s estate as the Treat Fund “for the purchase of books relating to the Church of England and Churches in Communion with her, and the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, especially as regards ritual matters.”<sup>39</sup> The will also contained a clause to include the acquisition of works “relating to Christian Archaeology (and Architecture), [as] my desire is to make this Department of the Library as full as possible for the benefit of scholars.” The Harvard Library would also receive Treat’s personal collection of books, manuscripts, photographs, and other items of historical value.

In the Librarian’s Report for the year 1911, a sum of \$49,115.11 is listed as “the legacy of John Harvey Treat of

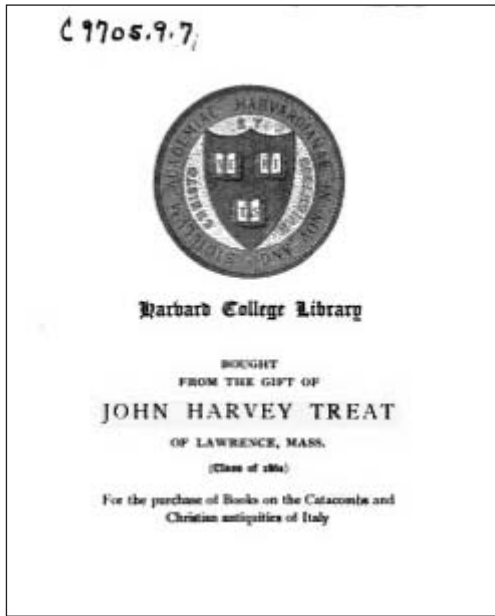


Figure 7. Bookplate for the Treat Fund for Christian Archaeology at Harvard University. Courtesy of Harvard University Libraries.

the Class of 1862, being the residue of his estate." This would become the John Harvey Treat Book Fund. In comparison with other gifts made to the library during the same period, it is an enormous sum, and continues as an active fund today.<sup>40</sup>

Of Treat's legacy to Harvard, the money is the easiest thing to trace. In the summer of 1909, after contacting the executor of Treat's will, a Mr. John A. Perkins, William Coolidge Lane paid a visit in person to Perkins at the cashier's office in the Merchants National Bank of Lawrence. At the bank, Coolidge Lane examined what was left of Treat's collections, and selected a total of 140 volumes, 126 pamphlets, and one photograph "suitable for the college library."<sup>41</sup> The Harvard Librarian also felt obliged to accept the gift of 174 copies of Treat's 1907 book on the catacombs of Rome. He wrote to Harvard President Abbot Lawrence Lowell that the book "was not an uninteresting one, and shows careful compilation," and suggested that copies be put on sale at the Harvard Cooperative Society, with remainders for "distribution to other libraries." The books arrived at Harvard in October, but various legal considerations delayed the receipt of Treat's estate for another two years.<sup>42</sup>

The final transaction proved somewhat complicated. A year after his visit to Lawrence, Coolidge Lane or one of his associates looked over Treat's will once more; it may be Coolidge

Lane himself who wrote in thick black ink at the bottom of the page: "have we a record of this?" to which another hand, in pencil, responded, "no."<sup>43</sup> Coolidge Lane wrote once again to Perkins, inquiring as to the fate of the objects other than books which were to have gone to the Harvard College Library.<sup>44</sup> In his response, Perkins explained that the previous year he had not obtained suitable shipping cases, but now offered to send the photographs at once: he was more evasive about handing over other material.<sup>45</sup> The photographs were recorded in the Fogg Museum Archives on March 11, 1911, with the annotation: "John Harvey Treat Bequest from the Harvard College Library."<sup>46</sup> It is most probable that these are the ones mentioned by Treat in his will, as they include images of ancient buildings, including the Egyptian pyramids and ruins in Pompeii. Most had been purchased from professional studios abroad.<sup>47</sup>

Coolidge Lane was not the only one keeping an eye on the Treat case, for fear that its benefits to the Library would be "overlooked." Plans for a new library building were well underway. Coolidge Lane's colleague Archibald Cary Coolidge now proposed to catalogue Harvard's collection of fifteen thousand volumes on Church History at the Divinity School in collaboration with Ephraim Emerton, Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History, "with the increase in the collection insured by the fund bequeathed in 1911 by John Harvey Treat."<sup>48</sup> Coolidge paid for the services of a Harvard graduate student, Theodore Francis Jones, and President Lowell accepted an increase in Coolidge Lane's operating expenses "to take advantage of Mr. Coolidge's generous offer."<sup>49</sup>

The Treat Book Fund has broadened its range today to include books on many Christian traditions, and the expansion of Harvard's library network has sent these books to all corners of the university.<sup>50</sup> A large part of Treat's original collection of books on Christian Archaeology and the catacombs remains intact, however, in Widener Library's section on archaeology. The volumes, encased in old-fashioned "marble" cloth bindings, are often no wider than a centimeter, and issue forth a light cloud of dust and paper when opened, often for the first time since they were exchanged between archaeologists in Rome so many years ago. One is still pleased to see them all together, as they were in the library of Treat's time, as the sign of his "devotion to the building up of a collection of works on the catacombs, in which subject [he] was especially interested."<sup>51</sup>



## NOTES

The title of this article is inspired by W. Bentinck-Smith's *Building a Great Library: The Coolidge Years at Harvard*, Cambridge, Mass., 1976.

1. I am most grateful to the Harvard University Archivist, Dr. Harley P. Holden, and his staff for unrestricted access to the archives of Harvard University and its library collections, as well as for their willing assistance with this endeavor. Debts of thanks are also due to Dr. Martha Mahard and her associate, Dr. Janet Bloom, for their assistance with the Harvard Photography Archives; Amy K. Hirschfeld, formerly of Harvard University's Peabody Museum and now Director of the International Catacomb Society in Boston, for such exacting editorial standards; and Sister Maria Francesca Antoniovanni of the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, who provided valuable advice on period photographs and prints to illustrate this article.

2. The Harvard manuscript was published much later as *The Catholic Faith or Doctrines of the Church of Rome Contrary to Scripture and the Teaching of the Primitive Church*, Nashotah, Wis., 1888 (esp. preface, p. iii). "Obituary of John Harvey Treat," *Providence Journal* (Rhode Island), November 11, 1908.

3. Excerpts from J. H. Treat, *The Catacombs of Rome and an Account of the History of the Tombs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, with notes and illustrations*, Boston, 1907, p. 18 and p. 97 (note 23).

4. Treat was not the only witness to Vespignani's destructive work inside and above the Catacomb of Cyriaca. The process had begun well before Treat's visit in the late 1860s. A report to Father Giuseppe Marchi, S. J., on April 4, 1851, states that construction workers digging beside the Church of Saint Lawrence had uncovered a burial chamber containing artifacts from Christian and pagan tombs. These were removed to one of the "warehouses" inside the modern cemetery: Gregorian University Archives, Rome (Archivio Collegio Romano—"lettere in gran parte d'archeologia di Padre Marchi"), b. 28II, f. 291a. An English traveler to Rome during the same period (1860s), the Rev. John W. Burgon, confirms that the catacomb was being "hacked away" for an extension of the Campo Verano cemetery; "the loculi or graves are open. . . more than one arcosolium, with its fresco paintings, has been brought into the light of day, and is fast disappearing." J. W. Burgon, *Letters from Rome to Friends in England*, London, 1862, p. 145.

5. Treat, 1907, p. 25.

6. See Treat's own preface to his work *The Catholic Faith*, p. iii. From his college days, Treat had kept "a large collection of extracts" from Church writings, "printed by himself and given away to friends," see Harvard Class Notes, 1882, 20th Reunion, Class of 1862, pp. 187–188 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives). The collection contains the writings of

the (Church) Fathers bearing upon the following subjects, arranged in chronological order, with an English translation and a few notes: *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin; St. Peter in Rome; Inscriptiones Vetustae; The Intermediate State; Late Origin of the Roman Doctrine of Purgatory; Loyalty to the Prayer-Book* (2d edition); *The Catholic Controversy*." A complete bibliography for J. H. Treat is at the end of this article.

7. Treat copied pagan and Christian epitaphs from the Vatican Museums, Saint Paul's Outside the Walls, and Santa Maria Liberatrice as well as pagan inscriptions from the Louvre, Vatican Museums, Appian Way, and Pompeii.

8. The expedition report is published as *East of the Jordan. The Jordan Valley: The Cities of the Plain, Palestine Exploration Society Fourth Statement*, January, 1877, New York, 1877; photographs in *A Catalogue of Photographs taken expressly for the American Palestine Exploration Society during a Reconnaissance East of the Jordan in the Autumn of 1875*, New York-Beirut, 1876. The itinerary included the sites of Baruk, Thelthatha, Jebel Esh Sheikh (Mt. Hermon), Rukhleh, Baniyas, Hazury, Tell El Kadi, Musmeik, Suleim, Kunawat, Atil, Salchad, Bozrah, Um El Temel, Gerash, Hebron, Arak El Emir, Hebran, Mashita, and Amman. The field party from the United States consisted of Engineer James C. Lane; First Assistant Engineer Rudolph Meyers; the Rev. Selah Merrill, Archaeologist; and J. Harvey Treat, General Assistance.

9. Harvard College, 1862 Class Notes, 1882, p. 187; in the engineer's report of December 13, 1875, Treat is listed as "disabled for work"; *East of the Jordan*, p. 23.

10. A partial list of these organizations is provided in the Harvard Class of 1862 50th Reunion Report (1902), p. 20. Treat's obituary, published in the *Harvard Bulletin* on December 23, 1908, notes Treat's membership in the New England Historical Genealogical Society, Cape Cod Historical Society, Harleian Society of London, American Academy of Political and Social Science, and the Essex Institute. Treat also served as Vice President of the New Hampshire Society of the Cincinnati.

11. Notice of Treat's gift to the NEHGS in the *Boston Journal* of November 3, 1887. Mr. Timothy Salls, the society's archivist, has been unable to trace the whereabouts of this coin collection and suggests that it may have been sold when the society moved to its current location in 1964.

12. William Coolidge Lane, "A Catalogue of a Collection of Works in Ritualism and Doctrinal Theology presented by John Harvey Treat," in *The Library at Harvard University: Bibliographical Contributions*, 36, ed. Justin Windsor, Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

13. A. Agassiz, in *Museum of American Archaeology*, October 1, 1888, p. 160.

14. Count Paul Edouard Didier Riant (1836–1888) of Paris, founder and director of the Société de l'Orient Latin, was the foremost scholar of his time of the Crusades and the Latin

East. Among his works is an edition of the “spurious and doubtful works” of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenos (Geneva, 1879), now at Harvard University’s Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies. *The Catalogue de la bibliothèque de feu M. Le Comte Riant*, a complete inventory of Riant’s library, was compiled by L. De Germon and L. Polain, Paris, 1896–1899.

15. W. Coolidge Lane, “Library Accessions” in *The Librarian’s Report to the President and Fellows of Harvard University*, vols. 1–10, Cambridge, Mass., 1898–1907, p. 217 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

16. J. H. Treat to W. Coolidge Lane, letter of April 23, 1900, from Rome, Italy, promising a gift of \$800 to the library, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 80, 1900, p. 5 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

17. Obituary for J. Harvey Treat in *Harvard Class of 1862, 50th Reunion Class Notes*, 1912, p. 45 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

18. Report of Alfred C. Potter, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 67, October 1897–December 1903, p. 86 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

19. Accounts 1903–1909, in *William Coolidge Lane: Special Subject File: Accounts 1903–1925* (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

20. Treat, 1907, p. 9. Treat’s acceptance of the doctrinal value of the catacombs suggests he fell under the spell of Roman archaeologist Orazio Marucchi, who recalled accompanying “Learned Protestants and especially members of the Anglican Church on their visits to the catacombs, and I have noted that the explanations I have made of monuments that concern dogmatic questions on which our separated brethren differ from us impressed them. I found out later that not a few of them, after studying Christian Archaeology, abandoned their prejudices.” O. Marucchi, *The Evidence of the Catacombs for the Doctrines and Organization of the Primitive Church*, London, 1928, VI–VII (quoted in M. Ghilardi, “Propaganda controriformista ed uso apologetico delle catacombe,” in *Gli arsenali della Fede: Tre saggi su apologia e propaganda delle catacombe romane (da Gregorio XIII a Pio XI)*, Rome, 2006, p. 66, n. 218).

21. Treat, 1907, p. 61 (and note 17 for p. 24).

22. Treat, 1907, p. 85 (and note 22 for p. 29). Treat evidently had heard about or had visited the “double cubiculum” in the Vigna Randanini catacomb that was decorated with human and animal figures.

23. By referring to the two Jewish catacombs discovered on the Appian Way, Treat reveals his familiarity with John Murray’s *Handbook of Rome and Environs*, 8th edition, London, 1867, popular at the time with Anglophone tourists. The editor of the 1867 edition, Joseph Barclay Pentland, had been one of the earliest visitors to the Jewish Catacombs in the

Vigna Randanini, and includes a reliable description of the site in his editions of Murray’s guide (pp. 348–349).

24. Letter to W. Coolidge Lane of July 1, 1902, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 90, April–September, 1902, p. 113 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

25. Treat, 1907, p. 21.

26. Treat, 1907, p. 41.

27. In his letter to W. Coolidge Lane of July 1, 1902, Treat mentions also hearing Marucchi speak after the service in the Catacombs of Priscilla (omitted from his 1907 book on catacombs). *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 90, April–September, 1902, p. 113 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

28. It did not escape Treat that Marucchi was Curator of the Egyptian Department at the Vatican Museums, another area of interest for Treat, well familiar with the Egyptian territories.

29. Marucchi uncovered the apse and form of the basilica, already seen by de Rossi in 1890: Marucchi then extended the dig to the mausoleum behind the church. The excavations of 1905–1907 were published in the *Nuovo Bollettino di Archeologia Cristiana* (June–July, 1908) and in O. Marucchi, *La Basilica Papale del Cimitero di Priscilla ritrovata ed in parte ricostruita dalla Commissione di Archeologia Sacra*, Rome, 1908.

30. M. Ghilardi. “Dalla morte di Pio IX all’ elezione di Pio IX: il recupero ideologico della Roma Sotteranea,” in Ghilardi 2006, pp. 139–140. Ghilardi does not mention Treat’s presumed “involvement”: on p. 139 he writes that the funding for excavations in Priscilla was provided “interamente” by Cardinal Merry de Val, and names only this benefactor, as well as the Archbishop of Tiro, V. M. van den Branden, as those who supplemented the financial aid of Pope Pius X to an “insistent” Marucchi.

31. Donations by Treat in 1905 and 1906; cited in *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 99, March–September, 1905, p. 110 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

32. Marucchi, 1908, p. 20, mentions twice the “generosi” who financed the excavation and restoration of the basilica of St. Sylvester and retrostant mausoleum, as well as excavations in the “baptistery” below.

33. Treat dealt with the Libreria Spithover (whose proprietor, a friend of Marucchi’s, was a member of the Society for the Cultores Martyrum and publisher, at that time, of the *Nuovo Bollettino di Archeologia Cristiana*), as well as with the book dealer Nardecchia in Rome. Letter of J. Harvey Treat to W. Coolidge Lane of July 1, 1902, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 90, April–September, 1902, p. 113 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

34. See note 24 (letter of Treat to W. Coolidge Lane). *The Boston Herald* of October 3, 1902, took note of the arrival of 100 books on catacombs bought by Treat from foreign printing houses, *Harvard University Archives: Biography Files: Treat, John Harvey* (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).



35. In his own lifetime, Gay built up one of the foremost collections of Italian Risorgimento material in his home in the Palazzo Orsini (Theater of Marcellus), a good part of which Harvard was later able to obtain.

36. Letter of J. Harvey Treat to W. Coolidge Lane, November 14, 1904 (from Maine), brings to Coolidge Lane's attention some letters for sale in Rome for Gay to inspect. *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 97, November 1904–February 1905, p. 45; also *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 93, 1903–1904, p. 122 (all courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

37. Treat, 1907, preface.

38. Treat continued his travels, visiting the American West and Canada in 1906.

39. Harvard University possesses this copy of Treat's will in its archives: *Wills, Treat, John Harvey* (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives). The portrait was that of Bennett Marlino di St. Pry, Treat's great-grandfather of Italian descent and a colleague of General Lafayette in Boston during the American Revolution.

40. Merchants National Bank, Lawrence, Mass., memorandum of assets of the Estate of John Harvey Treat, December 15, 1909 (total calculated from bonds, stocks, deposits, etc.) in *Wills*, *ibid.*

41. Letter of W. Coolidge Lane to A. Lawrence Lowell of November 6, 1909; the bequest of John Harvey Treat is entered on October 28, 1909, into the *Library Accession Book*, July 1, 1909–November 30, 1909 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

42. W. Coolidge Lane issued a formal receipt to Perkins on November 3, 1909; there had been some delay in the counting of the books.

43. *Wills*, *op. cit.* n. 39.

44. Letter of W. Coolidge Lane to J. A. Perkins, September 20, 1910, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 111, p. 67 (courtesy of Harvard University Archives).

45. Letter of J. A. Perkins to W. Coolidge Lane of September 24, 1910, *Harvard College Library Letters*, vol. 111, p. 88 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives). To be fair to Perkins, the other objects, connected in some way to the Treat family, may have eventually arrived to Harvard, but were soon forgotten. A letter from President Currier of Harvard sent years later to a Mrs. Forbes regarding the whereabouts of one of the Treat manuscripts admits that it "may be hidden in some mass of manuscripts": letter of T. F. Currier to Harriette Marrison Forbes, July 24, 1939 in *Currier Correspondence*, Treat Folder (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

46. *Fogg Museum Library Accessions Record*, inventory nn. 39117–39300 (courtesy of the Harvard University Archives).

47. With the helpful assistance of Dr. Janet Bloom of the Visual Collections of the Fine Arts Library at Harvard University, I was able to verify that the majority of photographs inventoried in 1911 were purchased from the Bonfils Studio

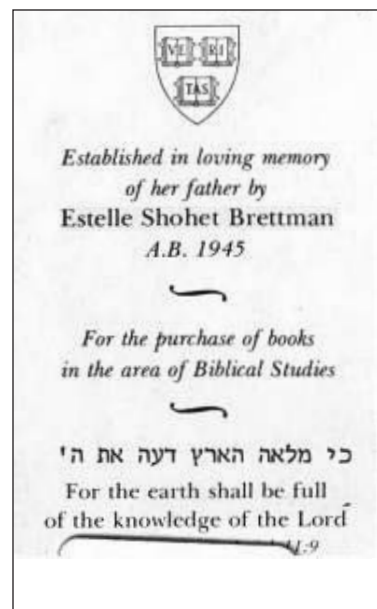
in Beirut. The prints from Italian studios bore the names of the Alinari, Moscioni, Brogi, and Esposito firms. Zangaki and Adullah Freres may be other studios in the Middle East. The photographs were not inventoried together as a special collection after their transfer to the Fogg Museum. None of the images appear to be of catacombs.

48. *Harvard College Library Annual Report, Libraries Book Accounts and Funds*, 1910, p. 9, and W. Bentinck-Smith, *Building a Great Library: The Coolidge Years at Harvard*, Cambridge, Mass., 1976, pp. 162–163; also *Library Catalogue and Shelf Lists*, ca. 1923, Classification Scheme cont. 4 (Church History); all courtesy of the Harvard University Archives.

49. Letter of A. Lawrence Lowell to W. Coolidge Lane, September 27, 1909; see also Bentinck-Smith, p. 163.

50. Other departments benefit from the Treat fund "if the funds are more than sufficient for the purpose designated," *Endowment Funds of Harvard University*, June 30, 1995, p. 252.

51. W. Coolidge Lane, *Harvard College Librarian's Report of 1911*, p. 20. Like Treat, the International Catacomb Society's own Estelle Shohet Brettman, A.B. Radcliffe, 1945, established a Harvard Library book fund in memory of her father, Dr. Gabriel H. Shohet, "for the purchase of books in the area of Biblical Studies"; this, too, is an active fund.



Bookplate for the Gabriel Shohet Fund for Biblical Studies, given in memory of her father by Estelle Shohet Brettman.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CATACOMB SOCIETY was founded in 1980 by Estelle Shohet Brettman. The society is dedicated to the preservation and documentation of the Roman catacombs and other sites that illustrate the common influences on Jewish, Christian, and Pagan iconography and funerary practices during the time of the Roman Empire. The society also strives to increase knowledge of the catacombs by circulating exhibits, sponsoring lectures, and disseminating information and publications.

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