

AN IMPORTANT COMMENT FROM THE STERA, INC., BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2015, after fulfilling all of STERA, Inc.'s formal requirements for accessing materials in our various collections, the Board of Directors voted to approve Giulio Fanti's request for access to three of the remaining tape samples from the Ray Rogers Collection. These were hand delivered to him in Turin in May 2015 by Barrie Schwartz. It should be noted that Barrie does not have a vote on the Board of Directors so did not participate in the decision to grant Giulio access to the samples. That decision was made solely by the Board of Directors.

In the *STERA, Inc. Materials Access Request* form that Giulio completed, he stated that, "The material will be returned AS it will be furnished without impact of any kind. Possible minimal alteration will be agreed before any operation." This indisputably implies that the testing he would perform would be completely NON-DESTRUCTIVE and was one of the critical considerations STERA, Inc. used in their decision to grant his request and make the samples available to him. When Giulio submitted a copy to the board of the first paper he produced based at least in part on the samples we provided, titled, "[Mechanical Characterization of Linen Fibers: The Turin Shroud Dating](#)," the Board of Directors reviewed it and made a series of comments and recommendations to improve the paper and make it more accurate.

The board letter made the following points:

1. The paper indicates that a fiber from slide 3EF was removed and used for destructive testing. This was a violation of the loan agreement whereby the slides and material on them would be used only for non-destructive testing.
2. The length of the tested fiber is unclear. If indeed it was "below 0.5mm" as implied in the paper, it seems nothing more than a speck and could not be identified with any degree of confidence as coming from the Shroud.
3. The paper states, however, that the fiber came from the Shroud. This is misleading, as it came from a sticky tape applied to the surface of the Shroud. Such sampling invariably picks up other adventitious surface material.
4. The fiber seems most unsuitable to test for its mechanical strength or rupture point, since it was in sticky tape on a slide that was deteriorating.
5. The method of "dating" described in the paper is not recognized by scientists and to our knowledge has never been confirmed or duplicated by other researchers.
6. Items 2, 3, and 4 above should be discussed in the paper. Failure to do so amounts to concealment of relevant facts.

Unfortunately, Giulio chose to reject (or ignore) the Board's recommendations and his paper was ultimately published without including any of them. As per the original agreement, the samples were personally returned to STERA, Inc. on August 6, 2016.

More recently, Giulio submitted another paper to the Board of Directors, this one titled, "[Blood reinforced by pigments in the reddish stains of the Turin Shroud](#)." Many Board members had immediate concerns about the paper, the major one being the dramatic conclusion that ALL the bloodstains on the Shroud had been retouched based on the observation of a single fiber and a single sub-micron particle on it. In the end, the paper was rather complex and no member of the Board of Directors felt fully qualified to evaluate it, so it was sent to an independent blood expert for his opinion. He wrote a detailed, in-depth technical review of the paper and made several specific recommendations which were provided to the authors. Here is a brief excerpt from just one of his recommendations:

"Caution should be used, however, in extrapolating the current findings to the sum of all of the bloodstains present on the cloth, a point that should be further emphasized in the manuscript."

In all fairness, Giulio did include the following statement in his conclusion: "These results, performed on a limited number of samples coming from the TS, must be obviously confirmed by future analyses performed on samples representative of a larger number of TS bloodstains." We agree wholeheartedly! Nevertheless, we believe that there is far too little data to support his current conclusions and claims and consider them premature at best.

The purpose of this document is to make clear that STERA, Inc., is not now nor has ever been directly involved in the research conducted on the samples we provided to Giulio Fanti, nor do we agree with the conclusions he has drawn based on those samples. Inclusion of these papers on Shroud.com does not constitute an endorsement by either the Editor or the STERA, Inc. Board of Directors of the methods used or the conclusions drawn by the authors.

Respectfully,

STERA, Inc., Board of Directors