

EX-KING UMBERTO

Italy's last king died in March, still in exile from his country. The Rome newspaper 'Il Messaggero' reported that Umberto's cousin, the Duke of Aosta, had stated that the King had bequeathed the Shroud of Turin, acquired by the House of Savoy in 1452, to the Vatican - as "a last, beautiful gesture". Professor Vittorio Delfino, an Italian Shroud expert who teaches anthropology at the University of Bari, commented when the news was released: "This comes as no surprise. The Shroud's ownership was always an anomaly".

Ex-King Umberto's body lay in state at Hautecombe Abbey, near Chambéry, guarded by Italian monarchists and viewed by hundreds.

DR. MAX FREI

News of another sad death was received a few weeks ago. Dr. Max Frei, the Swiss criminologist whose microanalytical studies of Shroud dust led to his identification of a substantial number of pollen grains deriving from plants typical of the vegetation of Israel, died suddenly in January following a heart attack. At 69, he had been ill but had seemed to make a good recovery.

A graduate of the University of Zurich, where he later became a professor, Dr Frei founded in 1948 the scientific laboratory of the Zurich police, and was this unit's director until his retirement in 1972. In 1961, he was commissioned by the United Nations organisation to investigate the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. Dr Frei participated in the scientific testing of the Turin Shroud both in 1973 and 1978.