

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Sindon, the official journal of the **Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia**, nos. 5-6, December 1993; no. 7, June 1994

Review by the **Editor**

These two latest issues have recently been received. No 5-6 includes the following articles: [i] by architect Andrea Bruno about the planning that went into the crystal display case that now protects the Shroud in the Choir of Turin Cathedral; [ii] by Gino Moretto, Secretary of Turin's Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia about the move of the Shroud to its new home; [iii] by Jesuit Michele Casassa about the final stage of the Shroud's journey from Chambery to Twin in 1578; [iv] by Sardinian surgeon Tarquinio Ladu comparing the crucifixion of two missionary priests in Japan in 1597 with what is known of Roman procedure; and [v] by Mario Moroni arguing from experiments that the low inner temperature of the casket in which the Shroud was kept at the time of the 1532 fire, and various types of irradiation considered, cannot have had any effect on the date of the Shroud arrived at by carbon dating. This issue includes fine photos of the new Shroud display case in Turin Cathedral.

Issue 7 includes articles: [i] by Monsignor Adolfo Barberis (1884-1967) on the history of devotion to the Holy Face; [ii] by Giuseppe Ghiberti on the claims made in the recent *Jesus Conspiracy* book by Holger Kersten and Elmar Gruber; [iii] by Milan professor of Forensic Medicine Pierluigi Baima Bollone insisting that the man of the Shroud was definitely dead when his image was imprinted on the cloth; and [iv] memorials to Giuseppe Pia, Father Peter Rinaldi, and other deceased "greats" of this century associated with the Turin Shroud.

Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Review by **Rev. Kim Dreisbach**

This book is rife with clues pointing to the Mandylion/Shroud's history and significance. Sindonologists who specialise in the history of art have long drawn attention to the similarities common to the Vatican Matilda Chapel Holy Face; the Genoa Holy Face, and the missing centre panel of the 10th century triptych at St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai (the surviving wings depict Thaddaeus presenting the Mandylion to King Abgar, and Thaddaeus seated).

Belting draws our attention to the fact that:

While icons generally have the half-length portrait scheme, Abgar images are reduced to an imprint of face and hair on an empty field symbolizing the cloth. They correspond in their appearance to an original that was not an icon but a cloth ... They are replications of an image relic that, it was believed, had come into being through physical contact with the face of Jesus. (pp.209-10)

What new insight Belting brings to such comparisons is summarised as follows:

The icons in Rome and Genoa... both are painted on canvas fixed to a wooden panel of exactly the same size (ca. 40 x 29 cm). The lost middle section of (the St. Catherine's triptych ...surely matched the examples in Rome and Genoa, as it has the very same size... This coincidence becomes significant insofar as the surviving panels betray a striking archaism that conceals their true age behind their chosen style. In fact, both panels adhere to a style found in eastern Syrian works of the third century, as in a fresco at Dura Europos. (p.210).

Lynn Picknett & Clive Prince *Turin Shroud: In Whose Image? The Shocking Truth Unveiled*, Bloomsbury, 1994, 212 pages; 16 pp b & w photographs.

Review by **Dr. Michael Clift**

This book was inspired by a good idea which, once stated, demanded attention, namely that the image on the Turin Shroud could be that of Leonardo da Vinci, effected by him using a lens and primitive photographic technique. It is a great pity, therefore, that the question has not been addressed by author or authors with at least a basic scientific training. Picknett describes herself as a journalist and certainly has journalistic style, while Prince admits to an accounting 'background'. They have interviewed and taken the word of those who have such academic qualifications, but again and again their own educational shortcomings show through 'in what is at best a carelessly written account of their 'experiments'. They should have been wary of extrapolating from what they have been told and it is this fault above all others that renders their account of things all but useless. For example, they use terms like 'light years' and 'chromatic aberration' with glaring ignorance of what they mean while yet sometimes patronising the reader by giving their own inadequate definitions.

At other times, too many indeed, for we see it on almost every page, they cannot resist sarcastic, highly subjective comments on the opinions of others. This is especially true of the hypothesis that the image could be a flash photograph from some nuclear reaction. Ignoring completely the fact that this is held by scientists of repute they repeatedly scorn the notion without themselves having a true understanding of the process. They say, for example, that nuclear energy would have destroyed the cloth and everything within the vicinity, forgetting that the theory demands the energy to have operated over no more than a nanosecond of time, thus rendering their objection invalid. They are pretend scientists who clearly have never heard of chronaxie and rheobase.

If it is perhaps their inability to resist contempt for, and even derision of, anyone with different views from their own that is the worst aspect of their so-called research. On page 134, referring to Isabel Piczek, they say "Although a believer in the Shroud's authenticity, and therefore given to *over-enthusiastic acceptance of some of the odder theories...*" apparently without realising that this argument cuts both ways. In any case a work of real scholarship would have done without the tendentious appendix on their unjustifiably jaundiced view of the BSTS. Having struggled, with Procrustean talents, to make their theory fit they then decide that it has become a received truth and thenceforward say such things as "We now know that the Shroud is not the winding

sheet of Jesus." They thereby claim to have achieved what all the sophisticated scholars of this late twentieth century have failed to achieve...

Joe Nickell, 'Pollens on the 'Shroud': A Study in Deception', *Skeptical Inquirer* vol. 18, Summer 1994, pp.379-385

This is an article aimed directly at destroying the reputation of Swiss criminologist Dr. Max Frei, who identified pollens from Near Eastern plants among the dust on the Shroud's surface, and who died in 1983. Nickell is already well-known for earlier arguments that the Shroud image was created by pressing a cloth soaked in hot-water over a statue, then daubing on an iron-oxide pigment. He now charges that Max Frei's pollen study "was an exercise in deception - self - deception, at best, if not outright scientific fraud." It is an authoritative, ostensibly well-researched article, pointing out that the U.S. group STURP, who worked on the Shroud in 1978, were surprised to find no pollens on the sticky tapes they applied to the Shroud'. This finding was then counter-balanced by release of the Frei materials to the U.S. Shroud group ASSIST in 1978, as a result of which even Dr. Walter McCrone was obliged to admit substantial quantities of pollens and plant debris were present. The very serious part is that in letters by Dr. McCrone to Joe Nickell, extracts from which have been published by Nickell, this pollen now agreed to be present is interpreted as at best 'contamination, and at worst 'skulduggery' on the part of Dr. Max Frei. McCrone further alleges that he was told by Max Frei's counterpart at the Police Crime Laboratory in Basel (whom he does not name) that Frei was 'several times... censured by the Police hierarchy in Switzerland for, shall we say, overenthusiastic interpretation of his evidence.' Omitted from the argument is the point that while McCrone may be an expert microanalyst, on his own admission he had no interest in identifying pollens, one branch of science that Max Frei particularly loved and made his speciality.