

News from Around the World

Reggie Norton in Turin.

Hotfoot from attending the Sydney Olympics, BSTS Treasurer Reggie Norton visited the recent Shroud expositions in Turin, accompanied by his sister and three cousins. He writes:

There seemed to be less people about than in 1998, but it was the middle of October and most people would have visited in August or September. Nevertheless the Turin photographer Aldo Guerreschi, whom we had arranged to meet, said that at weekends 40,000 visited the Shroud, whereas we were there in the middle of the week. Turin is not on the tourist route, for which I think the inhabitants are pleased.

Aldo was extremely kind to us. When I rang to arrange for him and his wife to have supper with us he asked when we were viewing the Shroud. He then arranged to meet us at San Lorenzo Church where he had mounted a small but very effective photographic exhibition which covered the history and features of the Shroud. It was situated in the passage that was the back entrance to the church but by dividing the passage in two and covering both walls there was sufficient room. From there it was possible to go into the body of this magnificent and recently restored church via the sacristy. The entrance to the Church itself contained a lifesize copy of the Shroud and a cabinet with a few items and there were parties of people coming in to see it all whilst we were there.

After our dinner that same evening Aldo invited us all to his studio the next day. He dedicated two hours of his time to us and gave us all presents. He gave me a 2" by 2" piece of cloth of the same thickness of the Shroud and with the same weave, which I was very glad to have to illustrate my talks.

He talked to us about the three-dimensional quality of the Shroud and how he had produced the three-dimensional effect from the Enrie negatives. As you know he was invited after the fire of 1997 to come in and photograph the session at which the Shroud was unwrapped to enable an inspection to be made of its condition after the fire. He said that he was thrilled to be so close to the Shroud for such a long period and that he had been amazed how little one could see when one was a foot away from the Shroud. It was only, he said, when one was at least a metre and a half away that one began to see the markings and image. My relations were astounded to hear this as when they had viewed the Shroud in the Cathedral the image was clearly visible.

Something else which he had told us at San Lorenzo I found very interesting. He said that in southern Italy there is a thorn very much like the thorns placed on Jesus's head at the crucifixion. He obtained some of these and then tried to weave them into a crown. It took him two hours! In his opinion the soldiers in charge of Jesus would never have bothered to do this. Most likely they just picked up a bunch of them and just pressed them onto his head. He said that he talked to Gino Moretto, author of the official guide to the Shroud [see book reviews: Ed] who suggested that after pressing the thorns on the soldiers probably put a wreath of another plant round the thorns to make it look like a crown.

The Sindone 2000 Worldwide Congress at Orvieto a great success...

As agreed by a consensus of attendees the Sindone 2000 Worldwide Congress held in Orvieto 27-29 August was a great success. Among the English-speaking attendees were Lennox Manton, Isabel Piczek, Barrie Schwartz, Mark Antonacci, Kevin Moran, Jack Markwardt, Dr. August Accetta, Professor Dan Scavone and his wife Carolyn, Alan and Mary Whanger, Rev. Kim Dreisbach, Joe Marino, Sue Benford, and Rex Morgan. Typical are these remarks by BSTS member Lennox Manton: 'It all went very well indeed. Emanuela Marinelli had it very well organised. She had to work very hard against a great deal of political bickering and opposition.... Orvieto is a fascinating town, its Cathedral one of the loveliest in Italy. The electronics could not be faulted with a large screen giving good slide reproduction and in-house television facilities. The lunches were well organised with abundant local wine and a variety of good food. Orvieto is famous in that respect.

New Theory for how the Shroud Carbon Dating Erred...

By general agreement one of the star presentations at the Orvieto Congress was that by Joe Marino and Sue Benford on the topic 'Evidence for the Skewing of the C-14 Dating of the Shroud of Turin due to Repairs'. This took its stance from a potentially highly significant remark made by Professor Enzo Delorenzo in the course of his contribution to the Report of Cardinal Pellegrino's Commission on the Shroud, published back in 1976: 'I should like to mention the impression I received during the course of my examination, namely that more pairs of hands have carried out ...darning than is suggested in the historical records (the four Poor Clares of Chambéry, the Blessed Valfré and the Princess Clotilde).' As Marino and Benford told the Orvieto Congress 'We believe that the Shroud has literally been *patched* with ... material from the 16th century, in the C14 sample itself [and that this] explains the mediaeval carbon dating results.' What Marino and Benford advocate is when the now missing portions of sidestrip were removed, a piece of 16th century cloth was added to mend or repair this excised portion, this mend overlapping into the part taken for radiocarbon dating. Thus the sample included pure sixteenth century material and pure first century material, each readily discernible to the trained eye. According to Marino and Benford this mending happened probably at the time of the execution of Margaret of Austria's will bequeathing that a portion of the Shroud should be removed and given to her church at Brou (see BSTS Newsletter 51, p.43), although also needing consideration is the suggestion made elsewhere in this Newsletter that one of the missing portions may have been removed for Charles IV of Bohemia back in 1353.

In support of their hypothesis Marino and Benford cite the late Dr. Alan Adler. During a tape-recorded interview with T.W. Case Dr. Adler specifically described the region from which the radiocarbon dating sample was taken as 'an area which has obviously been repaired. There's cloth missing there. It's been rewoven at the edge ... The simplest explanation why the date may be off is that it's rewoven cloth there' [T.W. Case *The Shroud of Turin and the C-14 Dating Fiasco*, p.73]

Opinions from Linen Manufacturers

To further check out their hypothesis Marino and Benford consulted several specialists in the manufacture and preparation of linen. For instance Thomas Ferguson & Co, world-famous makers of Double Damask Linen, noted of their examination of a photograph of the Zurich C-14 sample that this had been 'touched up to prevent unravelling.' They also pointed out that although 'we see the twill pattern clearly on both sides... still there is something different left

versus right.' David Pearson of the French Tailors company in Columbus, Ohio 'immediately recognized the disparate weave pattern and differences in thread size.' Pearson stated 'there is no question that there is different material on each side... It is definitely a patch.' He explained 'mediaeval European weavers would typically try to match the original cloth and then hand-stitch approximately half an inch of new material into the old, such that it was invisible to all but the trained eye. This would ensure the long-term integrity of the material, while maintaining aesthetic consistency throughout the fabric. This type of detail to repairs would be consistent with the wealth and devotion of the Savoy family, who owned the Shroud at the time.'

Opinions from Carbon dating Laboratories

Marino and Benford also consulted carbon dating laboratories concerning the effect of such a 16th century re-weaving on a carbon dating result. In their words; 'According to Ronald Hatfield, a scientist at Beta Analytic, the world's largest radiocarbon dating service, a merging of threads from AD 1500 into a 2,000 year old piece of linen would augment the C14 content such that a 60/40 ratio of new material to old, determined by mass, would result in a C14 age of approximately AD 1210. This correlates very closely with the Oxford mean date of AD 1200 as reported in *Nature* and with the observed ratio of original versus mediaeval material in the C14 sample.'

It is important to point out that no-one can yet have any degree of confidence that the Marino/Benford theory represents the true explanation for how the Shroud carbon dating came to be skewed. This is also always assuming, of course, that the Shroud's true date does not actually lie somewhere between 1260 and 1390. But the hypothesis should certainly now be set on a par with the other more plausible explanations, such as isotopic enrichment from the 1532 fire and the Garza-Valdes 'bioplastic coating'.

Amongst the other papers presented at the Congress, Dr. Antonio Lombatti argued against the identification of the Shroud with the Image of Edessa, while Professor Dan Scavone strongly defended the hypothesis. Isabel Piczek reported: 'Diana Fulbright delivered a good study on Shroud iconography and corrected some of the mistakes made even by Paul Vignon, Michael Hesemann from Germany delivered an excellent paper on the Titulus Crucis and the Shroud. From a distance he had taken some film footage of the real Veronica when it was shown during Holy Week from the balcony of the Veronica pier in St. Peter's, Rome. From this I recognized the same image that I was shown more than forty years ago. I recognized the frame. Of course because of the distance the image is not the clearest, but it certainly shows no face or features. [see article p.13] There was also an excellent, very forward and futuristic paper on physics and the Shroud by Dr. William Wolkowski. This demanded a knowledge of very recent physics, so some people thought it far out but for me it was one of the best papers.'

The full programme of the Congress was as follows:

Monday, August 28:

A. Acetta: Nuclear medicine and its relevance to the Shroud of Turin

R. Basso, G.B. Bianchini, G. Fanti: Compatibility between the digitized body image and a computerized anthropomorphic manikin

P. Dalleur: Heuristic reflections on new radioactive analysis of the Shroud

G. Fanti, S. Faraon: Computer cleaning of the body image of the Man of the Shroud

G. Fanti, M. Moroni: Densitometric comparison among the facial image of the Man of the Shroud and the results of experiments

A. Guerreschi: New elements derived from photographs of two body parts: the wound in the wrist and the right eye

M. Marinelli: Proposals for a permanent commission of study and a databank on the Turin Shroud

- J. Marino, M.S. Benford: Evidence for the skewing of the C-14 dating of the Shroud of Turin due to repairs
- K. Moran: Mapping the Turin Shroud. Body image picture elements
- M. Moroni, F. Barbesino, M. Bettinelli: A suggestive hypothesis covering the radiocarbon dating results of the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin
- B. Schwartz: Is the Shroud of Turin a medieval photograph? A critical examination of the theory
- R. Van Haelst: The radiocarbon dating of the Shroud
- M. Antonacci: The worldwide awakening of the Shroud
- M. Bettinelli, E. Curtoni, M. Moroni, F. Barbesino: Utilization of chemical-physical techniques to study the ageing in linen fibres
- V. Golikov: The theoretical analysis of "natural" factors for the organic pollutions capable to make younger the radio-carbon age of the Turin Shroud
- E. Lindner: The Shroud of Jesus Christ: the "scientific Gospel" to renew the faith in Resurrection
- G. Novelli: Some aspects on chemical and chemical-physical research developed on the Turin Shroud
- J.B. Rinaudo, F. Barbesino, G. Fanit, M. Moroni: Experimental results obtained through protons and neutrons irradiation
- G. Fanti, M. Moroni: Proposal for an endoscopic recognition on UV-light for the exclusion of the singeing hypothesis
- G. Fanti: Proposal for colorimetric high resolution mapping of the Shroud with scanner
- M.C. Van Oosterwyck-Gastuche: Problems related to the unreliability of the radiocarbon dating method. Application to the C-14 dating of the Turin Shroud
- Z.W. Wolkowski: Search for the Rosetta stone of teleportation: insights for the next millennium
- J.H. Cardos Resende: Jesus' wounds
- N. Cinquemani: The wounds on the feet of the Man of the Shroud
- A. Whanger: Botanical findings and the Shroud of Turin

Tuesday, August 29

- L. Boda: The hands of the Man of the Shroud
- A. Bontempi: The Shroud and the Marches
- B. Conticello: About the Holy Shroud, its relationship with the image of the [Greek Word] and associated physiognomy problems
- M. De Stefano: Reflections on what has been written about the Pray manuscript
- L. Fossati: Comparing Christ's face in the copies with the original one on the Shroud
- D. Fulbright: Egyptian Shroud portraits, the Shroud of Turin and Christian iconography
- G.D. Guerra: Is the "Volto Santo di Lucca" a copy of the Turin Shroud? A comparison between the two images made by computer.
- M. Hesemann: The discovery of the inscription of the cross. The relic of the *titulus crucis* and the Holy Shroud: two silent witnesses of the Passion
- L. Manton: Burial customs in the first century Palestine and their relationship to the Turin Shroud
- M. Whanger: The impact of the Shroud face on art works in the Middle East in the early centuries A.D.
- M.C. Ceruti: The defence of the Gospels' historicity
- A. Lombatti: The image of Edessa and its sources: the case of Moses of Chorene
- D. Duque, C. Barta: The Sindone sample from Constantinople in Toledo (Spain)
- J. Lupia: The seamless garment of Christ
- J. Markwardt: The Cathar crucifix: new evidence of the Shroud's missing history
- D. Scavone: A reply to recent scholarly literature on the historical documents pertaining to the Shroud
- G. Zaninotto: Shroud/Mandylyon during Constantinople silence (944-1242)
- A. Zingale: A devotional route to Turin Sindon from the 19th to the 20th century: Mother Maria Pia Mastena (1881-1951), the foundress of the Congregation of the "Religiose del Santo Volto"
- C. Griseri: Holy Shroud iconography in Cuneo area and during the Ligurian exile in 1706
- J. Chmiel: Semeiotics of the Turin Shroud
- A.R. Dreisbach: How the Acts of Thomas may provide "spy clues" pointing to the Shroud and its image
- M.A. Flores, A. Orozco Torres: Physical evidence of Christ's Resurrection on the Shroud of Turin?
- M. Loconsole: Jewish burial. Correlations between the Judaic sources and the Holy Shroud of Turin

- A. Malantruccio: Christ's double death. Interdisciplinary theological research about the causes and the meaning of Christ's death
P.H. Wiebe: Design in the Shroud of Turin

The Shroud and Elvis' Death – Official...

It's now official. Elvis Presley died reading a book about the Shroud. A biographical feature about Elvis in none other than the London *Times* of April 27 reported that he 'collapsed in his bathroom on August 16, 1977, while reading a book about the Turin shroud. Body found by his new fiancée. The post mortem verdict was 'cardiac arrhythmia'. By one of those bizarre coincidences the date of Elvis's death was none other than the Feast Day that the Eastern Orthodox Church accorded to the Image of Edessa, which is thought to have been one and the same as the Shroud.

Not yet determined is which book Elvis was reading, though from the 1977 date Robert Wilcox's *Shroud*, which has just been re-issued, has to be the likeliest contender.

From Science Fiction to Reality?

Only eighteen months ago, in Newsletter No.49, we reported how the cloning of Dolly the sheep in Scotland had generated the rash of science fiction books on the theme of cloning a new Jesus from the Shroud, or from some relic similarly retaining cells from his body. At that time the idea had seemed firmly a matter for science fiction alone. But such is the march of science that now it seems there are people in California seriously minded to translate it into scientific fact. The following notice concerning 'The Second Coming Project' has appeared on the Internet:

The Second Coming Project is a not-for-profit organization devoted to bringing about the Second Coming of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, as prophesied in the Bible, in time for the 2,000th anniversary of his birth. Our intention is to clone Jesus, utilizing techniques pioneered at the Roslin Institute in Scotland, by taking an incorrupt cell from one of the many Holy Relics of Jesus' blood and body that are preserved in churches throughout the world, extracting its DNA, and inserting into an unfertilized human egg (oocyte), through the now-proven biological process called nuclear transfer. The fertilized egg, now the zygote of Jesus Christ, will be implanted into the womb of a young virginal woman (who has volunteered of her own accord), who will then bring the baby Jesus to term in a second Virgin Birth. If all goes according to plan, the birth will take place on December 25, 2001, thus making Anno Domini 2001 into Anno Domini Novi 1, and all calendrical calculations will begin anew. How Can This Be Possible?

- a. Modern cloning technology enables us to clone any large mammal - including humans - using just a single cell from an adult specimen.
- b. Throughout the Christian world are churches that contain Holy Relics of Jesus' body: his blood, his hair, his foreskin. Unless every single one of these relics is a fake, this means that cells from Jesus' body still survive to this day.
- c. We are already making preparations to obtain a portion of one of these relics, extract the DNA from one of its cells, and use it to clone Jesus. No longer can we rely on hope and prayer, waiting around futilely for Jesus to return. We have the technology to bring him back right now: there is no reason, moral, legal or Biblical, not to take advantage of it. In order to save the world from sin, we must clone Jesus to initiate the second coming of the Christ.

The Second Coming Project is soliciting contributions and donations to help us in our quest. Time is short! We must have a fertilized Jesus zygote no later than April of 2001 if Baby Jesus is to come to term on the predicted date. Please send all contributions to:

The Second Coming Project
P.O. Box 295 Berkeley, CA 94701

Can they be serious?

From journalistic enquiries that have been made The Second Coming Project would seem to be serious and not just a sceptics-planted spoof. Very likely it has some well-meaning adherents, including presumably the young virgin anxiously waiting for 'divine' insemination no later than next April. But it has already been stressed that the DNA in the Shroud bloodstains is far too fragmented even to provide detailed genetic data, let alone to provide a blueprint for a Man of the Shroud clone. So what of the other 'many Holy Relics' cited? Even if it were possible to take just one of these seriously - and that has to be doubtful - the fact remains that not even a single dead animal has yet been successfully cloned. Despite astronomical numbers of cells having survived from mammoths found frozen in Siberia, even in their case the procedure has been deemed non-viable. So it seems more than a little presumptuous for so clearly Christian a project to be in such a hurry to use the method to bring back none other than Jesus Christ. Furthermore, even if it were technically possible for an identical Christ body to be physically created, say, from cells in Shroud blood samples, what assurance can anyone have that this creation would embody the identical mind? No doubt Archbishop Poletto of Turin will be receiving a request for samples from the Shroud for the Second Coming Project, if this has not been lodged already. But in the case of this proposal, at least, our strongest recommendation has to be that he should file it in the nearest waste-paper basket at the very earliest possible opportunity.

By way of footnote, it is sad to report that David Rolfe, producer of the much-admired 1970s Shroud documentary *The Silent Witness*, whose plan for a Shroud-based movie-thriller *Clone* was reported in Newsletter 49 (p.45), has suffered the collapse of his film-making business. A knock-on effect of this has been to put an end to his plans for *Clone*. One of David's last film projects was the wildlife series *Wild Britain*. Apparently he has now totally abandoned film-making, and has taken up a totally new venture making boats. We wish him well.

The Shroud Down-under

While the original Shroud was on display in Turin, those in far-off Australia were not to be outdone. From 31 August to Sunday 8 October Melbourne University's Ian Potter Museum of Art hosted a major exhibition 'The Holy Shroud over the Centuries: The Collection of Umberto II' Consisting of a life-size photographic replica of the Shroud plus numerous contemporary prints of Shroud expositions from the 16th century to the present-day, this was much the same collection that was exhibited at Turin's Palazzo Barolo during the 1998 Exposition. Its coming to Australia derived from an initiative of the Umberto II and Maria José of Savoy Foundation, the Italian Institute of Culture, Melbourne, and others. To mark the Exhibition Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy, the third of Umberto II of Savoy's four children, who has assumed special responsibility for the collection, held an introductory press conference in Melbourne on 30 August.