

# Who's Who in the Shroud World

## Richard Orareo

The Boston Shroud Art Collection is fed by suppliers all over the world, but there are two or three antiquarian dealers and booksellers in Turin that save every Shroud related object they find thing for the collection's owner, Richard Orareo, and he picks it up on his regular visits to the capital of Piamonte. I had the chance to speak with Richard in Turin in October about the collection how it started and what the future holds for it.

The collection started with a television programme that was on, but nobody was really watching it. There was a section on the Shroud which somehow caught Richard's attention – he found it strange that as an adult and a Catholic he had never heard of it. At the end of the programme there was an offer to send an SAE in order to receive a little card with a picture of the Shroud. The card came with a list of books about the Shroud, one of which Richard immediately bought (one of the Wuenschel books). Since then, just the book side of the collection has grown to over a thousand titles.

In the 1964 John Walsh book on the Shroud, there was a reference to Fr. Rinaldi and the Holy Shroud Guild in Portchester. One day, driving from Boston to New York, he saw a sign for Portchester and stopped at the church to see the Shroud photographs. Fr. Rinaldi came out and invited Richard for a coffee and a talk, and gave him more books from the 1940's, some slides and photographs. The collection was well and truly underway.

Boylston Street is one of the main thoroughfares in Boston, and one day Orareo saw a sign that said "Rinaldi Shoe Fair". He went in to see if the family was related to Fr. Rinaldi in Portchester, but they had never heard of each other. However, on the way out, he saw another sign for an antique dealer. Acting on a hunch, he went in to a huge shop which was almost empty apart from a few objects and a little man dressed in black, hunched up at the back. On making his way towards the shop owner, he saw a dusty old frame and went to wipe it clean to see what it had. It was a beautiful silk embroidery of the Shroud, with a price tag of \$100. It had been there for twenty years and nobody had even looked at it, so it came with a 25% discount. In Richard's own words, "it had been waiting twenty years for me less than a quarter of a mile from my house". It was truly meant to be his.

The book collection received a boost on a trip to Paris, when Richard went into a second hand bookshop, found a book on the Shroud and asked the store owner in sign language if he had any more on the same topic. He left the shop with 55 books, including two signed copies of the first edition of Paul Vignon's book. Unfortunately the shop did not accept credit cards or cheques, and Richard did not have enough cash for so many books. The shopkeeper took him to a place that seemed like anything except a bank, but they happily cashed a cheque and the books were taken back to Boston.

I asked Richard if there was any particular object he was looking for but which evaded him. There had been, he told me – a book called *The Holy Shroud*, written by P. A. Beecher and published in Dublin in 1928. At a recent meeting in Dallas, the late and sorely missed Alan Adler asked the same question, and when Richard started talking about an obscure Irish book, Alan immediately answered “You mean the Beecher?”. “How do you know about the book?” replied Richard. “Because I have one” came the answer. He had bought it at a Boy Scouts garage sale. He promised to try and find another one, but sadly died before he could fulfil his promise in person, but since his death Richard has found three copies. As always, Al kept his word in the end. The Boston Collection is constantly growing, and yet its long term future is unclear at the moment. It has been shown in New York, Richmond, Dallas and Illinois, and there are plans to take it to Canada in the near future. However, it remains in private hands and despite many attempts, the idea of setting up a permanent exhibition centre has so far not met with any success.



A souvenir of the 1898 Shroud exhibition



Poster from the 1931 exhibition



A medal from the 1933 Shroud exhibition