

WHAT ELSE TO DO IN TURIN

As we all know, the Shroud will be on show in May next year – speaking from past experience, it is well worth making the effort to visit Turin and see the cloth we are all interested in with our own eyes. However, this is not all there is to do in Turin: and so my intention here is just to take a quick look at some of the other things to do in the city apart from seeing the Shroud itself.

There is of course the Shroud museum, which has figured in past articles in the newsletter. This is of course a must if you go to Turin to see the Shroud. The museum was born in 1936 to run through the history of the cloth in which Jesus' mortal remains were reputedly placed, scientific research on the image and the relics kept by the Confraternity of the Shroud.

The new museum was opened on 15 April 1998. Now the crypt is lit up by virtual frescoes of the Passion, screened by 15 machines onto the vault and niches, continuously following the visitor.

Visitors to the museum can see the official plates of the photographs taken by Secondo Pia in 1888 and those taken in 1931 by Giuseppe Enrie, on which were based the first scientific investigations. They reach their peak in the amazing three-dimensional image of the face of the Holy Shroud, elaborated by Giovanni Tamburelli in 1978.

A large space is dedicated to further studies on the material and on its weaving, on the micro-marks (pollen, blood, aloe, myrrh, aragonite), on forensic investigation, on the prints of the coins left on the cloth on the iconographic analysis.

A particular section is dedicated to the history (the hypothetical and the real one) of the Holy Shroud and its worship in Turin and Piedmont starting in the second half of the fifteenth century, when the shroud became the property of the Savoy family.

Another of the main attractions in Turin is without doubt the Egyptian museum. The following information is taken from the museum's web site at <http://www.museoegizio.org/pages/History.jsp>.

The Museo delle Antichità Egizie is the only museum other than the Cairo Museum that is dedicated solely to Egyptian art and culture. Many international scholars, since the decipherer of Egyptian hieroglyphs Jean-François Champollion, who came to Turin in 1824, spend much time poring over the collections. It was Champollion who wrote, "The road to Memphis and Thebes passes through Turin".

The collections that make up today's museum were enlarged by the excavations conducted in Egypt by the museum's archaeological mission from 1900 to 1935 (a period when finds were divided between the excavators and Egypt).

The first object to come to Turin, purchased by the Savoy King Carlo Emanuele I in 1630, was the Mensa Isiaca, a Roman production of an altar table in the Egyptian style for an Isis temple cult outside of Egypt. It was probably produced in Rome. In 1724 King Vittorio Amedeo II founded the Museo della Regia Università di Torino in a palace of the University for the small Piedmontese antiquities collection. The altar table

was the object that spurred King Carlo Emanuele III to commission the professor of botany, Vitaliano Donati, in 1757, to acquire objects from Egypt that might explain the significance of the table. These subsequent additions, along with a small collection donated by Vittorio Amedeo II in 1723, were housed first in the university.

The Regio Museo delle Antichità Egizie was formally founded in 1824 with the acquisition by King Carlo Felice of a large collection. This was assembled by Bernardino Drovetti, of Piedmontese origin, who, following his service with Napoleon Bonaparte went to Egypt to become the French Consul (technically to the Ottoman Sublime Porte). Drovetti's collection of 5,268 objects (100 statues, 170 papyri, stelae, sarcophagi, mummies, bronzes, amulets and objects of daily life) were deposited, along with the other Egyptian antiquities already in the university, in the 17th century palace built as a Jesuit school by the architect Guarino Guarini that later passed in the 18th century to the Academy of Sciences. Drovetti's friendship with Egypt's Viceroy, Mohamed Ali, enabled him to remove his collections (he sold three) to Europe. Over half of the objects chosen for this book come from the great Drovetti Collection.

Champollion arrived in Turin as the Drovetti Collection was being unpacked, and within a few months of excited activity produced a catalogue of the collections. In 1894 Ernesto Schiaparelli, a former student of the Egyptologist and head of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, Gaston Maspero, became director of the Museo Egizio. Schiaparelli went to Egypt to acquire further antiquities (1898-1901). He then set about excavating in Egypt at several sites including Heliopolis, Giza, the Valley of Queens at Thebes, Qaw el-Kebir, Assiut, Hammamiya, Hermopolis, Deir el-Medina and at Gebelein, where his successor Giulio Farina continued to excavate. Further gifts and modest purchases were added subsequently to the collections.

The last great addition to the Museum was the small Temple of Ellesiya presented by the Arab Republic of Egypt to Italy for its sustained technical and scientific support during the Nubian monument salvage campaign.

Six and half thousand objects are on display, while a further 26,000 objects are in storage. Much of this material is not on view because of the lack of display space, conservation needs, and some objects are really only of interest to scholars and not to the general public (for example undecorated pottery, fragments of inscribed papyrus etc). However, we should take comfort in the fact much of the material not displayed is being studied by scholars from a number of disciplines and will eventually be published.

The **Mole Antonelliana** is a major landmark of the Italian city of Turin. It is named after the architect who built it, Alessandro Antonelli. Construction began in 1863 and was completed 26 years later, after the architect's death. Nowadays it houses the National Museum of Cinema, and it is believed to be the tallest museum in the world.

The building was conceived and constructed as a synagogue. The Jewish community of Turin had enjoyed full civil rights since 1848, and at the time the construction of the synagogue began, Turin was the capital of the new Italian State, a position it held only from 1860-64. The community, with a budget of 250,000 lira and the intention of having a building worthy of a capital city, hired Antonio Antonelli. Antonelli was notable for having recently added an "idiosyncratic" 121 metre-high

dome and spire to the seventeenth-century Church of San Gaudenzio at Novara. He promised to build a synagogue for 280,000 lira. [1] The relationship between Antonelli and the Jewish community was not a happy one. He immediately began to propose a series of modifications which raised the final height to 113 meters, over 47 meters higher than the dome in the original design. Such changes, in addition to greater costs and construction time than were originally anticipated, did not please the Jewish community and construction was halted in 1869 with a provisional roof.

With the removal of the Italian capital to Florence in 1864, the community shrank, but costs and Antonelli's ambition continued to rise. In 1876 the Jewish community, which had spent 692,000 lire for a building that was still far from finished, announced that it was withdrawing from the project. The people of Turin, who had watched the synagogue rise skyward, demanded that the city take over the project, which it did. An exchange was arranged between the Jewish community and the city of Turin for a piece of land on which a handsome Moorish Revival synagogue was quickly built. [2] The Mole was dedicated to Victor Emmanuel II. Antonelli again began construction, which took the height to 146, 153, and finally 167 meters (548 feet). From 1908 to 1938, the city used it to house its Museum of the Risorgimento, which was moved to the Palazzo Carignano in 1938.

The *Museo dell' Automobile* is one of the largest car museums in the world with a collection of 170 cars. The museum's current premises, dating from 1960, are regarded as one of Turin's most interesting buildings.

The museum charts the progress of Turin's motor industry, these days dominated by Fiat, but once home to many fledgling manufacturers whose names are almost lost to the mists of time.

With some real beauties in the collection, the museum is a real treat for anyone with the slightest interest in cars. One of the first displays includes the first Fiat 500 as well as many other examples from the days when cars had real character and charm. The last section of the museum is a must for Formula 1 enthusiasts, with a display of racing cars dating from the 1950's.

But some of the best cars on display must be the long narrow Lancia Lambda on the first floor, the Itala 35/45 HP that won the Peking to Paris race in 1907 and the *Autobianchi Bianchina 500* that looks almost exactly like Snoopy's car!

Although a bit far out from the city centre there is a bus stop fairly close by, or you can take a taxi from the city centre. Admission to the museum is 6 Euros.