

The First Shroud Exhibition in Finland

Torinon kääriinliina – Shroud of Turin
Exhibition at Martin's Church (Martinkirkko) in Turku, Finland
April 10th – May 23rd, 2010

This exhibition is presumably the first of its kind in the Nordic countries, and is to be held exactly at the same time as the real Turin Shroud is exhibited in Turin, a rare event, which occurred last time in the year 2000.

The arrangement of the exhibition is organized by the parish of Martti and it is situated at the Martin's church (Martinkirkko) in Turku, Finland. STERA, Inc. has provided photographic material and a life-size replica on canvas of the Turin Shroud for the exhibition, and some extra material has also come from C.E.S. (Centro Español de Sindonologia). Local manufacturers in Turku have made and delivered a major part of other matters, replicas and information, a very fortunate occasion indeed, since all this expert know-how was at hand here to be used for the benefit of the event. These include Irmeli Bergring (Merkki-Piste Oy), who has provided all the textiles. She very skillfully made a cloth backing for the Shroud replica, which gives an extra dignity for it. Jarkko Dietrich and Pauli Hiltunen have been the expert carpenters, who made replicas of the true cross and *patibulum*. Roman type *flagrums* and cross nail replicas have skillfully been manufactured by the smith Markku Vilppola, working at Kurala archaeological experiment workshop of Turku Museum office. Equally, a replica of a Roman *lancea* was manufactured by Ville Huhta from Rautaportti Ky. Replicas of the *titulus* and crown of thorns have made by Juha Hiltunen. There are some forty pictorial information tables (including maps and plans) concerning Sindonology, the Shroud's history, details of the Passion (based on Shroud testimony) and Biblical archaeology, mostly made by Juha Hiltunen. A number of other expert persons were involved, making together a professional and effective team, which made up an impressive exhibition in a short time with a minimum budget. The whole project were directed by the church vicar Tuomo Norvasuo and the parish priest Jukka Hildén.

After one week of the opening of the exhibition, we may say with certainty that everything is perfect and well-received by the public. Finnish media has given a wide visibility and attention for the event, and it is increasing all the time. Internet hits of the topic of Turin Shroud has arisen at the all time record here also. My book *Valokuva Jeesuksesta?* is selling very well. There is a lively discussion on Internet and other media about the authenticity of the Shroud. The distribution of opinions is divided between 60% supporting authenticity, while 40% are doubters. People are very interested in the international information available (Internet sources etc.) and the actual event in Turin, where the real Shroud is now on show.

A discussion of the continuity of this exhibition has also arisen, particularly with the next year in mind. The year 2011 is special for the city of Turku, as it will be the cultural capital of Europe. Some authorities of the organization responsible for the arrangements of Turku cultural capital events are already interested in this exhibition and an even greater event if possible. This may include an international symposium around the topic of Turin Shroud to be held here. One influential person in this group is Professor of Italian language and culture in the University of Turku, Dr. Luigi di Anna. Through his contacts in Italy and elsewhere we may have good chances for the idea to become real.