

New example of Lirey pilgrim's badge - the elusive lost mould relocated

Ian Wilson

In the last issue I presented the news of the discovery of the mould for a second example of a souvenir badge for mediaeval pilgrims visiting expositions of the Shroud at Lirey. Frustratingly, this was accompanied by the information that only shortly after the mould's discovery, by a jogger passing a field at Machy, near Lirey, contact with that owner/discoverer had become lost.

Thankfully the French local historian Alain Hourseau, who first alerted me to the discovery, has subsequently managed to retrace the jogger, and as it turned out, he had not sold the mould. Accordingly Alain, who is a historian of the Lirey area, and has written an authoritative book on the Shroud at Lirey, has purchased the mould from the jogger, hence is now its very proud owner. For any serious studies of the mould, this has been a very reassuring development.

In the last issue of the Newsletter a printer's error to the front cover unfortunately produced a rather distorted view of the mould's actual appearance. So because of the mould's considerable importance for future studies of the Shroud's history, this photo is now reprinted correctly here (see right), albeit mirror-reversed to convey the appearance of any badge struck from it.



*Lirey local historian Alain Hourseau
holding up the medieval badge mould
that he now owns.*

Another important discovery concerns the pilgrim's badge example preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, reproduced as fig.6 in Newsletter no.76. Because this hitherto unknown specimen had appeared on the Kunera website (which specialises in pilgrim badges), as a rather poor quality engraving, and mirror-reversed, the assumption was that it was probably another example of a mould for a badge. However recent personal enquiries made direct to the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels have furnished a proper photograph of excellent clarity (*see right*), revealing that the specimen is quite unmistakably a badge, rather than just the mould for one. Similar to the Machy mould example, it bears the inscription 'SVAIRE', though without the 'ThV' (abbreviation for 'of Jesus') of the former, thereby suggesting that it was created after Pope Clement's bull of 1390 which insisted that the Shroud could not be described as authentically Christ's. Even so, dating the Brussels badge remains as yet uncertain. Although it is unlikely to be earlier than 1390, nor much later than the Shroud's transfer to the Savoy family in 1453, these nonetheless remain very provisional dating estimates pending ongoing studies.

