

## NEWS & ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

### **The Italian Sindonologists at the Congress of Trani: 13-14 October 1984**

The Third National Italian Congress of Sindonological Studies, held at Trani (Puglia) was organized by the Pugliese Delegation of Turin's Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia and was presided by Prof. Luigi Ambrosi, President of the University of Bari. In two intense days, twenty-seven participants presented papers. Only a few can be mentioned here, without implying any judgment of the value of these over the others.

After the official opening by Prof. Ambrosi and Prof. Zeuli, President of the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia, and salutations from numerous groups around the world, the work began with the presentation of Prof. Ghio, who projected the splendid macrophotographs he made during the exams of 1978, along with the microphotos of pollen identified by the lamented Prof. Max Frei, and those of Prof. Gervasio, who has completed a detailed research on the structure of the Shroud fabric.

Considerable time was given to medical aspects. Dr. Baima Bollone confirmed his earlier identification of the blood group by a new procedure, and also demonstrated the presence of aloes and myrrh on the Cloth. Then he showed slides on which, between the fibres of bloodstained threads, there was not only a perfectly recognizable red blood cell but also horny squams of epidermis. Prof. Coppini corroborated Barbet's thesis concerning the nails in the Space of Destot, while Prof. Larato illustrated the devastating effects of the flagellation from the point of view of a clinical pathologist. Dr. Rodante, who has carried on an impassioned research for more than twenty years, spoke of details which exclude every possibility of a medieval forgery.

In the field of electronic elaboration, Prof. Tamburelli showed his latest work, a splendid face devoid of wounds, as it probably looked before the torture. Prof. Imbalzano, instead, used the computer in an original way, transforming the numerical information of the face into acoustic frequencies, which were then transcribed into musical notation. A score was arranged by Prof. Tarallo of the Conservatory of Turin, who played the composition on the organ.

In iconography, Prof. Moroni spoke of the possible influence of the Shroud in numismatics, in particular the coins of the emperors Justinian and Basil I. In medieval art, Prof. Centini distinguished between "direct" representations (expositions, etc.) and "indirect" representations (depositions, crucifixions etc.) to show how art could have been influenced, in some way, by knowledge of the Shroud.

In the areas of history and archeology, Prof. Zaninotto, speaking of the crucified man of Giv'at Ha Mivtar, proposed a new reconstruction

of the modalities of crucifixion. Then a report on the bibliographic sources of the Shroud in the XVI and XVII centuries commemorated the first European scholars of the Relic.

In exegetics, Don Giuseppe Ghiberti, Chairman of the Faculty of Theology at Turin, summarized the problem of the historicity or symbolicalness of the Gospel narratives. It should be mentioned also that throughout the various sections of study, the theological and pastoral aspects were brought out in diverse ways.

The work closed with a section entitled "Prospectives for the Shroud." Don Intrigillo, Secretary of the Pugliese Delegation, approached the problem from a pastoral and liturgical angle, while Prof. Baima Bollone discussed the scientific outlook.

After a retrospective of the development of sindonology, the desire as expressed for a continuation of serious studies, research weaned from personality and sensationalism; and the road which European researchers have followed, i.e., in the pledge, freely assumed by the scholars, not to divulge their research results until these had first been communicated to the mandatory Authorities, was reaffirmed and reconfirmed. As for future tests, it was considered inopportune to proceed to further examinations on the Shroud until all of the abundant material taken in 1978 should be exhausted. In the meantime, periodical meetings should be held and attended by researchers of the whole world, in order to control the data as well as to draw up programs for further research.

It is not yet possible to evaluate the results of the work of this Congress. Only in time, and especially after the publication of the Acts, will we see the importance of this encounter, in which the most up-to-date contributions and the exchange of ideas often point the way to unexplored avenues of research. It is for this very reason that the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia promotes a national Shroud congress every three years. All scholars of the Shroud will be grateful to the Centro's delegations for the not-indifferent pledge which they have taken upon themselves, to organize a congress at this level, as the Pugliese Delegation did this year with such splendid results, as well as the memorable Congress of Bologna in 1981; and the organizers, in particular Dr. Rodante, are already preparing for the next congress, to be held in Siracusa (Sicily) in 1987.

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#### **Spectrum Index**

An Index of the first twelve issues of *Shroud Spectrum International* is in preparation and will be available early in 1985. A minimal price will be determined by printing cost. Please check the box on the Subscription Form if you wish to acquire the Index.