

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED

ALFRED O'RAHILLY: *The Crucified*, edited by J. Anthony Gaughan. 371 pp., about 300 illus. Kingdom Books, 79 The Rise, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin, Ireland, 1985. £21.00.

Alfred O'Rahilly was a bold and colorful character, and in the Introduction to this book a fascinating biography is given of the man who, unaccepted in his youth as a candidate for the Jesuit Order, became a priest (1955) after a vivid and exceptionally active career.

*The Crucified* was to have been one of sixteen volumes on the life of Christ. Two studies had appeared in 1940: "Jewish Burial" and "The Burial of Christ", published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Review*. The articles were published as a book in 1942 but, written during the war, they did not receive the notice they deserved until much later. The manuscript for *The Crucified* was composed in the '50s. Despite the reiterated pleas of his publisher, O'Rahilly kept putting off his decision to publish the text. He died in 1969, just two weeks before his 85th birthday.

The text was edited by the Rev. Father J. Anthony Gaughan, whose devotion and scholarship were equal to what certainly was an enormous and painstaking effort. Besides his Introduction, Fr. Gaughan has added the illustrations and 26 pages of sources. We are grateful to him and to Kingdom Books for bringing this work at last to the light.

The opening chapter describes "A Textile Document" and the examinations lead to the identification of the person whose body left an image on the Cloth. Five chapters deal with crucifixion in history, archeology and art; the final chapters discuss the death of Christ and the pierced side. Every subject under consideration is supported by pertinent documents, from the Author's own day back to ancient times and tongues. In control behind the pen, there is a trenchant mind and a faith in which intellect and experience have fused into rock.

In the thirty-odd years since this volume was composed, scientific research has shown some of O'Rahilly's information to be outdated. The attentive reader will recognize these areas without being disturbed by them, remembering that even today science has not yet said the final word. Some of his remarks about the Charny family are incorrect; a subject on which your editor is hypersensitive but—in O'Rahilly's case—forgiving.

Most of the book, however, anticipates our own time. Two random examples will suffice: 1) he says the navel on the image can be discerned (p. 34), a question which caused commotion and "theological implications" at the 1978 Congress. Tamburelli subsequently demonstrated the presence of the navel "in the proper place". 2) O'Rahilly

learned from textile experts that the Shroud fabric would have stretched about 2cm (p. 35), a fact shown by Scarpelli at the Bologna Congress (1981). Had O'Rahilly consented to publish his book in 1956, as scheduled, his lucid and logical expose of the d'Arcis affair—while certainly not the detailed analysis by Don Fossati (*Nuove Luce su Antichi Documenti*, 1961)—should have reduced to ashes all the tiresome polemic about the Bishop's accusations.

O'Rahilly presents a wealth of documents—notably in iconography—which even today have been only partially investigated.

Some issues now accepted as settled take on a surprisingly new perspective while some angles hitherto neglected are brilliantly clarified by the Author's profound knowledge. In his *Breve Saggio Critico di Bibliografia e di Informazione sulla Sacra Sindone*, Don Fossati has this to say in his mention of *The Burial of Christ* (#216): "... the accuracy of the research in which not even the smallest detail is neglected, to arrive at the most complete presentation possible of the problem." Such was O'Rahilly's method. Having amassed his material, he slashes the historical horizon with an array of excerpts from primary sources—all translated into English.

If Christ's death on the cross radically altered the course of human history, indeed of human destiny, then every detail on the Shroud is significant. This "Textile Document", on which Christ's Passion and Death are recorded for all the world to see, is a real object fraught with information within the grasp of our progressing capabilities. From this, the other Reality emanates in meditation.

The Crucifixion is not a book to be read through and put upon a shelf, but to be kept at hand as reference for every central aspect of Shroud study.

D.C.

RAYMOND E. BROWN, S.S.: "Brief Observations on the Shroud of Turin", *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Oct. 1984.

Father Raymond E. Brown, S.S., of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, has given us some "brief observations on the Shroud of Turin". This review will make a few brief observations *a propos* of Father Brown's.

To begin with his conclusion: Father Brown finds that discussion of the Shroud "... seems to arouse passions and polemic almost as if the consideration of questions is a challenge to faith" (148.2). Even without this 'observation' the attentive reader might come to suspect that Father Brown has never heard of—or at least never read—*Shroud Spectrum International* (SSI). Had he wanted evidence of the high level of Shroud research, he could have read—almost randomly—a few of the articles published in SSI over the past four years; and then compared them with some of the "passions and polemic" one sometimes reads elsewhere. The difference is not hard to detect.

Brown's concern throughout is to maintain the image of impartial arbiter but the impression left with this reader, at least, was something else. Admittedly, when we assess 'probability' on the scale of 'certitude', we acknowledge, in principle, the risk of error. Reading Brown's "Observations", however, one has the vague impression that a 'compounding process' is making the risk quotient of Shroud research more formidable than it really is.

He sometimes argues from premises no more than hypothetical: "Let us suppose that an individual stumbled upon an image of a dead person produced by some energy unknown to us..." (146.2). Remarks like this have to be recognized for what they are. Otherwise they tend to linger in the mind of the unwary reader, taking on a realism they don't deserve.

One detects a certain bias in Brown's defense of 'natural' causes for the image formation as opposed to a 'supernatural' causation. "These questions have been presented as irenically as possible by one who has no set opinion about the Shroud ...", he writes; and yet he loses no opportunity to sound a warning against any 'tilt' toward a supernatural explanation. From appearances, at least, he would seem to be applying the method of the rationalist without dressing for the role.

By contrast, Brown is characteristically positive and affirmative when he draws inferences from his own research data. His hypotheses and conjectures are usually quite plausible although something less than self-evident. For example, in *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (Paulist Press, NY 1984, p.57), Brown asks: "Who could believe that the power of God was embodied in one who was hanged as a criminal?" Yet in "Observations" he seems to refute himself: "In the early argumentation about the Resurrection, the Shroud would have been a marvelous apologetic proof over against the Jews..." (148.2). Marvelous? Hardly that. There was still the 'scandal of the cross' to be lived down, and it might have been foreseen that the Shroud would raise more questions than could be answered, among Jews and Gentiles alike.

But enough of general observations. Brown's comments are linked together by a set of interrogatives: How? By whom? Of whom? Why? Where? When? Now to weigh the chain he forges, link by link.

**How?** Tribbe is quoted as quoting Robert Dinegar approvingly: "We have absolutely no indication that the image was produced by the hand of man" (Frank C. Tribbe, *Portrait of Jesus?*, Stein and Day, NY 1983, p.151). So why is Father trembling so? Dinegar's statement rules out no more than 'manual' causation—be it artistic or technological. But Brown sees a threat: "...one might easily get the impression that the production was supernatural..."; and, "...a reader...will often get the impression from discussions by the scientists that they have tilted toward a supernatural explanation..." We leave it to the scientists to allay his fears. In any case, whether the image was produced by natural or supernatural causes—or a combination of

both—must be resolved by scientific inquiry. It is not a matter of speculation or personal inclination.

**By Whom?** Brown thinks it "...important...to admit that we know nothing about the identity of the person involved in the production and/or preservation of the image..." (145.2). He does not give a reason for thinking so, and I can think of none except that it would be an interesting thing to know. In all probability, preserving the Shroud (or even producing it) would prove to be the work of an 'agency' rather than an 'agent'; a church or monastery. Maurus Green, O.S.B., cites the witness of St. Antoninus Martyr (ca. 570) that a sudarium was then being venerated in "a cave convent on the banks of the Jordan" (*Ampleforth Journal* lxxiv, 1967, p.329). But whatever advantages there might be in identifying the Shroud's first 'handlers', the researchers seem not to share Brown's sense of priorities and have not taken this route.

**Of whom?** Whose image do we see on the Shroud? Is it really that of Jesus Christ? Although he seems to concede that the image bears "the marks of scourging, wounds and crucifixion compatible with the Gospel accounts of the death of Jesus of Nazareth...", Brown feels drawn to another, a gruesome, hypothesis: "One could posit that an individual was deliberately scourged, wounded and crucified in the manner in which the Gospels describe Jesus' death" (145.2). He cites Gramaglia (1978) for the claim that "between A.D. 540 and 640, funeral wrappings from Palestine were numerous and crucifixions were used to mock Christians" (loc. cit.). Obviously there is no substantial rebuttal for an objection so unsubstantial. Once more we are forced back on our long-suffering probability factor: the greater the number of funeral wrappings retrieved, the greater the likelihood of finding another shroud with a comparable image. We await the discovery. Further discussion is futile until there is something to discuss.

**Why?** Father assigns prime importance to knowing the motives of the Shroud's first 'handlers'. "...If the Shroud was produced by natural causes unknown to us, the purpose of its dissemination needs still to be determined" (146.1). Only two motives are possible: devotion and deception. (He admits a possibility of the two overlapping but his interest seems 'tilted' toward the latter.) Once again the speculation seems rather pointless and he concludes these remarks with a reminder that "...two bishops of Troyes in the 1300's, when the Shroud of Turin was being exhibited for the first time in their diocese, insisted that it was not the burial garment of Jesus" (146.1). In fact, it was one bishop, Pierre d'Arcis, not two, who opposed the Shroud. Here, Brown is probably following Wild who made the same mistake (Robert Wild, S.J., in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 1984, p.34). For a more studied analysis of the facts, the reader is referred to: Fossati, "The Lirey Controversy", *SSI*, Sept. 1983, pp.24-34. Personal rancor undoubtedly entered into Bishop d'Arcis' dispute with Geoffroy II de Charny but, viewed on its own merits, an official position of 'cautious

disbelief' is standard procedure in the Church. Bernadette of Lourdes and the Children of Fatima all met initially with cool reception. Lacking a charism beyond the ordinary, how else may the conscientious authority screen out the charlatan and protect his congregation?

"...Clement VII allowed public exhibition of the Shroud only as 'a representation' of Jesus' burial garment. Clearly the intention of Clement was not fraudulent *even though in his judgment the Shroud did not contain the image of the true body of Jesus*" (146.1, my emphasis). Father is 'tilting' again. The phrase could also be tilted the other way: ...even though in his judgment it was not clear that the Shroud did contain the image..." This is a 'hedging' technique accepted and used by all teachers, scientists and public officials. It is to be found in almost any progress-report: "Our findings demonstrate x; it is not yet clear how x affects y." In his writings, Brown shows himself quite comfortable with the ploy: "I am not saying that...; nor is it clear that..." (*The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, Paulist Press, NY 1979, p.107). He might have interpreted the mind of Pope Clement with the same tolerance. The original documents give no reason to suppose that the Pontiff's initial pronouncement reflected a closed mind. Indeed, his subsequent flexibility indicates just the opposite. The Bull of 1 June 1390 conceded indulgences "to those who visit the Lirey church expressly on account of the Relic which is there preserved with veneration..." (see Fossati, *art. cit.* p.25). Thus within a year of its outbreak, the controversy seems to have been settled and the claims made for the Shroud implicitly vindicated. In Brown's 'observation'—offhand and unshaded—none of this comes through.

**Where? When?** The commentary that flows from these last two queries is safely conservative to say the least. The best evidence, Brown concludes, "...would tend to indicate that the image of the Shroud was not produced in France in the 1300's when the Shroud was first exhibited" (146.1); and, "If one opts for the Near East as the locus, however, a production before the 14th century becomes much more plausible" (146.2). But did not Brown just remind us that Pierre d'Arcis—an otherwise undistinguished 14th century bishop—considered the Shroud a fake? "...a certain cloth cunningly painted..." (From the d'Arcis *Memorandum*, 1389). The Bishop even states that the "artist" had "confessed". But recent research effectively disqualifies the Bishop's judgment on *a priori* grounds. This is, however, a noteworthy example of the 'compounding process' which Brown's method seems to facilitate. Two suppositions which are, in fact, mutually antagonistic, are stated impartially; then given a 'separate but equal' status in which they continue to confront one another.

We next turn to the internal evidence of blood and image. Much of the material Brown reviews had already been discussed by Wild (*art. cit.*) and subsequently criticised in letters to the editor (*BAR* July/Aug. 1984, p.22). Brown, following Wild, argues that the arms of a corpse in rigor mortis cannot be extended to cover the genital area in a posture such as we see in the Shroud image. Accordingly, he suggests

that this may be a later concession to Christian propriety. The photos reproduced in *SSI* (Dec. 1984, p.46), showing Egyptian mummies in that very position, should resolve any nagging doubts. As for the 'modesty' issue: Savio lists a rather lengthy array of sources, apocryphal and patristic, stating specifically that Jesus was crucified "nude" (*Ricerche Storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, 1957). Most of the sources are Greek although, significantly, the last-named contributor is a Latin, St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). Thus, while Brown's observation might carry some weight were we to place the Shroud's 'artifaction' in the High Middle Ages of Europe, once the question of time and place has been virtually settled in favor of the Near East (146.1)—making "a production earlier than the 14th century much more plausible" (146.2)—the force of the objection is dissipated. Had the image been somehow contrived within the cultural matrix of Eastern Christianity, the greater likelihood is that the corpus would have been represented in death as it was usually described, viz., "nude".

Under a final heading, "The Shroud and the Evangelists" (148.1), Brown takes up the apparent discrepancies between Gospel witness and Shroud evidence. "Some biblical scholars...have attempted in detail to show that the biblical accounts are not irreconcilable with the details of the Shroud" (148.1). Brown should not be faulted for taking the position that "...a true biblical critic cannot assume that any of the Gospels necessarily give us exact details about the burial of Jesus...lack of agreement between the Shroud and the biblical accounts is really not a major feature..." (ibid.). Yet he is inconsistent when he asks, even hypothetically (quoting J.A.T. Robinson "in an inverse way"): "If the Shroud were known to any of the Evangelists, would they have described the burial in the way they did?" (148.2).

Modern scholarship accepts without serious dissent that the Evangelists' viewpoint was theological rather than historical. They consistently selected the material that served their purpose. Factual data were often omitted because, in the inspired authors' minds, they didn't 'fit'. *Divino Afflante Spiritu*—not to mention more recent papal encyclicals—has stressed the importance of the literary form for scriptural interpretation. Brown knows that! and yet, on this occasion, he seems unmindful of it. A scholar of his acknowledged competence is well aware that such underlying motivations often help to shape the surface structure of a Gospel narrative.

Why, then, is he so concerned? "Certainly the Synoptics should have described a wound in the side of Christ and John should have been more clear about the nature of the burial cloth" (148.2). The narrative of Jesus' death is always cast in a 'form' and from that Event each narrator has used the data that fit his particular form. To set one Evangelist against another and force a showdown smacks of a fundamentalism we would not have expected in a scholar of Brown's advanced views.

As we survey our present knowledge about the Shroud, a question

arises: When does the evidence become 'sufficient'? We are not to expect a 'lab test' certainty that the Shroud of Turin is the true burial covering of Christ. Perhaps in this sense—and in this sense only—the Shroud is a "challenge to faith". Passions and polemic may roil along the sidelines, but a serious "irenic" study of all the vast sindonic literature should be required for any discussion. Father Brown, for all his brilliant work in scripture analysis, in this instance has not probed deeply enough. His work would be no less brilliant if he had.

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ALSO RECEIVED:

*Shroud News*, Rex Morgan's Newsletter from Australia, continues to appear punctually. With pleasure, we found, in #28 (April) an extensive memorial to Fr. Filas, giving much more information than I was able to gather in time for the obituary notice in the March 1985 *Spectrum*. We are grateful to Mr. Morgan for this, and for the warm personal touch he gave to his remembrance.

Gino Zaninotto, who wrote a vastly researched article on crucifixion for the third issue of the booklet *Emmaus*, continues his study of the subject for the Centro Romano with two monographs: "The Roman Flagellation" and "Crucifixion in the Latin Theater."

In 1980, the Salesian Missions of St. John Bosco published an English translation of the pocket-size booklet written by Jose Luis Carreno, S.D.B. Many thousands of these have been distributed. Now the little booklet has been translated, from the original Spanish, into French by the Salesians of Quebec, Canada, by the initiative and under the guidance of Rev. Lucien Trudel, S.D.B. Two quotations, one from Paul de Gail, S.J. and one from Pope John Paul II, have been added to the booklet, inside the back cover.

"*Emeroteca*" is a word I had to look up in the Italian Encyclopedia. For those readers who do not have an Italian encyclopedia handy, I will translate the definition: *a collection of newspapers*. Then I realized the word was derived from Greek (ημερα, day; θηκη, sheath). This "emeroteca" was initiated in January of this year, and comes out monthly. It consists of clippings about the Shroud from Italian newspapers, arranged and photocopied, and the copies stapled. Some articles are briefly commented by the Director, Edoardo Garelo, who is also Director of Turin's Center for Enigmological Studies and author of many books on enigmology, including one on the Holy Shroud (1978).

This project provides a genial and useful source for keeping us informed about the latest news appearing in the press. Perhaps some American enthusiast could undertake a similar service.