

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

By now, you have all heard the good news, announced on August 18, that Pope John Paul II has asked that new scientific tests be conducted on the Shroud. The archbishop of Turin, Mons. Saldarini, has assumed custodianship of the Shroud, following upon the retirement of Cardinal Ballestrero. The decision to submit the Shroud to new tests can only be the beginning of a well-regulated succession of events throughout the next few months. For authoritative information on what is happening, *Spectrum* recommends the *Holy Shroud Guild Newsletter*; P.O. Box 155; Esopus, New York 12429. Other periodicals will provide news according to their own schedules. Unable to publish current developments, *Spectrum* will follow along with in-depth articles.

The Fifth National Congress on the Shroud was held in Cagliari, Italy, last April 29 & 30. Organized by the Regional Committee of Sardinia and promoted by Turin's Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia, the theme was "The Dating of the Shroud". Approximately 250 scholars and scientists attended.

In the first session, "Science and Technics", Prof. Hall was scheduled to speak. But as it happened last September in Paris, he did not appear. According to his submitted text, "An attempt to answer criticisms concerning the dating of the Shroud", Prof. Hall should have resolved the problems raised by "hysterical scholars" and have confuted judgments expressed by "non-scientists". But Prof. Hall was awaited in vain.

Prof. **Gallino** presented "Considerations on the measurement of the radiocarbon dating of the Shroud cloth". He was followed by Prof. **Bertolani Marchetti**, who spoke on "The pollen content of the Holy Shroud in the framework of the vegetation of that time". According to the Authoress, the C14 age could have undergone a rejuvenation due to several causes. Prof. **Diana** presented "Determination of the depolymerization degree of the cell in tissues". As Prof. Diana explained, with the passing of time cellulose degrades and shows a very low Dp; this transformation can indicate the object's antiquity. Her report was introduced by Dr. Emanuela **Marinelli**. Prof. **Pourrat** of France advised that a "True blind radiocarbon dating of the Turin Shroud is feasible", and set forth strict measures to prevent any controversy on the result of the test. Eng. **Brunati** also spoke on the theme "Considerations on Shroud dating reports", pointing out that according to the dimensions given in the reports of Prof. Testore and Mr. Riggi, the samples given to the laboratories would be much heavier than they should be for the

Shroud linen. The joint report of Professors **Aramu, Montoni, Erriu, Onnis** and **Zucca** of the Cagliari Physics University, was entitled "Possible alterations of the general balance of C14". The Authors emphasized the necessity of caution in drawing final conclusions, as discrepancies have been reported in other cases. Prof. **Cossu**, in "Non-destructive examinations in the study of the Shroud", proposed x-ray fluorescence, magnetic nuclear resonance, neutronic activation and beta radiation retro-diffusion. Prof. **Gagliardi**, in "Critical analysis on modern nuclear dating research applicable to the Holy Shroud", suggested a preliminary polynuclear research on fabrics previously irradiated by different sources. Dr. **Rodante** argued "The reality of the Shroud in respect to C14", and Mr. **Consolo** suggested "Guidelines for an answer to the debated 'Verdict' of C14 on the dating of the Holy Shroud samples".

The second session was dedicated to "History and Art". The Rev. **Pisano**, O.F.M., in "History and the Shroud of Turin", urged more historical research in literary, archaeological, numismatic, and other sources. The Rev. **Pfeiffer**, S.J., spoke on "The Shroud and the iconography of the Image and the Passion of Christ". He excluded a medieval origin for the Shroud, citing Byzantine iconography and indicating representations before the twelfth century. Eng. **Balossino** raised the theme of the "Coin minted by Pilate", showing an imprint of the coin by the three-dimensional process that he had developed. Dr. **Moroni** showed the *lituus* transferred on the Shroud; hence his theme "The Man of the Shroud died under Pontius Pilate". The Author demonstrated with experimental and radiographical means that the coins found in two skulls of the Jewish Community Cemetery of Jericho could have come only from the orbital cavities, never from the mouth. The Rev. **Intrigillo** also spoke of "Coins on the eyelids of the Man of the Shroud in the light of authentic and scientific photographs", which show very clearly that the "rod" of the *lituus* on the coin is in fact a thread which continues on beyond the circumference of the "coin". Prof. Nigro discoursed on "Iconography, a Shroud language". Profs. **Zaninotto** and **Centini** doubt the "ordeal by fire" described in an account of an exposition at Bourg-en-Bresse and add: "...the Shroud was not boiled in oil". Prof. **Tessitore** proposed comparative examinations of the threads of the seams of the sidestrip and the patches. Dr. **Pastore Trosello** concluded the session with "The first visible clue on the Shroud regarding its presence in Europe", emphasizing some characters of an inscription identified by Marastoni.

In the third session, "Exegesis and Liturgy", Dr. **Iori** was first to speak. His subject: "Shroud and Gospels; the path of a research". Mr. **Popnicolov**, in "Iconographic description of a Holy Shroud till now unknown to science: archaeological and liturgical essay", refers

to frescos, dated 1345, in the Rila monastery in Bulgaria. Prof. **Falchi** reported on "The significant reason of the decree of Pope Eusebius (309-311)": ordering that the altar should be covered with a cloth of white linen: not a silk or colored cloth, but pure linen ... as [the Lord] was buried in a *sindone* of clean linen. [Some sources attribute this decree to Pope Sylvester (314-337). D.C.] Prof. **Motto** followed with a fascinating subject: "In the problem of Shroud dating, unconscious motivations of hope and fear, love and hate". He remarked that even non-believers participate more or less consciously in the spiritual problems connected with the Shroud. Very interesting was the report of Eng. **Moreno** and Mr. **Gomez** entitled "El Sudario de Oviedo y la S. Sindone: Dos reliquias complementarias?" The Authors remarked that since facial bloodstains on the Shroud of Turin and on the cloth of Oviedo coincide, one can infer that the two cloths are of the same age. This hypothesis could invalidate the C14 date attributed to the Shroud, as the Oviedo cloth is historically anterior to the thirteenth century.

The Congress held in Cagliari under the direction of Dr. **Ladu** and the collaboration of Cav. **Moretto** and Prof. **Barberis** concluded with an appeal to the Pope for a new examination of the Shroud. The same motion, unanimously approved, was presented by Prof. **Baima Bollone**, who requested the laboratories of Tucson, Oxford and Zurich to publish all the operational protocols and all the raw data concerning the samples they processed.

At the end, Prof. Baima Bollone announced that the Sixth National Congress will be held in Milan, Italy, in May 1993 on the subject: "The Shroud and the Medical Sciences".

MARIO MORONI

A conference entitled "Science, Theology and the Shroud" will be held at St. Louis University, St. Louis Missouri, on Saturday and Sunday, 22-23 June 1991. Sponsored by The Institute for Theological Encounter of Science and Technology and the Texas-based The Man in the Shroud Committee, the conference will focus on the relationship between science and religion in sindonology.

For details, write to: Bro. Joseph Marino; St. Louis Abbey; 500 S. Mason Road; St. Louis MO 63141-8500. For room/dinner reservations write to Monica Hilling; 2700 W. 16th Apt. 412; Amarillo, TX 79102.

The Centre International d'Etudes sur le Linceul de Turin (CIELT) will sponsor an extensive exhibit of Shroud material, including the full-size Vernon Miller transparency, courtesy of Kevin Moran, proprietor. The exhibit will be held at the Maison de la Chimie, located at 28, rue St. Dominique, Paris 75007, opening on November 28. It will then go on tour in Europe for one year. Fee for the exhibit: 50 francs (about 83¢).