

OBITUARY (1)
Dr Frederick Zugibe, M.D., Ph.D. (1928 - 2013)
by Ian Wilson



Before the 1988 carbon dating of the Shroud, some of the most respected proponents of the Shroud's authenticity were medical practitioners. And because of their speciality studying traumas suffered by the dead rather than the living, the branch variously known as pathologists (in the UK), and medical examiners (in the U.S.) represented the field's most authoritative echelons. 1970s Britain had Professor Taffy Cameron, Home Office pathologist and head of forensic medicine at the London Hospital, also Dr Derek Barrowcliff, who gave evidence against the 'Christ didn't die on the Cross' claims of German author Hans Naber.

1970s U.S.A. had Dr Robert Bucklin, medical examiner for Los Angeles, who starred so memorably in David Rolfe's 1978 Shroud documentary *The Silent Witness*. Then in the early 1980s USA there appeared onto the scene Lebanese-born Dr Fred Zugibe, chief medical examiner for Rockland County, New York, and a man who would put forward his own very individual new 'spin' on the details of Jesus' crucifixion so enigmatically imprinted on the Shroud.

Dr 'Fred' Zugibe, who died on September 6, 2013, at the age of 85, sadly suffered from Alzheimer's in his final years, but had connections with the BSTS going back almost three decades. His first book on the Shroud, *The Cross on the Shroud*, was published by Angelus Books of New York, in 1982. At that time he sent me an autographed copy, and three years later, on an occasion that he and his wife Catherine ('Kitty') were visiting England, he generously agreed to talk to the BSTS, brushing aside any form of remuneration. He gave the talk in the meeting room of the Kensington Central Library, London on the evening of 25 October 1985, and mildly disturbed many who attended, not least myself, by his very individual approach to the medical issues raised by the Shroud.

In particular he argued for some modifications to the then universally accepted idea, deriving from French surgeon Pierre Barbet, but supported by Dr Robert Bucklin and by my own revered medical mentor, Dr David Willis, that the Shroud showed its occupant to have been nailed, not through the palms, as had been traditionally supposed, but through the wrists. In a nutshell Zugibe argued for the nail having been driven in on the palm side of the hand (the side not seen on the Shroud), at the base of thumb, only exiting at the point of the wrist indicated on the Shroud. And as he told me in a letter of January 24, 1984, his so often harrowing work as a medical examiner had recently provided him with some unexpected extra support for this idea:

You may be interested in a recent Medical Examiner's case that I investigated a few months ago. A young woman found murdered had multiple stab wounds all over the body. The hand and the arm

regions contained several defense wounds from placing her hand in front of her face with the palm forward, in order to protect herself. One such stab wound entered the thenar fold right at the base of the thumb and pursued a course exiting at the exact spot as is depicted on the Turin Shroud. This path was identical to the one that I described in my book... An interesting facet of this was, the day after I had this case, Paul Maloney and John DeSalvo came to my office for a brief meeting regarding ASSIST [one of the USA's then several counterparts to the BSTS, and an organization of which Zugibe was President]. Since the body was still in the morgue, I took both of them into the autopsy room and showed them the hand. They were both utterly amazed.

Another memorable moment with Fred Zugibe occurred on 3 March 2000, on the occasion of a private showing of the Shroud for a small group of us who had been specially invited to Turin by the Shroud's then relatively newly-appointed custodian, Cardinal Poletto. It was to be my second such 'up close and personal' viewing, the first having been back in 1973, when I had been in the company of Dr David Willis. On that 1973 occasion the Shroud had been illuminated by some very strong TV lighting, and what I had failed to observe, despite my borrowing Dr Willis's magnifying glass to study the bloodstain of the wound in the side, was a feature shortly after noted by the STURP team during their 1978 examination, a yellowish rim or haloing around the major bloodstains. When blood is spilled its cells begin to thicken and concentrate. On a linen surface this causes them to shrink inwards within the bloodstain, leaving a rim or halo of yellowish serum. To observe this on the Shroud therefore represents even for the ordinary layman's diagnostic capabilities a reassuring confirmation that what appears to be a bloodstain on the cloth is indeed composed of real blood.

On the year 2000 occasion it so happened that the Shroud was set up in a temporary sacristy that received plenty of natural daylight, and when I approached it I saw almost immediately that all around the blood stains, particularly in the area of the small of the back (which had been

well above my head in 1973), there was indeed the haloing that had previously been invisible to me. Fred was one of the attendees standing nearest me, and so I had the on-the-spot opportunity to ask him, a man of such enormous experience studying trauma victims, if this feature was indeed blood serum. To my considerable relief and satisfaction he confirmed that it was. Indeed our conversation quickly became so animated as we discussed the various examples of this on the cloth, our fingers pointing these out to each other over the simple rope barrier, that one of the security guards felt obliged to caution us not to reach any closer. Fred was also in Turin again in September 2002 when the results of textile conservator Dr Mechthild Flury-Lemberg's conservation work, in particular the removal of the patches from the 1532 fire, were shown to the world. His main criticism as a medical examiner, voiced publicly on that occasion, was that the conservators did not wear gloves for their task. However, given the extreme delicacy of their task, and the fineness of the thread that the conservators were using, this may well have been impractical, as well as of little purpose given the amount of direct handling that the Shroud has received throughout its known history.

In his hey-day Fred was held in very high esteem by his medical colleagues. Besides his writings on the Shroud (towards the end of his life he extensively revised his first book, which in 2005 became republished by M. Evans & Co. as *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*), in 1986 he put out *Fourteen Days to a Healthy Heart*, published by Macmillan, USA, a commonsense guide to eating healthily and breaking yourself of the bad habits that increase the risk of a heart attack. He served as Adjunct Associate Professor of Pathology at Columbia University College of Physicians, and was a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, a Fellow of the College of American Pathologists, a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, and much more. In 1984 an important study by him 'Death by Crucifixion,' based on medical experiments deriving from his studies of the Shroud was published in the well-respected *Canadian Society of Forensic Science Journal*.

A devout Catholic, Fred Zugibe was one of a breed of men who pioneered the methods now routinely used in present-day forensic science. What he often did as one man, personally taking charge of 8,000 cases in the course of his career, is usually now the work of whole teams of specialists of the kind popularised in TV drama series such as *C.S.I.*. Because of such developments the subject of the Shroud may be hard-pressed ever again to find a medical practitioner of Fred Zugibe's range and stature. His passing, leaving behind Kitty, his wife of 62 years, six children, 18 grandchildren and five great-grand-children, effectively marks the end of a very memorable era.



OBITUARY (2)

Ilona Farkas (1923 - 2013)



Originally from Budapest, the daughter of a physicist, Ilona graduated from the Academy of Music as an opera singer. She fled to Italy after the Soviet invasion of Hungary, where she worked as a journalist and in 1985 founded the influential Shroud journal, *Collegamento pro Sindone*, which she edited until her retirement in 2003. Her obituary, by her successor Emanuela Marinelli arrived too late to be included in the last newsletter, but has been published on www.shroud.com, as well as on her journal's website, www.sindone.info.