

SPECIAL SHROUD SCULPTURE - FORENSIC SCULPTOR THOMAS GOYNE OF VIRGINIA AND A CONTROVERSIAL NEW IMAGE

Last summer Fr. Kim Dreisbach of the Atlanta Center for Continuing Study of the Shroud of Turin commissioned a young forensic sculptor, Thomas Goyne of Fredericksburg, Virginia, U.S.A. to make a sculpture of the Shroud face, designed to be cast in epoxy resin so that it could be handled by blind visitors to the Atlanta Center.

Goyne has recently unveiled the first stage of his work, the clay model prior to casting and colouring, and it promises to be of considerable interest to the sighted as well as the blind.

Goyne began his assignment by examining ancient Palestinian skulls at the Smithsonian Museum and developing a computer programme based on Shroud photographs. His normal forensic work has usually been to try to reconstruct the face from perhaps the skull of an unidentified murder victim or, as an aid to anthropology, from prehistoric remains. But in the case of the Shroud all he had to work from a front-facing photograph, which partly made his work easier, but partly more difficult.

His work evokes mixed reactions among those long reliant on the Shroud negative. The eyes and facial expression are remarkable, indicative of Goyne's professional talent. But is the upper part of the head a little too low, the jaw a little too square and exaggerated?

Everyone sees the Shroud negative differently, and so Goyne will be most unlikely to be able to please everyone.

For Goyne the next stage of the work will be to produce the bust in natural colouring, then a second version showing the man of the Shroud with all the suffering and wounds the Shroud indicates.

Given what Goyne has produced so far, this should be exceptionally dramatic, and will be awaited with keen interest.