

News from around the World

Shroud in the New Millennium' Conference To Hit Dallas

For those of the English-speaking world with a strong interest in the Shroud the subject's premier event of this year will be the international conference to be held in Dallas, Texas, USA, October 25-28. The venue, the Catholic Conference & Formation Center, 901 South Madison, Dallas, is situated on 13 acres, and has an auditorium providing comfortable seating for up to 200, with a chapel, cafeteria, book-store and library all in the same vicinity. Jointly sponsored by AM*STAR (the American Shroud of Turin Association for Research), and by America's Holy Shroud Guild, the conference title is 'The Shroud in the New Millennium'. In association with the two organisations' presidents, respectively Thomas D'Muhala, and the Revd Frederick Brinkmann, C.Ss.R, the conference's principal organisers are Michael Minor of Kaufman, Texas, and Isabel Piczek of Los Angeles.

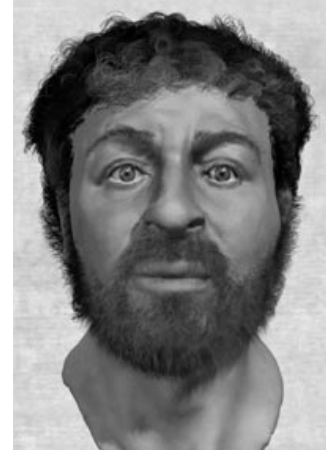
The gathering has attracted a number of speakers. The guest of honour is Professor Bruno Barberis, President of the Shroud 'Centro' in Turin, and one of the leading scientific advisers to Cardinal Poletto. The still provisional list of speakers, given here in no special order of priority, includes physicist Dr. August Accetta, noted for his experiments on the image formation; lawyer Mark Antonacci of St. Louis, Missouri, author of one of the very latest books on the Shroud, *The Resurrection of the Shroud: New Scientific, Medical and Archeological Evidence*; German author Michael Hesemann, whose new book, like Antonacci's, is reviewed later in this Newsletter; botanical specialist Professor Avinoam Danin of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, New York medical examiner translator Mark Guscini, who will talk on his researches at Mount Athos; Dr. Fred Zugibe, who has been conducting fresh researches on the mechanics of crucifixion; physician Dr. Gilbert Lavoie; John and Rebecca Jackson of the Turin Shroud Center of Colorado, with their scientific colleagues Keith Propp and David Fornoff; archaeology specialist Paul Maloney of Pennsylvania; Belgian scientist Dr. Marie-Claire Oosterwyck-Gastuche, who has made special studies of the radiocarbon dating issue; Los Angeles liturgical artist Isabel Piczek, who has been working on an important new reconstruction of the Shroud body; Diana Fulbright and Brian Walsh, organisers of the Shroud conference held in Richmond, Virginia, in 1999; retired psychiatry professor Dr. Alan Whanger and his wife Mary, together with their colleague Philip Dayvault; historian Professor Dan Scavone; Los Angeles photographer Barrie Schwartz; Hong Kong archaeologist Bill Meacham; Australian businessman Rex Morgan, the Revd. Kim Dreisbach, Thomas D'Muhala, Peter Schumacher; Fr. Fred Brinkmann; Kevin Moran; Barbara Sullivan and Jack Markwardt.

The conference will be preceded by a welcoming reception on the evening of Wednesday October 24, and will conclude with a banquet on Saturday 27th, at which the keynote speech—on the theme 'The Shroud in the New Millennium' - will be given.

All enquiries concerning reservations for the Conference, also for details of the various types and categories of accommodation available, should be addressed to conference co-ordinator Michael Minor at P.O.Box 878, Kaufman, Texas 75142, phone +1 972 932 5141; fax +1 972 932 7742. There is no e-mail address for the Conference, so written enquiries should be via fax. It is also understood that bookings cannot be made via any kind of credit card.

Is this the Face of Jesus?

The BBC TV documentary that caused a furore...



At the end of March several BSTS members expressed outrage at the BBC's publicity hype for a new three part television series on the historical Jesus, 'Son of God'. For the programme's image of Jesus - which publicists vaunted as 'almost certainly the closest representation to the face of Jesus that we shall see' - the BBC commissioned the Manchester University facial reconstruction specialist Richard Neave to make a reconstruction of the skull of a 1st century Jewish man. This skull was amongst a group of 1st century skeletons found by accident by a road construction team in Jerusalem. A *Times* correspondent described the resultant likeness, made from overlying a cast of the skull with clay 'muscles' and 'tissue' according to prescribed facial tissue thickness formulae, as 'a broad peasant's face, with a prominent nose, dark olive skin and short curly hair'. So definitely not the Shroud Jesus, nor the image of Jesus that has been passed down through centuries of art from at least as early as the 6th century AD on

Important to be recognised is that no criticism should be levelled at Richard Neave. Personally known to your Editor over a period of several years, Neave is at pains to emphasise that in any of his reconstructions features such as skin and hair colour are mostly conjectural, except in the unusual event of any wisps of hair having survived. Far more significant is the facial structure, in which regard Neave's facial reconstructions from skulls have deservedly won widespread acclaim for their helping reconstruct and identify otherwise unidentifiable murder victims, the success in these instances providing its own testimony to the reconstructions' accuracy.

The very flawed premise of the BBC producer and his publicists however, was that if this was the face of a 1st century Jerusalem Jew, it must be the closest we can get to what Jesus looked like. As the producer stated in press interviews 'Using archaeological and anatomical science rather than artistic interpretation makes this the most accurate likeness ever created. It isn't the face of Jesus, because we were not working with the skull of Jesus, but it is the departure point for reconsidering what Jesus looked like'. Shroud or no Shroud, this is tantamount to picking out any man in a London street and declaring his face to be the closest to what Tony Blair looks like, or any New Yorker and declaring it to be the face of George Bush. There is overwhelming anthropological evidence that faces in antiquity were as variegated as those in our own time. So any argument that the Neave reconstruction might somehow be an accurate representation of Jesus, potentially refuting the Shroud likeness, is fallacious in the extreme.

Fresh photos of the Veronica - plus the first-ever scientific examination

In Newsletter 52 came news of the first ever photographs of the famous 'Veronica' cloth of Rome. Though pilgrims trampled each other to see this during the Middle Ages, it has been so closely

guarded by the custodians in St. Peter's (where it is kept in a shrine within one of the great pillars that support the dome), that until very recently there had been no definitive scientific examination, nor were there any photographs in the public domain. Then in 1999 German author Michael Hesemann managed to photograph the cloth during the single ceremony each year when canons of St. Peter's hold it up on a high balcony set into the Veronica pillar. Distance and poor lighting meant that Hesemann's photograph lacked vital detail, but he promised to try again when the cloth was brought out this April, and has sent the following report:

Yes, I managed to film and photograph the Veronica again on April 1st. Unfortunately I was not allowed to use a tripod for the photos, and since the light was not perfect, the exposure time was long and thanks to my use of a 400 mm telephoto lens (which enlarged also the slightest camera movement) the pictures are a little bit shaky, in spite of the use of a 1600 ASA film. But still pictures from the video are perfect. [These should be shown at the Dallas conference - Ed]

And now comes the big news: The next morning I was able to visit the underground chapel beneath the Veronica column together with Dr. Jung Inghelssis. We spoke a little bit with an official from the Fabbrica di S. Pietro, who told us that just a couple of months earlier Cardinal Noe had commissioned an investigation of the Veronica by scientists. They were able to investigate the cloth and concluded: (1) It is very old linen; (2) There is no blood on the cloth; (3) It does bear remains of colour. This allows the conclusion that it is not a Passion relic but a very old painting of the same character as the Mandylion, or image of Edessa. It thereby strongly supports the hypothesis that it is an early copy of the Shroud. Unfortunately we were not able to learn any details, but let's hope they come out soon.

'Holy Headboard' to undergo tests

Michael Hesemann has also been involved in research on the reputed *titulus* or headboard of the cross. The gospel of John 19: 19 relates how Pontius Pilate, after handing Jesus over to be crucified, wrote out 'a notice' in Hebrew, Latin and Greek carrying the words 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'. Alleged to be this very relic is a piece of walnut wood, with strangely backward-written lettering, preserved in Rome's historic church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. According to Michael Hesemann seven international experts - among them the noted papyrologist Professor Carsten Peter Thiede who five years ago dated a fragment of Matthew's gospel preserved in Magdalen College, Oxford to the 1st century AD - date the Santa Croce relic's lettering to between the first and third centuries AD.

In particular they have noted the *titulus* lettering's similarities to that on the sole inscription bearing the name of Pontius Pilate that was found in 1961 by Italian archaeologists excavating the first century theatre at Caesarea Maritima in what is today Israel. They suggest that the *titulus* inscription was written, not by Pontius Pilate himself, but by slave scribes working under his direction.

Hesemann and his colleagues are currently negotiating with Rome's Pontifical Academy of Sciences for permission to be granted for a variety of tests on the *titulus*. Among these would be the taking of tiny slivers of its wood in order to try to determine its country of origin and approximate date.

A 'Sleuth's Corner' Coup— The Prague 'Shroud' fragment examined

In Newsletter 52 Sleuth's Corner highlighted recently received information concerning a fragment of cloth, catalogued as K202, preserved in the Treasury of St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague. This bears an

ancient inscription stating that it came from the *sudario* associated with Jesus' Passion and Burial. Although its quoted dimensions did not match the two portions of the Shroud missing at either end of the side-strip, it seemed worthwhile making further enquiries concerning this relic, at the very least in order to eliminate it.

BSTS member Hugh Duncan, who lives in France, rose to the challenge and contacted Milena Bramermanova of the department in Prague responsible for the Treasury and the various ancient objects it houses. Milena proved very helpful, determining the *sudario* relic's precise measurements to be 6.5 cm by 4.7 cm. But from an examination carried out on 19 March, in the presence of various Czech notables, it became apparent that it definitely could not have come from the Shroud preserved in Turin. According to Hugh Duncan:

'I received the report from Milena about the relic K202 in the St Vitus' Cathedral Treasury. They didn't open the reliquary in the end as they could see what they needed through a window using a magnifying glass. The textile was a brownish colour, probably originally red (not white/off white like the Turin Shroud). It was woven with silk, not linen and the type of weave used was 'tabby' not twill. So on all three counts, it did not match the Shroud of Turin.

Despite the fact that in this case, the enquiry drew a blank result, these things are always worth pursuing. Hugh Duncan is most warmly thanked for his efforts on the Society's behalf.

Revealed - yet another face of Dmitri Kouznetsov

Dr. Dmitri Kouznetsov, the enigmatic Russian scientist who duped many Shroud enthusiasts with his '1532 fire' answer to how the Shroud carbon dating became skewed, has appeared in the news in yet another guise. According to a report from Moscow in the *New York Times* of June 26 of this year, kindly forwarded by Joe Marino, Kouznetsov has claimed that while he was languishing in a Connecticut prison on fraud charges he was approached by an American student - allegedly employed by the FBI - who tried to recruit him as a spy for the United States.

According to the *New York Times* report:

The scientist, Dmitri Kouznetsov, a toxicologist who was imprisoned in the United States three years ago on bad check charges, accused John Edward Tobin, 24, a Fulbright scholar convicted in April for possession of marijuana, of being an F.B.I. agent. Mr. Kouznetsov said that while he was jailed in the United States in 1998, Mr. Tobin visited him, identified himself as an F.B.I. agent and offered leniency if Mr. Kouznetsov would collaborate. Authorities in Moscow said today that they were reviewing the accusations but had not decided whether to charge Mr. Tobin with espionage.

When Mr. Tobin was arrested, investigators suggested that he was a spy, after learning he had studied at an Arizona military intelligence institute. But ultimately he was not charged with espionage. Mr. Tobin's lawyer told the Echo Moscow radio station that the new accusations were spurious and levelled only to cloud Mr. Tobin's case ahead of an expected release. Russian officials have indicated that the American may be pardoned. Mr. Kouznetsov could not be reached for comment.

Not least of the intriguing features of this report is that here Dmitri Kouznetsov is described a toxicologist. When in 1993 he first came to the attention of the Shroud fraternity he presented himself as an expert in physics and chemistry. Two years earlier, when giving lectures to Creationist groups around the world he was described as a 'distinguished bioscientist'. Clearly he is a man of many

parts. However for those in the U.S. and elsewhere seeking to get their money back from him undoubtedly his greatest talent is as the Invisible Man.

Silver Nitrate and the Shroud

An interesting suggestion has come from artist Sylvia Hurst of Tantobie, Co Durham concerning how silver nitrate may have been involved in the creation of the Shroud's image. As she has pointed out in correspondence with the Editor:

Jewish custom forbade the washing of the corpse of anyone who had died a violent, bloody death. In the case of Jesus his extensively damaged body was laid in a *sovev* or winding sheet. And since washing was forbidden it has to have been buried still covered with blood. But what could be done to bring Jesus back to life, as had been prophesied? Someone might well have thought of soaking the *sovev* in a disinfectant solution. At that time a strong solution of silver nitrate was sometimes used for cauterising wounds.

Evidence for this practice can be found in book 5 - on wines and metals - of the *Materia Medica* by Dioscorides, a Greek physician who practised during the 1st century AD Roman era. This was one of the most important treatises on medicine, widely used up until as recently as the eighteenth century. Conceivably lightning struck through a ventilation shaft in the tomb to create a flash of light that activated the photographic properties of the silver nitrate. Then - since the production of urine can continue in a coma or similar state - the potassium or ammonia content of body fluids may well have served to fix the photographic image.

Entombment Engraving Created by Sylvia Hurst

At the end of last year Sylvia Hurst completed eight clear glass panels on which she had engraved depictions of the life and death of Jesus, as part of the celebrations for the new millennium. Mounted on an octagonal display stand, these panels were exhibited between 21 December and 31 January in the civic hall at Stanley, Co, Durham. Seen at right is her preparatory drawing for the panel depicting Jesus' tomb with the Shroud



Poems on the Shroud

Although poems on the Shroud are not normally included in this Newsletter, several members have composed and submitted some compelling verses on the subject. The next Newsletter will therefore probably be accompanied by a one-off supplement carrying some of these.