

SHROUD NEWS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN
By REX MORGAN - Author of PERPETUAL MIRACLE



Issue No. 4

3rd January 1981

EDITORIAL

I had hoped, as you know, to complete this issue of SHROUD NEWS in December and in so doing to have wished all my readers a very Happy Christmas. Let me now do so in retrospect in the hope that your Christmas season was indeed a joyful one reminding every one of us of the hope and peace that Christmas brings through whatever way we chose to celebrate it.

Unfortunately the pressure of immediate agenda did not allow me to keep to my SHROUD NEWS schedule and so issue number 4 is now dated for January 1981.

I am glad to report that our first letter to the editor from a SHROUD NEWS subscriber appears in this issue. Please write your own views about any matter connected with the study of the Holy Shroud as the more opinions and comment we can share the better it must be for the advancement of the subject.

Joan Lenehan, who shows the film THE SILENT WITNESS in Australia, the film so brilliantly made by David Rolfe of London, is planning a series of showings during 1981 which will also involve my Shroud lecture. I am pleased to say that bookings for the (free) lecture continue and thus the story of the Shroud is becoming ever more widely known in our continent.

Since issue number 3 was published I have had further letters from Father Filas in Chicago, Father Otterbein in New York and Joy Pagano of the British Society for the Turin Shroud. The awaited issue of POL magazine containing Janet Smith's article was also on the newsstands in late November and there is a review of it in this

Editorial (continued)

I have several scientific reports from America awaiting synopsis for SHROUD NEWS and several more cuttings from various parts of the world.

A friend (and SHROUD NEWS subscriber) sent me recently a book published in 1979: MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD. This book is reviewed in this issue with special reference to an article on the Holy Shroud.

All in all, this issue is more a digest of current items to keep readers up to date than one which contains any major article. I expect issue 5 to be prepared within the month for distribution in February. I hope I can count on your continued subscription support, and perhaps that of your acquaintances, for forthcoming issues.

REX MORGAN

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THE TEMPLECOMBE CONNECTION

There is a small village in Somerset, England, called Templecombe. Its name derives from the fact that in the year 1185 the Knights Templar bought the property of the Manor on the south side of the village. Here they established a Preceptory for members of their order. The Preceptor who lived there had the responsibilities of managing the estates of the Templars in the west of England, admitting new members to the order and training men and horses for service in the Crusades in the East during the 12th and 13th centuries. The object of the Knights Templar was to protect pilgrims and shrines from the Moslems in Jerusalem.

Ian Wilson, distinguished historian and author of THE TURIN SHROUD, is now widely known for his theory of the connection between the ancient Mandyllion and the Holy Shroud of Turin and part of his evidence is based on the ownership of the Shroud by the Knights Templar.

In 1951, during a gale in Templecombe, the plaster of the ceiling in an outhouse of the cottage belonging to Mrs A. Topp in the High Street collapsed and a wooden panel was revealed in the ceiling. The panel

The Templecombe Connection (continued)

was covered in coal-dust and keyhole and hinge-marks on it suggest that it had been at one time a door on the cottage coal shed. The most remarkable discovery was that this board bore a painted life-size portrait of the Head of Christ. It was clear that the portrait might have been associated with the Knights Templar whose connection with the village in mediaeval times was so strong.

The panel was expertly dated at 1314, although more recent studies suggest that it might well date to the 1100s. Thus the panel is a portrait of the Head of Christ used by the Knights Templar in their religious ceremonies. Almost all mediaeval portraits of Christ show the head with a halo above it. Most of those of the Templars did not have a halo and this led to their persecution as idolaters or worshippers of strange images. The Templecombe panel has no halo and has other striking resemblances to the image on the Holy Shroud. It seems clear that this is direct evidence of the Templars having had possession of the Holy Shroud from which their paintings, including the one at Templecombe was copied.

The ancient board now hangs restored in the Church of St Mary the Virgin at Templecombe. Rex Morgan visited the church and photographed the portrait in 1979 and the photo appears in PERPETUAL MIRACLE.

The striking resemblance, which has been fully discussed by Wilson, thus provides an uncanny link, discovered as lately as the mid twentieth century, with the history of the Holy Shroud and forms part of the historical evidence for its continued existence since earliest times.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Re: Dr McCrone Article on his London Lecture in
Shroud News, October 1980

After having studied the questions and answers given by Dr McCrone I find it very hard to believe in Dr McCrone's integrity as a scientist or as a person for the reasons as follows:-

Letter to the Editor (continued)

1. It was an agreement not to disclose any results until all tests by all scientists had been done. And in spite of this agreement Dr McCrone makes a statement beforehand and gives a lecture which leads me to wonder why.
2. For a scientist to make a statement that he cannot prove scientifically is something that no true scientist would do.
3. To point out that the tests that he had made had been done with a simple light microscope and that the other scientists had used highly advanced equipment and they did not agree with his findings. And yet, in spite of this, he still went ahead and conducted a lecture.
4. He also contradicts himself on several occasions throughout his own lecture.
5. And that it did not matter to him whether the Shroud was genuine or not.

I can't understand why a reputable scientist would conduct himself in this manner, unless he did so to get some cheap publicity for himself, before all tests had been done, as he would not be able to do so once all tests had been published. And also to save face or as a get-out he would state his work had been done with only simple equipment. Whereas all the other scientists had used highly advanced methods.

I think the facts speak for themselves and that Dr McCrone has acted like a charlatan or politician and as such, all future statements made by him would be suspect.

Even his remark that he dreamed up the idea of finger-painting as a possibility, to me as an artist myself, does not ring true. (Incidentally I see no reason why we could not conduct the finger-painting tests ourselves here in Australia.)

Under the circumstances for Dr McCrone to try and make money and to get cheap publicity in such a manner on the subject of the Shroud to my mind is highly despicable.

JOHN WEST, Sydney

RECENT PIECES IN THE AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER

On 13th November 1980, James S. Murray, who writes a chatty column called "Religion" in THE AUSTRALIAN wrote a piece entitled SHROUDING FAITH IN RELICS. He points out that Italy, like England, is more tolerant of eccentrics than we are. "Italy is keen on relics, but puritan England has held them in great contempt and it is part of the Protestant tradition to reject relics as touchstones of religion."

"But," says Mr Murray, "there is a cult growing around the Holy Shroud of Turin in which many Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, seem to be finding satisfaction." One could almost call it an industry. Group Captain Cheshire, VC, did some world tours on it; there have been a number of books examining its history and authenticity; and a film was made supporting claims to reverence and even faith...

"The Holy Shroud, not yet recognised as the real thing by the Catholic Church, does not come onto the historical scene until about the 14th century, though some recent apologists trace tortuous courses much further back.

"And recently, even some of the investigators have fallen out, with one asserting the detection of painter's pigments on the cloth on which the image of a bearded man appears.

"And then, just a few weeks ago, others found evidence of blood.

"In the case of the Shroud of Turin, the mysterious face and figure which stare from it are those of an old man, while Christ was in his late 20s; and anyway, in spite of the neat explanations, it was the custom to bind the dead with bandages.

"How wise the Jews have been, with funeral customs which make the collection of relics impossible.

"Surely the greatest disservice that can be done to anything is to turn it into a relic - religion most of all.

"And perhaps the scriptures have a word for the cult of the Holy Shroud: 'Why seek the living among the dead?' "

Recent pieces in The Australian (continued)

This article suggests that James Murray has done very little reading on the Shroud and can hardly be aware of the objective interest being taken in the matter by eminent people from many fields in many parts of the world. The article drew a reply on 19th November 1980 from DEREK EMERSON-ELLIOTT of Canberra. Emerson-Elliott rightly pointed out Murray's factual errors concerning the "old man" comment and cited several medical experts who have agreed on the anatomical evidence in the image as being of a man in "his early thirties". Murray appears to have seen only screened reproductions of the photographs.

Elliott also points out that binding was not a universal burial practice amongst the Jews until long after the time of Christ and he re-emphasises that the views of Dr Walter McCrone reported widely as claiming proof of human painting of the image have been widely disputed by other scientists.

Mr Emerson-Elliott's letter concludes:

"The questions posed by the Shroud of Turin are still wide open and pejorative statements such as Murray's serve neither the interests of science nor religion."

With this view, SHROUD NEWS agrees entirely. It is to be hoped that The Australian's James S. Murray will read the literature on the Holy Shroud (we have sent him a copy of PERPETUAL MIRACLE for a start) and will perhaps use his widely read column to present a rather more balanced account of the matter instead of shrouding his writing in superficial journalism.

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LATEST COMMENT FROM FATHER FILAS

Readers should refer to SHROUD NEWS No 3 in which a report of the remarkable theory of Father Francis J. Filas was published. Filas has shown that one of the coins appearing in the image on the Shroud over the right eye (unknown until Jackson and Jumper made their 3D photographs with the VP8 image analyser in the late '70s) can be dated to a coin of Pontius Pilate circa 30 A.D.

Latest Comment from Father Filas (continued)

In a recent letter to Rex Morgan he says:

" I still have not received a single rebuttal about the coins. The only denial is this: 'I will not accept your claim'. Nobody YET has explained WHY my claim is false.... As I thought out their argument this afternoon, they claim that they have an 'absence of proof', in that I don't have all the letters of Tiberious Kaisaros, or I cannot find a coin misspelled with the EXACT ucai. But I retort: nobody has found a proof of absence! In other words they refuse to accept the positive evidence I produce and demand more, more, more, because they will never be satisfied, as far as I can determine. The numismatists have apparently accepted the argument 100% -- my numismatic expert, Michael Marx, says that he has not heard one peep from any of his confreres to the contrary....

Thanks for publicizing what I have to say on the coins. I am content to let my arguments stand. I feel they speak for themselves without further buttressing, even."

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NEWS FROM THE BRITISH SOCIETY

Current information from the British Society for the Turin Shroud indicated that on 4th December 1980 the scheduled meeting was to be addressed by Averil Cameron, Professor of Ancient History, Kings College, University of London on THE SHROUD AND THE MANDYLION OF EDESSA. This address was to be based on Professor Cameron's earlier paper in which she argues against the historical thesis of Ian Wilson that the Mandylion and the Shroud are one and the same. It is hoped to review the earlier paper (which SHROUD NEWS has) in due course and to comment on the December lecture when it comes to hand.

The Reverend David Sox, General Secretary of the Society advises that he will be away from England for most of 1981 and the committee has been asked to appoint a new General Secretary. SHROUD NEWS is pleased to learn that the secretarial duties are currently being undertaken by Mrs JOY PAGANO (with whom we maintain regular contact) and Miss SUSAN BLACK.

News from the British Society (continued)

David Sox also advises that his new book **THE IMAGE ON THE SHROUD** will be published in January. He says that he has tended to take a critical stance about some of the current research. It sounds as if this new book will give us all plenty to discuss and **SHROUD NEWS** will make sure it has one of the first copies into Australia for review.

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THE SHROUD IN "POL"

POL is an extremely well-produced Australian glossy magazine which seems to be pitched at the fashionable, middle-income group who also have some intelligence. Its articles range, supported by superb photography, over eating and drinking, the arts, interesting people with unusual pursuits, and lately, under the editorship of avant-garde Don Dunstan -- ex Premier of South Australia, supporting minority views slightly trendier and pinker than those examined in earlier editions.

POL is a good magazine and contains excellent articles. An issue due for September/October 1980 and inexplicably (if not illegally) undated appeared with the uninspiring cover picture of an empty office-chair as its only means of identification. It contains, however, a seven-page article by **JANET SMITH** (she used to be Jan Smith but fortunately now likes it to be known that she is a woman) under the title **THE GREATEST MURDER STORY EVER TOLD**.

Janet bases her article on interviews with Rex Morgan and her reading of **PERPETUAL MIRACLE** and several other Shroud books as well as her own research on aspects of the matter which have intrigued her. The article is very well written and contains all the usual ingredients of Janet Smith's work: careful research, factual accuracy, occasional outrageous comment, racy style and the only aspect which marginally harasses her interviewees -- her habit of putting words into their mouths which either they did not say or they said another way. This is no bar to the usefulness and readability of the article, it's just that everyone quoted talks exactly like Janet does.

The Shroud in "Pol" (continued)

Her article puts forward the history of the Shroud in a concise and readable manner and she points to much of the current research being reported from the scientists. Revelling, I suspect, in the connection initiated by Wilson with the Knights Templar and not resisting the opportunity to remind her readers of some of their reputed less savoury practices, she is also at pains to point out that the Shroud makes no fancy claims as a relic to provide cures for the sick (which is, of course, one of the strongest arguments in its favour as a factual archaeological item to be considered as very much more than simply a relic connected with one religion).

Janet Smith's article should leave any reader, I suggest, with a clear conception of the mystery and mystique of the Shroud and she poses many of the questions to be answered in the future and, in this way, as well as including an interview with a Catholic priest, Father Little, whom she has set up to give the impression that he thinks non-Catholics like Rex Morgan shouldn't be meddling with things like the Shroud, provides a nice balance between the obviously pro-authenticity views of Wilson and Morgan (and Janet Smith) and some of the areas of disagreement and doubt.

All in all, the article is an important piece of current journalistic comment on the subject of the Holy Shroud and it should be in the library of every SHROUD NEWS reader. It is good that writers as widely-read and fashionable as Janet Smith have the perception to see the importance of the Holy Shroud as a current issue and to have the necessary persuasive power to induce such quality magazines as POL to publish her writing on a subject connected with religion.

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MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD

MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD is a well-produced coffee-table book edited by Christopher Pick and published by McGraw Hill. It is available in Australia at \$14.95. Its content, however, lifts it out of the coffee-table milieu and into the area of serious contribution to the rapidly increasing awareness and search for information about all those wonderful mysteries which so many scientists and historians have tried to tell us are beyond proof.

Mysteries of the World (continued)

My own interest in the Holy Shroud began as one of those mysterious areas of human knowledge such as Stonehenge, Atlantis, Kirlian photography, spontaneous combustion and the Bermuda Triangle. MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD contains twelve major articles on some of these and other matters. Sindonologist Ian Wilson writes the Foreword and rightly proclaims:

"It behoves none of us to be too dismissive of concepts that seem at first sight to be too outlandish to be credible. To the learned men of the 15th century the earth was obviously flat. It took Columbus to prove them wrong. Of the mysteries touched on in this book, and others relating to the whole nature of man and his role in the Universe it is best to acknowledge, with Hamlet, our own humility: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy....'

Thus, MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD gives valuable insight into twelve of the most extraordinary and important subjects which have intrigued thinking people for centuries. In ten pages containing an excellent article by Anna Sproule and thirteen superbly reproduced photographs the new reader is introduced to the history of the Shroud and reports of the past and current research activities.

Anna Sproule discourses upon the practice of relic-veneration and makes it clear that the Holy Shroud has come under fire throughout the years simply because of this practice and that so many people do not, in any case, accept such practices. She states well the attitude of the Catholic Church as being that the question of a relic's authenticity is not important to the Church: it is not the relic that is revered but the person with whom it is associated. Only relics which have been proved to be fakes are ruled out.

Thus, beginning from the point of view that relic-veneration has no real relevance to the mystery of the Holy Shroud, Anna Sproule traces the development of the history and study of it, bringing together the views of all the best-known commentators since the middle ages. The scientific tests are described briefly and allusion is made to the 1978 tests, the reports of which we are now receiving in 1980 and 1981. There is nothing new in this article for those well-versed in sindonology but it is well written and is placed in the

Mysteries of the World (continued)

reach of the book-buying public who might otherwise be unlikely to read anything to do with the Holy Shroud. For this reason alone it is a valuable addition to the mounting twentieth century literature of the Holy Shroud.

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SOME RECENT QUOTATIONS

(Taken from the Holy Shroud Guild Newsletter, New York)

"When asked to examine the Shroud, I was fifty percent sure I would walk in, spend thirty minutes or so looking at it, and decide it was a hoax, not worth wasting our time on. Not so at all. I am convinced the burden of proof is now on the sceptic."

-- Dr RAYMOND ROGERS, Microchemist, Los Alamos

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"Any evidence of forgery is positively out. Had we discovered elements pointing to a fraud, we would have walked out the door long ago. It would be miraculous if it were a forgery."

-- Prof DONALD LYNN, Jet Propulsion Laboratory,
Pasadena, California

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"We can show mathematically that the image was formed on the Shroud by a body shape underneath the cloth.

-- Dr JOHN P. JACKSON, U.S.A.F. Academy

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

With this issue all original subscribers have now received four issues of SHROUD NEWS for \$3. There seems little doubt that the newsletter can be kept going since the information needed to collate it continues to be received by the Editor. Please act upon the subscription notice enclosed and forward your cheque during January so that issue 5 due for February can be in your hands as soon as available.

MORE SUBSCRIBERS

Please encourage those of your acquaintance to make a subscription. In this way we can only improve the newsletter in the future. We still invite a subscription for only four issues at a time which does not over commit either the subscriber or the publisher.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Please feel free to write to SHROUD NEWS with any comment about the newsletter itself or about the subject of the Holy Shroud. Remember that what is published is now going to selected readers abroad as well as our own circle here in Australia.

FUTURE ISSUES

For future issues we plan to comment on several more of the scientific reports emerging from the 1978 tests, as well as writing up some interviews we have with people involved.

PUBLICATION

All information and opinion published in this newsletter is given in good faith to pass on to interested persons matters concerning the Holy Shroud of Turin. It is edited (and mainly written) by Rex Morgan and published by

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