

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Gilbert R. Lavoie, M.D., *Unlocking the Secrets of the Shroud*, Allen, Texas, Thomas More Publishing, 1998, 224 pages with over 70 black & white photographs throughout and four in full colour

Dr. Gilbert Lavoie is a specialist in internal and occupational medicine resident in Needham, Massachusetts, USA, who first came across the Shroud back in 1961, while a pre-med student, upon browsing through a copy of Dr. Pierre Barbet's *A Doctor at Calvary* that he found in a Boston bookstore. With his wife Bonnie he viewed the Shroud for the first time in 1978, at the time of the expositions of that year, and attended the accompanying Shroud of Turin International Congress.

Dr. Lavoie writes very fluently, with an easy-to-read style, and he is at his best describing his personal experimental work trying to understand and reconstruct how the Shroud bloodstains came to be formed, also interpreting the significance of a bloodflow at the left elbow. Somewhat less convincing is his argument that the image of the body of the man of the Shroud (as distinct from the accompanying bloodstains), is that of a man becoming upright. He appears to be rather tentatively looking to the Shroud body image having been created when Jesus stood upright in the tomb at the moment of resurrection, but since the Isabel Piczek and John Jackson reconstructions persuasively indicate a recumbent body, his arguments on this point are as yet not altogether persuasive.

Similarly lacking conviction is Dr. Lavoie's explanation of how the radiocarbon dating may have given a misleading result: '**Dr. Alan Adler** (1996) has done an examination of a piece of the shroud sample used for radiocarbon dating, comparing it to the non-image area of the cloth by Fourier Transform Infrared microspectrophotometry and by a scanning electron microprobe. The results clearly indicate differences in chemical composition.' On his own admission Dr. Lavoie has never been nearer than several feet from the Shroud, likewise Dr. Alan Adler. However, during my personal eight hours of viewing the Shroud in 1973, in which I specifically looked very intently for any anomalies such as 'added-on' material, I noticed absolutely nothing that might indicate some tampering of this kind. And it was particularly easy for me to view the area from which the carbon 14 sample would be taken 15 years later, because the vertical mode in which the Shroud was displayed in 1973 (by which the viewer found himself face-to-face with the frontal image) meant that this particular corner was very readily accessible to me, unlike areas of the back-of-the-body image, which were above my head.

Dr. Lavoie importantly includes a now rather belated but still very telling statement by the distinguished scholar of Byzantine Art Dr. Ernst Kitzinger of Harvard University. According to Dr. Lavoie:

'It was 1979 when I called Harvard University and asked for the name of a professor who was a specialist in iconography, the study of religious images. I was given the name of Dr. Ernst Kitzinger, who had spent a lifetime studying ancient paintings of Jesus from both the East and the West. I was fortunate to meet with him just before his permanent

departure to England where he planned to retire. I asked Kitzinger the following question: 'Can you show me some works of artists who have painted blood marks like the ones that you see on the Shroud of Turin.' His response was: 'The Shroud of Turin is unique in art. It doesn't fall into any artistic category. For us, a very small group of experts around the world, we believe that the Shroud of Turin is really the Shroud of Constantinople. You know that the crusaders took many treasures back to Europe during the 13th century and we believe that the Shroud was one of them. As for the bloodmarks done by artists, there are no paintings that have blood marks like those of the Shroud. You are free to look as you please, but you won't find any.'

As Dr. Lavoie remarks 'I did look, and he was right; I have never found any. Nor has anyone else.' Dr. Ernst Kitzinger has the highest reputation as an expert in Byzantine art, and it is very valuable indeed to know his expression of this opinion.

Mary & Alan Whanger, *The Shroud of Turin: An Adventure of Discovery*, Franklin, Tennessee, Providence House Publishers, 1998, paperback, 144 pages, with numerous good quality black & white illustrations scattered throughout the text

The 'adventure of discovery' of the title consists largely of Dr. Whanger and his wife Mary's perceiving, in the course of some twenty years of studies, more and more objects in the background of the Shroud.

On their p.102 they present a photograph representing the culmination of all these findings, reproduced right. This is a reconstruction of the body of Jesus wearing a neat pair of shorts, surrounded by flowers of many varieties, phylacteries on his head and arm, a Roman pendant around his neck, a Jewish lamp on his chest, the spear which pierced his side set alongside his body, the titulus of his cross on one side of his legs and a hammer the other, also Roman dice. The overall effect of this is very reminiscent of the way many pagans were laid out in death, bejewelled and surrounded by worldly goods.

However the first question to be asked is: 'Are such objects truly represented in the background of the Shroud's image?' If affirmative, the second question has to be: 'Is such a burial arrangement compatible with known Jewish practice of Jesus's time?'

With regard to the first question, this Editor, as already stated, withdraws nothing of his 'Very Like a Whale' comments in Newsletter 46. With regard to the second question, worth noting are the words of the Jewish scholar **Joe Zias**, curator of the Israel Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem, from an article that he wrote for the latest issue of *Approfondimento Sindone*:

'Had these researchers been conversant with Jewish burial customs here in Jerusalem then and now, they would know that today as in the past the deceased is almost never buried with any objects. The Mishna explicitly states 'A man must be taught not to be wasteful, for has it not been said that whoever heaps effects upon the dead transgresses the

injunction against wanton destruction?', so Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Eleazar bar Zakok says: 'He disgraces him' (The Tractate Mourning 9: 23). In fact, many of the objects allegedly 'seen' on the Shroud are beyond belief as they are so non-Jewish and pagan...'

My postbag continues to be full of letters from individuals of similar pleasantness and good sense to Dr. and Mrs. Alan Whanger, people who likewise see all manner of images on the Shroud. Among the latest crop one correspondent 'sees' a crucifix on the man of the Shroud's forehead, another, a woman's face in the back-of-the-head area. To all of these, as to the Whangers, I can only respond as politely as possible, to the effect that while these obviously have some special significance for them, they should not expect the world at large to come to the same interpretations.

John C. Iannone, *New Scientific Evidence: The Mystery of the Shroud of Turin*, New York, Alba House, 1998; paperback, 228 pages plus 16 pages of photos in full colour, \$14.95. Introduction by the Rev. Ken Stevenson.

John C. Iannone, who lives in New Port Richey, Florida, has a master's degree in religion from the Catholic University of America, and he describes himself as vice chairman of the Holy Shroud Task Force 'an organization of scientists, scholars, writers and interested individuals working to preserve the Shroud from modern environmental damage and to promote continued studies and testing of this precious relic'. He was formerly an executive with the now defunct Pan Am airline company. His book is up-to-date and moderately well-informed, but its critical sense and background knowledge is not high. For instance, besides quoting much material of little reliability, e.g. lengthy discussion of the 'coins over the eyes', he devotes just one page to the findings of **Dr. Walter McCrone**, surprisingly invoking Picknett and Prince by way of refutation. Kouznetsov he presents as a bona fide researcher.

From the historical point of view I found myself repeatedly unhappy at his enthusiastic presentation of my own findings. When authors quote Greek as often as does Iannone they ought to have some reasonable working knowledge of it, but he speaks of a *sudario* when he means *sudarium*, renders *keiriais* as *keriais*, likewise consistently reproduces as '*acheiropoietas*' the Greek word *acheiropoietos* 'made without hands'. His lengthy and seemingly erudite discussion of the meaning of 'Pharos' is painful given that the 10th century *De Imagine Edessena* specifically speculated that the Constantinople chapel was so-called 'perhaps because it is embellished as splendidly as a fine garment'.

I could not help noticing that some of the images in Iannone's photo section show such a striking indebtedness to those in Emanuela Marinelli's *La Sindone: Un'Immagine Impossibile*. The mystery became solved when it became apparent that the Fathers and Brothers of Saint Paul are behind both publications, usefully enabling savings in the costs of producing illustrations in full colour.

Dr. Edward Brucker, *Thy Holy Face: My 39 Years of Lecturing on the Shroud of Turin*, Self-published. 51 pages of text. Colour and black & white photos throughout.

Dr. Edward Brucker was a student of the late Father Francis Filas at Loyola University, Chicago before World War II, and after qualifying at the University's Stritch School of Medicine he became an enthusiastic lecturer on the Shroud throughout Arizona and the rest of the USA. His book has been nicely produced, and he has also managed to get all photos of the Shroud the right way round, something that those of us who use commercial publishers do not always succeed in, even when proofs we have been shown were correct! However the downside is that although Dr. Brucker is a recognized criminal pathologist, he has disappointingly little original to offer in his own field, and much of the rest of his book is rather secondhand. Amongst a number of mis-spellings of sindonological names there are some amusing malapropisms: **Dr. Eric Jumper** appears as 'E. Lumper', **Dr. Robert Dinegar** as 'Bob Dangler' and **Dr. Max Frei** as 'Dr. Fries'.

Sindone 98. Special supplement to *Avvenire*, 6 March 1998. Full colour A4 page size booklet, 66 pages

This is a beautifully produced souvenir booklet incorporating articles by a variety of Italian language contributors with accompanying translations in English. There are graphic images of the fire of April 11, 1997, superb new full-length and facial colour photos of the Shroud taken by **Giancarlo Durante** on 25 June 1997 (at the same time that the video was made), historic images of previous Shroud expositions and much else.

Eberhard Lindner 'Facing Reality' Scientific Version of the Farewell Lecture held 11 December 1996 in Karlsruhe' M. Lindner Verlag, 1997. 64 pages

Dr. Eberhard Lindner was a student of Nobel prizewinner for chemistry Karl Ziegler at the Max Planck Institute, Mülheim Ruhr, Germany, and became Professor of Technical Chemistry at Karlsruhe in the 1970s. He taught there for over 44 semesters before his recent retirement. He has written four books embracing the frontiers of science, theology and philosophy, and was the most notable opponent in Germany of the claims made by **Holger Kersten** and **Elmar Gruber** in their book *The Jesus Conspiracy*.

In this his farewell lecture, published in English, Dr. Lindner argues for electron radiation and neutron flux from the body of the man of the Shroud having been responsible for what the eye sees as the Shroud body image. With the utmost scientific rigour he argues for the Shroud being nothing less than an 'eyewitness' of the Resurrection by which the traces of Jesus's physical body were literally 'burnt in' to the surface of the linen. He suggests that the very same event is the only one that could have increased the Shroud's

radiocarbon content, and thereby have given a misleadingly younger date when the linen was radiocarbon dated.

David Van Biema, 'Science and the Shroud' major feature in *Time* magazine, April 20, 1998, pp.50-59

This beautifully-illustrated feature was researched and written with great care, as this Editor can attest from direct dealings with several members of the *Time* staff who helped put it together, and it was particular felicitous that the face as it appears on the Shroud proper should have been chosen for the magazine cover. Considerable interest concerns the particular colour photo that *Time* selected, since it is one of those taken by the Italian Gianpaolo Durante at the same time as the High Definition videotaping, shortly after the fire of last year. As evident even from the magazine reproduction, the quality of detail is absolutely superb, and arguably this must represent the new optimum for photos of the Shroud face.

On p.52 of *Time* is also reproduced a full-length full-colour view of the Shroud with accompanying explanatory panels that again has to be the best single 'plan' of the Shroud that any publication has produced so far. It is noteworthy that the photography of this is accredited to R. La Russa who, like Durante, is described as of the Commissione Diocesana Sindone Torino. Presumably both photographers will be making prints available in due course, but meanwhile anyone wanting an argument for the the Shroud not being 'cunningly painted' has only to look hard at the *Time* cover. Could any artist ever have been *that* subtle?

The *Time* text is also a model of fairness and good balance, making clear that Professor Stephen Mattingly of the University of Texas Health Science Center still upholds the presence of a so-called bioplastic coating' on the Shroud, and the view that this may have seriously interfered with the radiocarbon dating. But as the article also rightly makes clear, Dr. Garza-Valdes, the originator of the coating's discovery, is now straying along some rather questionable paths down which not all Shroud supporters may care to follow him.

[Editor's note. Because of the flood of recent publications and articles, it has been impossible to report on all of them in this issue. For instance, the new journal *Approfondimento Sindone*, featuring articles in both English and Italian by opponents as well as proponents of the Shroud's authenticity, continues to go from strength to strength, likewise the CIELT *Revue Internationale du Linceul de Turin*. Emanuela Marinelli and Orazio Petrosilo have also recently brought out a much updated edition of their *La Sindone, Storia di Un Enigma* first published in 1990. And the 28 February issue of the Catholic periodical *The Tablet* included an article 'The cult of the Shroud' by former BSTS General Secretary the Revd. David Sox. Several reviews have therefore been held over until the next issue.]