

Other news from Round the World

Turin Exposition – New Dates

The dates of this year's expositions of the Shroud in Turin Cathedral have recently been extended, the showings now commencing on 12 August and continuing through to 22 October. Now beginning two weeks earlier than the previously scheduled date of 26 August, this has been done so that young people visiting Rome for World Youth Day will be able also to incorporate a visit to the Shroud in their itinerary. As in 1998, the Shroud will be displayed in Turin Cathedral, and visiting it, inclusive of an instructive introductory tour, will be free, but it is 'obligatory' that reservations should be made in advance. In Italy this can be done by calling the toll-free number 800-329-329. For the UK the toll-free number is 0800 9679511; for France 0800 907674; for Germany 0130819457; for Spain 900 993943; for Switzerland 0800 551129. Other countries should dial 39 115 118900.

Professor Bruno Barberis, President of the Confraternity of the Turin Shroud, has asked us to issue a reminder that a visit to the Museo della Sindone provides a most worthwhile excursion for anyone coming to Turin at the time of the expositions. Located at 28, Via San Domenico, about ten minutes' stroll from the Cathedral, the Museum contains a variety of historical objects associated with the Shroud. These include Secondo Pia's camera, early engravings of Shroud expositions, the casket in which the shroud was carried from Chambéry to Turin in 1578, and the silvered casket that was the Shroud's container throughout most of its time in Turin, up to 1998. There are also audio-visual presentations, and English and other language audio-guides are available. During the period of the expositions the Museum will be open daily from 9am to 8pm. Large parties should make advance bookings. The Museum phone/fax number is +39 011 4365832, e-mail Sindone@tin.it.

Orvieto Congress

The World Wide Congress Sindone 2000, being held at the Palazzo del Popolo, Orvieto from August 27-29, has recently issued its programme, with a vast 'Committee of Honour' and 'Scientific Committee'.

The list of speakers includes some highly respected international names: Mark Guscini, Remi Van Haelst, Dr. John Jackson, Dr Eberhard Lindner, Jack Markwardt, Lennox Manton, Professor Luigi Mattei, Kevin Moran, Mario Moroni, Dr. Marie-Claire Van Oosterwyck-Gastuche, Isabel Piczek, Barrie Schwartz, Professor Dan Scavone, Dr. Alan Whanger, Professor Gino Zaninotto and Dr. Fred Zugibe, to name but a few. The Organizing Committee Coordinator is the redoubtable Professoressa Emanuela Marinelli.

Alongside these names, however, there is a worryingly large number of unfamiliar names. Perhaps this denotes a huge wave of genuinely fresh research on the Shroud

just about to be released. But greatly to be hoped is that there should be no repeat of the fundamental mistake of the Turin 1998 Congress, cramming too many speakers, many of very indifferent quality, into too short time-slots.

Shroud copy for Moscow Cathedral

Interest in the Shroud in Russia continues to grow apace, and is now being fostered at the highest level. In May of this year Archbishop Severino Poletto of Turin visited Moscow together with a delegation from the Commissione Ostensione Sindone. On May 12 they were received by the Russian Patriarch, Alexei II, and they presented him with a lifesize photograph of the Shroud which will be displayed in Moscow's Cathedral of the Saviour. This Cathedral notably has a striking Mandyllion image in its dome. A delegation from the Moscow Orthodox patriarchate is expected to visit Turin to venerate the Shroud during the expositions later this year, Patriarch Alexei II quite possibly accompanying them.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Fr. Fred Brinkman, C.Ss.R, President of the US Holy Shroud Guild, on the Silver Jubilee of his Ordination to the Priesthood, celebrated in Warminster, Pennsylvania, 10th June 2000.

The Shroud and a Splendid National Gallery Exhibition

The National Gallery exhibition 'Seeing Salvation', to which we gave advance mention in Newsletter 49, proved to be quite outstanding, with a number of items of Shroud interest.

Directly depicting the Shroud as we know it today was an engraving on silk, from the collection of Sherborne Castle, Dorset, showing a late 17th century exposition. Although this has long been difficult to date precisely, it shows an exposition of the Shroud at which Duke Victor Amadeus II of Savoy (ruled 1675-1730) and his wife Anne of Orléans officiate. And from the inclusion in the scene of their daughters Maria Adelaide, Maria Anna and Maria Ludovica the National Gallery have dated the showing to between Maria Ludovica's birth in September 1688 and Maria Anna's death in September 1690. Almost certainly the engraving was obtained as a souvenir when a 17th century Catholic ancestor of the Wingfield Digby family, Sherborne Castle's owners to this day, made a pilgrimage to Turin. This is the only historic engraving of a Shroud exposition known to be on continuous display anywhere in the UK (the National Gallery borrowed it from Sherborne), and it appears to be unique, with no identical example known in Italian collections, although there are many variants from around the same period.

Also in the exhibition was one of the finest examples of an icon of the Mandyllion, or Image of Edessa to include scenes of the Image's early history. Owned by H.M. the Queen, this icon was formerly in the Queen's private chapel in Buckingham Palace,

but is now kept at Hampton Court. It is reproduced on the back cover of this Newsletter. The excellent Exhibition catalogue very even-handedly acknowledges the theory that this cloth was one and the same as the Shroud that we know today.

The Exhibition also included several paintings and other images of the Veronica cloth, also of the Man of Sorrows, both images Shroud-related. Of the Man of Sorrows, one item that has never before BEEN noted in the context of the Shroud was a scene of this on a hitherto unknown late 15th century prayer roll in a private collection (NG Exhibition catalogue no.64, seen below). Typical of the 'Man of Sorrows' genre, this shows a crossed-hands Christ figure rising out of a casket-like tomb, but its particularly noteworthy feature is that the tomb is represented with three round circles, or openings. Such circles or openings can be seen on earlier representations of Jesus' tomb, and derive from the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennitus, in the 10th century, having decorated the tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem with three circular openings. A tantalising though still elusive link is suggested between these 'triple holes' and the so-called 'poker holes' on the Shroud.

Accompanying TV series

Associated with the Exhibition was also a four part BBC 2 TV series of the same name, presented by Neil MacGregor, director of the National Gallery. This began on April 2, and although it has not yet reached Australia. (we usually get such programmes eventually!), BSTS member Judith Bate very kindly sent a copy. The first programme of the series was devoted to the likeness of Jesus, and I watched it with almost unstinted admiration.

As Neil MacGregor explored the earliest Christian art down in Rome's Catacombs, he very powerfully illustrated the first Christians' reticence, influenced as they were by the Jewish abhorrence of 'graven images', towards direct representations of Jesus. He equally clearly showed how when we get the first representational images, they are mostly of an unfamiliar-looking, beardless Jesus based on pagan models. Superb photography brought us closer to examples at Ravenna than it is possible to get even when you are in Ravenna itself. In MacGregor's commentary accompanying close-ups of the copy of the Mandylion, or Image of Edessa, in the collection of H.M. the Queen, he gave a very even-handed account of the powerful influence of this on the Eastern Church. Its continuance into Russia was illustrated with an entertaining clip from Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* of the image's deployment as a battle-standard.

And without the programme directly espousing any link between Shroud and Mandylion, the Shroud was introduced very sympathetically, complete with glimpses of MacGregor actually attending the 1998 exposition. (My only criticism of this sequence was to wish that good colour images of the Shroud's natural appearance had been used, instead of fuzzy monochrome, though knowing the rapacious sums of money that are sometimes demanded from TV companies for the use of the latest high quality footage, this may have been the best that BBC budget constraints could muster.!) MacGregor was equally interesting in his treatment of the importance of the Veronica in later Western art, also the Iconoclasm that Protestant England indulged in following the Reformation. Throughout he spoke from a stance which, though scholarly, was never dilettante, and always what may best be described as

'Christianity friendly' rather than 'Christianity sceptical'. From this reviewer, the warmest thank-you to both MacGregor and the BBC.

A Case of Very Undivine Deception

Marring the otherwise upbeat news from Britain was one eventuality which thankfully seems (deservedly) to have attracted little media attention, publication of *The Divine Deception: The Church, the Shroud and the Creation of a Holy Fraud* by Keith Laidler. These days books with wacky theories hostile to the Shroud's authenticity present little surprise, the UK sadly seeming to be a particularly prolific stable for them. But Laidler's is a particularly nasty example because of the very undivine deception that was his modus operandi.

Late last October Laidler, a former producer of natural history programmes for TV, wrote from his County Durham farmhouse to artist Isabel Piczek in Los Angeles saying that he was writing a book on 'the Holy Shroud' and that he wanted to use photographs of her work, since he thought this to be 'of great importance in the study of the authentication of the Holy Shroud.' Isabel duly provided the photographs free of charge, and heard nothing more until being alerted by me, following receipt of a review copy of the book from Laidler's publishers.

For a key part of Laidler's thesis is that despite Isabel Piczek's hundreds of hours of work with life models she has 'failed to reproduce the posture of the man of the Shroud' - just about as blatant a mis-statement as saying that the Wright brothers did not invent the first successful aeroplane, or that Michelangelo did not paint the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Furthermore, according to Laidler 'no one has yet been able to place a human volunteer in the body position shown on the Holy Shroud', which would be as 'astonishing' as Laidler claims it to be were it true, which it is not. Indeed the issue is one on which I can speak with some first hand authority, having only last July - and without any awareness at that time of Laidler's line of argument - actually undergone the experience of being a human volunteer placed in the body position shown on the Shroud, in Isabel Piczek's own studio.

Since Laidler describes his Shroud body position claims as 'crucial' to his overall argument, one might have expected him, in the interests of science, if not common courtesy, at least to have discussed them with Isabel Piczek before publication, particularly given that he had successfully traced her and been given free use of her photographs. To his great discredit, he did not. Nor, despite seeking my help with sources of Shroud photographs (help solicited in the form of e-mails cryptically signed 'pachyderm'), did he broach anything of this kind with me. What goes without saying is that the Laidler book is a disgrace to an individual who holds a University of Durham doctorate in anthropology. It promulgates an utterly absurd idea that the Shroud image is the combination of an embalmed true head of Jesus owned by the Knights Templar, and the body of another, much later individual who was tailor-

crucified in the Templar period. It has absolutely no place in any serious discussion on the Shroud, whether for or against authenticity.

Yet the irony is that the Shroud body posture issue is a genuinely interesting one which has probably not been accorded sufficient attention up to now. Equally ironically, since it did not arise from any advance awareness of Laidler, this is a deficiency that happens to be addressed in the new book that I have written with Barrie Schwartz, *The Turin Shroud: The Illustrated Evidence* to be published by Michael O'Mara Books of London this August (see Forthcoming Publications, p.52). Accordingly I have devoted part of this Newsletter to a special feature detailing the whole history of successful reproductions of the posture of the man of the Shroud, quite aside from those of Isabel Piczek.