

Publications, Recent and Forthcoming

Don Giuseppe Ghiberti, *Sindone verso il 2000*, Casale Monferrato (AL) Italy, Edizione Piemme 1999 [publication address Edizioni Piemme - Spa, 15033 Casale Monferrato (AL), Via del Carmine 5] Softback 287 pages. No photographs.

Around the time of the Shroud C14 dating, when he attended a conference at an Oxbridge conference Don Giuseppe Ghiberti was rather appropriately given a room numbered C14. Not long after Cardinal Saldarini of Turin appointed him as his right-hand man to superintend the Shroud expositions of 1998, and on Cardinal Saldarini's retirement last September Turin's incoming Archbishop, Severino Poletto upheld this appointment for the year 2000 expositions.

A member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, and lecturer at the Catholic Universities of Milan and Turin, Don Ghiberti is the man closest to Taurinese clerical deliberations on the Shroud below the Archbishop himself, and his book epitomises this intimate knowledge. My Italian is insufficient to do the fullest justice to any review, but what is clear from Don Ghiberti's chapters is his attention to an aspect of the Shroud too many of us neglect, its deep spiritual importance and profound influence at the pastoral level.

While we outsiders are often critical of Turin's reticence on matters of the Shroud, Don Ghiberti lets us know the strong resistance that can come from within Italy, even from within Turin, and not only from protestants but also from certain Catholics, towards any fresh showing of the Shroud at all. He begins the book with looking at how the Shroud may be reconciled with Jesus' death as described in the gospels, a topic on which, as a scriptural scholar, he is particularly expert. He follows this with chapters devoted to issues such as 'Scientific Research and Pastoral Care', 'Science and Faith', 'The Shroud Image as a Sign', 'The Shroud and its home city', 'Piedmontese devotion to the Shroud', culminating in 'Towards 2000' and 'The Jubilee and the Shroud'

He gives attention to relics possibly linked to the Shroud, with chapters on the Holy Coat of Trier and the 'Sudario' of Oviedo. He also looks to churchmen associated with the Shroud during the last thirty years. One chapter 'Fossati, Pellegrino, Cottino' is devoted to two former Turin Cardinals, Maurilio Fossati and Michele Pellegrino, and their part in Shroud showings during the 1930s and 1970s respectively. Also to the late Monsignor José Cottino, who held much the same responsibilities for the Shroud as Don Ghiberti's from the 1950s to his death in 1983.

There is a chapter on the death of Cardinal Ballestrero. Another is a deep appreciation of Cardinal Saldarini and his initiative restoring the Guarini Chapel that has been the Shroud's traditional home since 1694. The book ends with the text of Pope John Paul II's so memorable address in Turin Cathedral, before the Shroud, on May 24, 1998, also Cardinal Saldarini's words to the Nice Shroud conference of May 1997, and Turin's 3rd International Shroud Congress in June 1998

Norma Weller, *New and Undisclosed Secrets of the Turin Shroud*, with accompanying translation into French by Sydney Vale, Ferrieres (France), Cahiers 'Études Cathares, 1998. Soft-back. 64 text pages, 32 in English, 32 in French, with 16 pages of colour plates

For many years University of Brighton lecturer Norma Weller has tantalised us with her enigmatic renditions of the Shroud face with colour overlays, which she has exhibited annually at her Hove studio. More recently, and equally enigmatically, she has shown versions with myrtle leaves in the places on the forehead where most of us see bloodstains from the crown of thorns. Now, all is explained - or rather nearly explained - in this slim volume, the main text of which is only eleven pages, the rest being 'annexes' or appendices.

Among Norma's conclusions, which she usefully summarises, are the following:

- 1) That the image imprinted on the Shroud of Turin is indeed Jesus the Nazarene
- 2) That the body which transcended and disintegrated from the condition of materiality was a body of light, legitimised now by our present understanding of the properties of anti-matter
- 3) That only pertinent signatures of unknown light processes only recognisable in the unorthodox domain of Radionics (Healing at a distance through blood samples and harmonic resonance) can further validate the extraordinary character of the light radiation involved
- 4) That the authenticity of the Shroud image has been so far unrecognisable because the nature of Nazarene doctrine has been substituted for that of vicarious atonement involving the inevitable crown of thorns so dominant in Christian iconography
- 5) That it never occurred to anyone to re-examine the image in the light of Nazarene practices, which could have led to a much earlier recognition and confirmation of its authenticity without the complexity of carbon dating
- 6) That the carbon dating would need to be viewed from a different perspective should the presence of the myrtle plant be found on the burial linen

To the best of my awareness Norma Weller is the first person to associate the Shroud image with the little known subject of Radionics, and for all I know this may be a very profound breakthrough indeed. But given that the population at large, including myself, has but the dimmest knowledge (and most of it negative) of what Radionics is all about, some very strong and detailed preliminary persuasion is needed that Radionics itself should be taken seriously. This the booklet fails to provide, either textually or visually. Plate 12, apparently a radionic image of bone, looks to me more like a Rorschach ink-blot. While plate 11 opposite it, which from the list of illustrations is described as 'Suggestion of elongation of coccyx in blood stains at the centre of the [Shroud] image', is a blurry negative of one of the 1534 patches at the side of the body. It is also a long way from where I understand the coccyx to be located.

As for the myrtle, apparently this is a plant still sacred to the Gnostic sect known as the Mandaean or Nazorean/Nazarenes. According to my *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, some of this sect were still surviving last century south of Baghdad, though goodness knows how they are currently faring under Saddam Hussein. According to Norma Weller, their priests, their brides & bridegrooms, and their dying, wear sprigs of myrtle on their heads, so the marks on the man of the Shroud's forehead and back of the head that most of us interpret as bloodstains from the crown of thorns should in actuality be interpreted as images of myrtle springs. But for Norma Weller to persuade us of this she really needs to properly explain why marks that have the same colour as other stains on the Shroud (such as the wrist wound), should in this instance be interpreted not as blood, but the image of a plant sprig. As it is, we are expected to swallow it in one gulp. University lecturer Norma Weller has the credentials to be taken seriously, and her heart is undoubtedly in the right place. But if her theses are to have any serious credence, they need a full exhaustively argued and illustrated book, not a pamphlet, as here.

Joseph Marino *The Burial of Jesus of Nazareth and the Shroud of Turin*, private publication, 1999. 67 pages, \$12.95 plus mailing costs. [Copies can be obtained on application to the publisher Jeff Richards at 1241 N.East St., Suite 38, Anaheim, CA 92805, USA, e.mail Jeffsfo@netscape.net]

I was immensely saddened when Joe Marino resigned his vocation as a monk of the Benedictine Abbey at St. Louis. As he cannot but recall, I tried my darndest to persuade him to change his mind. Today's Catholic church, certainly that in the English-speaking world, can ill afford the loss of any priests, let alone ones as young and dedicated as Joe. Even while he was training as a priest he was hard at work preparing a thesis on the Shroud, as well as sending out to a sizeable mailing list (including myself), regular bulletins of any news on the subject that he happened to come across.

It is therefore heart-warming to see him at least continuing his association with the Shroud in this fine, scholarly work that deserves a wider circulation than can normally be achieved by private publication. His consideration of what is known from Jewish sources about the burial customs of Jesus' time, and how these are to be understood both in relation to the gospels and to the Shroud is particularly strong. He points out how when the Jews buried their dead it was customary for them to bind both the hands and the feet to keep them together. This was particularly necessary when the body was being carried on an open litter to its burial place, as happened back in Jesus' time, and continues to be customary even in today's Israel. Similarly continuing to the present time is the urgency to bury the deceased on the very same day as his death, if at all possible. Joe Marino very even-handedly reviews the arguments for and against the body of Jesus having been washed. Drawing on the studies of Dr. Eugenia Nitowski, he also interestingly discusses the specifications of Jewish tombs of Jesus' time

Frank Tribbe, *I, Joseph of Arimathea: A Story of Jesus, his Resurrection and the Aftermath*, Nevada City, Blue Dolphin Publishing, 2000, \$US 99.95. 385 pages, including a six page section of maps.

A former US government attorney, now living in retirement at Penn Laird, Virginia, Frank Tribbe established himself as a serious writer on the Shroud with his *Portrait of Jesus: The Illustrated Story of the Shroud of Turin*, published back in 1983. More recently he has produced an entertaining children's story *Denny and the Mysterious Shroud*, an excellent vehicle for introducing the story to children. The idea behind *I, Joseph of Arimathea*, a historical novel aimed at an adult audience, is quite masterly. Joseph of Arimathea has to be one of the Christian gospels' most interesting, yet also most enigmatic figures. Here was a man, one apparently of wealth and influence, who does not rate a single gospel mention until the moment of Jesus' death. At that point he suddenly steps forward to take charge, procuring what is arguably the very cloth that is this Society's *raison d'être*, and arranging by direct appeal to Pontius Pilate for the body to be laid in his own nearby tomb. So who was he? Why did he do it? What happened to him?

It was probably for these reasons that Joseph quickly became the subject of Christian apocrypha, then of mediaeval romances and Cornish folklore. Certainly he is a worthy subject for a fine historical novel, as Frank Tribbe has most valiantly attempted, and it is important for the historian to suppress his historical quibbles, given that the genre is fiction, rather than an attempt to reconstruct fact. *I, Joseph of Arimathea* is an easy read. Beginning with Joseph's purchase of the Shroud, the burial, Jesus' resurrection appearances and the Shroud being taken to heal Abgar in Edessa, it then chronologically tracks back to a visit by Joseph to the 'tin fields' of Britain in AD 1 before proceeding forward again. I found impressive Frank Tribbe's care describing minutiae of the journey of the Shroud to Edessa, which he does via a long letter from Thaddaeus to Joseph. He also has a nice attention to details such as sea voyages, tidal conditions, the craft of metallurgy and much else.

A jarring factor is the often stilted and banal dialogue, particularly in scenes that might otherwise have been very powerful, such as Joseph and Jesus wandering to Golgotha, sometime before Jesus' crucifixion, to view those at that time being crucified. 'Death finally

comes from asphyxiation, as a rule' observes Jesus to Joseph 'They survive a few hours, or even days, only if they can relieve the strain of hanging full-weight from their impaled wrists.' 'How cruel', responds Joseph to Jesus, remarking of one sufferer 'Is there not a more humane way to effect his death?' The chapter ends with Jesus telling Joseph 'It [crucifixion] clearly is difficult and very painful, but it is a death that I can tolerate, I am sure.' The nit-picker in me would much prefer for Frank Tribbe to have avoided the cliché of representing Joseph as a tin-merchant trading with Cornwall. I also winced to find Leptis Magna repeatedly referred to as Lepcis Magna, and a map of Edessa that I had supplied captioned 'The Mandyllion ... was reportedly kept in the Hagia Sophia from AD 33 to 57,' when the Hagia Sophia would not be built for another five centuries!

But few books escape without errors, often not of the author's own making, and my problem was wanting *I, Joseph of Arimathea* to be of the quality of Robert Graves' *I, Claudius*, when one can expect such masterpieces to surface only very rarely. Frank Tribbe has had a very good idea. He has researched it diligently, written it up and steered it all the way to commercial publication. And all credit to him for these initiatives.

[Frank Tribbe has asked us to point out that his *Shroud* book designed for young people Denny and the *Mysterious Shroud* is now being distributed from Ave Maria Books, The Abbey, 12829 River Road, Richmond, VA 23233, USA; email: amil806@earthlink.net. The US retail price is \$12.95. It is also available from Rex Morgan's Runciman Press.]

***The Living Shroud* CD ROM Emanuela and Maurizio Marinelli, Edizioni San Paolo, 1999**

A beautifully produced guide to the Shroud in CD-Rom format, this is the English language version of the Italian CD-Rom *Sindone Viva* which Emanuela and Maurizio Marinelli first issued in 1997. It has sound accompaniment, lively animations, and is state-of-the-art for how a subject such as the Shroud can be presented via this medium. In the 'Guided Visit to the Shroud' you can home into close-ups of any area of the Shroud which may take your interest. There is a 'History and Art' section, giving an account of how the Shroud can be traced through 2,000 years. This is illustrated with fine photographs taken by Emanuela of her travels in the Shroud's historical footsteps, including Urfa/Edessa and Istanbul/Constantinople. Another major section 'Studies and Analyses' details the major researches that have been carried on the cloth, including the 1978 testing and the radiocarbon dating of 1988. There is also a section listing the major books on the subject, periodical articles, published proceedings of Shroud conferences and a list of the Shroud Centres and groups around the world from which information can be obtained. Excellent use is made of the opportunities that CD-Rom provides for animation, the presentation of the Oviedo cloth being in this respect particularly fine.

The *Living Shroud* CD Rom is probably best for education purposes, and for anyone new to the subject, rather than for the in-depth researcher. The translation from Italian to English is good, but nevertheless makes you aware that it is a translation, and might therefore be improved in any new edition. For computer users it is available in Windows and Macintosh formats, in the case of the former requiring Windows 95 or above, and in both instances a recommended minimum of 16 Mb RAM.

Forthcoming Publications

Due out in August to coincide with the year 2000 Shroud expositions is a new, lavishly illustrated book on the Shroud, *The Turin Shroud: The Illustrated Evidence*, co-authored by

the Editor in partnership with Barrie Schwartz, and providing what, subject to the actual colour printing itself, should be more plentiful and better quality colour photographs of the Shroud than have ever appeared before in any English language publication. Despite *The Blood and the Shroud* having appeared only two years ago, this new book is packed with the wealth of evidence that has appeared since then, with full colour photographs throughout, mostly by Barrie Schwartz, and many never published before. Brought right up to date to include photographs from the March Symposium in Turin, amongst the topics given special attention are the latest Flury-Lemberg textile findings, the Danin-Whanger flower image and pollens controversy, the Piczek-Wilson studio reconstruction of the burial 'pose', and the radioactivity experiments by Dr. August Accetta suggesting how the Shroud image might have become imprinted on the cloth.