

Book Reviews

Journey of the Shroud - Stories for Young People

Written by Joanna Emery

Available from Volumes Publishing, Canada
(www.volumesdirect.com)

BSTS member Joanna Emery has written various books for children, including *Caring for a Colony - the Story of Jeanne Mance*, *Brothers of the Falls* and *Melville Smellville*. Her latest book for young people is called *Journey of the Shroud*, a beautifully produced book with no shortage of full colour illustrations, explanations of words and ideas that people without a specific interest in the Shroud might not understand and a list of web sites and books for those who might wish to find out more about the cloth.

Some of the scenes are short fictionalised versions of events in the Shroud's history, such as the results of the carbon dating in 1988, a souvenir seller in Lirey and the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople at the beginning of the thirteenth century. These scenes are backed up by concise factual explanations, such as the pages devoted to the Abgar legend, the Vignon markings and the Sudarium of Oviedo.

All in all, this is probably the best available introduction to the Shroud of Turin for younger people. In the words of Barrie Schwartz, "Very entertaining, nicely illustrated, filled with accurate scientific and historical facts and sure to spark the interest of young people".

The Ark, The Shroud and Mary

By Philip Gardiner, 2007, New Page Books, 319 pgs. Softcover, ISBN: 1-56414-924-2

Reviewed by Joanna Emery

Only the final two chapters of this book deal with the Shroud of Turin and, to get there, the reader has to wade through some 200 pages of Ark of the Covenant lore including odd, strangely-linked New Age interpretations of secret societies, gnosis, etc. Gardiner's premise is that there may have been a real Ark but its true meaning is enlightenment as is that of Mary (the new Ark). According to Gardiner, the Shroud's imprint may have been caused during an electromagnetic discharge of radiation due to a rise in the bioelectrical fields of Jesus' body. In the author's words, "the Shroud's creation relates to the enlightenment process" but he really offers nothing more, scientific or otherwise. He explains that his 'discovery' is 'in line' with his next book due out next year (it is called "Gateway to the Otherworld" and no doubt Gardiner will again include the Shroud although in my opinion that title is self-explanatory and reflects the other planet Gardiner might be living on). Much of Gardiner's Shroud information is a summary of already well-known Shroud books (such as Ian Wilson's "The Blood & The Shroud") but even his constant reference to these cannot keep this book afloat. Gardiner's ideas simply don't hold any water.

Sindone – gli anni perduti, da Constantinopla a Lirey: Nuove Prove

Alessandro Piana, Sugarco Edizioni 2007.

Reviewed by Mark Guscini

Always assuming that the Shroud was in Constantinople in 1204, when the city was sacked and looted by Western crusading armies, the years from this event to when the cloth suddenly reappeared in the town of Lirey, France, in the mid-fourteenth century, have been called the Lost of Missing Years. There are various theories as to the Shroud's whereabouts during this period, the best-known and possibly the most widely accepted being Ian Wilson's theory that the cloth was with the Knights Templar, although not all would agree with this.

Alessandro Piana, who has authored and coauthored various books and articles on Shroud-related topics, seems to have provided a definitive answer to the mystery in his latest book, at present only available in Italian. According to this recently published work, the Shroud would have come to France almost immediately after the sacking of Constantinople in 1204. The first documentary proof comes in the form of a letter written by Theodore Angelus Comnenus, dated 1 August 1205, reporting the presence of the Shroud in Athens. New evidence has come to light in the castle of Ray-sur-Saône, a French village, revealing a series of shrines that confirm the presence of the Shroud at the beginning of the 13th century.

How did the Shroud reach the castle? The French knight Otho de la Roche, Duke of Athens and Thebes, married Isabelle de Ray in 1205 and thus became Lord of Ray-sur-Saône. The existence of his tomb in the surroundings of Ray is proof that he returned to France.

He brought with him such precious relics as fragments of the True Cross and stones and soil from Jerusalem. There is in the castle a coffer where the Shroud was kept, more or less the same size as the coffer displayed in the Shroud Museum in Turin, that was used to take the cloth to Turin. The author thinks it is likely that the cloth was folded up in the same way in both boxes. Another discovery in the same castle is a copy of the Besançon Shroud, a painting which showed only the frontal image.

The family tree of Ray-sur-Saône's family joined to the one drafted from father Anselme de Sainte-Marie for the de Vergy family confirms the blood link at the fifth generation between Otho de la Roche and Jeanne de Vergy, second wife of Geoffroi I de Charny, who became Lord of Lirey. The book then continues with the movements of the Shroud and the main events in its history from 1453 to 1578, and in the last chapter from 1578 to 2007.

Some of the events mentioned in the book, especially the part related to the castle in Ray-sur-Saône, were already suggested by Spanish Centre for Sindonology researcher César Barta, and published in *Linteum*, the Spanish Centre's magazine, in June 2004.