

EDITORIAL

It has been a good year for Shroud studies, with three international conferences, in Italy, Missouri and Germany, the publication of a book described by a leading Shroudie as the best ever written, and a controversial article in *History Today* by a sceptical historian. Most importantly, perhaps, are the details of the forthcoming exposition in Turin after Easter.

John C. Klotz is a practising lawyer from New York City with a long time interest in the Shroud, who has recently published the fruits of his research as “*The Coming of the Quantum Christ: The Shroud of Turin and the Apocalypse of Selfishness.*” Although Klotz is an unashamed devotee of the authenticity of the Shroud, with little time for contradictory evidence, his book is a wide-ranging investigation (465 pages) into what Dan Porter (of the discussion blog shroudstory.com) describes as “the confluence of streams of human understanding that meet in the study of the Shroud. Religion converging with science is one. Our history meeting our future is another.” The reason Dan considers this “the best book ever written about the Shroud” is that “it is not just about the Shroud. ... It is about what the Shroud is about.”

Apart from a few slightly outré exceptions, opinion regarding the provenance of the Shroud has devolved into two possible periods of origin, the 1st or the 14th century. Both of these have large numbers of adherents, some more vehement than others, but both have serious problems to them which must be resolved before any definitive consensus is likely to be achieved. For the ‘non-authenticists,’ one of these is the utter uniqueness of the Shroud in terms of its shape, weave, image and ‘blood-stains.’ If it always was as it is now, it appears to lack any kind of artistic context. Art Historian Thomas de Wesselow’s comment: “Technically, conceptually, and stylistically the shroud makes no sense as a medieval artwork,” is difficult to gainsay. However recently Charles Freeman has published an article in the widely circulated and well-respected magazine

History Today attempting to fill this gap by exploring the “Quem Quaeritis” Easter ritual of the Medieval Church. Typically of most contributions to Shroud studies, the article is far from definitive and leaves a number of significant objections unanswered, but Freeman has reopened a channel of investigation first explored by Ian Wilson in the 1980s, hoping that further scholarship will help settle the matter.

Caught up in the authenticity debate, with its minute investigations into the exact proportion of cotton fibres among the linen, or the various possible ways in which the word “tetradiplon” can be interpreted, it is easy to forget the image itself just as an image of the face of Christ. To remind myself as much as anyone else, I have compared the face on the Shroud to some of the most famous classical interpretations, and invite all our members, over the Christmas holiday and towards the 2015 exposition of the Shroud, to answer the question I was asked when I first joined the Shroud Science Group a year or so ago: What do you see in the face on the Shroud? It seems to me that neither Leonardo da Vinci, nor Michelangelo, nor any of the great masters captured as much of the character of the man as has been captured, by whatever means, in the negative image of the face on the Shroud.

On a Society note, I am happy to say that there has been a smooth changeover from Reggie Norton, our treasurer and membership secretary since 1999, to Benedict Lawrence, an accountant by profession. Also, last issue there were a number of subscriptions due from members whom, by my losing their names, I was unable to notify. This has been rectified this issue!

There remains for me only to wish all our members and those across the Shroud world who read these words on www.shroud.com,

a very Happy Christmas and New Year 2015.