

In Memoriam Mario Maroni, a Man in front of the Shroud

By Alessandro Piana



Mario Moroni (1931 – 2017) was an electronics expert who over the course of forty years made a major contribution to research on the Shroud of Turin. He was the author of books, contributed articles for publication in specialised magazines and presented numerous papers at national and international conferences. He distinguished himself above all as a numismatic expert and for experimental research conducted to verify some of the problems linked to the formation of the Shroud image and to the dating of cellulose fabrics. His studies also covered the Shroud-

inspired image of Christ visible on many Byzantine coins and experimental research regarding the presumed presence of coins on the eyes of the Man of the Shroud. Through his talks and exhibitions, he has contributed to spreading the Message of the Shroud in Italy and around the world. He was also a member of the International Center of Sindonology (now the International Center for Studies on the Shroud).

A man endowed with a solid Faith, Mario was able to place himself in front of the Shroud with the eyes of an experimenter, taking every hypothesis into equal consideration, only to then subject it to experimental verification as desired by Saint John Paul II:

“It requires first of all the commitment of every man, in particular the researcher, to grasp with humility the profound message sent to his reason and his life. [...] Those who approach it are also aware that the Shroud does not stop people’s hearts within itself, but refers to Him at whose service the loving Providence of the Father has placed it. Therefore, it is right to nurture awareness of the preciousness of this image, which everyone sees and no one can explain for now. For every thoughtful person it is a reason for profound reflections, which can end up involving life.”
(Turin, 24 May 1998).

Shroud Research Group

To honour the memory of Mario Maroni, an association called “*Gruppo di Ricerca sulla Sindone ‘Mario Moroni’*” was founded shortly after his death. Based in Robbiate (Lecco, Italy), this association was created with the aim of remembering his contribution to experimental research on the Shroud and continuing the deep relationship established with the territory by keeping the message of the Shroud alive and passing it on to new generations.

The first meetings of the association were dedicated to local schools but in the immediate future, these meetings - which it is hoped will be held on an annual basis – will involve Shroud experts as well as friends of Moroni. These friends began creating a permanent exhibition featuring the photographic copies of the Shroud that he had made, as well as the iconographic panels and reproductions of instruments used in the Passion of Jesus that had been part of his mobile exhibitions.



Chapel of Our Lady of the Rose, in the church of Sant’Alessandro Martire, Robbiate

In the spring of 2024, this exhibition found a permanent location inside the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rose, in the church of Saint Alessandro Martyr, thanks to the support of Gianni Bassani (secretary of the association) and Father Gianni De Micheli, titular parish priest. This permanent exhibition, which is also in the town of Robbiate, can be visited every day during the opening hours of the church.

In September 2023, the friends of the Research Group published a book entitled: *Il tuo volto, Signore, io cerco. Mario Moroni, un uomo davanti alla Sindone*, which is

dedicated to the research carried out over forty years by Mario Moroni. The book title quotes Psalm 27 verse 8 “*Your Face, Lord, I seek*”; what better title for a life dedicated to Shroud research?

The book contains almost five hundred pages of hypotheses and research, divided into four parts: The iconography of Jesus and the Shroud; Numismatics: coins from the time of Jesus; Mechanism of formation of the Shroud Image and Dating of the Shroud. All these areas of research constitute, even today, open problems in the research and debate surrounding the Shroud of Turin.

The text takes a chronological approach by topic, starting with the first areas of research in which Mario Maroni focused his interest. The idea is to present the evolution of his investigation methodology and his desire to delve deeper into what had already been studied, in the light of both personal experiences and those of others. It is a real anthology collection in chronological order of essays, articles and columns printed in magazines and newspapers, images, materials exhibited and presented at conferences, and includes unpublished material resulting from his latest studies. Thirty-five selected research works are also presented in the book which includes documents not only in Italian and English, but also Spanish, German, French and Portuguese. It is hoped that this book will stimulate readers to take up some research and - who knows... - perhaps draw inspiration from it for further insights.

It is hoped that the study of the Shroud will help those who approach this extraordinary object to reflect on the last moments of Jesus’ earthly life but, above all, to understand what all this was for. For this reason, the text is accompanied by the speeches given by the pontiffs - starting from Paul VI, moving on to Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI and finally arriving at Francis – and by some prayers that can help readers to meditate upon the face of Shroud. How important does this become in these times tormented by war and suffering?

Pope Francis, shortly after his election to the papal throne, in this regard spoke thus:

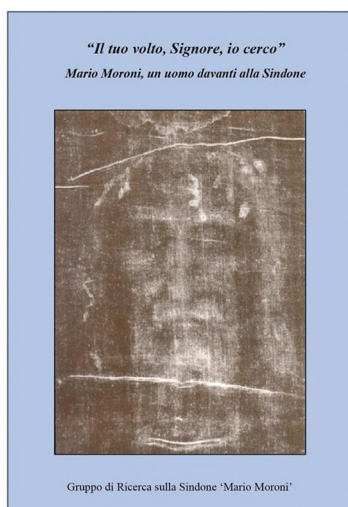
“This image - imprinted on the cloth - speaks to our heart and pushes us to climb the Mount of Calvary, to look at the wood of the Cross, to immerse ourselves in the eloquent silence of love. Let us therefore allow ourselves to be reached by this gaze, which does not seek our eyes but our hearts. Let us listen to what he wants to tell us, in silence, going beyond death itself. Through the sacred Shroud the unique and final Word of God reaches us: Love made man, incarnated in our history; the merciful Love of God who took upon himself all the evil in the world to free us from his dominion. This disfigured Face resembles many faces of men and women wounded by a life that does not respect their dignity, by wars and violence that affect the weakest... Yet the Face of the Shroud communicates a great peace; this tortured Body expresses a sovereign majesty. It’s as if it lets

a contained but powerful energy shine through, it's as if it's telling us: have faith, don't lose hope; the strength of God's love, the strength of the Risen One conquers everything.” (Video message on the occasion of the extraordinary exposition of the Shroud, 30 March 2013).

A rich bibliography is accompanied by the main collaborations maintained over the years, both with his colleagues – in particular his close collaborator, engineer Francesco Barbesino – and with the main research laboratories scattered around the world where the experimental research was carried out.

The work is non-profit and proceeds from the sale of the book will be entirely donated to the “Recanto Nossa Senhora de Lourdes” of Sao Paulo (Brazil), where his brother – Father Angelo Moroni – served as a Guanellian missionary until his death in 2016.

A life for research, a research for life : “Your Face, Lord, I seek” (Psalms 27,8).



The book is available on the main on-line platforms, including:
<https://www.amazon.it/Signore-cerco%C2%BB-Moroni-davanti-Sindone/dp/8831626213>

