

## **“The Shroud of Turin: Perspectives on a Multifaceted Enigma” Conference**

“The Shroud of Turin: Perspectives on a Multifaceted Enigma” conference marks the 30th and 20th anniversaries of two of the most important events in Shroud history. It’s been 30 years since the 1978 multidisciplinary study by the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP), which was given an unprecedented five-day access to the Shroud. STURP’s overall studies suggested that the Shroud was an authentic first century burial cloth. It’s also been 20 years since the 1988 Carbon-14 (C-14) test on the Shroud performed by three laboratories with the results placing the putative origins of the Shroud between A.D. 1260–1390. In many people’s eyes, that ended the debate of the Shroud’s authenticity.

This conference continues a string of post-1988 meetings, including Bologna 1989; Paris 1989; Cagliari, Italy, 1990; New York 1991; St. Louis 1991; Rome 1993; Nice, France, 1997; Turin 1998; Dallas 1998; Rio de Janeiro 1999; Richmond, Virginia, 1999; Orvieto, Italy, 2000; Turin 2000; Dallas 2001; Paris 2002; Rio de Janeiro 2002; and Dallas 2005.

This historic conference will highlight the contributions of the 1978 STURP team, including a special presentation by STURP documenting photographer Barrie M. Schwartz. The year 2008 also marks the third anniversary of the death of STURP and Shroud Science Internet Group member Raymond N. Rogers to whom the conference is being dedicated. Rogers, who had dropped out of sindonology for about 20 years before reentering the scene to critique some ideas in a controversial Shroud book in 2000, was in a unique position regarding the evaluation of the 1988 C-14 results. He had custody of some samples from the 1978 study and in 2003 had been given access to leftover samples used in the 1988 dating. No one else in the world had the combination of the scientific expertise and authentic Shroud samples with which to do the appropriate testing.

Despite a long-time illness, Rogers was an untiring researcher. The amount of work he did at the end of his life was most impressive. He conducted work on Shroud samples, posted countless e-mails to the Shroud Science Internet Group, carried on extensive personal correspondence with many individuals, and wrote, with the help of Barrie M. Schwartz, a book on his research, which will be unveiled here at the conference.

Shortly before his death, Rogers authored a significant paper in the prestigious peer-reviewed scientific journal *Thermochimica Acta*, in which he asserted that “Pyrolysis-mass-spectrometry results from the sample area coupled with microscopic and microchemical observations prove that the radiocarbon sample was not part of the original cloth of the Shroud of Turin. The radio-carbon date was thus not valid for determining the true age of the shroud.” Skeptics, and even those otherwise convinced of the Shroud’s authenticity, have contested Rogers’ findings, but to date, no one has published a rebuttal in any peer-reviewed journals.

Since the release of Rogers’ paper, other researchers have found additional compelling evidence supportive of his findings. Several papers related to this new research will be presented at the conference, including one from a researcher given a Shroud sample by Rogers himself before his death. Some fascinating new details will be revealed in this paper. A previously-

unpublished paper by Rogers will also be presented. In addition, there will be two papers that will present analyses of dusts and particles taken during the 1988 C-14 dating. Another notable fact about the conference is that it will be the first Shroud Congress for which the proceedings will be available online. (See [www.ohioshroudconference.com](http://www.ohioshroudconference.com) for details.) Scientists, historians, theologians, and researchers continue to weigh in on this enigmatic cloth. It is hoped that this conference will be another significant chapter in the saga of the Shroud of Turin.

*Joseph G. Marino*