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PROPOSALS FOR A PERMANENT COMMISSION OF STUDY AND A DATABANK ON THE TURIN SHROUD

Abstract

My proposals start from an unquestionable fact: there are over thirty disciplines interested in the Turin Shroud: among them we can remind anatomy, anthropology, archaeology, biology, botany, chemistry, electronics, computer graphics, biblical exegesis, physics, photography, geology, iconography, informatics, forensic medicine, microbiology, micrography, numismatics, holography, palynology, pathology, radiology, history, history of art, thanatology, textile technology, theology, traumatology. In few words we can say that it's the archaeological object most studied in history and there is no syndonologist really expert in all these disciplines.

Paradoxically, however, all these studies were carried out by individual scientists who seldom published their results on referenced scientific magazines submitting their works to the classic "review among equals". Many criticisms to the shroud studies are due just to this lacking of official character in the communication of the results and the denigrators of this object found rich soil for their theories that in this way had the same dignity of existence.

This work proposes to create a permanent commission of study on the Turin Shroud that values the works and the results obtained above all during the last century, definitely authenticating the reliable data, determining the unreliable data because of the impossibility to repeat the results announced by some scholars and suggesting the future tracks of study on the basis of interesting works. These commissions should be divided into sets of three experts for each single discipline, telematically connected among them and to the rest of the commission with the permanent publication of the works both on paper and on Internet.

As for the last aspect, this would open remarkable scenarios till now unimaginable. Indeed, besides creating a permanent paper archives (probably in Vatican or in the Archdiocese of Turin) this would allow anyone to enter this virtual databank to approach this object without false news and understanding which are the certainties and the uncertainties of the studies already carried out. This would allow anyone who wants to carry out studies on the Shroud to start without false presuppositions and without having to start from scratch in his research.

The databank itself should, then, have a photographic and video mapping with different resolutions (HDTV, normal and black/white) and with different kinds of shooting (UV, infrared, natural light). This thing it's today not available since the most elaborated photographic images go back to 1978 and the last video shot (1997) with high resolution was made to realize then the official videocassette of 1998 Exhibition.

At last one should keep some certified samples of the Shroud at scholars' disposal to allow scientific researches not destructive and only in extreme cases destructive. The lacking of such "certain" samples gave rise to many "not official" ones around the world that certainly didn't help the scientific rigour of some studies engaging then harsh polemics.

This work wants to lay the foundations of the permanent scientific commission on the Turin Shroud that could begin just from the Scientific Committee of the Worldwide Congress "Sindone 2000" determining tasks and time for the verification and the creation of the shroud Databank. Moreover, it wants to suggest the modality for the construction of the Databank itself, proposing concrete examples in order to get a correct and uniform methodology for all fields of study.

Such work seems to be necessary before proposing new exams on the Shroud since one cannot reach sure results if the basis from which we started aren't certain. However, there is yet the initial condition to overcome: to place the Shroud in the center of our interests and not one's own glory, fame and profit since only with the common effort of everyone we could get a serious, correct and reliable result.