

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ETUDES SUR LE LINCEUL DE TURIN

C.I.E.L.T.

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Why go to Rome?

Christianity's most remarkable relic and the most studied archaeological object in the world - more than 150,000 hours of scientific work - the Shroud of Turin remains an enigma for twentieth century Science, which is still unable to explain the mechanism of the transfer of the image to the origin of its formation.

An object of controversy regarding its authenticity since the fourteenth century, the Shroud of Turin entered the field of science on 28 May 1898, when Secondo Pia found that the image of the Crucified, represented on the Cloth, was a perfect photographic negative, except for the blood stains which were positive.

The consensus of scientific research converged towards a confirmation of authenticity when, in 1988, the medieval dating of the Shroud by carbon 14 - interpreted as the signature of a fake - launched this archaeological object into the world-wide field of the media.

Since then, following upon the International Symposium of Paris, on 7 & 8 September, 1989, the International Scientific Community has recognised that the Shroud of Turin could not be a fake; notably Dr Tite, the coordinator of the carbon 14 dating and the Direction of the British Museum, which was the authority within which the experiment had been placed. Consequently in the present state of research, the scientific status of the Shroud of Turin is, for some observers, an authentic object of the fourteenth century, while for others it is of the first century. How can twentieth century science permit this contradiction any longer without settling it?

In August 1990, the Holy See, proprietor of this incomparable archaeological object, took note of the epistemological contradiction introduced by the carbon 14 dating, and launched an appeal to the International Scientific Community to resume research.

It is in response to this appeal that CIELT decided to organise the Rome Symposium, in order to offer the International Scientific Community the very best forum to make their proposals known.