

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**From Turin:
A Report on the Opening Day
of the 1998 Shroud Exposition
by Emanuela & Maurizio Marinelli**

[This article already appears on the Shroud of Turin Website. Click here to view.](#)

From an American in Turin on the Opening day...

Bravo to the Italians!

by **Richard Orareo**

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Official Video of the Shroud Expositions

Visitors to the Expositions will be able to purchase a special video as a souvenir of their experience. Entitled in Italian 'L'Uomo dei Dolori, la Sindone di Torino' (The Man of Sorrows, the Shroud of Turin), it is the diocese of Turin's official documentary on the Shroud. A quite exceptional feature of the video is that it was filmed using the very latest High Definition video technology, and the footage includes lengthy camera work of the Shroud specially displayed in the Church of the S. Sudario, Turin on 25 June, 1997, a few weeks after the so disastrous fire in Turin Cathedral.

In tracing the Shroud's history the producers also filmed in Jerusalem, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Urfa, Istanbul, Lirey, St. Hippolyte-sur-Doubs and Chambéry. The image quality is absolutely stunning, but the production, as directed by **Michelangelo Dotta**, is clearly aimed at the devotional believer rather than the open-minded sceptic.

For those not visiting Turin, copies of the video can be obtained via **Nova-T Produzioni Televisive**, Via Ferdinando Bocca 15, 10132 Torino, Italy, tel. 011 899 14.00; fax 011 898 70 98. The cost in Italy is 25,000 lire, plus 8000 lire postage.

The Shroud's new showcase - could it actually be counter-productive for the Shroud's conservation?

A warning by Dr. Leoncio Garza-Valdes of San Antonio

According to the U.S. physician Dr. Garza-Valdes, who was in Turin on the opening day of the Expositions, there is some cause for concern regarding the Shroud's long-term preservation in an atmosphere with argon gas (in place of oxygen), which became the Shroud's new environment from the outset of the current expositions. Given that oxygen is needed by the living micro-organisms on the Shroud that have formed the bioplastic coating (micro-organisms which Garza-Valdes argues to have protected the Shroud as well as having skewed the carbon dating), it could happen that these die while other potentially more destructive forms survive, thereby ruining the ecological balance which has preserved the Shroud so well for so long.

Although the Shroud has been in an argon atmosphere before, for the expositions in 1978, the intention is that from now on it should live permanently in its new show-case, which will simply store it in flat mode when it is not on display. So although it will be possible easily to view the Shroud in this, in order to regularly check on its condition, no-one can be totally sure of the long-term effects of this new environment.

The Pope is to see the Shroud

The Pope is scheduled to visit Turin on May 24 for a special viewing of the Shroud. While he was still Cardinal Woytywa of Krakow, Poland, he viewed it on 1 September 1978, during the six weeks of expositions held that year. A few weeks later he was elected Pope, following which he was given a special personal viewing on 13 April 1980.

From Los Angeles, USA News of Papal Honour for Shroud artist Isabel Piczek

The Los Angeles-based ecclesiastical artist **Isabel Piczek**, who gave a most memorable lecture to this Society 'A Professional Artist and the Shroud' on November 23, 1992, has recently been honoured by Pope John Paul II. This was in recognition of her prolific artistic achievements, examples of which can be found in nearly 500 different cathedrals, churches and other buildings across the world.

On Sunday January 11 of this year **Cardinal Roger Mahony**, Archbishop of Los Angeles, conferred on Isabel admission into the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory, and the title Dame of Saint Gregory, whereby she became one of the only 70 Knights and Dames throughout the world who hold this honour. The ceremony, in which Isabel was presented both with a special insignia and a certificate signed by Vatican Secretary of

State **Cardinal Sodano**, was held at the St. Francis de Sales Church, Sherman Oaks, Los Angeles, and was followed by a dinner at the Sheraton Universal, Los Angeles.

Shroud supporters who attended the ceremony included Los Angeles photographer **Barrie Schwartz**, whose Shroud web site www.shroud.com has attracted unprecedented new heights of interest in recent weeks, also Charles Parlato, promoter of the Shroud conference held in New York in 1991, and **Richard Orareo**.

On Monday March 9 of this year Isabel also very successfully lectured on the Shroud at St. Matthew's Catholic Church, Champaign, Illinois, in conjunction with a special exhibition of Richard Orareo's collection of Shroud pictures, sculptures, books and other materials held at the same venue. According to Isabel: 'On the day of my lecture a most terrible snow storm developed. We had already resigned ourselves that no-one would come. But by seven in the evening the church was filled with people, over three hundred of them. There were many from the local University, also ecumenical groups, Protestants, the Byzantine right, and members of the local Jewish synagogue. It was a delight to talk to them.' This lecture was followed by another for the Mindzentzy Foundation, Anaheim, California, following which she was given the Mindszentzy Foundation's 1998 Freedom Award. Isabel is expected to be one of the key speakers at the Shroud Congress in Turin in June.

From Connecticut, USA Russian Scientist Dr. Dmitri Kouznetsov arrested

This Newsletter was the first to raise some serious warnings (see issues nos 33 & 34) regarding the aberrant and unbusiness-like behaviour of **Dr. Dmitri Kouznetsov**, the Russian scientist who at the 1993 CIELT Symposium in Rome claimed that isotopic exchange from the heat of the 1532 fire may have caused the Shroud, when radiocarbon dated, to appear younger than its true age.

Following the warnings, met with disbelief in some quarters, for some while Dr. Kouznetsov's whereabouts remained unknown. Then on December 11 of last year the News Times of Connecticut reported the following:

Arrest made in bad-check scheme

DANBURY - A 42-year old Moscow native, who recently moved to Danbury, was jailed on a \$100,000 bond yesterday, charged with writing bad checks at a Bethel bank.

Dmitri Kouznetsov, of White Street, was arrested on a warrant charging him with attempted first-degree larceny, first-degree forgery, third-degree larceny and first-degree attempted larceny for his dealings at a First Union Bank branch. Police said Kouznetsov had in his possession three checks that had been stolen from a Virginia Beach, V.A., couple. He allegedly made the checks out to himself and deposited the money into an

account he had opened at the branch. Kouznetsov told bank officials that he needed a local account for business purposes.

Police said checks stolen from the Virginia couple have also surfaced in New York and New Jersey. More than \$20,000 was cashed in these cases, according to an arrest warrant. Police did not elaborate on the out-of-state cases, but said that the suspect used names similar to Kouznetsov and that the scheme worked in a similar manner.

At Kouznetsov's arraignment yesterday, bail commissioner John Foulner said the defendant was trying to start up a business in the area. He had been living in Danbury for about two months, Foulner said.

From several interested parties it is understood that Dr. Kouznetsov is currently awaiting trial at the Bridgetown Correctional Facility, Connecticut, and is the subject of further investigations.

Was the Shroud radiocarbon dating 'a Freemasonry plot'?

An astonishing claim from Cardinal Ballestrero, the Shroud's custodian at the time of the 1988 radiocarbon dating

According to the German paper Die Welt, dated September 5 1997, **Cardinal Ballestrero** made some remarks which appear surprising in the light of the declarations he made in 1988 backing the results of the dubious C14 dating test. In particular, Die Welt says the following: The Turin Shroud is, in Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero's opinion, authentic. The laboratory tests conducted in the 80s, which dated the cloth back to the Middle Ages, would appear to have been performed without due care, declared Ballestrero in an interview. At the time, the cardinal had himself published the results of this research. After the publication of these results, criticism was swift to follow. Under the title (translated from the Italian) "A masonic plot against the Holy Shroud?", *Corrispondenza Romana*, dated September 20, provided additional information. The main outline of this article is given below.

Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero, the former archbishop of Turin, in an interview with his private secretary, **Father Giuseppe Cavaglia**, which appeared in the latest issue of the Carmelite review and was reproduced by the paper Avvenire (September 4, 1997), declared that he strongly suspects freemasonry of playing an important role during the scientific research which led to the surprising announcement of October 13th, 1988 which denied the authenticity of the Holy Shroud.

The Cardinal declared himself convinced that at the time proper care was not taken in the set procedure "With the examinations that I had myself authorized, as soon as the solemn exposition (of 1978) was over, science became unleashed and centres for study of the Shroud shot up everywhere, for the most part in Protestant countries. This context gave

rise to the most insistent requests for an examination to be conducted using carbon 14. At the same time, vicious calumny about the Church was purposely being spread around, accusing it of being the enemy of science because it feared the truth and was frightened of losing the relics from which it made money." At this point, Father Cavaglia asked Cardinal Ballestrero whether freemasonry had not played a certain role in all this campaign. "Without question," came the cardinal's reply.

[Reproduced from the CIELT journal *Revue Internationale Du Linceul de Turin* which published this article on page 28 of its issue no 6, Autumn 1997]

News from Spain

My First Viewing of the Cloth of Oviedo, 20th December 1997

Report by Mark Guscin, member both of the BSTS and of the Centro Espanol de Sindonologia, the BSTS's Spanish counterpart

Saturday 20th December, 1997 had been designated as the day for our group in Spain to study and photograph the *sudarium* of Oviedo. It represented a much-looked-forward-to opportunity for me personally both to view the cloth directly, and also to go through all the *sudarium* related documents in the Oviedo Cathedral archives.

All the people present were members of the Investigation Team of the Spanish Centre for Sindonology (CES), under the leadership of **Guillermo Heras**. The other people were **Jorge Manuel Rodríguez** (Secretary of the Investigation Team and Vice President of the CES), **Felipe Montero** (Chemical Engineer), **Dr. José-Delfín Villalain** (Professor of Forensic Medicine), **Manuel Carreira** (Astro-Physicist) and myself, in charge of investigating the history of the cloth. The rest of the team had arrived the previous night and so were all at work when I arrived at midday.

The *sudarium* is normally kept in the 'Cámara Santa' under lock and key, and in its own silver frame, although it had been discreetly taken down to a small room adjoining the Cathedral sacristy, where a photographic session was underway when I was shown in. This was the first time I had seen the cloth at first hand and so I was quite excited, although the first sight, albeit not disappointing, made me realise that the *sudarium* is actually better appreciated on photographs.

What was truly moving was the thought that this was probably the actual blood of Jesus that I was looking at, and this cloth that I was touching had actually been placed over his face. Religious beliefs apart, I think it is exciting to be in the presence of any object known to have been in contact with any well-known historical person. As everybody in the team has always said, this cloth is a dirty rag stained by blood, and it takes a guide to appreciate what each stain is and how it was produced. It is not like the Shroud of Turin, where the image itself can be appreciated without more knowledge being needed. To see

the cloth and listen to the explanations with the stains right in front of your eyes is an unforgettable experience.

Then I went to do my work, leaving the scientists to do theirs. After being taken to the Cathedral archive and given the boxes of information about the sudarium, I sat down to go through all the documents at a table just next to the room where the cloth was for this day.

The main history of the sudarium is contained in the Book of Testaments, written by the 12th century bishop of Oviedo Pelagius (Pelayo in Spanish). The first document was a transcription of everything Pelagius wrote about the cloth. There seemed to be two versions, a longer one and a shorter one, and most of the information I have read about this in the past seems to be from the shorter version, and the longer one seems to contain a much more detailed version of the history of the cloth. I will, of course, study this document in detail. The Book of Testaments itself is a beautiful manuscript, with wonderful miniatures and very difficult-to-read writing. There were many medieval lists of the relics in the cathedral, both in Latin and in Spanish, which are very interesting but do not provide any critical historical facts.

There are also copies of all recent studies on the cloth, including the article published in the *BSTS Newsletter* number 43, June/July 1996. The cloth was then taken out of its frame so that the other side could be examined too. The backing cloth was taken off, hopefully for the last time as all it does is leave foreign material on the sudarium. The cloth was not put back in its original silver frame but in a new more protective frame that permits both sides of the cloth to be observed without having to take it out. Future studies were also discussed. One of the most pressing topics is that of security as the Cathedral authorities are all too willing to show the cloth to anyone who asks them, without any safeguards. All that it takes is one madman...

From the historical point of view, the sudarium's stay in Toledo and Seville has to be investigated further, requiring many hours of work in the archives of the Cathedrals of these two cities. A full plan of investigation will be put together early in 1998, and hopefully the year when the Shroud itself can be seen will also provide more details about the Oviedo sudarium too.