

## AROUND THE INTERNET

Preliminary reports have appeared regarding the latest exposing of the original limestone shelf on which the body of Christ is supposed to have been laid in Joseph of Arimathea's unused tomb. In 325AD the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, removed the pagan temple built by Hadrian two hundred years earlier, and then flattened the whole area, leaving only a thin shell of rock around the original cave, which he enclosed in a building called the Aedicule. Over the years the site has been rebuilt and vastly expanded several times, the latest major reconstruction being in 1810, although some marble cladding of the limestone itself dates from 1555.

However, this reconstruction deteriorated after a hundred years, and since 1947 has been supported by a scaffold of iron girders. This too is showing its age, and this year a major investigation of the whole edifice



has been launched, which included, in October, the removal of the 1555 limestone covering of the tomb shelf itself (above).



The top layer, upon which pilgrims have prayed for 450 years, was slid back, under which was another protective layer, of grey marble, which must be older still. This was badly damaged, revealing the bedrock of crumbly limestone underneath (above). After brushing away the dust of centuries, a carved cross was revealed (left), which may date from the time of the crusades, the middle of the 12th century.



There are various reports of a strange sweet scent accompanying the removal of the cover, and of electromagnetic anomalies disrupting the readings of the various instruments placed on it, but these are currently unconfirmed.

Elsewhere, [shroud.com](http://shroud.com) keeps us up to date with events regarding the Shroud, which I don't think need to be duplicated here. Since the June edition went to press the much respected monumental artist and stained glass window maker Dame Isabel Piczek has passed away, and one of the



oldest paintings of the Shroud has been discovered in an early 16th century prayerbook (above), details of which are available at [www.christies.com/features/Turin-shroud-prayerbook-7442-1.aspx](http://www.christies.com/features/Turin-shroud-prayerbook-7442-1.aspx).

I have also been enjoying reading Rex Morgan's 'Shroud News' which he produced from September 1980 to December 2001, and which is being scanned a few issues at a time by Stephen Jones. We are about halfway through - the latest being October 1990 - and every issue provides a fascinating insight into the Shroud thinking of the time, as well as occasional enigmatic details that appear to have surfaced briefly and sunk without further inquiry.

