

# An Academic Scandal

The British Museum gave its name and weight to the 1988 Carbon 14 result and the verdict that The Shroud of Turin was nothing more than crude mediaeval forgery - ... "faked up and flogged off." It's then employee - Prof. Michael Tite -

(centre) was appointed by Turin as an independent invigilator of the test.



Edward Hall (left), Michael Tite (centre) and Robert Hodges at the British Museum after revealing their findings on the shroud.

## Turin Shroud shown to be a fake

By Michael Sheridan in Rome and Phil Reeves in London

CARDINAL Anastasio Ballestrero of Turin yesterday confirmed what newspaper readers around the world have known for weeks: that tests on the Turin Shroud have shown it to be of medieval origin.

The shroud, believed by many to carry the imprint of Christ's face and body when laid in the tomb, has attracted devout pilgrims to Turin for centuries. Loads of the results of modern carbon-dating tests had indicated the authenticity of Turin and the shroud's Italian custodians who spoke harshly of foreign plots against Italy, anti-Catholic prejudice and the like.

Yesterday it was at last official: the tests had established a 95 per cent likelihood that the 14-foot linen was made between 1260 and 1390 AD. There is no chance that it dates back to the time of Christ.

Cardinal Ballestrero pointed out that the shroud had never claimed that the shroud represented Jesus but had honoured a tradition of piety rooted in centuries past.

"Considering the results of the scientific tests, the church reiterates her respect and her veneration for the shroud," he said.

The tests were carried out in laboratories at Oxford University and in Arizona and Zurich. They were based on counting the number of radioactive carbon 14 atoms in a fragment of the shroud about the size of a postage stamp. However, they did not resolve the case's origin, or the mystery which surrounds the blood-stained image on the shroud, resembling a photographic negative, of an apparently crucified man.



The Shroud of Turin: exposed as a fake.

Professor Edward Hall, the director of the Oxford research laboratory involved, gave his theory: "There was a small-million pound business in making forgeries during the fourteenth century. Someone just got a bit of linen, faked it up, and flogged it."

Professor Hall, 64, who said he had a file full of mostly "cranky" letters from believers in the shroud's authenticity, added that some people would probably continue to regard it as genuine. "Just as there is a Flat Earth Society". But he was severely criticised by his findings were right.

Modern Catholic teaching holds that relics are an aid to devotion. They divide into three classes: a first-class relic is either an instrument of the Passion, such as the Turin Shroud, or bones of the saints.

A second-class relic is an object which has touched one of these, and a third-class relic is an object which has touched a second-class relic.

The disappointment in believers is the shroud is unlikely to deter enthusiasts for the tens of thousands of relics, many of them the products of medieval tricksters, which remain in glass cases and ornate wooden cases in churches throughout Italy.

In Rome, one may view a further from the Archbasilica Caelata at the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

Other examples include vials containing the last breath of Saint Joseph, several beads of Saint John the Baptist, unamenable splinters from the True Cross, and two thorns from the crown.

In Naples, a vial containing the blood of Saint Januarius miraculously liquefies each year. In 1981, when it failed to do so, the city was struck by an earthquake.

We now know that sometime after his appointment his independence was compromised by secretly accepting the promise of a senior position with the Oxford Radio Carbon Unit. This appointment depended on Oxford not only being appointed as one of the C14 labs chosen to carry out the test but also being able to demonstrate the certainty with which it could place accurate dates on the flimsiest of samples.

Despite the fact that Prof. Tite has been forced to accept that his original "crude forgery" verdict cannot be sustained the British Museum refuses to re-open the question of its damning pronouncement.

In doing so The British Museum, under Hartwig Fischer, has shown itself to be unworthy of any scholarly investigation which requires genuine independence. What is it afraid of?

David Rolfe, Editor, BSTS Newsletter: 2018.