

## FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

You have in your hands the Proceedings volume of the International Workshop on the Scientific approach to the Acheiropoietos Images (IWSAI 2010) that was held at the ENEA Research Centre of Frascati, Italy, May 4 through May 6, 2010. The IWSAI was aimed at promoting a scientific discussion on chemical, physical, biological, forensic and historical aspects of the Turin Shroud, the Tilma of our Lady of Guadalupe and the Veil of Manoppello, in order to gain a deeper insight into these controversial images. They are controversial, indeed, mainly because, according to tradition, they are *acheiropoietos* images, that is, "*not made by hands*" and Science is still not able to fully explain their origin.

When looking first at the outstanding Scientific Program of the Workshop, then at the content of this volume, we conclude a primary goal was achieved. There were forty-three presentations by thirty-five speakers from Austria, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Spain and USA. Forty papers were submitted for publication and thirty-five (87%) were accepted for publication in this volume after a rigorous peer-review process. Thanks are due to the Members of the International Scientific Committee who selected the summaries submitted for presentation, and to a group of twenty-seven Referees from six Countries that gave up their time and skill to review all the submitted papers, thus ensuring the high scientific level of the Workshop and of the Proceedings. This hard work made it possible to select papers able to shed light into a number of unclear aspects of the Veil of Manoppello, the Tilma of Guadalupe and the Shroud of Turin. The papers published in this Proceedings volume offer a multidisciplinary approach to the *acheiropoietos* images: in fact they face almost all the relevant topics, from the formation of the images to the Shroud dating; from image processing to textile properties; from archaeology and history to iconography; from philosophy to forensic medicine.

At the end of the IWSAI, we have improved our knowledge on these images, and new ideas, contacts and new collaborations have arisen. This is a very important result, as I am convinced that corroboration and (multidisciplinary) collaboration are necessary elements for progressive scientific acceptability and understanding of these images.

The IWSAI has been a peculiar (if not unique) event, from many points of view. It was the first time that the Turin Shroud, the Tilma of Guadalupe, and the Veil of Manoppello were discussed together, in an unprecedented attempt at cross-fertilization of the up-to-date knowledge of them. It was the first time that a top-level Research Centre was the venue of a congress concerned with *acheiropoietos* images. It was the first time that a genuine fiber of the Shroud was observed and analyzed through the microscope, in person, directly in front of the audience of the Workshop. And it is the first time as well that a Proceedings volume devoted to *acheiropoietos* images contains only peer-reviewed papers.

Let me give few numbers about IWSAI 2010: fifty participants, twelve authorized journalists and cinematographers from Italy, U.S.A. and Mexico, and many international echoes in the media (see a partial summary of interviews and broadcasts at [www.acheiropoietos.info](http://www.acheiropoietos.info)). Numbers convey concise information but cannot describe everything: I remind the hard work done to finalize in only five months the proposal to organize an international Workshop at ENEA Frascati on a so short notice; the pivotal support by Diana Fulbright and Giulio Fanti on arranging high-level invited-papers sessions, and over 2,100 e-mail messages sent to and received from scholars of *acheiropoietos* images all around the world. And finally, we experienced the deep emotion to see that all we had planned with passion in the previous months came into being, plainly and successfully.

The guided tour to the Exarchic Monastery of Santa Maria in Grottaferrata (also known as the Greek Abbey of Saint Nilus) and the visit to the Shroud exhibition after the Workshop added further memories of IWSAI.

During the visit to the Greek Abbey, we had special permission to see the treasures of the Library of the Monastery (with manuscripts of the tenth century) and to visit the Loggia of Vignola, with beautiful frescos, which are usually closed to public.

The coach trip to Turin and back to Frascati provided an occasion to continue the informal and lively discussions about the Workshop presentations. The concert in beautiful Savigliano, with the voices of Giovanna de Liso and her choir, moved us deeply. And finally, the group visit to the Shroud exhibition, allowing our attention to dwell in front of the mystery, was an unforgettable spiritual experience.

The IWSAI was made possible by the help of many. Here I would like to express my gratitude especially to the Director of the ENEA Frascati Centre, Gaetano Maurizio Monti, to the Local Organizing Committee and the International Scientific Committee, as well as to all the participants of the Workshop, the Authors of the papers and the Referees. Thanks to their efforts and their ability to work together as a team, we can enjoy the reading of this volume.

Finally, there are my wife Laura, and my family, who made it all worthwhile.

Have a good read!

Paolo Di Lazzaro

30<sup>th</sup> October, 2010