

## LETTERS

**From mediaeval glass painting specialist D. Aldring [? -signature only partly legible] of 94 Cambridge St., Norwich, Norfolk:**

If the Turin Shroud does turn out to be a mid-fourteenth century work, it would be useful to consider the grisaille painting on silk now in the Louvre known as the Parement de Narbonne, dated by Millard Meiss [*French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry*, Phaidon, 1967], to c.1370-75. This is a work of exceptional quality with a high degree of realism and as such is the work of an (unknown) artist who was probably already working twenty years previously. It is in a technique which involves painting on cloth and which uses only various shades of grey and shows an unusual degree of facial realism for the period. Meiss comments: 'The immediate origins of the art of the 'Parement' in French painting of the mid-century remains undiscoverable today' [op. cit, text vol., p.102] So there were perhaps painters around in France in the mid-fourteenth century who could paint in a highly realistic but monochrome technique on cloth, but whose works have been totally lost.'

[photo]

[Editor's note: One of the most Shroud-like figures by the Parement master, the Entombment, from the Paris Louvre, is shown above. Any such examples of monochrome painting on fabric, specifically designed for Lenten use, and from a period so close to that of Geoffrey de Charny, undoubtedly deserve serious consideration by those interested in the Shroud. Also noteworthy in the plates section of Meiss's two volume work are highly realistic sculpted portraits of kings Philippe VI (p1.589) and John the Good (p1.590). These were the monarchs directly contemporary with Geoffrey de Charny, and the sculptures indicate that France in the second half of the fourteenth century was rather more highly developed artistically than is sometimes allowed. Nonetheless, the Parement images are still traditionally linear, and exhibit nothing of the Shroud's highly developed light and shade, let alone its negativity.

Our Chairman, Rodney Hoare, has also recently drawn attention to a thirteenth century Lenten hanging in Pinacoteca, Siena, painted specifically on linen at a time when panel paintings were the norm. This comprises three scenes by Guido da Siena: the Transfiguration, Entry into Jerusalem and Raising of Lazarus. Unlike the Shroud image, however, these scenes have been painted on a thin, but unmistakable coat of gesso applied to the linen as a primer. Also the artistic style is unmistakably linear and characteristically thirteenth century Italian. For further details, see James H. Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, Princeton: University Press, 1964]