

A CHECK OF THE RUSSIAN ARGUMENTS

Dr. Kouznetsov kindly gave a copy of his paper to your Editor, and upon my return to England copies of this were forwarded to Dr. Bob Otlet, the specialist for many years in charge of radiocarbon dating at the Harwell proportional counter laboratory (and now with his own radiocarbon dating laboratory near Wantage); also to Professor Michael Tite, who of course supervised the Shroud carbon dating in 1988, and is now in charge of the accelerator mass spectrometer radiocarbon dating facility at Oxford University's Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art.

At the time of this Newsletter going to press Dr. Otlet (whose views will be fully impartial), is still giving the Kouznetsov paper serious consideration, and Professor Garmon Harbottle, Otlet's opposite number in the U.S.A., is said to have declared 'an extremely positive interest' [*Lettre Mensuelle du CIELT*, no. 421]. The following letter, however, was received from: Professor Tite on 16 July:

Concerning the Russian paper on the radiocarbon dating of the Shroud, first, the implication that C13/C12 ratio of -25‰ was assumed by the radiocarbon dating laboratories is incorrect. The C13/C12 ratio was actually measured for the Shroud samples by all three laboratories.

Second, the value obtained for C13/C12 ratio (-25‰ to -27‰) was normal, indicating that no exceptional fractionation (i.e. enrichment) of these two isotopes had occurred as a result of any fire that the Shroud might have suffered. Therefore, there could have been no significant fractionation of the C14 in the Shroud as suggested by the authors. Consequently I do not believe that this paper provides any basis for not accepting the radiocarbon dates as published.

Reactions from Dr. Otlet and others will be published in forthcoming Newsletters at the earliest opportunity.