

EDITORIAL

DANGERS OF A SHROUD OF BABEL?

Just over five years on from carbon dating's verdict on the Shroud as a mediaeval forgery, controversy over the subject remains as lively as ever, as will become clear from the contents of this latest *Newsletter*. Not only do we have yet another weightily scientific explanation of how the carbon dating may have erred, we have no less than four new theories of how the Shroud image may have been formed. In addition, during this very month two new books supportive of the Shroud's authenticity are appearing on bookstalls throughout Britain. One of these, provocatively entitled *The Turin Shroud is Genuine: The Irrefutable Evidence*, is by the BSTS's own Chairman, Rodney Hoare.

Even so it remains far too early for any euphoria that the strong tide that has run against the Shroud's authenticity may at last be on the ebb. In this particular Newsletter there appear two quite independent theories of an X-ray-type formation of the Shroud's image that are rather more esoteric than our normal fare. They are included because they have been put forward by individuals of recognised academic distinction, and just conceivably may open a whole new chapter in our understanding of the Shroud.

But too many elaborate speculations on how the Shroud's image may have been created, along with too many theories of how the carbon dating may have been in error, can serve only to confuse even those of us theoretically well-informed on the Shroud, quite aside from the public at large. For the subject of the Shroud to become a new Tower of Babel is a real danger that enthusiasts of all nationalities and shades would do well to avoid.

Arguably yet another Tower of Babel is the world of computers, this Editor's cue to draw your attention to the altered appearance of this *Newsletter*, the result of a long overdue transition to the world of high technology in the form of an IBM compatible 486 and WordPerfect 6.0 software. Hopefully this should now enable more and longer outside contributions than hitherto, ones provided on floppy disc being particularly welcome. But the transition has not been easy!