

THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RADIOCARBON DATING

In sindonology's pristine age, B.C.14 (Before Carbon 14), and precisely in the month of July, 1988, it was decided that *Spectrum* would delay publication until the Official Announcement of the carbon dating results could be included; and this would be the signal for experts, with relevant documents in hand, to prepare an analysis of the procedure followed, according to the protocol. No special foresight was needed to calculate that all this would probably put the September issue into late October, and so the corollary decision was made to compose a double issue, September/ December, in order to offer good coverage of the performance, finally accomplished, of the long-discussed and controversial application of the carbon 14 dating method to the Holy Shroud.

As we all know, at a televised press conference on October 13, the Archbishop of Turin, Anastasio Cardinal Ballestrero, announced that:

"By a dispatch to the Pontifical Custodian of the Holy Shroud, on 28 September 1988, through the intermediary of Dr. Tite of the British Museum, coordinator of the project, the laboratories of the University of Arizona, the University of Oxford, and the Polytechnic of Zurich, which had carried out the radiocarbon dating measurement of the cloth of the Holy Shroud, at last communicated the result of their operations.

"This document states that the interval of the calibrated date assigned to the sindonic cloth, with a confidence level of 95%, is between 1260 and 1390 A.D. A text with more precise and detailed information about the result is being prepared by the laboratories and Dr. Tite, and will be published in a scientific journal.

"For his part, Prof. Bray of the Metrology Institute 'G. Colonnetti' of Turin, appointed to review the summary report presented by Dr. Tite, confirmed the compatibility of the results obtained by the three laboratories, the certainty of which falls within the limits allowed for the method utilized.

"Having reported this information to the Holy See, owners of the Holy Shroud, I am hereby giving public notice concerning what has been communicated to me."

Loyal to his word that the Church has nothing to fear from the truth, the Cardinal then briefly expressed his unreserved acceptance of the medieval date for the fabrication of the Shroud.

The scientific community, as well as the informed public, did not so hastily jettison the stores of previous evidence, so painstakingly gained, in favor of a single datum which seemed to imply a direct contradiction to the acquired knowledge. From everywhere, the

voices of the people were raised in an immediate outpouring of all that we have learned from chemical, physical, historical, exegetical, and the many other studies springing from the photographic revelation of 1898. True to their training, scientists more cautiously pondered this new factor of a date that, frankly surprisingly, fell so neatly into the lap of Pierre d'Arcis.

I want to express my deep gratitude to Dr. John Jackson for providing *Spectrum* with his perceptions in regard to this added enigma of the Shroud.

I would also like to thank all those good people who have dispelled the turbulence of these days by assuring me that the carbon 14 findings have not shaken their confidence that the Shroud is in truth the Sheet which covered the corpse of Jesus Christ in the tomb, and from which He rose, leaving there this inexplicable Image and the perfect, undisturbed transfers of his Blood in the haloes of exuded serum.

DOROTHY CRISPINO