

SOME RECENT SHROUD PUBLICATIONS

Robert Drews: *In Search of the Shroud of Turin, New Light on its History and Origins*, Rowman & Allanheld (81 Adams Drive, Totowa, New Jersey 07512, USA), 1984, @ \$15.95.

Robert Drews is Professor of Classics at Vanderbilt University, and his previous publications include *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* and *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece*. The line of argument taken in his Shroud book is unusual, and only his own, highly readable text will really do this justice. While readily accepting that the Shroud and Mandyion of Edessa were one and the same, Drews argues that the Shroud image was man-made from Jesus' actual body back in the first century A.D., thereupon becoming preserved by the Gnostics. At face value the hypothesis sounds highly speculative, and almost certainly is so, but to dismiss it so cavalierly would be to fail to do justice to Drews' unquestionable scholarship and clarity of presentation. At the very least, a book that is as thought-provoking as it is informative.

Dr. John Heller: *Report on the Shroud of Turin*, Houghton Mifflin Company, (2 Park Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108, USA), 1983, @ \$15.95.

BSTS Treasurer Bill Sinclair brought a copy of this book back from a recent American visit (members may have seen a condensed version in the April issue of *Reader's Digest*), and he writes:

"This is a bold, exciting and persuasive book, telling the astonishing story of the beginning of STURP, its work up until now and the conclusions that the group has reached. Heller tells in fascinating detail how 40 scientists of wide ranging disciplines pooled their skills, obtained the use of rare and expensive equipment and finally, with considerable difficulty, raised the funds for the journey to Turin - much of the money coming from their own pockets. The author describes the obstacles which had to be overcome, both human and physical, some at first sight almost insuperable but finally overcome by dedicated and determined teamwork. Even the final stages were difficult; samples had to be meticulously taken, and testing for gelatin or human blood on such minute threads was problematical. Readers will find this an absorbing report from a scientist of considerable standing, giving conclusions likely to confound the sceptics and encourage the 'believers'. The book is not yet published in the UK, but BSTS hopes to obtain copies from Boston. The price is likely to be approximately £10.00. Members interested should send enquiries, enclosing an s.a.e. to the General Secretary".

Noel Currer-Briggs: *The Holy Grail and the Shroud of Christ*, ARA Publications, (25 Harrow Piece, Maulden, Beds, MK45 2DG) 1984, @ special price of £6.50 inc. p&p from BSTS (bookshop price £7.50).

This publication has been eagerly awaited by all those who had appetites whetted by Noel Currer-Briggs' lecture to the Society. Attractively produced in large-format paperback style, the book contains a mass of meticulously researched material pertaining to both the Shroud's

possible journeys through Europe from Constantinople and to the Grail legends - but material always presented in a thoroughly readable fashion. The author's main hypothesis is that the Holy Grail, far from being a cup, might have been a 'grille', or latticework casket containing the Shroud. He accepts that the Mandylion and the Shroud were very possibly one and the same in outlining his hypothesis, and lays before the reader a host of 'clues' discovered in his own genealogical researches and in the work of other scholars. Was the Shroud the 'idol' worshipped by the Templars? Was it kept, a focus for pilgrims, in the remote Chateau de Montsegur as the 'Treasure of the Gathers'? Do legends such as prompted *Parzival* and other Grail romances contain references to the Shroud in a disguised form? All these questions and many others the author attempts to answer in this engrossing book - which one eminent American reader describes as 'enchanting'. Besides a certain nonobjectivity at times over factors such as the Shroud's 'authenticity', Noel Currer-Briggs exhibits nothing but a trained and authoritative eye for unravelling skeins of obscure family trees to provide coherent facts, an enviable ability to project himself into the medieval mind, and a comprehensive grasp of history. A must for all interested in the Shroud of Turin.

(Available from the Gen. Sec.; please make cheques payable to The British Society for the Turin Shroud).