

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

David Sox, *The Shroud Unmasked: Uncovering the Greatest Forgery of all Time*, Lamp Press paperback, £2.99, 160 pp. plus 8 pp b & w photographs

For the background story to the carbon dating, this is so far the only available publication in book form, and provides an impressive amount of inside detail.

Sox was aided for this by his visit to the Zurich laboratory as part of his association with the *Timewatch* programme (see below).

The book, which was already printed, but not yet released, more than two weeks before the official announcement of the carbon dating results, makes clear that Sox authoritatively knew the carbon dating result well in advance. Inevitably, therefore, someone leaked their result to Sox, and he in turn was responsible directly or indirectly for at least two of the highly publicised leaks from within the U.K., those immediately in the wake of his *Timewatch* programme, and the *Sunday Times* premature announcement (headlined an "official" result) of 18 September, which the *Sunday Times* admitted derived from an advance copy of Sox's book. But if Sox knew from Switzerland, he does not disclose this. Instead, all that is apparent (from p.147 of the book), is that Sox knew the outcome of a bet between Dr. Harry Gove of the Rochester carbon dating laboratory (who as pioneer of the AMS method, was allowed to watch Arizona's dating work), and Shirley Brignall of the Brookhaven laboratory. Reportedly, Shirley Brignall bet on the Shroud being 2,000 years old, while Gove backed a date of no more than 1,000 years old. According to Sox:

Whoever lost was to buy the other a pair of cowboy boots. The calculations were produced on the computer and displayed on the screen. ... The date would be when the flax used for the linen relic was harvested. Gove would be taking cowboy boots back to Rochester.

We are yet again reminded of the soldiers casting lots for Jesus's clothing at the foot of the cross, and indeed Sox himself took quite a gamble if he based the whole thrust of his book on such minimal "inside" information.

But while it was clearly a gamble that paid off, the book hardly lives up to its claim that "the greatest forgery of all time" has been "finally exposed". How, for instance, can Sox justify such total confidence in the dating of the Shroud when on p. 138 he notes that Wölfli of Zurich was:

worried about the results he had with the linen tablecloth of his wife's mother. It was 50 years old, but carbon dating said it was 350 years old. There might have been a problem created by detergents which had been used on the cloth.

Only if and when someone can explain exactly and irrefutably how an artist produced an image as extraordinary as that of the Shroud (and neither Dr. McCrone nor David Sox have succeeded so far), will the mystery genuinely be describable as "finally exposed".

Ian Wilson

Giovanni Riggi di Numana, *Rapporto Sindone (1978/1987), Cronache e commenti del fatti accaduti dal 1978 al 1987 intorno alla ricerche scientifiche condotte sulla Sacra Sindone di Torino*, 3M Edizioni, 176 pages, with numerous full colour illustrations.

Giovanni Riggi, a Turin microanalyst, took part both in the 1978 testing and the taking of the carbon dating samples on April 21 this year. In 1978, when the Shroud was partly unstitched from its backing cloth, he vacuumed samples of dust from the freshly exposed area between the two cloths. This year he supervised the making of the only visual record of the taking of the samples (using both video and still photography), and personally cut from the Shroud the portion of the cloth used by the laboratories. Riggi has therefore been able to provide a unique first-hand account of these activities. Unlike Sox's, the book dates only up to the events of April 21, but is particularly notable for the excellence of its photographs. According to Riggi there may be an English language edition, although this was before the carbon dating results became known.

SHROUD SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL, quarterly publication of the Indiana Center for Shroud Studies, issue no. 26

This issue features on its front cover a beautiful embroidered silk copy of the Besançon shroud, as acquired for the Holy Shroud Library of Boston. An article by Don Luigi Fossati reproduces photographs of the face of Christ from numerous artists' copies of the Turin Shroud (including Lierre, Belgium, 1516; Alcoy, Valencia, 1571; Acireale, Italy, 1644; and the Reffo and Cussetti copies of 1898), and what is evident from all of these is their comparative crudeness, and how much the Turin original is qualitatively distinct from all of them. In the same issue is a most useful translation into English of Agostino Cusano's first hand account of a viewing of the Shroud shortly after it first arrived in Turin in 1578. Also of considerable interest is an article by Père Dubarle on the subject of the "Veil of Antinoë", a face veil excavated early this century from a Coptic cemetery at Antinoë in Upper Egypt by French Egyptologist Albert Gayet. Apparently this veil, folded four times over the face, featured at least three imprints of the face it once covered.

Unfortunately, although the Gayet collection still exists, and is now kept in the Louvre, the veil in question is either no longer extant, or its imprints have disappeared. As noted by Père Dubarle, the pioneering French Shroud scholar Paul Vignon must have known of the Antinoë veil, but appears to have taken no interest in it.