

## TWO RECENT B.B.C. TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Besides the mass of recent British newspaper, radio and television news items relating to the carbon dating, there have been two recent television documentaries on the Shroud:

Programme 1: "Shreds of Evidence", *Timewatch*, BBC2, 27 July 1988, 8.10 pm

This programme was of considerable interest because it included video sequences directed by Giovanni Riggi (a friend of Professor Gonella) of the activities associated with the taking of the samples of the Shroud for carbon dating on April 21 of this year. The Shroud was shown being taken down from the Royal Chapel altar and laid out for inspection by the carbon dating laboratory scientists. Those present included Hall and Hedges of Oxford, Damon and Donahue of Arizona, Wölfli of Zurich, and Dr. Tite of the British Museum, together with two textile specialists, Viale of Lyon and Testore of Turin. Riggi was shown cutting the carbon dating sample to be apportioned among the laboratories. The 7 x 1 cm. sample, cut in two, with one half retained in Turin, and the other divided into three, was taken from the bottom left hand edge of the frontal half of the Shroud, in the very same area from which the Raes sample was removed in 1973. The programme also included scenes from the carbon dating preparations at the Zurich laboratory. Leaning heavily in favour of the Shroud being a forgery, the programme included interviews with Professor Averill Cameron and Dr. Robin Cormack (of the Courtauld Institute) associating it with the mediaeval love of relicry. The sole consultant was the Revd. David Sox, and it appears to have been made and scheduled for July in anticipation that the dating results (already known to Sox), would be released at that time. The original title, "Verdict on the Shroud" had to be changed at the last moment for this reason.

Programme 2: "Riddle of the Turin Shroud", *Q.E.D. Special*, B.B.C.2., 17 October 1988, 7.10 p.m.

This was produced to coincide as near as possible with the release of the results, and to reflect some of the unanswered issues raised by the Shroud even in the event of a mediaeval dating (it was designed to be easily adaptable to any carbon dating result).

Reviewing some of the arguments against authenticity the programmed featured the attempts of a previous *Q.E.D.* to show how an artist could have made the Shroud image, the artist being shown copying the Shroud face tone for tone (ignoring the problem that a mediaeval artist would have had no such model). Dr. Max Frei's pollen claims were criticised by an Israeli palynologist, who pointed out that Dr. Frei's list very surprisingly included no pollen from olives, one of the most common Israeli trees both in Jesus' time and now [note: the olive is not exactly rare even in the countries in which the Shroud is positively known to have been kept. The fact that Dr. Frei did not identify olive pollen does not mean that there is none on the Shroud].

More favorably, the programmed extensively featured Dr. Alan Whanger's studies of points of congruence between the Shroud image and a 7th. century Byzantine coin; experiments with a manikin in a Jerusalem tomb testing Sister Damian's theory that the image might have been formed by Jesus's body temporally heating rather than cooling after death; and some fascinating work carried out at the Shirley Institute to try to replicate the Liverpool Mattress image. Towards the end of the programme Sister Damian, by far the most televisual contributor, warned that comparison between 1931 and 1978 photographs strongly suggests

that the Shroud image is deteriorating, and may not last another twenty-five years. The programme, produced by Robin Bootle, who made the *Q.E.D.* on Lindow Man, very creditably acknowledged that, since the Liverpool Mattress image was not yet understood, how the Shroud image was formed remains even further beyond our grasp. It provided a reassuring balance to the so consistently destructive media publicity of the previous week.

A video of both films can be loaned (to U.K. members only) merely for the cost of the postage (97p in postage stamps) on application to: Ian Wilson, Ground Floor, Sneyd Park House, Goodeve Road. Bristol BS9 1PW.