

EDITORIAL

For the purposes of a Dutch television documentary, my wife and I recently made a whistlestop trip across Europe visiting locations associated with the Shroud. These included the church of St. Gommaire, Lierre, Belgium, where we examined the 'Durer' copy of the Shroud made in 1516; Paris, where we discussed the Pray manuscript with Prof. Lejeune; Lirey; Turin, where, hosted by Prof. Bruno Barberis and Gino Moretto of the 'Centro' we viewed for the first time the impressive crystal display case in which the Shroud now reposes behind the Cathedral high altar; Genoa, where Padre Cavazzuti kindly allowed for filming S. Bartolomeo degli Armeni's Mandyliion icon; and not least, Rome, where it was a shock to find the Ponziano catacomb's Christ Pantocrator fresco, one of special iconographic significance for the Shroud, ruined through lack of conservation. Of this latter more details appear later in this Newsletter, on p.13. Meanwhile the message for everyone must be that such neglect cannot be allowed to happen to the Shroud...

But while the need for the Shroud's well-considered conservation is paramount, and in the next issue we will be reproducing a crucial paper by Dr. Alan Adler on this topic, keynote of this particular Newsletter is a significant hotting up of the debate on radiocarbon dating, arising from Dr. Kouznetsov's so controversial paper on this subject to this year's Rome Symposium.

In the wake of Professor Tite's critique of Dr. Kouznetsov's arguments, as reproduced in the last letter, Dr. Kouznetsov has responded with such vigour that despite some of the technical language few apologies seem needed for reproducing this almost in its entirety, together with a closely related contribution from Dr. Marie-Claire Oosterwyck-Gastuche.

Dr. Kouznetsov rightly stresses the provisional nature of his findings so far, and it is important not to underestimate the time and effort yet needed to change the undue reputation for infallibility that radiocarbon dating has enjoyed in respect of its verdict on the Shroud. But one does sense the tide being about to turn.