

Editorial

The restoration work carried out on the Shroud last summer and reported on by Ian Wilson in the last edition of the Newsletter is still causing arguments and all kinds of comments. I suppose quite inevitably, I was accused of bias in my approach to the restoration, after publishing Ian's favourable comments. Publishing one very well stated side of the argument does not amount to bias just because someone else does not agree with it. The biased person is the one who is not even prepared to listen to opinions that do not coincide with his / her own. I mentioned two names, people who had both spoken out against the way the work was carried out, and both reminded me that they had not been alone in their criticism. Emanuela Marinelli also mentioned the detailed press release articles she painstakingly translated into English, which can be seen on Barrie Schwartz's web site, and it is certainly true that I failed to appreciate her great effort in this respect. However, I cannot accept the accusation of bias. As a person, I am entitled to my own opinion about the restoration work, but as Editor of the BSTS I am prepared to publish both sides of the argument. I requested articles from both Emanuela and Bill Meacham in Hong Kong, explaining what in their opinion was wrong with the restoration work, but the reply in both cases was silence. The offer is still open - if anyone wishes to criticise the work in a constructive way, I am open to publishing such an article.

Opinions and reactions were also the subject of Dr Fred Zugibe's reply to criticism of his work in the previous edition. Zugibe had also in turn criticised Peter Leitch's article, and I received the following comments from Peter:

I recognise that in the course of writing my article that I ventured into a field of exacting scientific enquiry. I did so carefully and openly conscious of personal limitations. However, I defend the right of persons to offer observations on all matters in which they have a deep interest, not least of all those which pertain to the study of a cloth believed by many to be the burial Shroud of God incarnate.

This, in essence, is what the BSTS is. It is not a peer reviewed journal, although I do submit some articles to experts to obtain their opinion about certain things before agreeing to publication. The Newsletter is also a way for each and every member to express their thoughts about the Shroud. My

intention is to obtain a suitable balance between expert articles and opinions from anyone who is simply interested in the Shroud.

Not everybody is going to agree with what everybody else thinks about the Shroud, and that goes for me too. I include articles whose content I do not personally hold to, but if I only included articles I agree with, the Newsletter would rapidly become mine and not the Society's.

Something similar happened recently to Joe Marino, who does an excellent job of circulating all Shroud-related news over the Internet. He obviously received some complaints about the content of some of the articles he gave links too, but his job is to let people know where they can find the writings, not to agree or disagree with them. As I told Joe, he and I do not see eye to eye on some issues, but he really carries out a great service to the on-line Shroud world.

Professor Daniel Scavone's article on the Image of Edessa and the Holy Grail in the last Newsletter also attracted comment. Historians loved it, while others found it difficult to follow at times. In the world of Shroud investigation there are both highly technical papers (anybody who has seen Dr John Jackson's Carbon 14 experiments presented at a Congress will know what I mean), and also more popular and easily accessible material, and all of it should be made available to people who are drawn to the Shroud for whatever reason. Professor Scavone's article was quite long and the chronology just did not fit, and so it is included here.

I have also included an article on the Shroud's conservation by STURP member Ray Rogers (including some comments that can hardly be considered favourable to the restoration work carried out last year), and as it is the Spanish Centre for Sindonology's fifteenth anniversary this year, there is a summary of the Centre Investigation Team's work and investigation related to the Sudarium of Oviedo, with plenty of photographs as this is the best way of appreciating the cloth.

The Diocesan Committee for the Shroud in Turin recently started publishing an electronic newsletter and the highlights of the news from Italy is made available here too.