

APOLOGY FOR DELAYED PUBLICATION

After such a delay, you must have been wondering whether there was ever going to be another *Newsletter*. The reason has been partly that of pressure of personal commitments, but also partly that of waiting for the official *Nature* report, as below

CARBON-DATING REPORT

A four page official report "Radiocarbon dating of the Shroud of Turin", with full scientific detail, was published in the highly respected international scientific journal *Nature* on 16 February 1989. In the words of the abstract "Very small samples from the Shroud of Turin have been dated by accelerator mass spectrometry in laboratories at Arizona, Oxford and Zurich. As controls, three samples whose ages had been determined independently were also dated. The results provide conclusive evidence that the linen of the Shroud of Turin is mediaeval."

As the report makes clear, the control samples consisted of (1) an 11th to 12th. century piece of Coptic linen from a tomb excavated at Qasr Ibrim in Nubia in 1964, dateable from its inscription; (2) an early 2nd century piece of mummy linen from Thebes, dated by independent radiocarbon dating; and (3) threads from the cope of St. Louis d'Anjou, dateable on historical grounds to between 1290 and 1310 AD.

Averaged between the three laboratories, and at a 95% confidence level, the Shroud was carbon dated to between 1262 and 1384 AD; the Qasr Ibrim piece to between 1026 and 1160 AD; the mummy linen to between 9 BC and 78 AD.; and the St. Louis d'Anjou cope to between 1263 and 1283 AD. Rounded down/up to the nearest ten years, the Shroud's dates were calculated at between 1260 and 1390 AD. As concluded by the report: "These results therefore provide conclusive evidence that the linen of the Shroud of Turin is mediaeval."