

May 12, 2008

Dear Researchers,

On May 11, 2008 Barrie Schwartz placed on his Website an article entitled, "A Review of the Recent BBC Shroud Documentary". In one part of that review he writes, "In his introduction to Jackson, Rolfe (the producer of the film) seems to imply that he is the primary American researcher studying the Shroud, a statement that many other researchers might find somewhat arguable. At one point, Jackson is given sole credit for work that was actually done collectively by many of the STURP team members". Because this comment was made about me on an internationally visible website on the Shroud, I believe that I need to render my own response to colleagues of the Shroud Science Group (who are probably main readers of Barrie's website) in order to prevent any possible misunderstandings of my thoughts, as presented below, which Barrie is free to publish on his website.

First, I consider the ability to work on the Shroud, as I have for now 34 years and to have been the President of STURP at the time of the 1978 testing, to have been a privilege and an honor. It has been an honor to have worked with the fine scientific talent that comprised STURP. It is certainly upon the scientific data that was accumulated by STURP that much of the research of our current Shroud group is based. I am also indebted to other non-STURP researchers who also have contributed to the knowledge of the Shroud. In no way do I consider, or have I ever considered, the scientific research of STURP to be of my sole origin. I also want to acknowledge the fine research that has been contributed through the members of our research group, the Turin Shroud Center of Colorado, namely, my wife Rebecca, Keith Propp, and Dave Fornof whose collective time involvement has spanned 58 years. From this perspective, I categorically reject any insinuation that this or that person, including myself, is the "primary researcher studying the Shroud", for there have been many fine contributors to increasing knowledge about the Shroud.

For the record, I think it is appropriate to provide the pertinent direct quotes from the official transcript of the BBC documentary (with the time code indication in the format of 10.minutes.seconds.) and leave it up to the judgment of the readership to determine if the movie makes it appear as though I am the primary researcher in the Shroud or that I am being given "sole credit" for the work of STURP as has been suggested. These statements, of course, were not of my authorship but that of the production team for the movie.

10.10.00 – "Lying in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains in the United States is Colorado Springs. It's the home of the man who has studied the Shroud closer and longer than anyone else".

10.10.43 – "In 1978 when interest in the Shroud was at its height he led a large team of scientists to Turin where they examined the Shroud for a week. No one since has secured such full access to the cloth. Significant amounts of different types of data were

extracted. Jackson became the primary custodian of that data and he has continued the work”.

10.12.31 – “If we’re dealing with a medieval relic then it’s one that’s been meticulously created. And we know that the blood stains are not paint. Jackson’s team identified it as blood in 1978.”

Finally, my comments made in the film are not STURP conclusions. My comments referred to (1) the Shroud’s three-dimensional quality, (2) alignment of certain bloodstains with respect to a body shape, (3) testing of the hot-bas relief hypothesis, (4) correlation of fold marks found on the Shroud with the hypothesis that the Shroud was displayed in Constantinople (These fold marks were photographed at my request first by Vern Miller in 1978 and then in the High Definition BBC film itself; these fold marks also appear in some of Barrie’s 1978 documentation photographs), (5) the hypothesis that the side strip was originally used as part of the burial configuration, and (6) the radiocarbon monoxide hypothesis. All of these studies were formulated by me and subsequently developed by my team after the STURP testing and its conclusions were published. In as much as we do not have a book published on our research as of yet, as do other researchers, I am pleased that the BBC documentary presented these ideas.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express a thought that I believe is worthy of contemplation as it relates to the topic of this letter. There would be no Shroud image to analyze, assuming that it is the authentic burial cloth of Jesus, without that the event of the Crucifixion and the intense agony that was suffered by Jesus during that event. I am sure that we have little appreciation of the many life sacrifices that probably were made during the early centuries, under the heavy Christian persecutions of those times, by those who protected the Shroud so that we, today, can have it for study. And let us not forget the risks that persons in 1532 took to rescue the Shroud from the fire and, of course, in our time in 1997 when firemen, at great personal risk, again rescued the Shroud from a terrible fire. In view of these considerations, how could any of us, living in the relative comfort of our research libraries or laboratories, allow ourselves to be concerned about who has made the most valuable contribution to the Shroud?

Many persons have made excellent contributions to Shroud research and I do agree that those who have should be given their rightful credit for having done so and the opportunities to express their ideas in the manner of their choosing. I also believe that, such ideas should always be open to fair criticism and discussion, but in a manner that is respectful and professional.

I want to close by stating my appreciation to those who kindly welcomed me and my colleagues into your Shroud Science Group. I also want to compliment Barrie in his otherwise generally positive review of the documentary which David Rolfe’s hard work deserves and to thank him for extending to me the invitation to write a short review of our radiocarbon monoxide hypothesis as part of that review.

Regards,  
John Jackson