

NEWS FROM JOHN TYRER

At a recent meeting with Dr. Brian Sagar, who a few years ago helped the B.B.C. with the Q.E.D. programme on the Shroud, John Tyrer, our Manchester textile specialist, was given a large sample of a piece of linen made up to the same specifications as those of the Shroud. John has already made some interesting observations from this, most particularly that its stiffness is characteristically weft-way rather than warp-way, which happens to correspond rather neatly with Drs. Jackson and Jumper's reconstruction of the Shroud's original drape, as published in *Newsletter* no. 9, p.19. More from John Tyrer in our next issue.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Peter K. Rinaldi, S.D.B.: *In Verdant Pastures: From a Pastor's Diary*, Don Bosco Publications (U.S.A.), 1985, 225 pages. U.S. price \$15 (see below)

Father Rinaldi's personal souvenir of his Golden Jubilee, this book, which it is hoped may be published here in England, is a double gem. First, for its delightful human insights into Father Rinaldi's day-to-day life as a parish priest, fleeting, deceptively simple moments that each capture a deep spiritual truth. And second for its rare but all the more valuable glimpses of Father Rinaldi's ever cordial meetings with those directly responsible for the Shroud's care. Typical is this extract concerning the Shroud's one-time formal owner, the late Umberto II of Savoy:

"Gracious" is the word that could best describe Umberto II of Savoy. A tall, handsome man, vibrant and youthful-looking, he immediately put me at ease as we sat sipping tea in the lovely garden of Villa Italia, on the outskirts of enchanting Cascais, near Estoril, in Portugal.

He was well aware of the growing interest in the Shroud, particularly in scientific circles. As owner of the relic, his family's most treasured heirloom for nearly five hundred years, he never underestimated its significance to both the world of religion and the world of science.

"Your Majesty," I told him, "people want to see the Shroud. Experts and researchers would like to examine it. Right now, the Church authorities are reluctant to even talk about it. If they could be told that you are not against lifting the curtain somewhat, I am sure things will start moving."

"I take it by Church authority you mean the Archbishop of Turin," the king said.

"And the Vatican, too, Your Majesty."

"You may assure them I am in favour of anything they will undertake to do with regard to the Shroud. All I ask is that I be kept informed."

I could hardly have hoped for a better reply from the king. He was full of questions about my Shroud contacts in Italy and in the United States ... That first visit to Umberto was to be followed by several more during the next two decades. Slowly, the

Church authorities began to see the wisdom of lifting the veil on the Shroud. "I can see only good coming from it," Pope Paul VI told me at a memorable audience.

But progress was slow, almost to a point of exasperation. I remember complaining about it to the king one day. He smiled. "Father," he said, "you forget that the Church is eternal, and wise with the wisdom of centuries."

I cannot ever forget how pleased and excited the king was when, in the spring of 1978, I finally placed on his desk the detailed program of the tests which the American scientists planned to make on the Shroud, following the exposition in the fall of that year.

"Well, Father," he exclaimed, "we made it!"

... Umberto died on March 18, 1983. Few things gave him greater comfort in the last months of his life than the success of the 1978 exposition and the outcome of the Shroud's scientific investigation. On my last visit to him in the late fall of 1982, I told him what one of the experts had said. "The things we have discovered about the Shroud are so astounding as to be almost unbelievable."

"I always felt," the king commented, "that the Shroud is something very special, truly unique."

He felt, too, at that point in his life, that it belonged to the Church, to Christianity, and no longer just to his family. No-one was surprised when, shortly after his death, it became known that he had bequeathed his family's greatest treasure to the Holy See."

For those wanting an early copy of *In Verdant Pastures* these can be obtained direct from the Holy Shroud Guild, Corpus Christi Church, 136 S. Regent St., Port Chester, NY 10573, U.S.A. The U.S. price is \$15 per copy, inclusive of a leatherette red folder with two photographs of the Shroud face, but it would be wise to allow a little more for overseas postage. All proceeds will go towards Shroud research.

SHROUD SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL, quarterly publication of the Indiana Center for Shroud Studies, issues no. 16 (Sept. 1985) and no. 17 (Dec. 1985)

As remarked in previous Newsletters, editor Dorothy Crispino has set an exceptionally high standard in both the presentation and content of this quarterly journal, and the latest two issues continue in the same mould. The contents of *SHROUD SPECTRUM* no. 16 include a well informed article by Joseph Uten on "The Title of the Cross", the so-called *titulus* preserved in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome. Claimed as part of the notice described in John 19: 19 as having been fixed to the cross of Jesus: "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews", Rome's *titulus*, whether genuine or not, has a long history, and Redemptorist Fr. Uten describes it well. Also in the same issue is a summary of the British proposals for a new testing of the Shroud (a companion piece to that published in our last *Newsletter*), and an article by Rome theology professor Luigi Sartoris "The Embalment of Corpses as Practiced by the Egyptians and Hebrews."



The reputed fragment of the *titulus* of the cross of Jesus, as preserved in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome. One curiosity of what can be detected of the Greek and Latin lettering is that this has been written from right to left, in the manner of Hebrew.

SHROUD SPECTRUM no. 17 includes an exceptionally detailed and scholarly article "The Tomb of Christ from Archaeological Sources" by Sister Damian of the Cross. Sister Damian was formerly the Biblical archaeologist Dr. Eugenia Nitowski before, in 1983, she became a postulant of the Order of Discalced Carmelite Nuns. Although her name has previously been unfamiliar to us here in Britain, she is extraordinarily energetic among her varied accomplishments she is a photographer, private pilot and amateur astronomer - and she is quickly establishing a high reputation in Shroud studies. Also in the same issue is a valuable translation into English of Frenchman Paul Claudel's moving "The Face of Christ", as originally published in Paul Vignon's *Contacts et circonstances*, Gallimard, Paris, 1947, and another important translation, Byzantine custodian Nicholas Mesarites' account of the Palace Revolution in Constantinople in 1201. The particularly intriguing feature of the latter is its so tantalizing reference to what may be our Shroud - in Dorothy Crispino's translation, via one in Italian:

"The burial shrouds of Jesus: these are of linen, an inexpensive fabric, which still smell of myrrh; they are not subject to alteration because they covered the Dead One, clearly nude, and were full of myrrh after the passion."

For new members interested in obtaining a subscription, *SHROUD SPECTRUM*'s address is the Indiana Center for Shroud Studies, R.3, Box 557, Nashville, Indiana 47448, U.S.A. A year's subscription, inclusive of air mail postage, is \$25.