

RADIO COURTOISIE

It is not of international TV cameras nor press reporters with pencils poised that I want to tell about; but a Parisian radio station called *Radio Courtoisie*: an FM broadcast that every Thursday evening brings cultural programs to a constant audience of 500,000. On the Thursday before the Paris symposium, different aspects of Shroud studies were discussed by the Rev. A.-M. Dubarle, Dominique Tassot, Phillipe Bourcier de Carbon and myself. Every third Thursday, *Radio Courtoisie* presents a three-hour program by Chantal Dupont, with a repeat on Friday morning.

For her program to be broadcast on September 21 and 22, Mme. Dupont interviewed a number of symposium speakers, among whom were John Jackson, Gilbert Lavoie, the Rev. Adam Otterbein, Jacques Evin, Mike Tite.... The following excerpts are from Mme. Dupont's interview with Dr. Tite. Her opening question requested his conclusions concerning the results of the carbon dating of the Shroud. Dr. Tite replied:

C14 has certainly shown the Shroud to be medieval. I am convinced that the Shroud is medieval.

Why did you give the results as a journalistic scoop?

There were unfortunate leaks, but the scoop was due to the press, not us. (Dr. Tite speaks crossly.)

Who put the exclamation mark after the date on the blackboard?

I can't remember who did that, the press, Hall, or me ... it reflected the mood of the moment.

Were you interested in the Shroud before your participation in the tests?

I was not interested in the Shroud before but I am now and will continue to follow events.

Why was the blind test not carried out, according to the protocol?

There were two aspects. We decided in January that we would rather not have a blind test because that could be done only by unraveling the samples, and that makes it much more difficult to clean. The decision to abandon the blind test was made in Turin at the moment of the cutting. As for Ballestrero and I going into a separate room, that was quite unnecessary.

Why were the laboratory representatives present?

The laboratory representatives wanted to be there just for personal reasons, just to be part of the event....

You accepted a fourth sample in an envelope. Why did you not stop the meeting?

A medieval sample is very difficult to find. There was none in the British Museum that we were permitted to destroy. I asked Vial, Evin, Wilson and others. When I arrived in Turin I learned that Evin had found some medieval threads. We had to make a decision quickly — it would have been impolite to refuse it — people would have been furious. It was done for scientific reasons and good will. (He laughs amiably.)

Why were the labs informed about the dates of the control samples?

It would have been better if the labs did not know the dates. If I did it again, in hindsight, I would do it differently. But that it invalidates the result is absolute nonsense.

The Shroud is consistent with what we know about Jewish burial in ancient times.

But C14 is the only method that gives a scientific date. Inferences from other information are not hard facts.

Do you believe the Gospels?

No, I cannot believe the Gospels. Any historical document is full of errors ... even today....

According to Matthew something happened. Would the Resurrection have any influence on C14?

If one accepts that there was some supernatural event ... I suppose that if there was a flux of neutrons it could have influenced the date. As yet, no one has tested neutrons ... to see if that changes C14. If there was a supernatural event and a change of neutrons it would be a major coincidence if it came to this precise medieval date.

In iconography as early as the sixth century we see icons of Christ with characteristics similar to the Shroud Face. How do you explain that?

I don't know, you tell me! (Ha ha.) I personally believe we should leave relics as relics. Let people believe....

But in the case of the Shroud there is so much other evidence for a first century date.

The only specific date is by C14. The cross, the nail, the crown.... It is best to leave well enough alone!

What did you feel when you saw the Shroud?

(long pause) — Ah! — (pause) I mean ... it is a remarkable image. I never looked at it the way I look at paintings of Christ; that is just an esthetic experience rather than religious. I was there to do a specific job. It is different when you are in an art gallery or in churches. I did not see it as an esthetic experience. It's tied in with my work.

Would you be interested in further tests to solve some of the Shroud problems?

I do not feel the need. If it were a supernatural event ... but I don't believe in that. If neutrons did change the carbon content, that could perhaps give an apparently aberrant date on the Shroud.