

## PARIS - THE SYMPOSIUM SCIENTIFIQUE

Despite an all too thin representation from this country (only four known attendees, one of whom was Dr. Michael Tite), the Paris *Symposium Scientifique International sur le Linceul de Turin* was an outstanding success. On 7th and 8th September some 300 delegates, many from the United States, gathered at the Centre Chaillot-Galliera, a magnificently equipped conference facility within a short walk of the Champs-Élysées. The programme was extremely full for both days, beginning at 8.30 am and extending well into the evening, with a single short break for lunch. Projection and simultaneous translation facilities were first class throughout, and most importantly, the conference acted as a vehicle for genuine debate.

Of -course, this debate inevitably focused on the sharp division between those who adhered to the carbon dating result, most of whom were physicists, and those who opposed this from the viewpoint of other disciplines. The former camp were particularly ably represented by Jacques Evin, director of the Lyon carbon dating laboratory, by Dr. Michael Tite of the - British Museum, and by Dr. Robert Dinegar of Los Alamos, STURP's deputed carbon dating specialist (who made quite clear he no longer believed in the Shroud's authenticity). Although the Oxford laboratory's Professor Teddy Hall was listed in the programme as a speaker (his topic was "Dating the Shroud by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry"), in the event he sent his apologies, apparently because as a member of the main board of G.E.C., he had become involved at the last moment in the much-publicised takeover of Plessey.

The Symposium was lobbied by supporters of Brother Bruno Bennet-Eymard, the French priest who has accused Dr. Tite of switching the samples (see Newsletter no 22). This group is now even claiming (from misinterpretation of the last Newsletter), that we in Britain provided Dr. Tite with his supposed clandestine sample. But very sensibly the Symposium organisers gave the Bonnet Eymard camp no platform for their views, and several speakers pointedly distanced themselves from their claims. Dr. Tite won general respect by his open-minded approach to the Shroud, and acknowledged himself sufficiently impressed by the evidence that although he adhered to the 14th. century date, he did not believe the Shroud to be a painting.

Undoubtedly the most outstanding success of the conference was its conveying, in the teeth of press reports that the Shroud has been "proved" a fake, that the subject simply cannot be dismissed so easily. Speaking on behalf of Don Luigi Fossati, who was unable to attend because of illness, *Shroud Spectrum* editor Dorothy Crispino presented a fascinating series of slides of the different artists' copies of the Shroud that graphically demonstrated the special qualities of the original in relation to these. Italian scholar Prof. Gino Zaninotto, in a presentation of the history of the practice of crucifixion, showed that that the crucifixion method indicated on the Shroud is characteristic specifically what would be expected of the first and second centuries AD. M. Gabriel Vial, the French textile specialist who was present at the taking of the samples for carbon-dating, insisted that whether or not the Shroud is first century, or from the Middle Ages, its weave is very unusual; he knew of no comparable example before the 16th. century.

Paul Maloney of ASSIST reported that his group had on July 15, 1988 acquired the original sticky tapes with which Dr. Max Frei had obtained his pollen samples from the Shroud, together with the manuscript of his research which Dr. Frei had been on the point of publishing at the time of his death. The collection is apparently in excellent order, and reveals some fascinating insights into Dr. Frei's methodology, including the manner in which he

extracted specimens from the sticky tape, and the fact that he had been about to publish a further 18 pollen and related specimens from the Shroud at the time of his death.

Maloney told how he has been in touch with Israel's foremost palynologist, Dr. Aharon Horowitz, and with Dr. Avinoam Danin, leading specialist in the desert flora of Israel at the Dept, of Botany of the Hebrew University. Unlike Dr. Uri Baruch, the Israeli botanist interviewed in the Q.E.D. programme, these specialists have apparently expressed their support for Dr. Frei's findings. In answer to Baruch's criticism that Frei found no olive pollen on the Shroud, Maloney revealed that Frei had definitely anticipated that olive might be found on the Shroud, because he had collected an olive sample in Israel as part of his standard procedure of setting up a collection of control specimens. But because of the immensely intricate task of manipulating pollen, Frei had only made mounts for approximately one third of his material at the time of his death. And as Maloney pointed out, he would have categorised olive as part of his low priority "group C" (Mediterranean plants) because it is so non-localised and widespread throughout the Mediterranean region. One particularly new and important argument from Maloney was that the pollen evidence seems to indicate that actual garlands of springtime flowers from the Israel region were once laid on the Shroud, either at the time of the hypothesised original burial, or possibly when the Shroud may have been used liturgically in the manner of the Eastern Orthodox Church's Good Friday *epitaphios*.

Dr. John Jackson presented a theory of the Shroud's image formation compatible with all that had so far been observed scientifically, and which edged remarkably close to dematerialisation of the body. Another fascinating presentation was given by U.S. physician Dr. Gilbert Lavoie, who demonstrated by experiments with a cloth-draped human model (above) that the bloodflows seemingly illogically on the hair of the man of the Shroud would in actuality have been on the forehead. The displacement apparently arose because of the body's three-dimensionality and the fact that the formation of the blood marks and the creation of the body image derived from two quite separate events.

One of the foremost speakers directly to challenge the carbon dating result on its own ground was Dr. Marie-Claire Van Oosterwyck, an archaeologist of Belgium's Royal Museum of Central Africa. She pointed out a number of examples of aberrant results in carbon dating, particularly ones in which some form of water intrusion had been involved. Dr. Eberhard Lindner also elaborated on his hypothesis, as given in Newsletter no. 20, that the carbon dating reading is misleading because arguably the Shroud became irradiated with neutrons during the original creation of its image nearly 2,000 years ago. According to Lindner, his hypothesis is capable of scientific verification, and he has already approached the Vatican authorities in this regard.

But the longest as well as the most highly applauded presentation was one given by a French scholar hitherto unheard of in Shroud circles, Arnaud A. Upinsky, a mathematician and "epistémologue" who had reportedly not even begun to inquire into the Shroud until a month or so before the Symposium. Taking an entirely fresh overview of the subject, he used a series of charts to weigh up the evidence for and against the Shroud's authenticity. Pointing out that the Shroud carries no tell-tale signs of forgery, and a lot of positive indications in favour of authenticity, he argued that the carbon dating, for which we have not been given the raw data, and for which "double-blind" and other recommended procedures were not followed, simply does not warrant the scientific weight with which it has been accredited.

Father Otterbein of the Holy Shroud Guild, and Dr. Larry Schwalbe of STURP both gave well-argued presentations of the way forward for Shroud studies, Schwalbe setting out what might reasonably be hoped to be achieved in knowledge of the Shroud by the year 2,000, with particular stress on the Shroud's conservation. A final, and very moving word on the proceedings was given by Professor Jérôme Lejeune, Member of the French Academy of Medicine, and of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

Sadly, the one British report of the Symposium, which appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* on September 10, offered an unjustly jaundiced view of the gathering, describing the audience as "monks, priests and women with scraped-back hairstyles", and commenting "the carbon dating of the shroud as sickeningly medieval hung over the Symposium like a fog that would not lift." This latter comment is somewhat surprising, given that the journalist in question listened to only a tiny fraction of the forty papers presented. It's probably just a mischievous thought, but could there be any significance to the fact that this journalist's name was Anthea Hall?