

An occasion for rejoicing

For any person to have produced, virtually single handed, one hundred issues of a newsletter over a period of about eighteen years is a remarkable achievement in itself. When one considers that the fiftieth issue of *Shroud News* was overshadowed by the results of the carbon dating tests and the triumphant claims that science had proved conclusively the Shroud is a product of the fourteenth century, many of us would not have been surprised if the 50th issue of *Shroud News* was the last.

Was it inevitable ignorance that made Rex Morgan hold to the belief that the Shroud was authentic? I don't think so. I believe it was a profound and critical scholarship that had convinced Rex Morgan he was right.

While so many of us, who had followed all the evidence for and against the Shroud, knew that the piece of cloth kept in Turin and known as the Shroud was certainly in existence before 944 AD, the picture was not as clear cut then as it is now.

This lack of conclusive knowledge on the Shroud's earlier history was to have unfortunate consequences for those carrying out the carbon dating tests in 1988. They should have realized that they had a need to re-examine their results to see what had gone wrong. Instead it was left to a Russian scientist Dimitri Kouznetsov to show where those scientists had made their mistakes. It does not matter whether one fully accepts Kouznetsov's results and explanations: for the inescapable fact is that the carbon tests were wrong.

Now let us turn to where *Shroud News* fits in to all this. Through the history of its publication Rex Morgan has maintained a critical approach. He has always been open to any ideas about the Shroud's history and origin; to measure against the fully established scientific facts of the Shroud. He has published articles about those who do not accept the Shroud as authentic. This has influenced many flights of fantasy and even one article that described the Shroud as a cloth black with age.

The important point here is that this critical approach adopted by *Shroud News* had prepared readers back in 1988 to examine the claims of scientists who had disagreed over the results of the carbon dating tests.

Is it any wonder that in a recent survey I did of Shroud sources of information, I found that *Shroud News* was quoted far more frequently than any other publication? As I believe that this has been achieved because of the policy of genuine critical scholarship, I therefore fervently say, may *Shroud News* continue to flourish.

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