



Holy Shroud Guild

ESOPUS, NEW YORK 12429

Affiliated to the *Centro Internazionale
di Sindonologia* Turin, Italy

Sponsored by the Redemptorist Fathers
Canonically erected in the Archdiocese of New York

Business Office: 294 East 150th Street - Bronx, N. Y. 10451 - Tel. (212) 585-3678

Turin, October 19, 1981

Dr. Walter C. McCrone
McCrone Research Institute
2508 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Ill. 60616 - USA

Dear Dr. McCrone:

Since you also address yourself to me in your October 6 letter to Ian Wilson, I feel justified in resuming our correspondence against a promise, mutually entered into some time ago, to rest our case on the Shroud.

I must say in all sincerity (and I pray you do not read in what I write any lessening of my high regard for you) that your letter betrays an emotional approach to the Shroud which in a scientist I find difficult to explain and even to justify.

You attack the members of STURP as "self-deluding religious zealots," who wilfully ignore the scientific evidence you have found while researching the Shroud. You mention "a large number of scientists" to whom you have presented your evidence, and add: "I have yet to find any of them who disagree with my conclusions."

I now ask: assuming at least some of these scientists have had the opportunity to study the Shroud in all its complexities, why did you not take them personally with you to the Hamilton, Canada, meeting, or even to the recent New London symposium? You could have compared notes with the members of STURP, debating the issues with them. I understand your delegate at Hamilton was woefully unprepared, a "complete washout," in the words of an impartial observer. Resorting now to recriminations and throwing epithets about is certainly not the correct scientific approach.

There is more. In your letter I find a statement hard to believe. You write: "I have, for at least two years, been convinced that the Shroud is a work of art, pure and simple. I have left open the possibility that it is authentic, but highly embellished (not enhanced) by an artist. I did this for two reasons: 1) I did not like the idea of disagreement between two groups of scientists,

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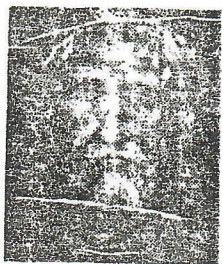
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(Father Rinaldi to Dr. McCrone - Oct. 19/81)

and 2) I did not like to be a bearer of bad news, especially to you, Father Rinaldi and Father Otterbein, for whom I have a high personal regard."

Dr. McCrone, if such be the reasons (not at all scientific, incidentally), may I ask you why in your article in *THE MICROSCOPE* (Vol. 28, No 3/4, 1980) your concluding sentence reads as follows: "That an artist either enhanced an earlier image or created the entire image is incapable." Did you have or did you not have the evidence for such a statement? For the longest time you insisted you had reasons to believe an artist enhanced a pre-existing authentic image on the Shroud. Now you say: "The Shroud is a work of art, pure and simple." Do you wonder that we have doubts about your "evidence?"

And why hide the truth behind a ploy (you were unwilling to disagree with the scientists and to be a bearer of bad news to Father Otterbein and to me) even though it was well-intentioned? A scientist, in a sense, is never a bearer of bad news when he can prove he has discovered the truth. Surely you do not believe the faith Father Otterbein and I have in Christ depends on the authenticity of the Shroud!

Apropos of this, the Cardinal-archbishop of Turin made some rather pertinent statements when last March he was interviewed for an ABC television program. Briefly, he made the point that at no time in its official and liturgical pronouncements the Church ever stated that the image on the Shroud was left on it by the body of Christ. The Church speaks of the Shroud as bearing an image of the crucified Lord. "Were the Shroud image proven to be the work of an artist," the Cardinal continued, "it would still remain a 'venerable icon' that sets our thoughts on Christ's redeeming mission." Indeed, the Shroud did just that during the past three years, with a surprising impact on the world.

I am convinced that, in spite of pressures, the carbon-14 test is well into the future. The Church is never in a hurry, certainly not with regard to the Shroud which was never and is not now one of its major concerns. Besides, you know as well as I



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do that, even were the carbon-14 test to prove that the Shroud does date back to the time of Christ, there is no way to prove with absolute certainty that the image it bears was left on it by the entombed body of Christ. You yourself said you would still loudly proclaim that the Shroud is a painting.

Why you should be so disturbed, furious may be the better word, with the members of STURP I do not understand. Had they concluded that the image on the Shroud could only have been put there by Jesus, you might be justified in calling them self-deluding religious zealots. But all they did is disagree with your findings. You say you have evidence to believe the Shroud is the work of an artist. They say they have evidence proving that only the cadaver of a crucified man wrapped in a cloth could have produced that image. They at no time stated or even implied that man is or could in effect be Jesus. You put it into their mouths, acting like the proverbial man who sets up a strawman and then, raging, proceeds to knock it down. And so I ask: is it right for you to call STURP's members self-deluding religious zealots?

Dr. McCrone, let's keep things in their proper perspective and stay within the correct bounds of the issue. Is the Shroud a work of art, as you claim; or is it, as STURP affirms, an image which, through some kind of a mechanism as yet unknown, the unclad bloodied body of a crucified man left on the cloth? In this context, your statement that you see in the way STURP's researchers conduct themselves a proof of "how religious faith can again overcome scientific truth," this statement, I say, is unwarranted and unconscionable.

In your letter you warn Ian Wilson against the imaginary risks of setting up (as he intends) STURP's exhibit in London, one more way, you imply, to perpetuate a fraud and a delusion. Surely STURP did not (and I know Wilson will not) present the exhibit as "Christ's Burial Cloth," or as "The self-portrait of Christ," but simply as "The Shroud of