

## COMMENTS FROM THE GALLERY

Ian Wilson has recently been in correspondence with Miss Joyce Plesters, Principal Scientific Officer for the examination and conservation of paintings at the National Gallery, London. Asked about the STURP team's methods of image sampling from the Shroud, Miss Plesters replied as follows:

"I consider that taking samples from the Shroud by means of sticky tape was rather a crude method. ... It seems to me that with an object like the Shroud, which has a comparatively rough surface and which has been lying around for centuries collecting miscellaneous deposits, you would with sticky tape pick up a miscellany of particles, many from the very topmost protruding fibres of the cloth, hence accidental deposits and nothing to do with the original image ... I also feel very strongly that the persons who examine the samples initially by optical microscope should be the same persons who take the samples, and that the initial examination under the optical microscope ought to be done on or near the site of the object being examined so as to be able to keep going back to the object being examined to compare the sample with the sample site and in the context of the object as a whole. It does not appear from what has been written that Walter McCrone and his team ever inspected the Shroud, nor did they take the samples. ... With regard to sampling methods, we would probably use needles or fine pointed scalpels for the purpose."

Miss Plesters also had some useful recommendations for future conservation of the Shroud:

"One would hope that the Shroud would be kept in controlled conditions of temperature and humidity (too high a relative humidity can cause mould and fungal growth in textiles), and at low light levels with ultra-violet rays filtered out also, in a case with air filtration to remove dust and atmospheric pollutants like SO<sub>2</sub>. These are the sort of routine precautions which would be taken with any valuable object of this sort ...."