

MEMBERS' LETTERS

In answer to Michael Clift's set of questions published in the last *Newsletter*, Rodney Hoare writes:

It was good to see comments from a member in *Newsletter* no. 10 and Mr. Michael Clift raised some very interesting points. The first one "Where exactly is the left hand in the (Shroud) image?" I find difficult to answer, for it seems perfectly clear it rested on top of the right hand. The lower, right hand looks the longer, but with the stains provided by the upper arms and shoulders obscured by the fire damage I cannot follow his argument that either elbow or shoulder was dislocated. The body must have been constrained by the sides of the trough in which it lay, for if the top surface of the cloth had dropped down beside the body instead of crossing the rim of the container, the image would have been much wider. I developed these arguments much more precisely in my book *A Piece of Cloth* (see review in this issue, p.16, Ed.). The hands were only able to remain crossed in the "figleaf" position because the elbows were held up above the floor level by the sides of the trough - try lying flat on the floor, and you will find your elbows naturally drop and your hands fall away - and the length of the fore-arm and hand image depends on the height at which the elbow is held above floor level.

His second point was "Why are the water stains not directly-over the fire damage?" He went on to ask why the fire was put out, in view of the separation. A very good point, but I think the answer is misinterpretation. The lozenge shapes on the cloth surrounded by, tide-marks must be the areas the water did not saturate, rather than the areas soaked. The water did not quite reach the corners of the folds furthest from the place where the silver casket melted, and they are surrounded by the tide-marks.

(Not everyone would agree with Rodney Hoare's answers. What are other members views? Ed.)

Sculptress Ross Spencer writes from 20 Worsley Road, Gurnard, Isle of Wight:

Very tentatively, may I query: is there a negative image in yellowed fibres of the Shroud's surface lay locally corresponding to and simultaneously formed with the body image? Confining study to the facial area, three things seem to point to it: (i). slight corrugation vertically down the herringbone twill weave shown by the variation in clarity of the body image in alternate bands at the intersections of the new twill weave. New herringbone twill has a tendency to do this. (ii). Apparent slackening of material about the head, shown by more pronounced ridging of the crisp material falling away from the more taut area over the face. This does not seem due to coarser warp threads; (iii). Slight horizontal ridges, either thicker weft threads and/or creases which seem to have influenced the flow of some of the "blood" images; (iv). 'V' shape at bridge of nose - perhaps the image of an ancient ruck?

Especially I have looked at the lower neck crease. The two sides of this crease seem to have been recorded in yellowed they show up on different negatives as light on dark, dark, as the body image does, whereas the centre of the crease shows up with the tonal values reversed, i.e. in negative, as a still present crease, seeming to indicate that this is a very ancient ruck in the cloth. On photographs taken in 1931, 1969 and

1978 the crease is shown variously smoothed out; not so what appears to be the "image" of its original fold visible at the sides, and identical on different photographs.

So (even more tentatively, may it not be possible to date creases contemporaneous with the image formation?

Ross Spencer