

VOLCKRINGER PLANT DONATED TO S.E.A.R.C.H

Dr Jean Volckringer, born in Paris in 1906, after a distinguished career in pharmacy and biological chemistry, became Inspector General of Health for France in 1956. During his long career he was the recipient of many national honours including Officer of the Legion of Honour, Commander of the National Order of Merit, Officer of the Order d'Etoile Noire, Commander de la Sante Publique, Medal of Honour du Service de Sante Militaire, Laureate of the Academy of Medicine, Laureate of the Academy of Pharmacy and Knight of the Order des Palmes Academique.

During his days as a hospital professor of pharmacology he discovered an old book of pressed plants, botany being one of his hobbies. What struck Volckringer, who has always been interested in the Shroud of Turin, was that several of the plants in the book, dating back to the eighteen-forties, had produced images in positive and negative on succeeding pages which were very similar to the negative image on the Shroud.

In 1942 he published his book *Le Probleme des Empreintes devant la Science* in which he expounded his theory that there was a perfectly natural explanation for the nature of the Shroud image, namely, that it had been made by cellulose degradation of the fibrils of the cloth by the effect of vegetable matter and various chemicals which had been placed on or near the corpse. Thus Volckringer anticipated by forty years what STURP scientists concluded after the 1978 examination of the Shroud in Turin that the actual cause of discoloration on the Shroud image area is cellulose degradation.

Volckringer's work is quoted and the photographs of his plants and their images appear in almost every standard work on the mystery of the Shroud although his book has never been published in English. As *Shroud News* readers have been made aware, the Runciman Press was given permission, some time ago, to translate and publish his work in English. It is hoped that this will be done during 1989.

Over the past few years Rex Morgan has met with Dr Volckringer on several occasions and during this year Dr Volckringer generously marked the establishment of the South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud (SEARCH) by donating his original plant, *Lysimachia*, which dates to 1847 and is still in perfect condition, together with the original pages from the book in which it was pressed, showing both the positive and negative images it produced.

This very valuable Shroud-connected item will be part of the permanent exhibition and resource material of SEARCH for which all future Shroud researchers will be extremely grateful in years to come.



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