

E-mail note from the Rev. Albert "Kim" Dreisbach received 1/19/05:

THE TEXTILE ITSELF John Tyrer, Chartered Textile Technologist, Associate of the Textile Institute and Associate of the Manchester College of Technology, has observed:

"It would be reasonable to conclude the linen textiles with 'Z' twist yarns and woven 3/1 reversing twill similar to the Turin Shroud could have been produced in first century Syria or Palestine ... Turning from the ancient world to medieval Europe. . . it appears that linen textiles similar to the Shroud have not survived in any number from the early fourteenth century."(1)

Written in 1983, Tyrer's words now seem both prescient and prophetic. In attempting to gather control samples for the C14 testing, Dr. Michael Tite of the British Museum observed:

"The Shroud sample ... because of its unusual weave ... is quite rare, and therefore we were not able to find control, known-age samples, which matched the weave... (2)

"Because the distinctive three-to-one herringbone twill weave ... it could not be matched in the controls. It was possible for a laboratory to identify the shroud sample."(3)

If this were a problem for the British Museum with all the resources available to it in the 20th century, one can legitimately ask how it was possible for an alleged 14th century forger to obtain nearly five yards of this rare linen? Further suspicions about the sample actually dated are raised when one bothers to follow up on a seemingly insignificant acknowledgment made by Oxford in the final report by thanking P.H. South (Precision Process (Textiles) Ltd., Derby) "for examining the cotton found on the shroud sample."(4) In fact, in an article entitled "Rogue Fibres Found in the Shroud," Mr. South is quoted as having discovered that:

"The cotton is a fine dark yellow strand, possibly of Egyptian origin, and quite old. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say how it ended up on the Shroud, which is basically made from linen ... it may have been used for repairs at some at some time in the past, or simply bound in when the linen fabric was woven-"(5)

It would be interesting to know with greater "Precision" just what Mr. South had in mind when he evaluated the cotton as "quite old."

(1) John Tyrer. "Looking at the Turin Shroud as a Textile." Shroud Spectrum International No. 6, March 1983, Yr. II. p.338.

(2) P.E. Damon, D.J. Donohue, et al. "Radiocarbon dating of the Shroud of Turin." NATURE Vol. 337, 16 February 1989, p. 612.

(3) Ibid., p. 614.

(4) "Rogue Fibres found in the Shroud." TEXTILE HORIZONS, December 1988, p. 8.

(5) Ibid.