

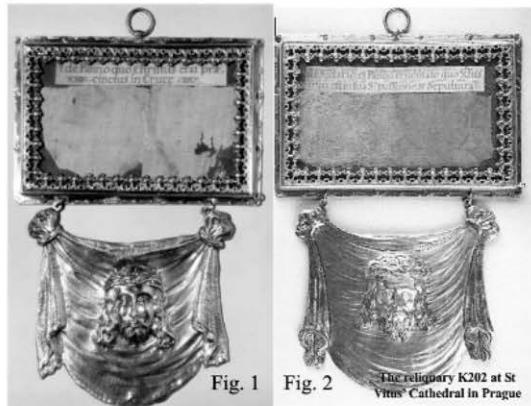
Further Shroud Relics in Prague? - Hugh Duncan

The story of there possibly being a piece of the Shroud in Prague first appeared in the BSTS journal No.52 November 2000 (1), but without an image of the relic. It was a gift from Pope Innocent VI to Charles IV King of Bohemia in 1353, the Pope having had close links with Geoffroy de Charny. I tracked down the contact, Milena Bavermanova, in the St Vitus Cathedral in Prague, who sent a colour photograph of the item (K202) and a copy of the most recent examination (2001), all of which appeared in the BSTS journal No.74 from December 2011 (1). The results showed that the sample was not the same material as the Shroud of Turin.

Milena had given me the name Professor Jan Matejka, the chapter deacon at Metropolointni kapitula u sv. Vita Praha-Hrad Bohemia, Czech Republic, as the expert, so I wrote to him for further details. He replied 5.1.2013 (2) and explained that K202 was not the only 'shroud' related relic kept in the cathedral. There were four items: K202, K203, K036 and K207. As K202 was already dealt with, here are the others.

K203

The second of two similar Shroud reliquaries.



The K203 reliquary (Fig. 1) looks like the twin of the K202 featured in BSTS 74 (Fig. 2). Professor Matejka included his own notes and a link to the cathedral's inventory (3), which describes the reliquaries. Both are made of silver and have the same sized frames 15.0 x 9.4 cm. Hanging beneath each one is a similar

silver 'Veraikon', the Veil of Veronica. In the K202 reliquary are two pieces of cloth sewn together. One piece is made of fine silk and cotton, which over time has turned yellow. The other piece, almost brown, is made of **fine linen**. The cedula (written label) reads: *de Panno, quo Christus erat praecinctus in Cruce*, which translates: "**from the cloth with which Christ was girded on the Cross**". In the K203 reliquary, there are also two pieces of material sewn together and both are made from the same **white linen**. The cedula here reads: *de sudario et panno cruentato quo Christus usus est in sua s Passione*

et Sepultura': "from the sudarium and blood-soaked cloth used in Christ's Sacred Passion and Burial". Sudarium means sweat-cloth (4) and originally referred to something like the scarf worn by roman soldiers. It has been used to describe a small cloth like the Veil of Veronica or the Oviedo cloth but also a large cloth like the Turin Shroud.

I highlighted 'linen' in bold print. In the BSTS 74 article, the examination of the K202 cloth concluded it was "tabby", which is *coarse silk weave*. There was no mention of the piece being made of two different materials sewn together. Even if one of the two halves of K202 is linen, it does not seem to be 3 to 1 herringbone twill (the recognisable 'diagonal' pattern of the herringbone weave is not visible), and therefore not from the Turin Shroud. As for the both parts of K203 being 'white linen', from the original of the photograph above, one can see individual threads, but neither piece looks the same weave as the Shroud either, though the quality of the image does not make it easy to say. The reverse side itself of the Turin Shroud does not look like the familiar 3 to 1 twill of the image side, so could the pieces in the K203 reliquary also be showing the same reverse side?

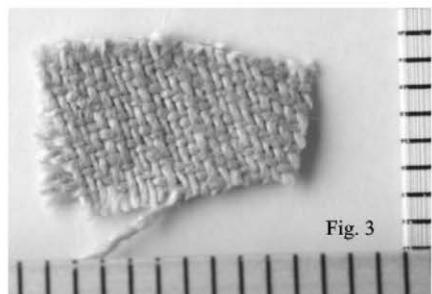


Fig. 3

Barrie Schwortz kindly gave me an image (5) (©2012 STERA, Inc.) of the reverse side of the Turin Shroud. It is shown in Fig.3 along with a mm scale. I tried to enlarge the image of the K203 cloths and increase the contrast. I could see some threads but the quality and resolution was low. In comparing both halves of the K203 sample they seem to have the same thread density in

both directions, supporting the claim both halves are from the same cloth. When using the same scale as the Turin sample, the K203 thread density looked about three times lower than the Turin Shroud. Not only that, even the reverse side of the Turin sample shows a diagonal pattern, which is absent from the K203 samples. For these reasons, it can be concluded that the K203 samples have not come from the Turin Shroud.

K036 The Gold Cross with relic

The next item of interest is a cross-shaped gold reliquary known as K036, shown in Fig. 4, which contains a piece of cloth in a very bad condition. It is also presented in one of the inventories (6). The gold cross is 31cm high, 23cm wide and 1.5cm thick. In the centre is an oval glass frame containing a sample of cloth in a very bad condition. The inventory states that it is '*the garment that Christ wore on the cross*', which one would call a loincloth. At the turn of the 19th/20th century, all the textiles from the Cathedral of Prague were inspected microscopically by a botanist Pro. Dr.

Bohumil Nemec, but the content of this reliquary [K036] had almost disintegrated and turned to powder. The material, being described as silk, not linen, would therefore exclude it from being a piece of the Turin Shroud.

Fig. 4



The image in the upper part of the vertical bar of the gold cross depicts Christ on the cross, with the traditional figures of the Virgin Mary and St John on each side, while Christ is wearing a loincloth. In the right-hand section of the transversal (left as we look at it), is shown Pope Urban [V] and Cardinal Pierre Roger de Beaufort, who followed Urban as Pope on 1370. In the other side of the transversal is Charles IV of Bohemia and his son Vaclav. In the lower part of the cross, the Pope is giving a piece of cloth (the relic?) to Charles IV, with a mini version of the gold reliquary in the background. The inscription says: *de panno cruentato quo xpc pcinctus fuit in cruce datum per urbanu papa V karolo IIII imperatori romanoru*. From the

bloodstained piece of cloth with which Christ was girded on the cross, given to Charles IV emperor of the Romans by Pope Urban IV. This description, along with the top panel image and the inventory comment make it clear that this relic is considered to be part of the loincloth that Christ wore on the cross, and hence nothing to do with a burial shroud.

K207 The Container of the Gold Cross

The gold cross reliquary (K036) was kept in a rectangular container (K207) (7). It has dimensions 43cm high, 31.5cm wide and 3.3cm deep. The casket was renewed in the year 1740, but the inscription 9.4cm by 1.7cm dates from the middle of the 14th century : + DE SUDARIO + DNI + ALLATUM + P + KAROLUM + MAGNUM. This translates as: from the sudarium of the Lord brought by Charles the Great. Even though it uses the word sudarium, the gold cross reliquary stated already that the relic was the loincloth so in this case it is not referring to the Shroud. (See below.)

Fig. 5





Conclusion

The St Vitus Cathedral has relics that are claimed to be taken from the ‘sudarium’ of Christ, possibly one of the Passion related cloths such as the loincloth. The evidence suggests that none of them is from the Turin Shroud.

Special Thanks

I would like to thank the following people for helping with the various translations along the way: Ian Wilson for the Latin translations, Nina Neeteson for the initial German letters to Matejka, Nathalia Kovalenko for the initial Russian letters and Charlotte Hoyos and her teacher Alfred Thum for the final translation of the Matejka German letter.

References

- (1) British Society for the Turin Shroud website: <http://www.shroud.com/bstsmain.htm>
For the following articles:
BSTS 52-original article about a possible Shroud sample K202 in Prague.
BSTS 53-brief mention of the examination of the Prague sample K202.
BSTS 74-more complete report on the Prague sample K202.
 - (2) E mail letter from Matejka 5.1.13 (available on request).
 - (3) K203 Professor Matejka’s letter gave links to the Cathedral’s inventories and the section referring to K203 (page 74 and 75) can be found at:
http://kramerius.mlp.cz/kramerius/ontheflypdf_MGetPdf?app=9&id=745&start=95&end=114
 - (4) sudarium <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudarium> sudario <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sudario>
 - (5) Barrie Schwortz report on the STERA, Inc.-University of Arizona Radiocarbon Dataing Laboratory Macrophotography-30th August 2012 <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/arizona.pdf>
 - (6) K036 gold cross relic pages 40-44 in the inventory:
http://kramerius.mlp.cz/kramerius/ontheflypdf_MGetPdf?app=9&id=745&start=55&end=74
 - (7) K207 items 52/53 same link as (6)
- NOTE: a copy of original 1353/4 letters that accompanied the relics can be found in: Chrámový poklad u sv. Vítá v Praze, authors: Antonín Podlaha, Eduard Šittler, Publisher: Deditví sv. Prokopa, published in: 1903, Page: 25
Latin transcription of 1354 letter page 27
Latin transcription of 1353 letter page 24