

DOES POLLEN ON THE TURIN SHROUD SHOW IT CAME FROM JESUS' COUNTRY?

The Turin Shroud is the most famous relic in the world. Millions believe that it is the burial cloth of Jesus Christ bearing his crucified and bloodied image. The cloth is kept at Turin in Italy. The cloth is an enigma. Many say it is a miracle. Believers present a lot of odd evidence for believing it is really from God.

Robin Lane Fox observed that there is evidence that the Eddesa cloth was not older than 560 AD. It was probably discovered thanks to a battle around that time (page 250, *The Unauthorized Version*). He says the tests that showed pollen from plants in Jerusalem and Edessa on the Turin Shroud were unsatisfactory and failed to show that the Turin Shroud was the same as the Edessa Cloth. The Jesus Conspiracy page 28 for a book determined to show that the Shroud was authentic is admirable for admitting that there was no pollen from the Olive Trees and grasses which were and are common around Jerusalem. It also confesses that no proper answer has been found to this problem. The answer of course is that the Shroud was never in Jerusalem.

We must remember too that Walter McCrone reexamined the work of Frei which claimed that pollen from the Holy Land was on the cloth. Frei took tape samples from the cloth to identify pollen.

Frei found nothing from Palestinian olive trees. What is not found is more important than what was found. If there is one thing that would have been on the real shroud it is that.

Frei's tape samples showed little pollen barring one which held too much pollen for comfort - it was as if it were introduced after being used on the Shroud. McCrone mentioned how it was proven that Frei was a crook and a liar. This does not prove his work with the Shroud was a fraud in itself. But the work itself indicates that he was up to his old tricks.

Steven D Schafersman said it was incomprehensible how a cloth that had travelled over Europe and been exposed at times ended up with no pollen on it but pollen from Palestine, Istanbul and the Antaloian steppe. To me that suggests the cloth is not as old as believers want to think. It was made at the time the carbon dating showed and more or less kept indoors which explains the lack of pollen. The pollen that is there was planted.

Please read the book, *Relics of the Christ* by Joe Nickell, University of Kentucky Press for the lowdown on Frei's work.

Even if the tests had been valid there are questions. How do we know that the pollen from Palestine wasn't added when interest grew in the Shroud or when the microscope was invented which made many believe it would soon be possible to see pollen and identify the country of its origin? It's a matter of shaking flowers from Palestine over the cloth. If the Shroud washed in the past, is the same as the Turin Shroud it is proof that Frei's work was suspect. He was going to try and authenticate the cloth by examining the pollen - some feat when he knew from its history there could be no pollen from Jesus' time on it!

The arguments in favour of the Shroud from the pollen are still being published and circulated. The dishonesty of those who want to believe and who want others to believe is worrying. They prove that faith enables fundamentalism and opposition to facts.

Read this quote: *Flowers And Pollen Grains*: Avinoam Danin, a botanist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, reported in 1997 that he had identified *Chrysanthemum coronarium* (now called *Glebionis coronaria*), *Cistus creticus* and *Zygophyllum* on the Shroud. He claimed that pressed image of these flowers on the shroud was first noticed by Alan Whanger in 1985 on the photographs of the shroud that were taken in 1931. He claimed that the outlines of these flowering plants would point to March or April in and around Jerusalem. However, the presence of such impression on the Shroud could not be verified by others who feel that it is a matter of seeing what one wishes to see within irregular patterns. From

We must remember that the mystery of the image is not the only mystery. The pollen one though far less interesting is the biggest mystery. It is fatal to authenticity. Do not obsess about the image - it is easy to for it is ethereal and arresting but that does not mean that it is the only mystery that matters.

1355, is as far back as we may be able to go in tracing the history of the Turin cloth. Nothing for certain then could ever be gleaned from the pollen.