

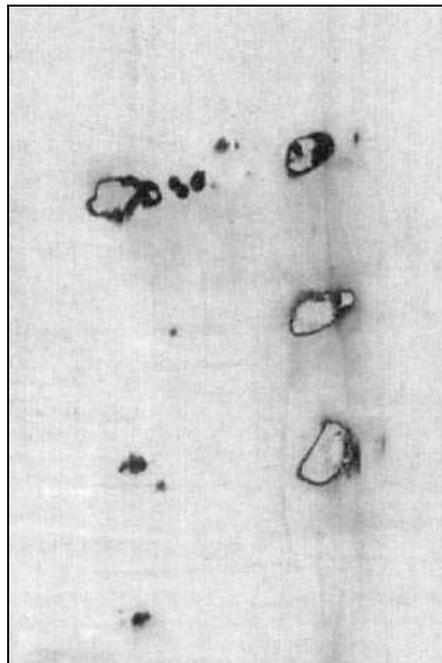
THE SHROUD'S MISSING YEARS - A NEW THEORY

The years between 1204 and 1357 have been called the Shroud's "missing years", and various theories offered to account for them. Not long ago the Society heard from Hungarian scholar Dr. Eugene Csocsán de Varallja his hypothesis that at the time of the Crusader sack of Constantinople the Hungarian-born empress Mary-Margaret took charge of the cloth, and after a period in Thessalonica it spent some time in part of present-day Hungary before the Knights Templar whisked it to France.

Now a German scholar, Dr. W.K. Müller of Wiesloch has come up with a quite different theory: that the Shroud spent part of the time in what is present-day Germany. Dr. Müller's manuscript *Festive encounters - The sojourn of the Turin Shroud in Franconia (1229 - 1245)* is in German, but he has recently kindly provided a summary in English, of which the following is an abbreviated digest:

"In the year 1203 ... the 'Holy Mandylion' [i.e. the Shroud] went across to the French Templar André de Joinville, who took it with him to the Centre of the Order at Acre, where it was used for a special cult. This cult was condemned by Pope Innocent III.

With the intention of humiliating the Templars and welding them into a great coalition of Crusaders, in 1228 the patriarch of Jerusalem prepared to charge the order with heresy. The Templar André de Joinville was arrested, the Shroud confiscated, and a trial by fire was held [see below], which the Shroud failed.



Scars of the 'trial by fire' theorised by Dr. Müller?
One of the four sets of pre-1532 poker holes visible on the Shroud

whereupon the Emperor Frederick II, charged with passing sentence, handed the matter over to a young Franconian knight, Conrad of Hohenlohe-Brauneck. Making his own investigations, Conrad not only came to the conclusion that the Shroud might genuinely be

that of Christ, he also managed to persuade the Emperor of this. As a result André de Joinville was set free, enabling Conrad to return with him and the Shroud to Franconia, where the Shroud was housed in a special Chapel at Burgerroth.

During a subsequent period of unrest the Shroud became transferred for safety to another, remote chapel in the care of the Archbishop of Cologne. Then, following the overthrow of Frederick II, it was decided that the Shroud had to leave German territory. Conrad of Hohenlohe's younger sister Cunegundis married a nobleman of the House of Weinsberg, and this couple went into exile to Champagne in France, taking the Shroud with them. In Champagne the de Joinville family provided them with the necessary minimum of estates and the title "De Charny". With the fall of the Staufian dynasty in Franconia, this von Weinsberg/De Charny settlement in Champagne became permanent, while two brothers of a side-branch of the de Joinville family acquired Cunegundis of Hohenlohe's dowry, a large but scattered assemblage of estates in Franconia.

Via descent from the von Weinsberg connection the Shroud passed to Geoffrey de Charny of Lirey, to his son of the same name, and finally to Margaret de Charny who, dying childless, bequeathed it to the House of Savoy."

Without a detailed knowledge of Dr. Müller's sources, and fluent German, it is almost impossible to determine whether there is any serious substance to his arguments. Any member interested to pursue Dr. Müller's theories is invited to get in touch with him direct at Schillerstr. 23, D-6908 Wiesloch, R.F.G.