

**FLORAL IMAGES AND POLLEN GRAINS ON THE SHROUD OF TURIN:
AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. ALAN WHANGER AND DR. AVINOAM DANIN**

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Recent information suggests that bunches or bouquets of flowers and floral materials were once placed on the Shroud of Turin which left pollen grains and imprints of plants and flowers on the linen cloth. Such information provides evidence regarding the origin of this precious cloth in the Holy Land.

In 1995, Israeli botanist and expert on the plant life of Israel, **Dr. Avinoam Danin**, a Professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was asked by **Dr. Alan Whanger**, Professor Emeritus at Duke University in North Carolina, to confirm floral images which Alan and his wife **Mary** had noted on Shroud photographs. They were later joined by **Dr. Uri Baruch** of the Israel Antiquities Authority, a palynologist and expert on Israel's pollen. Danin studied the plant images and Baruch analyzed the pollen grains found by the late Swiss criminologist and botanist **Dr. Max Frei** via the sticky tape collection of materials that Frei had taken from the Shroud in 1973 and 1978.

Twelve years earlier, in 1983, **Oswald Scheuermann**, a German physics teacher, advised Dr. Alan Whanger that he could see flowerlike patterns around the face of the Man of the Shroud. In 1985, Whanger spotted the faint outline of petals of a flower noted by Scheuermann and identified as "*the inflorescence of the crown chrysanthemum (Chrysanthemum coronarium)*" (Danin). The Whangers continued to find many images of plants by examining the photographically enhanced excellent black and white photographs of **Giuseppi Enrie** taken in 1931. They compared their findings with the authoritative botanical work of **Michael Zohary** and Naomi Feinbrun's "*Flora Palaestina*" to tentatively identify 28 types of plants. Whanger noted that all 28 plants grow in Israel. The Whangers approached Danin, who largely verified their conclusions and found additional images of "*one species the Whangers already named, fragments of a rope and a node of reed on what look like a stick.*" (Danin).

The Provenance of the Shroud:

The pollen grains and floral images serve as "***geographic and calendar indicators***," (Danin) demonstrating that the origin or provenance of the Shroud was definitely the Holy Land. Evidence suggests also that the flowers were picked in the Spring from an area in and around Jerusalem including an area between Jerusalem and Jericho. Danin notes that "***...they could have been picked up fresh in the fields. A few of the species could be found in the markets of Jerusalem in the Spring of the year***" - a period consistent with the time of the Passover and the Crucifixion.

The floral images found by the Whangers included hundreds of flowers - many in the vicinity of the head of the Man of the Shroud but "***many others including several bouquets extending down to the level of the waist***" including some on the chest and abdomen. (Whanger). In addition to the Crown Chrysanthemum, Danin confirmed the image of the Rock Rose (*Cistus creticus*) identifying images of a bouquet of Rock Rose lateral to the left cheek of the human figure on the Shroud. Dr. Frei had found grains of Rock Rose pollen as early as 1973. This finding was approved by Dr. Uri Baruch in 1998. As Danin states it: "***The fact that the existence of this plant image on the shroud has been demonstrated by two independent botanical methods proves beyond a reasonable doubt that plants of this species were placed on the shroud at one time.***"

In 1997, Danin, while visiting the Whangers, noted a bouquet including bean caper plants (*Zygophyllum dumosum*) which the Whangers had noticed but had not fully identified and did not publish. In establishing the provenance of the Shroud, Danin indicates that *Zygophyllum dumosum* is the most significant plant on the list, stating that: "***As Zygophyllum dumosum grows only in Israel, Jordan and Sinai, its appearance helps to definitely limit the Shroud's place of origin.***" In very recent correspondence, Dr. Danin advised: "***At present, I give a higher weight to Gundelia tournefortii because of the (presence) of plenty of pollen grains of the latter and its image on the Shroud. Both species (Zygophyllum dumosum and Gundelia tournefortii) are necessary for locating the origin of the Shroud.***" Dr. Whanger notes that the Crown of Thorns was made mostly with the *Gundelia tournefortii* tumbleweed.

Conclusion:

Drs. Whanger, Danin and Baruch point out that, while the presence of floral images and pollen grains on the Shroud defines the place of origin as the Holy

Land, they do not, of themselves, identify the Man of the Shroud with the historical Jesus of Nazareth. This author concludes that such images and pollen grains coming from the Holy Land, most from an area in and around Jerusalem and representing flowers and floral materials picked in the Spring, strongly support the case for authenticity and add to the growing body of evidence that the Shroud of Turin is the same cloth in which the historical Jesus of Nazareth was buried.

June 6, 1999

Quotes are from the article "Pressed Flowers: Where Did The Shroud of Turin Originate? A Botanical Quest" by Avinoam Danin (Reprinted from ERETZ Magazine, November/December 1997) [available on the Internet at <http://www.shroud.com/danin.htm>]; from information provided in Dr. Danin's lecture at the III Congress On The Shroud - Turin, Italy 1998 [now also available on the Internet at <http://www.shroud.com/danin2.htm>]; from recent correspondence with Dr. Alan Whanger and Dr. Avinoam Danin; and from Dr. Alan and Mary Whanger's recent book *The Shroud Of Turin: An Adventure of Discovery* (Providence House Publishers, Franklin, Tennessee - tele: 800-321-5692) 1998.

Further Information:

Dr. Alan and Mary Whanger will present "**The Real Date of the Shroud: the Visual Evidence**" at the coming Shroud of Turin International Research Conference in Richmond, Virginia on Saturday, June 19th afternoon session. Further details on the conference can be obtained via the website <http://members.aol.com/turin99/shroud.htm>.

Dr. Avinoam Danin will present "**The Flora of the Shroud of Turin**" at the International Botanical Congress in St. Louis, Missouri during the evening of August 4, 1999. Information about the meeting may be found on the website <http://www.abc99.org>.

John C. Iannone, Shroud lecturer and author of "*The Mystery of the Shroud of Turin: New Scientific Evidence*" (Alba House-NY-1998) will present the opening address "**The Shroud of Turin: The Case for Authenticity**" at the National Church and Synagogue Library Association Conference at the Hyatt Airport Hotel in Orlando, Florida on July 25, 1999. The same lecture will be

presented at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. to the faculty and student body in the Fall - 1999 (date to be determined). For further information, e-mail JCI@theshroudofturin.com or go to the website <http://www.theshroudofturin.com>.