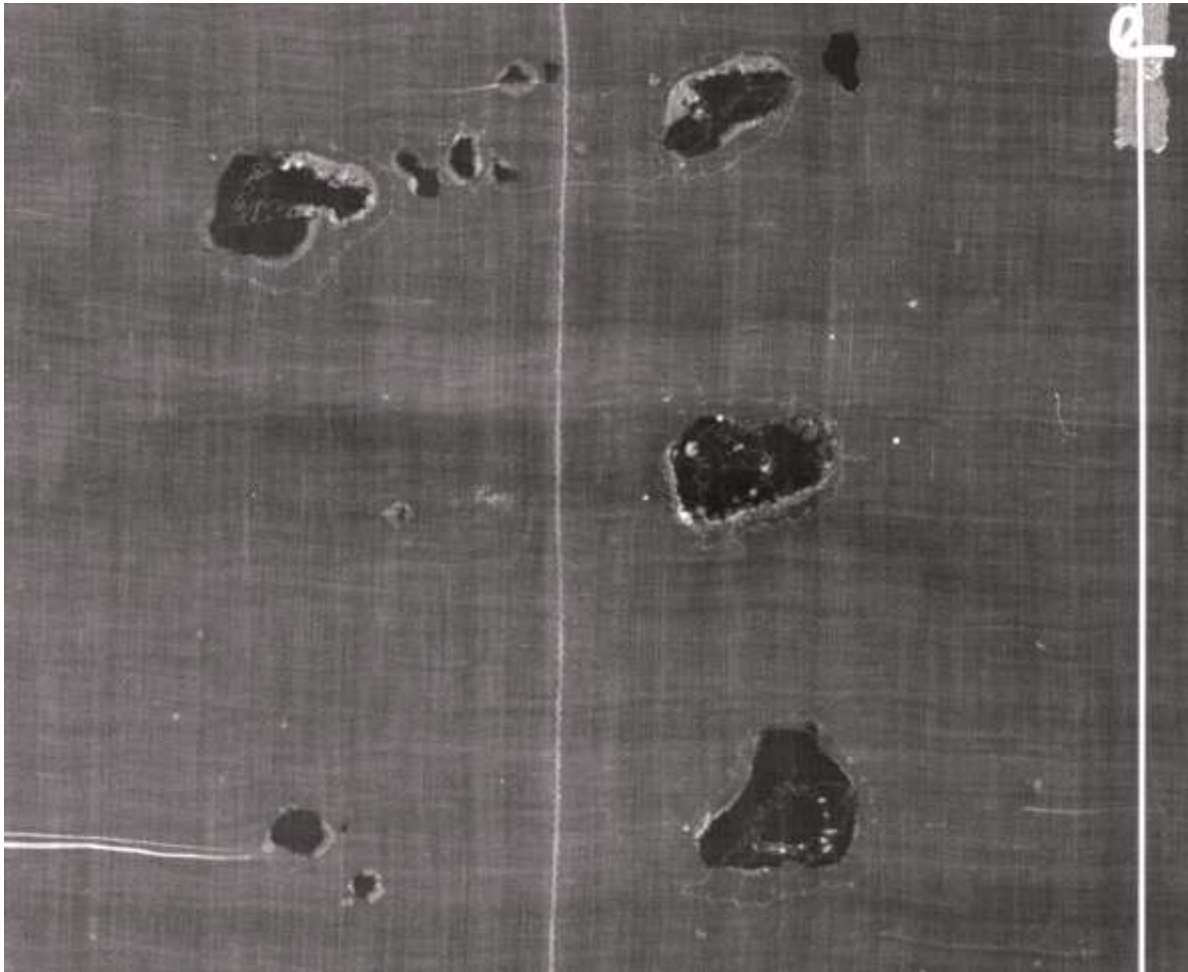# SHROUD X-RADIOGRAPHS

As previously noted, full-size X-radiographs of every portion of the Shroud have recently been given to the Society. We owe these to the kindness of William (Bill) Mottern of the Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dr. William Airth-Kindree of the Medical Computing Laboratory, Urbana, Illinois, and Dr. Ben Williams and colleagues of the Radiology Department, Mercy Hospital, Urbana.

A detail of one of the X-radiographs, featuring the so-called "poker holes" that pre-date the 1532 fire, is shown below:

Note the stitching around the largest holes, one of the many features of textile interest.

The X-radiographs are currently being studied by John Tyrer, who will be leading the discussion on them on the 26th. October, and he remarks:

"I am very interested in the comparison that can be made between the altar cloth used to patch the Shroud, the Shroud itself, and the backing cloth. The altar cloth can be seen without Shroud superimposed where the burn holes occur. The backing cloth can be seen without Shroud or altar cloth superimposed where the patches do not extend to cover the holes. The altar cloth and the backing cloth are plain woven, and are much better products than the Shroud. They seem to contain less weaving faults whilst the Shroud is a very poor product by comparison. It is full of warp and weft weaving defects, many mistakes in 'drawing-in'. The impression I am left with is that the cloth is a much cruder and probably earlier fabric than the backing and patches, This I think lifts the Shroud out of the Middle Ages more than anything I have seen about the textile.

After I examined the X-ray pictures I re-read the account in *Shroud Spectrum* (issue no. 2, March 1982, pp.19-27) about the patching done by the Poor Clare nuns. If I might wax a little emotional, I felt very moved and close to their predicament rather than critical of what is really poor workmanship in the patching. In an odd way I was brought nearer to the Shroud and its history by this than I have so far been by the image itself even. Perhaps I was 'picking up' their overwhelming piety ..."