

WEAVING MYTH & MAGIC

by Suzette Bernard

On occasion, researching ancient weaves can uncover some interesting information

Take for instance the Twentieth Century Fox Studio movie "The Robe" from the early 1950's. Based on the novel by Lloyd Douglas, the robe is a symbol of Christ in the movie--the seamless robe Christ wore before the Crucifixion and for which the Roman centurians cast lots. In accordance with the policy of the studio, every detail of the picture needed to be as historically accurate as possible, including the seamless garment, handwoven as in Biblical times, used for the robe.

A handweaver from the Los Angeles area, Dorothea Hulse, wove the garment. A great deal of research and experimenting went into the production of the garment. Charles LeMaire, costume designer for the movie, did many drawings, Yarn markets in this country and in Europe were searched for the right grade of sheep's wool for it had to be of the type used in Galilee at the time of the Crucifixion. Mrs. Hulse's own copy of Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible gave them a description of how yarn was spun, dyed with walnut shells, and woven in the first century. They also had a contemporary sample of a robe, woven in Bethlehem, as a replica of the garment.

The appropriately textured yarn was found in England but it was much too heavy. Research had brought out that the garment was "finely textured." In the book (and the script) the Robe is not only worn by Christ, it is also carried in the tunic belt of Marcellus, in the knapsack of Demetrius, and passed from the hands of Marcellus to Diana, to Peter. Once the problem of the yarn was solved, the garment was planned using tubular and double weave, using four shuttles to make the neck and arm openings.

The garment, once finished, was not yet free of problems. The walnut dye was deemed "unphotogenic" and had to go through another dye bath to be "technicolor-perfect." And, in addition to being insured for \$50,000, three duplicates were made.

About the weaver . . . Dorothea Hulse did much therapeutic work in California, private tutoring (how many of us remember Gail Patrick!), and had her own weaving shop. She also had a previous motion picture studio assignment --weaving Susan Hayward's costumes for "David and Bathsheba," which were so light that a six to eight-yard length could be pulled through a wedding ring without wrinkling.

Perhaps one of our local television stations will have a showing of "The Robe" and we can take a closer look at this "handwoven" garment!

NOTE: this has been based on an article by Bertha Marshall from the Summer 1953 issue of Handweaver & Craftsman.

please wear name tags at Guild meetings;
it will help us know one another

BULLETIN BOARD



Members notices published here at no charge. Non-members may place classified ads at 15¢ per word.

FOR SALE

2-harness floor loom, good condition. Weaves 36"-48". Make an offer. Call: Wendy Sporleder: H 645-3897. W 544-2957.

FOR SALE

Weaving books at two-thirds of purchase price or best offer. Call Marj Pohlmann, 825-2751.

Production Weaver Wanted. Call 333-7246 between 9 & 3.

MOVING???

If so, please fill out the following form and send it to the Guild office (2402 University Ave., St. Paul 55114) as soon as possible. The Guild newsletter is sent by bulk mail, and unless specifically requested to, the Post Office does not forward bulk rate mail.

Please address all correspondence about membership records to the Guild office, also.

name _____
 old address _____

 zip code _____
 new address _____
 city _____
 state _____
 zip code _____
 new phone number _____
 (include area code if other than 612)

THE MINNESOTA WEAVER

Weavers Guild of Minnesota
2402 University Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55114
612/644-3594



published 11 times a year by the Weavers Guild of Minnesota, a non-profit organization.

Editor Suzette Bernard
 Art Mary Lis, Dianne Swanson, Suzette Bernard
 Photography many sources!
 Articles and Columns: Mary Lis, Caroline Miller, Mary Skoy, Phyllis Waggoner, Marie Nodland, Kathy McMahon, Connie Magoffin, Paul O'Connor, Ann Fox, Peggy Benson, Susan Carr, Pat Hiltz, Susan Marschalk, Irene Wood, Janet Meany

The Weavers Guild of Minnesota, Inc., is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Items for the Guild newsletter, The Minnesota Weaver, should be submitted to the Guild office by the first of each month.