

Tower of London, Martin TowerTextile

Elisabeth Crowfoot

- AML.820390. fragments, all from the same textile, ?warp, flax, undyed, 2 spun, ?weft, wool, dark emerald green, 2 spun, weave tabby (plain), count 11-12/8 threads per cm, surface probably napped.
- (a) c.2.0 (4.0 cm folded double) X 9.0 cm, iron nail at one end, and scrap 2.5 X 4.0 cm.
 - (b) c.2.0 (as in a) X 4.5 cm, two iron nails one end, one also holding a scrap of leather with a straight-cut edge 2 cm from the folded edge of the fabric; the leather is light brown with copper-coloured gilding, painted also over the nail that holds it.
 - (c) fragment fabric with double fold, c.2.8 X 3.0 cm, probably from the corner, one nail going through both folds and also holding a torn scrap of gilded leather, similar to that on (b).
 - (d) fragment 2.0 (folded) X 5.3 cm, with one nail hole.

The photograph shows that these fragments were originally nailed to the top edge of a wooden partition, where it was fastened to the cross-beam of the wall. The textile was probably used to cover the partition in the same way that "green baize" was used to cover passage doors, though baize is correctly an all-wool fabric. There is no way of telling how much of the green textile was covered by the gilded leather, but the cut edge perhaps suggests it was simply an edging strip.

The evidence of the dye used in the textile (see below) suggests a late 19th century date.

Fibres

H.C.Appleyard, F.T.I.

?Warp, bast fibres; the cross-sectional shape suggests they are flax.
 ?Weft, green dyed wool in good condition, medium diameter fibres, some having fragmental medullae.

Dye

Penelope Walton

The sample contained indigotin, with an unidentifiable yellow dye, whose spectrum was masked by the powerful synthetic blue. The first synthetic dyestuff (mauveine) began to be used commercially in 1857. However, this sample was not very fast, and generally reacted like one of the early synthetics, so probably pre-20th century.