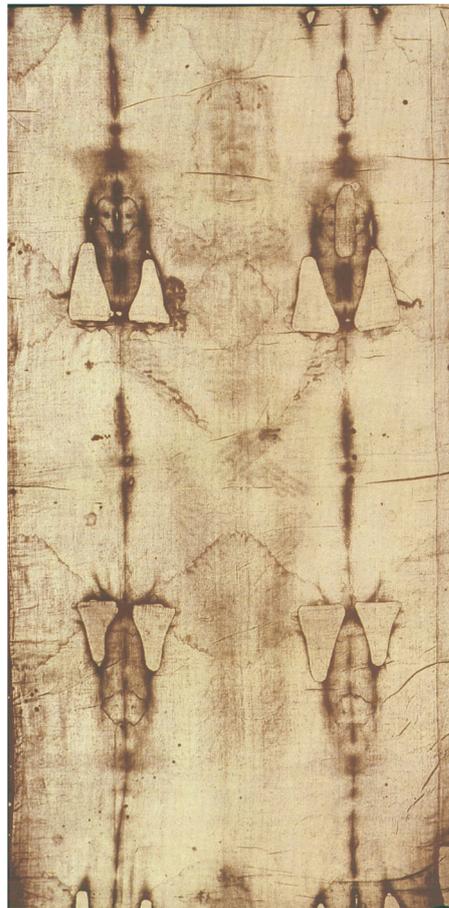


650 YEARS OF A FALSE SHROUD AND TRUE STUPIDITY

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HOW WAS THE SHROUD OF TURIN MADE?



More than 6 centuries ago Pope Clement VII, knowing that the currently known Shroud of Turin was a forgery, allowed for it to be exhibited in public and let the mob believe it was an authentic burial cloth of Jesus. Today the Church exhibits it itself, and the mob believes just the same.

Around 1357 canons from a tiny church in Lirey, near Troyes in France, exhibited a piece of linen. That was supposed to be the authentic burial cloth, in which Christ's body was wrapped after his deposition from the cross and on which his naked body purportedly left its imprint. Initially from France, and later on from all over Europe, travellers flowed to Lirey, while a flow of money ran to the owners of the shroud – not only to them, actually, as the real business rapidly developed around the cloth: various devotional articles and relics were sold, including lead lockets with the image of the shroud, and it was also necessary to provide board and lodging for thousands of pilgrims. Obviously, not free of charge. Lirey, once a paltry place, soon turned into one of the most important centres in the Christian world.

Having heard the rumour about the Jesus' shroud, the bishop from nearby Troyes, Henri de Poitiers, instituted an inquiry. The canons had not even asked him for a permission to open exhibitions, which was unusual. Suspicion arose that the shroud was a forgery and its disposers were in possession of no proof of cloth's origin. They would later on be claiming that it used to be in possession of the founder of the Lirey church himself, brave knight Geoffrey de Charny – Geoffrey was dead by then, mind you. An explanation convenient yet incredible. As there are documents left which should mention the shroud in question if it had existed in Geoffrey's lifetime, but none of them contains the slightest indication of the linen bearing the image of Jesus. The shroud must have had a shady origin. And it did.

There was a far more important reason to start an inquiry than the insubordination of the canons. The Bishop and his milieu were well aware that the gospels, the scripts of the Fathers of the Church and the entire Christian tradition could not have remained silent with regard to such an unprecedented evidence. Yet they did keep silent. The shroud must have been a forgery. And it was.

Following the Bishop's inquiry, the shroud-maker was found who revealed how the shroud had been created. In the surviving document from those days there is no mention of either the name of the artist or, what is more important, the way the cloth was forged – the latter being the inspiration for various cranks announcing the shroud's authenticity as well as obsessed scientists who lost a large piece of mind for a little piece of linen. The Bishop's inquiry led to the discovery of not only the shroud-maker but the originator of the entire exhibition swindle, too: that was the Dean of the Lirey church himself, the one who obtained the fake relic in order to attract pilgrims and thus mend the church's budget. And to be sure, his own, too.

When the truth was discovered, the canons gave up exhibiting and hid the cloth. They decided to display it again in 1389 but at the time a new party joined the dealings – this was Geoffrey II, the son of Geoffrey de Charny. If the cloth's guardians had hoped the truth would have been forgotten after over thirty years had passed – they were in the wrong.

Bishop Pierre d'Arcis, the successor of the Bishop who discovered the fraud, also had a closer look at the issue in question and stated that the shroud was a forgery. He was also acquainted with the findings of his predecessor, and the witnesses to that scandal were still alive and had been interrogated by him for sure. He threatened the frauds with excommunication and forbade them to exhibit the fake relic. The frauds refused to obey. And they took steps enabling them to display the cloth despite Bishop's ban.

Having wrapped him around their little finger by lies, half-truths and concealments, they beguiled Cardinal Pierre de Thury, pope's legate, who happened to be staying in the vicinity, out of the permission to place the cloth in the church which was interpreted as Cardinal's permission to hold public exhibitions – and they did arrange such exhibitions. D'Arcis turned

to Pope Clement VII for intervention. The latter, without examining the case and listening to the Bishop, ordered him as regards the cloth – to remain silent for ever. Pope’s odd reaction becomes clear when we learn that the canons’ associate, Geoffrey II, was Pope’s close relative – his widowed mother got re-married to the Pope’s uncle. The matter was settled in the family. Geoffrey did one more thing: he got married to a niece of a certain bishop – the first one to have revealed the fraud! It was a love-match, to be sure.

Geoffrey II turned for the permission to exhibit the cloth also to Charles VI, the King of France, who, like the Cardinal, had been treacherously deceived, and not only did he give the permission but also allocated the King’s Guards of Honour to keep watch over the alleged relic.

Bishop d’Arcis responded by presenting the King with the true facts. Having learnt that he had been misled, the king revoked his earlier permission, issued a requisition order and sent a court executive to confiscate the forged cloth. Yet he did not obtain it. The then Dean of the Lirey church (the original culprit was already dead) refused to hand over the linen and the executor returned empty-handed.

Bishop d’Arcis addressed the Pope again – this time presenting him with all the facts and body of evidence in favour of the forgery:

The case, Holy Father, stands thus. Some time since in this diocese of Troyes the Dean of a certain collegiate church, to wit, that of Lirey, falsely and deceitfully, being consumed with the passion of avarice, and not from any motive of devotion but only of gain, procured for his church a certain cloth cunningly painted, upon which by a clever sleight of hand was depicted the twofold image of one man, that is to say, the back and front, he falsely declaring and pretending that this was the actual shroud in which our Saviour Jesus Christ was enfolded in the tomb, and upon which the whole likeness of the Saviour had remained thus impressed together with the wounds which He bore.

This story was put about not only in the kingdom of France, but, so to speak, throughout the world, so that from all parts people came together to view it. And further to attract the multitude so that money might cunningly be wrung from them, pretended miracles were worked, certain men being hired to represent themselves as healed at the moment of the exhibition of the shroud, which all believed to be the shroud of our Lord.

Besides, the Bishop made the Pope aware that his predecessor on the bishop’s throne, Henri de Poitiers, had already conducted an inquest into the matter – stated the fraud, found the artist who had created the cloth and learned from him how the cloth had been made.

Eventually, after diligent inquiry and examination, he discovered the fraud and how the said cloth had been cunningly painted, the truth being attested by the artist who had painted it, to wit, that it was a work of human skill and not miraculously wrought or bestowed.

Confronting the presented evidence, the Pope had to admit that the alleged Christ’s shroud was an ordinary cloth bearing the image of Jesus’ dead body plotted by the artist. By an act of nepotistic concession to a relative, though, and driven by the desire for a business to keep going, he gave his assent to exhibitions: the cloth, however, was to be displayed without candles, incenses or any other celebration. Moreover, the exhibitions were to be accompanied by an explicit statement to the public that *this was not an authentic shroud of Our Lord yet a copy and an image of Christ’s shroud.*

The ban on claiming the shroud’s authenticity was, however, no obstacle for the frauds who had already experienced the problem and knew how to cope with it. For, as Bishop d’Arcis pointed out: [...] *although it is not publicly stated to be the true shroud of Christ, nevertheless*

this is given out and noised abroad in private, and so it is believed by many, the more so, because, as stated above, it was on the previous occasion declared to be the true shroud of Christ, and by a certain ingenious manner of speech it is now in the said church styled not the sudarium [shroud] but the sanctuarium [relic], which to the ears of the common folk, who are not keen to observe distinctions, sounds much the same thing [...].

In 1395 Bishop d’Arcis dies, and three years later – so does Geoffrey II. The shroud drama now stages his daughter – Marguerite de Charny and the canons of Lirey. So far they have been collaborators, but they will go separate ways. They will become inflamed with the fight for the cloth.

In 1418, when Lirey is threatened with military action, the canons allow Marguerite to take the cloth to Montfort castle. Her second husband, Earl Humbert, draws up a receipt which enumerates all the church gems and relics, including the shroud, to be taken away from Lirey. He describes it not as the authentic Christ’s shroud but as its *image* only. How can the earl know that this is not the real burial cloth of Jesus when everybody else roars so? Without fail, from the canons or/and his own wife. No other source could be more reliable.

After the cloth was removed from Lirey, for many years to come Marguerite would exhibit and show the alleged Christ’s shroud round Europe. In contravention of the Pope’s prohibition, she avoided univocal statement that it was only the work of an artist and the crowds believed they were watching the real shroud of Jesus. Yet she could not be expected to cut the branch she was sitting on. Let us be human.

In 1449 the cloth was exhibited in Chimay, the diocese of Liège, Belgium. Alarmed by the rumours that it was the authentic shroud of Christ, the Bishop of the diocese, Jean de Heinsberg, instituted an inquiry into the matter – so far the third one in the cloth’s history. The investigating team called by him asked Marguerite to present the relic’s proof of origin, which for obvious reasons Marguerite could not do. As the chronicler of those days Cornelius Zantfliet reports, she only showed four permissions to exhibit the cloth. All of them bluntly stated that it was simply a piece of art while Marguerite herself added that her grandfather obtained the cloth as a spoil of war. Her father, Geoffrey II, was telling a different story, though: that his begetter received it from someone as a gift. The latter might even be the truth, albeit perfidious; brave Geoffrey de Charny might have indeed received the cloth as a gift – from the artful Dean who had ordered the shroud to be made by an artist! Anyhow, the show in Chimay was not successful. Neither was the subsequent display of the cloth in the castle of Germolles, which suggests, that there, too, somebody took a closer look at the purported relic. Feeling beset and being of advanced age, Marguerite decided to sell the cloth.

A naive purchaser was rich Duke Louis I of Savoy who in 1453 gave in return for a piece of cloth the castle of Varambon and the revenues of the manor house and town of Miribel – the transaction which should place Marguerite de Charny in the Guinness Book. The canons of course raised an outcry but, despite their successful judicial claims to receive their property back and the writ of excommunication against Marguerite issued by the court in Besançon, they never recovered the cloth. And the church of Lirey, deprived of its receipts from exhibitions, crumbled into ruin.

A dozen years later or so the true origin of the fake shroud started to sink into oblivion and Pope Sixtus IV declared that this was the authentic burial cloth of Christ: [...] *the Shroud in which the body of Christ was wrapped when he was taken down from the Cross. This is now preserved with great devotion by the Dukes of Savoy, and it is coloured with the blood of Christ.*

The Savoys exhibited the cloth on various occasions – not only in Chambéry, where it was permanently stationed, but in other towns of Savoy, too. In 1506 Pope Julius II even instituted a special shroud holiday to be celebrated on May 4 which was extended to all of Savoy by Leo X. This time there is no requirement to proclaim this is only the work of art as ordered by Clement VII, just the opposite: the cloth is exhibited as the authentic shroud of Jesus, with all the pomp and celebrations due for such a wonderful relic.

In 1578 the cloth is moved to Turin where its exhibitions will be held for some time, and there it will stay until contemporary times. Finally, as a gift to Pope John Paul II it will travel to the Vatican that will exhibit it with all solemnity, drawing, as in the Middle Ages, countless crowds – but this time incomparably more numerous. And as in the Dark Ages, the common herd will believe it to be the authentic burial cloth of Jesus.

The farther we move from the times of the cloth concoctation and discovery of the fraud, the stronger the faith in the authenticity of the fake shroud. In 1936 Pope Pia XI states that the cloth is the authentic cloth of Jesus, for *beyond any doubt it was not man-made*. In 1973, during the first presentation of the Turin Shroud on television Pope Paul VI will cry out: *What a mercy it is to see Jesus, Him, true Him! Look, neither time nor distance deprived us of this mercy*. A poor, stray sheep. John Paul II behaves in a more sensible way. Although he does use the term “relic” and says that the cloth witnessed Christ’s resurrection which suggests it is authentic, but at least from time to time he uses a conditional clause – if what shroud specialists say is true. Let’s see then what shroud researchers have to say.

The picture on the cloth is a negative, but since photography was invented as late as contemporary times, a negative image could not have been taken in the Middle Ages, before it was invented. Hullo! Hullo!

Negative prints were possible not only in the Middle Ages but even thousands of years earlier. On the walls of prehistorical caves there are imprints of human palms covered in paint that have the same negativity as a figure on the Turin Shroud. Old herbals contain the prints of plants which are negatives, too. Negativity can be achieved in many other ways. For example, one can put a cloth on the medallion coming from the Middle Ages with the image of the Lirey shroud and rub powdered dye into it, thus getting a negative image of the medallion. The wet and dry method was applied in the old days to depict flat objects. Negative images can be seen in gothic Westminster Abbey in England: these are pencil rubbings on carbon paper depicting tombstones. The Chinese used rubbings to create negatives as early as the 2nd century whereas in Europe this method has been used at least since the 12th century in all sorts of replicas. Medieval artists made negative images at once even when painting portraits of Jesus, as the eleventh-century mosaic in the Grecian monastery Hesios Lucas proves. The concept of negativity/positivity has been know to people from time immemorial: it is the basis for the seals used for clay plates, casting bas-reliefs by way of moulds, printing and template-making. The funniest thing is that the shroudists babbling about the impossibility of producing negatives without the use of photography unintentionally produce them using the non-photographic method: when leaving their imprints in the wet ground! And what about dinosaurs – they too left the negative imprints of their paws in the wet sand. There is of course the way the artist-forger cunningly created his canvas, but how the Turin Shroud was made – this will come later.

Once upon a time there was a researcher as quick-witted as the shroudists. He discovered ancient drawings of human skeletons on the rocks and gashed in amazement: how could people know what a human skeleton looked like before the invention of X-ray pictures? The shroudists should get in touch with him.

The imprint on the Turin Shroud is a perfect photographic negative...or a stronger version of the twaddle about the unfeasible negative.

The picture on the shroud is not a photographic negative. It is something else. The cloth image intensity stands in inverse proportion to the distance between the cloth and what was under it. That is, the parts of the purported body the closest to the cloth like a protruding nose would have a darker representation on the linen while those further removed from the cloth would be in the highlight, whereas shadow gradations are proportionate in nature: the closer a given part of the body to the cloth, the darker its imprint on the cloth. This has nothing to do with a photographic negative which does not reveal such a characteristic. Photographic plate density is not correlated with the distance between a camera and a photographed object, that is the nose of a photographed person is not going to have more image darkness on the plate because it is closer to the camera than the mouth – it might even be the opposite. Negative density is correlated with something completely different: the tone of a photographed object and its reflectance. Thus, if we photograph a naked body, negative density will depend solely on the tone of the body and its reflectance, and will have nothing to do with the body topography, that is its relief.

Not being a photographic negative, the image on the cloth can neither be a perfect photonegative, as shroudists claim. Something else is perfect here, though: their ignorance and foolishness.

The presence of pollens typical of plants growing in the countries of the Near East was discovered on the Turin Shroud, which proves it is the burial cloth of Christ. Neither does it prove, nor can it prove this.

The main seeker of pollens on the Turin Shroud was a Swiss criminologist Max Frei. His report is not scientifically credible as he did not observe scientific standards – he did not for example use control samples. Professional palynologists, i.e. experts in the study of pollen, harshly criticized Frei and found his findings to be deprived of credibility.

In addition, Frei was a researcher as naive as a child: he acknowledged the authenticity of Hitler's memoirs for they were written by the same hand as the letters of the Führer. Surely, by the same one, for the letters were written and delivered by the same cheats who had fabricated the memoirs! Frei took the samples by small stripes of sticky tape, which makes the findings statistically insignificant. Contrary to his statement that he had found numerous pollens on the cloth, the subsequent studies of the notorious Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) did not detect a big number of pollens, although STURP itself was no better: their pollen findings are not statistically significant, either. Huge patches of sticky tape should be used to cover the entire cloth and the study should be carried out by professional palynologists. Frei was not a palynologist, and in STURP there was no such expert. Pollens were searched for afterwards by other shroud researchers yet still, as for the evidence, nothing comes out of it – and nothing can. Shall we see why?

There are pollens of plants from the Near East – all right. So what? This does not constitute the evidence that they got onto the cloth right in the 1st century of the new era. They could be carried in the Middle Ages on the clothes of pilgrims who arrived to see shroud's exhibitions from almost "all over the world". Troyes, from whereabouts the shroud appeared, was famous for the trade of fabrics and its textile trade fairs. The cloth could just as well be brought by merchants, that is come from the near-eastern import – and this is where the pollens come from. So much for the shroudists and their pollinated thinking about pollens.

There is blood on the shroud, which proves that the cloth is authentic. Oops! Even if there is – the shroud can still be a forgery.

The alleged bloodstains on the shroud are consistent with the evangelical account of the crucifixion of Christ. They are where they should be: on the wrist, foot, on the spot pierced by the spear, and there are trickles of blood at the top of the head from the crown of thorns. There are also marks left by whipping, and even abrasions on the shoulder from carrying the cross, as hawk-eyed shroudists have detected – and the ones with poorer eyesight have overlooked. In their opinion, this proves that the cloth did cover Jesus, for everything is so beautifully in line with the biblical story. How can it be otherwise, as the artist was making the cloth "with the Bible in hand"? He was making the shroud of biblical Jesus, what was he to model it on if not the Bible?

"Bloodstains" raise doubts at once as they look "picture-like". There are other failings, too: on the hair blood trickles can be seen. Genuine blood does not behave in such a way. It does not flow in rivulets yet soaks and glues locks of hair together. Anybody who has ever had a head wound knows that, and shroud specialists should be aware of that, too. Judging by their shrouded ravings, they must have fallen down from at least the height of the length of the Turin Shroud.

Instead of paying attention to the suspicious image of "blood", shroudists count the marks left by whipping, claiming at the same time that the medieval artist could not have known what the Roman whip *flagrum* looked like, whose blows can allegedly be seen on the image. They should read the accounts of Christian martyrdoms where the mention of the *flagrum* is frequently made or have a look at medieval paintings where this tool is depicted. A medieval artist could see the *flagrum* in the street and could even buy it: in the mid-XIV century, at the time when the Turin Shroud appeared, self-castigation processions using the very type of the whip were quite common. Oh! Medieval history is not shroudists' strong point, either. They also say that except for a few painters no medieval artist portrayed wrists nailed to the cross, only palms. They did, they did portray – at least the one who made the Turin Shroud. And who is claiming that the cloth was made by an artist painting pierced hands? It was made by an artist who preferred pierced wrists – which can be seen on the Shroud of Turin.

As time passes, real blood grows darker in colour, turning brown and then almost black. The bloodstains on the shroud are red. After a lapse of a few centuries blood does not look so but there is something which does: paint. And there is paint in make-believe blood-stained places.

It is composed of three artists' pigments: iron oxide, vermilion and madder rose. They were detected by Walter McCrone, one of the world's best microanalysts. He was "expelled" from STURP for insubordination, although he was one of a few non-obsessed members of the group.

As McCrone was looking for artists' pigments, others were looking for the traces of bloodstains on the cloth. The majority of analyses checking the presence of blood, though, were made not by means of tests specific for blood only but non-specific, intermediary tests such as the tests checking porphyrins which occur not only in blood but also in plant and animal substances, such as madder rose or natural collagen whose presence on the shroud was detected by McCrone. The same goes for bilirubin and albumin also found in artists' colouring matters from the Middle Ages.

In search for blood, numerous tests were conducted. However, their findings are contradictory: some claim there is no blood on the Turin Shroud, others – that there is. What significance would the discovery of blood have for stating the authenticity of the cloth? None. The cloth could have been bloodstained by the forger on purpose. He could have added both blood and pigments. He could have mixed blood with paint. The cloth could have been retouched with blood by someone else in more recent years. The blood on the Turin Shroud is no proof of whether it is the authentic burial cloth of Jesus. With or without blood – the shroud may be a forgery.

The likelihood that the Turin Shroud does not depict Jesus yet someone else is unimaginably small – that is variations of the shroudists on a statistical theme.

Let us have a look at the way the shroudists set about the piece of work and what comes out of it. Initially they enumerate the seven features related to Jesus: wrapping up the dead body in a canvas, wounds at the top of the head, carrying the cross, piercing with nails, the wound in the chest, hasty funeral and a short-term stay of the dead body in a canvas wrapping. Each of the enlisted features is ascribed certain probability, so that total probability could be estimated. They put down one in a numerator (bravo! well done) and at this point they could have as well gone home as the values to be put down in the denominator cannot be reliably estimated, and it is even unclear what is the range of the error committed. One might as well draw lots.

What probability can be ascribed to the statement that the body of Jesus was wrapped in a canvas? According to the shroudists, 1 out of the 100 crucified individuals was wrapped in a cloth. Or perhaps 1 out of 10, 20 or 300? I believe that 1 out of the 15 crucified was wrapped in a canvas. And my neighbour believes it was 1 in 24 while his wife – 1 in 6.

The probability of carrying the cross is estimated to be 1/2 that is, according to them, 1 in 2 of the crucified in the entire history of humanity carried the cross on his shoulders. Why not 1 out of 4, or 105, or 19? Or a short-term stay of the dead body in a canvas wrapping. They put the number 500 here. That is, according to them, 1 out of the 500 crucified was wrapped in a shroud for a short time. All the rest – too long to leave their imprints. And I believe, 1 in 109 of the crucified was wrapped in a canvas for too short. OK, let it be 1 in 110.

The shroudists call this something a probability "calculus". Why not making up? Breath-taking calculations. If mathematicians were to calculate like this, 2 and 2 would make 7. None of the numbers in denominators have anything to do with either numerical accuracy or historical knowledge, as there is little known about crucifixion. (Archaeologists have discovered the bones of a crucified human being only once.) One way or the other, the shroud experts have estimated that as few as 1 out of the 200 000 000 000 crucified (one out of two hundred billion) could exhibit all the qualities ascribed to crucified Jesus. The number is indeed impressive: even Gauss would go pale.

But dependent on the mood, and God knows what else, different shroudists make up different numbers – each of them arriving at different estimates. Why won't they reach an agreement during one of their sindonological sessions or draw a mean value? There is one instance, though, when we should do justice to the pitiable shroud statisticians: despite huge discrepancies in their famous estimates, all of them arrive at the same conclusion – the probability that the image on the cloth is that of Jesus is enormously high: something around 99.999999%. I absolutely agree. Nay, let me be even more radical! I believe that the probability is even higher and amounts to precisely 100%. Do you know why? Because the artist portrayed Jesus. He was making the shroud of Jesus, so why should have he depicted anybody else?

Rumours is spread in Church circles that it is impossible to know what Jesus looked like, for there are no descriptions of his appearance. Aren't there? Don't we have his authentic burial cloth, on which his body left an imprint – the Turin Shroud shows us what Jesus looked like. And not in an ordinary way, mind you, but through the neutron explosion or the photon flash, as some of the shroud specialists claim. Let's see then...

What must have Jesus looked like if this was him who left his imprint on the shroud?

Being a Jew from the first century A.D., he had an appearance characteristic of medieval Gothic art which came 14 centuries later – funnily enough, the very era the Turin Shroud appeared. One of his arms was longer than the other, the mouth off centre and shifted to the left, his arm span greater than his height. Besides, he had spidery, enormously elongated fingers, whose length equalled one quarter of the total length from fingertips to elbow, unlike in a normal person, whose fingers are much shorter – they measure 1/5 to 1/6 of this length. Moreover, he was 14 cm taller when looked at from the front, as his ventral image on the shroud is that much longer than his dorsal image. By the way, these are the findings of the shroudists themselves. One cannot help but wonder how a person measured from the front can be taller than the same person measured from the back – this cannot be explained even with the help of Einstein's theory of relativity. As we can see, the man of the shroud was so appalling that it is hardly possible to look worse: even Quasimodo was of the same height both from the back and from the front. Let us be more specific. What can the difference in height be accounted for? It is not only that the ventral image on the shroud is longer than the dorsal image when retaining the same proportions: the legs of the figure are longer, to be more precise, the front part of the legs is 14 cm longer than the same legs in the back imprint. Oh, the medieval artist didn't do his best!

We have been specific, let us now be consistent. The feet of the ventral image are at the lowermost part of the legs, where they should be, while the feet of the dorsal image are 14 cm above those seen from the front. Since, as can be judged from the cloth, the man had only two legs, it turns out that each leg had two feet 14 cm away from one another. In order to better visualise this, let him stand up. We see a person who is resting on his feet (those of the ventral image), and 14 cm above them, there is another pair of feet (of the dorsal image). Some of the specialists write about the image of the shroud: *terrifying beauty*. A matter of taste.

As we can see, the man of the shroud was so appalling, that one wants to cry out in fear: Jesus Christ! Perhaps this expression of fright derives from the fact that people knew how unattractive Jesus was? But if they knew what he looked like why is it said that it is unknown what

he looked like? What is it like, finally? Either way, if Jesus looked the way the Turin Shroud depicts him, no wonder, the Gospels keep silent as far as his looks go.

Maybe the person depicted on the shroud is not Jesus yet somebody totally different? It's out of the question! The probability that the image is not that of Jesus' is 1 in 200 000 000 000 – as the shroudists have themselves calculated.

The observation about four feet can be used to produce the evidence for the falsity of the Turin Shroud which has not been introduced by anyone yet. This is going to be perfectly inbred evidence. No outer context, no historical arguments, chemical analyses or pollens. Only the Turin Shroud – and nothing else.

If a person with two feet at each leg, one above the other, that is with the appearance reconstructed on the basis of the Turin Shroud, lay down between the plies of the cloth and left his imprint on it, the front piece of cloth would bear an imprint of four sets of toes (altogether), and the back piece – the imprints of four heels, so we would end up having an image of a human with four feet. And the image on the Turin Shroud has only two feet. The shroud bears inner contradictions. It could not happen the way the shroudists want. The cloth is fake.

Radio-carbon dating pointing to the Middle Ages was erroneous. Dear me!

First, the shroudists claimed that dating with the use of radioactive carbon is the best method to fix the date of the cloth and wanted such tests. They were sure as hell that it would point to the first century A.D. However, all the saints let them down and the dream did not come true. The carbon-dating tests pointed to the Middle Ages. Suddenly a swarm of church experts on radio-carbon dating turned up – they must have been hiding in sacristies, as no one had ever heard of them earlier. No matter where they used to be hiding, having abandoned their concealment, they stated immediately that radio-carbon dating was erroneous as the shroud is known to be authentic – it contains the right pollens and is woven in herringbone pattern. It did not occur to them that they were also weaving – around. The shroud was woven in zigzags, and their minds were zigzagged, too. Strangely enough, the dating error was such that it pointed to the medieval times – not the VIth, VIIIth or Xth century but this particular period when the Shroud of Turin materialized out of thin air. During the days of fake relics that grew in numbers and when excessively thin, gothic figures were portrayed by artists – just like the one on the Turin Shroud.

If the findings had pointed to the 1st century, they would be credible according to the shroud experts, but as they pointed to the Middle Ages, they are untrustworthy – although these are still the same tests! I have a proposal to make for my scholarly colleagues involved in dating the shroud: it should be publically announced that the findings have been wrongly interpreted and the dating fixed the time at the 1st century A.D. Then the opinion of shroudists should be quoted: the cloth dating tests are untrustworthy!

A few other, Church-unrelated experts – but who knows they might be saying a prayer three times a day – have confessed their contemplations of the shroud, too. They should be presented with a different argument. If carbon dating of the shroud is erroneous because of the so-called “bioplastic film” produced by bacteria, why does the bacterial coating falsify only the findings concerning the Turin Shroud? Why not tens of thousands of other findings? Whenever other textiles, furniture or a mammoth are studied, bacteria do not affect the dating, and when the shroud is tested – they do. Somehow strange are these bacteria. To take such a liking for the Shroud of Turin! Perhaps there are simply no bacteria on other objects? No way. They are

everywhere. And if they are, they must falsify the age of other objects tested by way of a radio-carbon method and historians appear to have been led astray. Textbooks have to be rewritten. History as such should be reshuffled so that it is well in line with the Turin Shroud. The experts on the bioplastic film opened our eyes: Totmes III did not build temples yet tended goats, the Second World War was not 60 yet 1300 years ago, while we do not live in contemporary times but in the Middle Ages – which is actually true in the case of the shroudists.

The shroudists needn't be quoting the instances when the method of carbon dating did produce wrong results. This did happen – and so what? Indeed, there were false findings in a few cases but in an incomparably larger number of cases the results were positive. Since the shroudists love statistics so much as their notorious statistical work shows, they should know what comes out of the statistics on radio-carbon tests: when one compares the number of tests with a positive outcome with the number of tests whose findings were wrong, the probability that the dating of the shroud was erroneous is 1 in 1000. (Estimated using the famous statistical method of the shroudists, that is at a guess).

What would happen, however, if the tests pointed to the days closer to the 1st century? Nothing special. Would it be the proof that the cloth of Turin is the authentic shroud of Jesus? Why should it? Weren't there forgers and frauds before? Only saints? The latter might not be the best comparison as saints cheated, too – they were believed to go up into the air but somehow nobody has ever seen a saint to have flown by. Jets only. Each epoch had its frauds, and let me give an example – at random, so that nobody, God forbid, would accuse me of being antireligious. Among the frauds there were for instance: theologians, the Fathers of the Church, canons, priests, bishops, cardinals, popes and all the saints – the only decent saint was Simon Templar. I chose the example at random so that nobody would think that I am biased, and I will add, so that nobody thinks I am duffing the Church up as an atheist, that I am a believer. I believe in Zeus. He is as real as the one with a beard contrived by Moses.

It is no contrivance, however, that swindlers existed long ago, so the shroud could have been forged even earlier. What more, by the Church itself. Why could have? Although to some it is going to be a message, not divine, mind you, that is not the Gospel, the Church did produce artificial shrouds – till sparks flew! Since the fourth century A.D. the Church has been manufacturing shroud relics and distributing them on a mass scale (E. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkultes in der christlichen Kirche*, 1904). Actually there is no need to go back to such distant past: let us remind ourselves of the words of Bishop d'Arcis who commented on how the shroud came to Lirey. The shroud was procured, ordered most certainly, not by a shoemaker, a musician from a brass band or an astronaut but by the head of a chapter of canons, somebody belonging to the Church – from this, following the *pars pro toto* principle, we can deduce a moral that the Church made a fool of itself and got its deserts. The Church provided itself with a fake shroud to which it now prays in earnest.

STURP scientists have proved that a human body was wrapped in the Shroud of Turin. Gee!

Jumper and Jackson, the STURP examiners, have stated that the image on the cloth has the qualities that can be transformed into a 3-D picture – what they mean is a known correlation between image density and the distance between the cloth and whatever was at rest underneath. That such a correlation exists, is visible to the naked eye, but STURP managed to acquire

quantitative data. The procedure they adopted to prove that a human body was enveloped in the Turin Shroud contains a glaring methodological error – the vicious circle of argumentation. Jackson and Jumper began with wrapping a human model in the cloth in order to measure the distance between parts of the body and the layer of the cloth covering it. Then, by a series of corrections they adjusted the measurements to the image of the Turin Shroud, which was inevitable as the figure of the shroud could not ideally correspond to John Travolta or Johnny Kowalski. Finally, they came up with a conclusion that a human being was lying covered by the cloth. Of course, he was: they put him there themselves! They put a man under the cloth, so what could have they come out with – a fish?

So much for the famous experiment after which the shroudists scattered overjoyed that it was scientifically proved that a human body was wrapped up in the Turin Shroud. It was, it was, but not the one they meant and in a different cloth.

Not only is the idea of Jackson and Jumper based on the vicious circle of erroneous argumentation but it does not reach the objective set, either. Their endeavours can only help to obtain the model of the body of a given man used for the experiment with a three-dimensional image of the shroud figure crammed into it – something resembling a two-ply conglomerate. What purpose can it serve and what can it prove? The obtained model would have to be distorted for, as it was said before, one cannot fix the likeness of the man of the Turin Shroud to somebody who is not him. The STURP researchers had problems with making their live model lie on his back: whenever he wanted to position his feet in the way identical with the imprint of the feet on the bottom piece of the Turin Shroud, the model had to bend his right leg and the knee went high up. How could dead Jesus raise his leg? And what for? To adapt himself to the Turin Shroud? When, trying to adjust himself to the shroud, a human model raised his right knee, his right calf moved away from the bottom piece of the cloth. And there is an imprint of the right calf on the shroud. And what's more, it is as clear and intensive as the imprint of the left calf, which means that the right calf was at the same cloth-body distance as the left one, which could not be so if it had to be raised in order to fit into the original imprint. This should have raised STURP researchers' doubts: it was not a human body that reclined under the cloth yet something different. But it did not raise any, and so they went on blundering into a dead-end street.

The folds of a cloth covering a human body can be arranged in various ways. And this is how they folded in the case of the STURP researchers. Every time in a different way. And the arrangement of folds is one of the key issues, as it becomes the basis for measuring the cloth-body distance which, in turn, can determine further calculations. And it did determine. Jackson and Jumper took to various corrective procedures, dividing the drapery shape into constituent parts, manipulating the curve of image darkness and modifying the mapping function so that finally a human form more or less well-adjusted to the shroud image was obtained. But, they did not prove what they wanted to – that a human body was enveloped in the Turin Shroud – as this is simply impossible to state on the grounds of the information the image contains.

Something different can be done, though: the reconstruction of something the artist used to smartly contrive his cloth. Jumper and Jackson escaped doing that by a hair-breadth. They could have reconstructed the image of the object imprinted on the cloth but missed it stupefied by the thought that the Turin Shroud really covered Jesus. The image on the shroud does not represent a real human being yet something that left an imprint, and let us now touch upon the crux of the matter: by what means and in what way did a medieval artist create his canvas, that is...

How was the Shroud of Turin made?

The solution to the mystery of the cloth's contrivance lies in the cloth itself – that's for sure. One should only watch and see. The opening question to solving the puzzle is: *what was the image of the figure created with, in other words what creates the image?*

The likeness of the body is not a painting. And not because there is no directionality, that is traces of a paintbrush on it, as the shroudists argue. A painting can be made without directionality and a brush, and a pigment can be applied using one's fingers, a piece of cloth or by adding strongly diluted water-colours. The body image is not painted for yet another reason: no paint was used to produce it. Although there are on it particles of iron oxide, which is a commonly used component in artists' pigments, but their amount is too small – not only to form the body image but even to intensify it. The image exists thanks to something else.

It is formed by dehydration which causes cellulose fibres of the cloth itself to lose water, which creates the dark sepia colour. "Dehydration" sounds scholarly but does not get down to the crux of the matter, and "dewatering" does not sound right, either. The word that hits the nail on the head is different: the image was formed by – scorching. The cloth was scorched in such a way that the image of Jesus' body emerged on it.

In such a way — what way? Can the cloth be scorched in such a way that a picture would be copied onto it? Of course, it can.

Two features of the Turin Shroud indicate that this method was used by a medieval artist. These are the so-called three-dimensionality and negativity of the image. Can the cloth be scorched in such a way that not only an image would be imprinted on it but it would also contain the information about the three-dimensionality and would be a negative? A piece of cake.

Think of popular pencil rubbings we entertained ourselves with as children: paper is placed over a coin, rubbed with a pencil and a negative impression is obtained containing the information about brass's three-dimensionality, which presents us with a picture bearing the same characteristics as the image on the Turin Shroud. Yet this one was not created by means of an ordinary pencil – something different than a pencil was used. Can you already guess how the Turin Shroud was made?

Instead of a coin a bas-relief representing Jesus is used and in place of paper – linen cloth, and a pencil is replaced by a piece of heated iron. We lay the cloth on a bas-relief and draw a piece of hot iron across it which, by scorching the cloth, produces a negative copy of the relief underneath. A pencil draws on paper with graphite, the "shroud pencil" draws on the cloth with burning-hot iron. The Turin Shroud is an ordinary piece of rubbing but made with hot iron.

All the essential properties of the Turin Shroud can be reconstructed by any housewife, just as my grandmother Fela did it, adroitly using a steam iron. (An electric iron will do, too). However, according to the shroud experts the image was produced by a flash of photons and radiation emanating from Jesus' body. Clearly, by radiation – any hot object radiates. That is, heat goes. However, the radiant energy was not of the type they imagined and was not given off by Jesus' body yet by an iron. It is a pity that, when talking about the photon light, they were not enlightened that they were talking nonsense. One can see that in photon sparks emitted by Jesus they lost the last spars of wisdom.

On the one hand we have the shroud experts with their photon flash and, on the other, there is grandma Fela with an iron. Who is better? The specialists cannot make a replica of the image while grandma Fela can – what more, twice a day. (From now on we are going to write

Grandma Fela using capitals). After all, the shroudists devoted plenty of space to Grandma Fela, without even knowing that. Writing about Her they say that a person capable of making such an image on the cloth *would have to be of supernatural intelligence and possess superhuman wisdom*. Grandma Fela! I didn't know that side of Yours! With even more admiration, or even adoration, the spokesman of the Italian King Emmanuel I, Baron Manno, referred to Her saying that a person who would be capable of making the image on the cloth *must be God*. Dear Baron, you must have played a clown.

We have learned the method, let us now say a few words about the props and details. What should a bras-relief representing Jesus look like and what could have the medieval artist made it of? A relief has to be relatively flat to elicit sufficiently sharp outlines and details on the cloth. It must offer a number of variations in tones but at the same time has to be "rather flat". A deep carving would not elicit neither clear outlines nor details – it will produce only blurred, undecipherable blots. A relief cannot be too deep but cannot be too flat, either, as then half-tone gradation is going to be too steep and, as a result, the famous three-dimensionality of an image is going to disappear.

A carving should not be deep for yet another reason, too. Eliciting tonal variations ranging from the darkest scorching to the weakest may require thrusting a piece of cloth into the hollows of a bas-relief so that more lightly scorched places would not be touched directly with a hot iron. Too deep hollows in a bas-relief (if the cloth was crammed into it) would cause deformities in image fragments that would show after the cloth is smoothed out. A relief should be well-adjusted, which does not mean that only this particular relief used by the counterfeiter is the only one that could be used for making a convincing image on the cloth. As a matter of fact, there is a shallowness-depth interval for a relief within which a fine rubbing is going to be produced.

Let us now say a few words about a "shroud pencil", that is a piece of hot iron or simply an iron. Its dimensions are not irrelevant for obtaining a fine image: it can't be either too big – as it would be difficult to operate, or too small – it can't go inside the furrows and hollows of the relief. Taking into account details and dimensions of the figure in the image, the size of the iron seems appropriate.

There is more to burning-hot iron: there are particles of iron oxide found on the image although their amount is small (altogether 10 mg on both the imprints). They come from rubbing hot iron against the cloth. One cannot but admire McCrone for having detected them.

And how about the photon flash emanating from Jesus' body apparently required for the image appearance on the cloth? Would not an ordinary iron suffice, by any chance?

Rubbing with hot iron is not difficult to make – everything comes out effortlessly, when we think of children rubbing a coin with a pencil. The effect depends on the use of an appropriate relief while the medieval artist did not have to produce a fine shroud at once. He must have tried it out on smaller pieces of linen and could have practiced it at will, as in the Middle Ages linen cloth was easily accessible and cheap, especially in Troyes famous for its textile produce. The artist had freedom to create not only because of the cheapness of cloth and simplicity of instruments but also because, to produce a relief, he could have made use of the material whose modelling potential was simply limitless. He did not make a relief of tin, wood and did not have to mould it. He made it of what was the most suitable and there was plenty of it available free of charge. The author of the Turin Shroud made a bas-relief of Jesus – of clay. He put the cloth over the earthenware bas-relief and rubbed it with a burning-hot piece of iron until it began to scorch, making a negative copy of the relief.

Probably he made two bas-reliefs of clay: the ventral part of the body and the dorsal one. He was making the shroud in two instalments: first he copied one body part and then the other one with the help of the other relief. It is also known at what distance from the initially imprinted image the artist placed the other relief: at the distance which separates the head outline from the ventral image and the head outline from the dorsal imprint (about 15 cm) – as there is no imprint of the top of the head on the shroud. Medieval pilgrims could have been told that the cloth hanged loose at the top of Jesus' head but the STURP experts cannot be told that and they can't get it why their photon flash did not produce the image of this part of the head, too. The dullest of the shroudists say that the flash was controlled by Jesus' will power. All right. But what did Jesus have against the flash at the top of his head? Would it be to his detriment? Instead of prattling on about photon flashes, the STURP experts had better flash with a realisation that the shroud is a fake. And that with the use of the simplest tools: an iron and clay the artist could have dugged and wheeled in a barrow all by himself.

Wait a moment – the shroudists would say – if the shroud had really been made in such a way, the burns would have scorched through to the reverse side, and it is not scorched on the reverse. The fact that the image is to be on the one side of the shroud only is regarded by the shroudists to be God knows what an important argument. The argument is weak.

Grandma Fela has solved the problem at once, dipping the linen into water. The method seems to have been quite well-known in the Middle Ages. When linen is wet, the scorched rubbing does not appear on the reverse side: the image is already visible on one side and is not yet visible on the reverse. Obviously, you cannot delay lifting an iron for too long, as everything is going to be burnt like hell.

Before Grandma Fela played her trick with wetting the cloth, I myself had tried to scorch it in such a way that the burn would not go right through and was somewhat successful, too. (The idea of the wet linen came to my mind as the second one). When the cloth is scorched on the one side, the heat penetrating into it should somehow be carried away. How to do it? That's very simple. It should be placed on something that conducts heat well. Thus, I put it down on floor tiles in the kitchen. And the scorch did not get to the other side although I had to make sure I lifted an iron quickly enough. Soaking the cloth is more efficient and leaves more time for scorching. Still more time can be gained by combining wet linen with the surface that is a good heat conductor such as tiles. And what are tiles made of? Well, of clay – just like the clay used by the author of the shroud to make his bas-relief. And so we go round and round.

As one can see, the situation of the blessed cloth lovers is not very optimistic – the cloth can be scorched in such a way that the burns would not go through to the reverse side. But it can be worse, as a reasonable question pops up:

Did not by any chance Jesus' image show on the reverse side of the shroud?

If not the entire image, at least some of its fragments could have gone right through. Provided that the artist did not make sure nothing would show on the reverse. Was he careful? Not necessarily. As can be guessed from the blunders he made, he was not a perfectionist – although one must admit he was ingenious. It is also possible that he did not know how to prevent penetration of the image to the other side or did not really succeed. It is thinkable, too, that he could have thought that there was nothing discrediting to his work in the penetration of the image. In any case, the appearance of something in the image on the reverse of the shroud is

consistent with the simplest version of its production. It is consistent with something else, too. With the account of somebody who saw the shroud from underneath. Not only could something be on the reverse. Something was there.

In 1534 the nuns of the Poor Clare Convent patched the shroud after it had been through the fire and looked at the cloth from underneath. And what did they see? That the flagellation marks could also be seen on the reverse side of the shroud! Whether anything else showed through we do not get to know from the Poor Clares. Anyhow, something of the image did show on the reverse, although it was a little paler: according to the Poor Clares, wounds could be seen on the reverse as if looked at through the glass.

To determine what exactly happens on the reverse side of the shroud should not cause any difficulties at all, and should have actually been known for a long time now. The shroud was, after all, subject to solid scientific research. It was, it was – but the research was somewhat one-sided. Literally.

Although a normal person can get dumbstruck at the news, but it seems that the reverse side of linen has never been looked at since 1534 when the Poor Clares saw it. With all these studies, allegedly scientific ones, nobody had a close look at the research object! A bungle, an unprecedented one. Even an ordinary carpenter eyes every plank on both sides. As one can see, the shroud was not investigated, it has transiently been examined. And when the nearest opportunity occurs, also the lovers of the holy fabric should get examined. For they assert with entire self-confidence that there is nothing on the reverse side of the shroud – although nobody has been looking at it for almost 5 centuries!

As the writings on the shroud indicate, the first examination of the reverse side of the cloth took place in 1973 but let nobody think that it was done appropriately: only a piece of lining was unseamed and the examiners tried to devoutly peep inside. The next time the underneath of the cloth was pried into during the STURP research, again with only a tiny piece of the lining unseamed. Then they also used an endoscope, that is a view-finder for examining the interior of organs, and with the use of it a picture of small fragments of the underneath of the cloth was taken – from a very close distance and only of the purported bloodstains. To dispel doubts, a short question will be asked: where is the photograph of the underneath of the cloth? Of all the numerous pictures of the shroud — none has been left.

Why could have the shroud researchers overlooked the image even when unseaming just a small piece of the lining and only peeping inside? As can be deduced from ancient iconographic pictures, the image of the body on the shroud used to be much more intensive. The scorch-rubbing also produces an initially more intensive image but with time the scorching gets paler, as anybody who has seen the old marks of iron scorching knows. After a lapse of a few centuries the image on the shroud grew so dim that it is barely visible – so, if the counterpart image on the reverse was less intensive to start with, until now it could have become almost imperceptible. But there is more to it. When you watch the shroud from a short distance, no image of the body is actually visible. To perceive it, one has to move away. The researchers were looking at the underneath of the cloth from a distance of a dozen centimetres or so and that is why they could have overlooked a faint image. Also because it could have penetrated only partly and, finally, because their attention was attracted to the purported bloodstains which soaked through the cloth.

Negligent examination of the reverse of the shroud is the fault of the Church which makes a lot of fuss over a trifle, and haggles over each thread although its archives contain

the proofs of its fakeness. From the very start anybody who had anything to do with the shroud knew it was fake. This was not contradicted even by its original owners and their successors: they only let the mob believe in the authenticity of the cloth – and on the sly they spread false news about its authenticity as they profited by expositions. That the shroud is only a piece of art was not doubted by the Church officials of those days, either, including Pope Clement VII, the proof of which can be found in his writings and papal edicts. This can be found in the source materials as was shown in black and white by a canon scholar, Ulysse Chevalier, whose age-old essays about the shroud of Lirey should be read by the shroudists in bed.

Instead of reading Chevalier in bed, the shroudists are talking about the herringbone. Neither do they take into account the account of Poor Clares, their eyes curtained with the shroud – or cover it with the shroud of silence in their works. This time, for a change, this is a good choice, as the potential penetration of the image will not only force them to think about scorching the cloth but could do harm to the shroud in still another way: it could be to the dismay not only of the contemporary fans of the wonderful linen but of ordinary medieval pilgrims, too. How come, to imprint oneself right through? If pilgrims from the Middle Ages had shared the knowledge with contemporary researchers, the photon flash emitted by Jesus' body would have immediately come to their mind – and like this they could imagine various nasty things: for example that Jesus hit the shroud slap-bang. Recently one of the half-researchers has invented something of this kind: in his opinion, for the known image to emerge, dead Jesus had to somehow push his way through the cloth. The quantum-tunnel effect in its fullness.

If the Church cares about truth (and it cares more about something else), let it order to remove the lining from the shroud. Then we will know what the unvarnished truth is and we will not have to be guessing. No endoscopies, peeping under the lining and tucking the scanner under the shroud (which has been done lately) will ever replace a thorough examination. One can't expect the Church to take to tailoring in the nearest future as can be judged from the rate at which shroud research has proceeded so far. Not mentioning its quality: almost all and sundry involved in the shroud research are religious believers or kooks, which guarantees the highest scientific value. Even in STURP, allegedly an external research body, 39 of 40 researchers were believers. For now, the shroudists may not worry about the image penetrating through the cloth especially as they can find some consolation: the marks of scorching caused by the fire of 1532 emit light under ultraviolet whereas the body image itself does not, which, in their opinion, contradicts the idea that the image was produced by the heat. Why is it that one thing emits light and the other does not – I am soon going to enlighten the shroudists. For the time being, I am going to relieve their anxieties using a different argument – the one within their bailiwick. For when one thinks carefully, the two-sidedness of the image on the cloth could as well be a positive argument. The Turin Shroud could not only be a three-dimensional and photonegative miracle but a stereo one, too! And stereo was unknown in the Middle Ages, which proves that the shroud is authentic.

If the shroudists wish so, we can have the shroud without the permeating image. It is possible, too. If they prefer a two-sided shroud, let it be. It can as well be partly passing through to the other side. As can be seen, the situation is so terrible that we should feel sorry for the shroudists. That's why I have just comforted them offering a new, simple proof of the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. The one with the stereo.

The proof was plain, as plain were the means used by the shroud-maker – not to say they were primitive. Plain means should have actually been expected from the very beginning

and he does not deserve the credit for using whatever he had at hand. The idea of the rubbing was not his invention, either, since as early as the mid-XIVth century this method was of high technical and artistic quality in Europe.

The artist who created the shroud has earned praise for something different.

Praiseworthy is the idea to use on the linen the “paintheat” instead of graphite, paint or ink. The Chinese made their rubbings on paper with ink: they laid wet paper over a relief, tucked it into furrows using a hard brush and covered it with ink pressed with a silk rammer. The medieval artist could use neither paper nor ink: he was to produce the shroud which could not be made of paper while ink easily soaks into the cloth creating fuzzy blots. He did not want to use simple artists’ paint as the shroud had to be folded or rolled and dry paint could get cracked, flake off or crumble. Bloodstains are a different story as they had to be red and paint could not be done without; but they could be small and easily produced by simply spilling diluted paint or smearing it over the linen. The artist could have used a powdered pigment tapping or rubbing it into the fabric but, as the tests conducted by an American sceptic Joe Nickell indicate, this method does not produce the required mild change in tonal gradations. The use of paint, whether wet or dry, has such a drawback that the body image can be washed or rubbed off the cloth or removed in any other way. In case anybody thought of checking whether the image was not a painting by any chance. And if a forger had been prepared for that, he was right: the shroud was indeed tested against forgery.

In 1503 there were attempts to remove the image applying quite invasive methods. The cloth was boiled, scrubbed and washed in soap – soap industry was already well developed in medieval Europe. Besides, it was boiled in oil and soaked in lye several times. Obviously, the image would not even budge. Again, everything is beautifully in line – this time with the chores: soaking and ironing the linen (artist), folding (shroud guardians) and washing (examiners testing cloth’s authenticity). Okay, the chores have been performed a bit “out of order”, but let us not be too demanding of those living in the Middle Ages. (Here is the right order – to inform the shroudists – soaking, washing, ironing and folding).

Washing, scrubbing and boiling the cloth have to do with the final, allegedly insurmountable puzzle of the Shroud of Turin. Although the shroudists have in front of their eyes a striking similarity between the image and the scorching on the ironing-board and know that the image reflectance spectrum is identical with the spectrum of scorches from the fire of 1532, the image on the cloth cannot, according to them, come from heat, as the scorches left by the fire emit light under ultraviolet whereas the image itself does not. Of course, it does not. And do you know why?

Somebody malicious could say that chemical compounds causing radiance managed to evaporate long ago: the image came into existence in the days of Christ and two thousand years is more than enough for them to have perished. As I am not malicious, I will say something different. Scorches left by the fire emit radiance as they came into existence *a f t e r* the cloth had been through washing. *E a r l i e r* the shroud had been washed while the fire scorches developed *l a t e r* – and after the fire the shroud has been neither washed nor rinsed. Compounds causing radiance of the image were washed out when the cloth was boiled, washed and scrubbed – and this is why the image does not glow. The shroudists would not glow either if they got such rub and scrub.

The lack of image radiance under ultraviolet puts an end to its mysterious and allegedly inexplicable essential properties – with negativity and so-called three-dimensionality at the top of the list. All of them can be replicated by the simplest means. The shroud can be reproduced by means of rubbing with hot iron followed by thorough washing of linen. The shroud-maker could have washed it himself to make it look older as in his days Jesus' shroud was to number thirteen hundred years and could not be brand new. Anyhow, the Turin Shroud has its human originator and the question arises:

Who was the medieval author of the cloth and can he be identified?

This is not known for a fact. But it is quite possible. The creator of the Turin Shroud has not been identified yet not because it is impossible but more because nobody has been looking for him. Have contemporary shroud researchers been looking for him digging through archives? Nothing of the sort. Instead of doing that they admired the herringbone pattern and counted pollens on the cloth. When I contacted the Maison de l'outil et de la pensee ouvriere in Troyes (museum and library) inquiring about their linen cloths coming from the XIVth century (a rudimentary thing) I asked in passing whether anybody has ever asked them similar questions. Nobody has ever asked us such questions – was an answer. The shroudists do not do what they should and do not search for where they should. Where should they be looking for? Most certainly, in Troyes itself.

Troyes is the first guess as the shroud-doer's place of residence and workshop, which were most certainly the same place. Troyes was in the mid-XIVth century a town of a considerable size. It had about 10 000 citizens and was 19 kilometres away from Lirey. Lirey itself is out of question – no artist would be working there having a bigger town and market at hand where he could offer his produce for sale. Troyes naturally comes to mind. Is there any other reason why the author of the shroud should be searched for there? Yes, there is. The fact that the Bishop of Troyes did find him.

That there was an artist who concocted the shroud, the Bishop obviously did not learn from the shroud custodians and had to look for him on his own. The Bishop knew the shroud must have had a human creator since he knew the shroud must have been fake. And he started searching for him where it was the easiest and where all the events took place: in his own diocese. He sent his people around the town ordering them to make a reconnaissance and the artists working in Troyes were interrogated for sure. Maybe the artist could not hold his tongue or his assistant disclosed the information? Or maybe Bishop's people questioned merchants about the artist who had bought a long piece of linen? Anyway, after the "diligent inquiry" the Bishop found the artist who confessed everything to him. No wonder he confessed, if we consider the methods of persuasion practiced by the Church in the Middle Ages.

Who could have that artist been by profession, for he needn't have been a painter? Although Bishop d'Arcis writes in his letter to the Pope that the cloth was painted, one can get an impression (if this is not just a suggestion) that he did not really know what to call the activities whose result was the emergence of the image on the cloth. This should not be startling. The image did not appear in any miraculous way but was an instance of human artistry. Now, when we know how the Shroud of Turin was made, let us try to call these activities with one word. We can say that the image was painted yet it should immediately be added that with a very peculiar "pencil", that is a piece of burning-hot iron. However, not only was it painted, or else it was

rather copied than painted. The shroud was both painted and copied. The shroud-maker could have been a painter but he may have as well not been one. Still, we know for sure that he was an artist – let us have a look at who was regarded to be an artist in Troyes of the XIVth century, or better: what artists lived there at that time and what were they engaged with?

There is a plentitude of medieval documents from Troyes in the archives of the place. Municipal tax books have been preserved with the lists of crafts, craftsmen and their places of work. There are registers of “The Review of Arms” possessed by knights and sentries, court files, official applications, municipal bills and family archives – to mention just a few types of documents. Their study is very instructive – one can learn, for example, that in the XIVth century, in Troyes there were merchants who specialised in trading the rolls of old cloth. Did the shroud look old from the very beginning – this we can only speculate. Anyhow the artist could easily buy a roll of old cloth, the most appropriate for his purpose. Apart from craftsmen, the documents also mention artists living in Troyes around the mid-XIVth century and we know the names of the streets they lived at. These were: painters, illustrators (illuminators), goldsmiths, map-makers, wood-engravers and crest manufacturers. One of them must have created the Shroud of Turin.

To get to know him by his name, one should look through the documents in the archives: first of all the cathedral archive in Troyes where from Bishop Henri de Poitiers managed his inquest, the City Archive and the Archive of the Aube Department. One cannot rule out a possibility that one may come across a document written down by the Bishop or his clerks – perhaps even the description of the knavery which resulted in the emergence of yet another fake relic coming into the world.

Speaking of relics, the Church was always very much into collecting them and displayed a good taste so typical of it. What didn't the Church have in its collections – all the gems of the world! These included the feathers from the wings of archangel Gabriel, a phial with St Michael's sweat, Enoch's slippers, a fiery bush from which God spoke to Moses and even a finger of the Holy Ghost. I envy them. There have been so many teeth of St Apollonia that Apollonia must have had at least twenty two pairs of jaws. She wasn't too pretty, this saint, I guess. And there is such a plentitude of nail parings left by St Peter that they must have been growing at the third cosmic speed. As can be estimated, using the famous probability calculus of the shroudists, the nails must have outgrown the solar system. Maybe Peter wanted to go to heaven stepping on his own toenails? Or else wanted to escape from Apollonia. One or the other. Some of the most precious relics included the corpse of Mary Magdalene. Three exemplars. All three authentic. As one can see, not only does the entire history need reshuffling in order to be consistent with the Turin Shroud but all the details have to be fixed, too. A Dolly-sheep for example – she was not the first clone. Mary Magdalene was.

I do realise that the Church may be dissatisfied with me giving so few examples of its rich collection – I am going to tot up. It has some hay from Jesus' crib, his napkins, milk teeth and a navel. Unfortunately, only one. These were the Dark Ages so it was difficult to find more in the dark. But then as many as six Jesus' foreskins were found! It must have dawned on them for a moment. The Church is also in possession of the cloak Joseph covered Jesus with after the latter's birth, the gifts brought by the three Wise Men, a bottle of Mary's breast milk (curdled, I guess), a few hairs of God the Savior, Jesus' plate and the pap-spoon, sandals in which he treaded and the tail of the donkey upon which Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

Oh yes! The Church also has the burial cloth of Jesus, that is the Turin Shroud.

And it has something more. It has interest in making people believe that the shroud is authentic.

And we have had a different, more noble interest – to reveal the truth. The shroud from Lirey can be made as a scorched rubbing on the cloth with the use of a bas-relief with the image of crucified Jesus. It is also possible to make an almost ideal copy of the image – if it was known what the bas-relief that brought the shroud image into being looked like. Except that there is no bas-relief – and will never be. And no photograph was taken, either, for, as the shroud researchers have told us, photography was not known in the Middle Ages. The relief was made of clay, so it quickly broke into pieces or the artist himself, terrified by the interrogation conducted by Bishop's people, threw it immediately on the scrap-heap. The bas-relief is out of our reach. It perished. It got lost in the shady history and we will never learn what it looked like.

Won't we?

And this is going to be my last revelation. I am going to show you the bas-relief used by the artist to create his deceptive masterpiece. Although the Middle Ages were not familiar with photography, there exists a photographic picture of the bas-relief – unintentionally delivered by the shroud-maker himself. And it is what the cloth conceals. It is visible in the photograph of the shroud looked at in the negative

Ladies and gentlemen! Let me introduce to you the bas-relief used to produce the Shroud of Turin.



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