

THE TURIN SHROUD AND ST. RAPHAEL'S CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

The paper was based on a talk given at St. Raphael's Church, Surbiton on the evening of Palm Sunday, 14 April 2019. Two documents, in the Italian language, both of which were apparently issued by Turin Cathedral in July 1874, were found in the archives of the Church. To each was attached a piece of cloth, stated to be silk, that was cut from the covering of the Shroud of Jesus Christ, also known as the Turin Shroud. Research on the Turin Shroud and the documents from the Church included exploration of the historical background and the results of various scientific investigations on the Shroud, including anatomical studies and the now-questioned radiocarbon dating results published in 1989. Christian beliefs about the Shroud also were explored. It was concluded that while there was no reason to doubt that the pieces of cloth attached to the documents had been in contact with the Turin Shroud, doubt remained whether it was the actual burial cloth of Jesus Christ. However, there was a scientific consensus that the image of the Shroud accorded very well with the description of the Passion of Christ as recorded in the Gospels and lay people could see this for themselves by looking at the various negative photographic images available. Therefore, the Turin Shroud and reproductions of it provided a very sound focus for meditation on the Passion, especially during Holy Week.

INTRODUCTION

This paper was based on a talk given at St. Raphael's Church, Surbiton, on 14 April 2019, Palm Sunday. The talk outlined research on the provenance of two documents found in the archives of the church. Both were apparently issued in Turin on 19 and 20 July 1874, respectively. To each was attached a piece of cloth, apparently made of silk.¹ The wording of each document was entirely in the Italian language. Each stated that the attached cloth was cut from the covering of the Shroud of Jesus Christ. The inference was that each piece of cloth once was in contact with the Turin Shroud. The following questions were considered in the talk.

1. What is the Turin Shroud?

2. What could be discovered about the documents from St. Raphael's?
3. Was the Turin Shroud a fake, as had been suggested? What was its history? What were the results of scientific investigations carried out on it?
4. What Christian beliefs were held about the Turin Shroud?
5. Were the pieces of cloth attached to the documents from St. Raphael's authentic? That is, were they actually once in contact with the Shroud and were traces of Christ's presence transferred to them?

The research was carried out mainly on secondary sources of information about the Shroud and during visits to Turin in November 2018 and March 2019. A bibliography of secondary sources is at **Appendix 1**.

WHAT IS THE TURIN SHROUD?

The Shroud was described as a linen cloth, ivory in colour, 14 ft. 3 in. long by 3 ft. 7 in. wide [i.e., 4.4 by 1.1 m and in *Old Testament* units of measurement, 8 cubits by 2 cubits]. It had a three-to-one herringbone weave with a "Z" twist. It was much-travelled and much-handled. It had been seriously damaged by fire and water, the results of which were evident, and it had been repaired and altered a number of times. In 2002, a conservation project was carried out on the Shroud, which effected significant changes to it [below]. In short, the Shroud that was known to have existed in medieval times was not the Shroud of 2019.

The Shroud was said to have the faint outlines of the front and back of a totally naked, long-haired, bearded male who appeared to have been scourged and crucified in accordance with the account of the Gospels. Many people believed that the Shroud actually was the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, while others believed it to be a medieval forgery.

The Shroud, once owned by the Royal House of Savoy, now was the property of Pope Francis and its custodian was the Archbishop of Turin.² In March 2019, it was kept in a special reliquary to the left of the high altar of the Cathedral of St. John The Baptist in Turin. Within the reliquary, but not visible, the Shroud was preserved in a fire-proof, virtually indestructible, environmentally-controlled container. There was much information about it within the Cathedral and before the reliquary there were facilities for veneration of the Shroud contained within it. Near the Cathedral was the Museo della Sindone [Shroud Museum] which was run by volunteers of the

Confraternity of the Holy Shroud. This provided much historical information about the Shroud and helpful literature was on sale.

It was clear that the Shroud was the focus of worldwide interest. The major website <https://www.shroud.com> received 1.54 million visits in 2018.³ It showed that over 1200 books and about 370 scientific articles were written about the Shroud, at least 25 conferences and symposia about it were held between 1996-2017 and there were about 48 Shroud organisations around the world. David Rolfe produced four films about the Shroud. These were “The Silent Witness”, 1978, and “Shroud of Turin”, 2008, “Shroud”, 2010, and “A Grave Injustice”, 2015.⁴

THE DOCUMENTS FROM ST. RAPHAEL’S CHURCH

The document of 19 July 1874 measured approx. 266 mm [10.5 in] by 218 mm [8.6 in]. A piece of black cloth, approx. 24 mm by 20 mm, was attached by means of a thread secured with red sealing wax with the impression of a seal, to the top left hand side of the document. The document of 20 July 1874 measured approx. 271 mm [10.7 in] by 213 mm [8.4 in]. A piece of red cloth, approx. 29 mm by 29 mm, was attached by means of a thread secured with red sealing wax with the impression of a seal, to the top left hand side of the document. The seal on both documents was assumed to be that of the Chaplain of His Majesty’s Royal Chapel in Turin [below]. Both documents carried a stylised depiction of the Shroud under which was the legend “*BALBIANI INC*”, the significance of which legend was not discovered. Each document had a footnote which was translated that it was printed by St. Joseph’s Technical School, a charitable institution in Turin, founded in 1849, where poor and orphaned boys were taught various trades, including printing.⁵

The document of 19 July 1874 had a statement which was translated as follows: *“Cutting of the black silk which previously had covered the Holy Shroud, in which was wrapped the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the tomb. This covering previously had been sewn to the Shroud by the Blessed Sebastian Valfrè on 26 June 1694. On 28 April 1868, the covering of black silk was removed by her Royal Highness Princess Maria Clotilde of Savoy, consort of Prince Napoleon, who knelt to replace it with a covering of red silk.”*

The Blessed Sebastian Valfrè, 1629-1710, was a priest of The Oratory of

Turin who venerated the Shroud and was a great benefactor of poor and oppressed citizens.⁶ Princess Maria Clothilde of Savoy was a woman who led a life of great piety, in contrast to her spouse, Prince Napoleon, who was said to be a womanizer who preferred worldly pleasures.⁷

The document of 20 July 1874 had a statement which was translated as follows: *“Cutting of the red silk which previously had covered the entire length of the Holy Shroud, in which was wrapped the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the tomb, and which had been in direct contact with this precious relic from 26 June 1694 to 28 April 1868.”* It was assumed that the cutting of red silk was from the bale of silk in which the Shroud was rolled when not on display.⁸

Both documents carried the following prayer: *“In honour of the Holy Shroud of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, whose blessed body, having been taken down from the cross, was wrapped in the Holy Shroud and left traces of Your presence on it. With your unquestioning love and for the reward of Your holy passion, and in respect of this venerable linen which served as Your burial shroud, give us grace that on the day of the resurrection we are lifted up into your kingdom where you will reign for ever and ever. Amen.”* Moreover, it stated that *“80 days of indulgence are granted to those who recite this prayer”*.⁹ The prayer, and promise of an indulgence, was attributed to Alessandro Richardi di Netro, who was Archbishop of Turin, from 1867 to 1870.¹⁰

Both documents appeared to have been issued by J. M. Antonielli, Chaplain of The Chancellor of His Majesty’s Royal Chapel which adjoined the Cathedral of Turin and which housed, at the time, a magnificent altar which contained the Shroud, wrapped in red silk, in a golden reliquary. The Chapel of the Royal House of Savoy, known as the Guarini Chapel after its architect, opened in 1694 to house the Shroud. Sadly, on the night of 11-12 April 1997, it suffered a disastrous fire and currently is in the final stages of restoration. The Shroud was rescued, unscathed, by the heroic action of Turin firemen.¹¹

The Shroud Museum in Turin displayed a number of certificates similar to the ones held by St. Raphael’s Church and probably once they were sold as souvenirs to pilgrims who came to see the Shroud when it was on public display – see below. A wide range of other souvenirs of public exhibitions of the Shroud were also displayed.¹²

But, how did the documents come into the possession of St. Raphael's Church? No record of the deposition was found. Let us accept that they must have been deposited by somebody who actually had visited Turin in 1874 to see the Shroud. Between 1850-1888, the Church was owned by Edward Raphael, who inherited it from Alexander Raphael, its builder. Thereafter, until 1945, the Church was owned by the family of the Earls of Mexborough.¹³ While Edward Raphael was a candidate, perhaps the Mexboroughs, for whom there was evidence, in the archives of St. Raphael's, that they travelled in Italy, deposited the documents and we may never know how they came to be in the Church's archives. Pictures of the documents are at **Appendix 2**.

IS THE TURIN SHROUD AUTHENTIC?

While the Gospels recorded Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection – a topic that is considered later – they did not say that his crucified image was left on the burial cloths found by St. Peter when he entered the tomb. And, neither did they mention Veronica and the image of Christ's face on the cloth, veil or towel, that she gave Him to wipe blood and sweat away, on the *Via Dolorosa*; which is remembered at the 6th Station of the Cross, and is part of Catholic tradition. St. John admitted that not all that happened to Jesus Christ was recorded in his Gospel. However, it was difficult to dismiss the idea that the ability of Jesus permanently to impart His image on cloth, while alive in the case of Veronica, and while in the tomb after crucifixion, would have been worth recording if St. John was aware of this.¹⁴

Ian Wilson, in 1978, hypothesised that the Mandylion, an image on cloth of Christ's face, and venerated by the Orthodox Church, was the Shroud folded so that only the face was visible. According to Wilson, the Mandylion travelled from Jerusalem to Edessa, in Syria, to Constantinople in the 10th century. From there it travelled to France and, when owned by Geoffrey de Charny, first was exhibited, as the unfolded Shroud, in Lirey around 1356. After it became a possession of the Dukes of Savoy, it travelled from Lirey to Chambéry. From there, after exhibition in different places in Europe, it was moved to Turin, being based there from 1578 to the present day. There appeared to a consensus that the history of the Shroud's movements in medieval France to Italy, such as was recorded by Wilson, 1978 [**Appendix 3**],

generally was reliable. A possible connection with the Veronica cloth image tradition and the Mandyion tradition was proposed by Wilson, 1978. He and Thomas de Wesselow, 2012, suggested possible connections between the Shroud and the images of the Pray Codex of 1192 and the Sudarium of Oviedo which may date to the sixth century according to local legend.¹⁵

Scientific investigations

Numerous scientific investigations were carried out on The Turin Shroud. Only a few can be reviewed in this paper. The first one, in 1898, was carried out by the lawyer, Secondo Pia, an amateur photographer. He obtained negative images of the Shroud which revealed much more detail, relief and depth, than ever before had been seen. According to Wilson, 1978, Pia's most striking visualisation was the face, *"incredibly lifelike against a black background"*.¹⁶ Svensson and Heimburger, 2012, noted that everybody could now see with a high accuracy the shape and many details of the Shroud image, instead of a vague, faint, human form [Figure 1].¹⁷ For convenience, scientific investigations on the Shroud could be classified as anatomical interpretation of visual images, forensic investigations, microscopic examination, chemical tests, and dating tests. Theories of image formation, such as they are, are discussed separately.

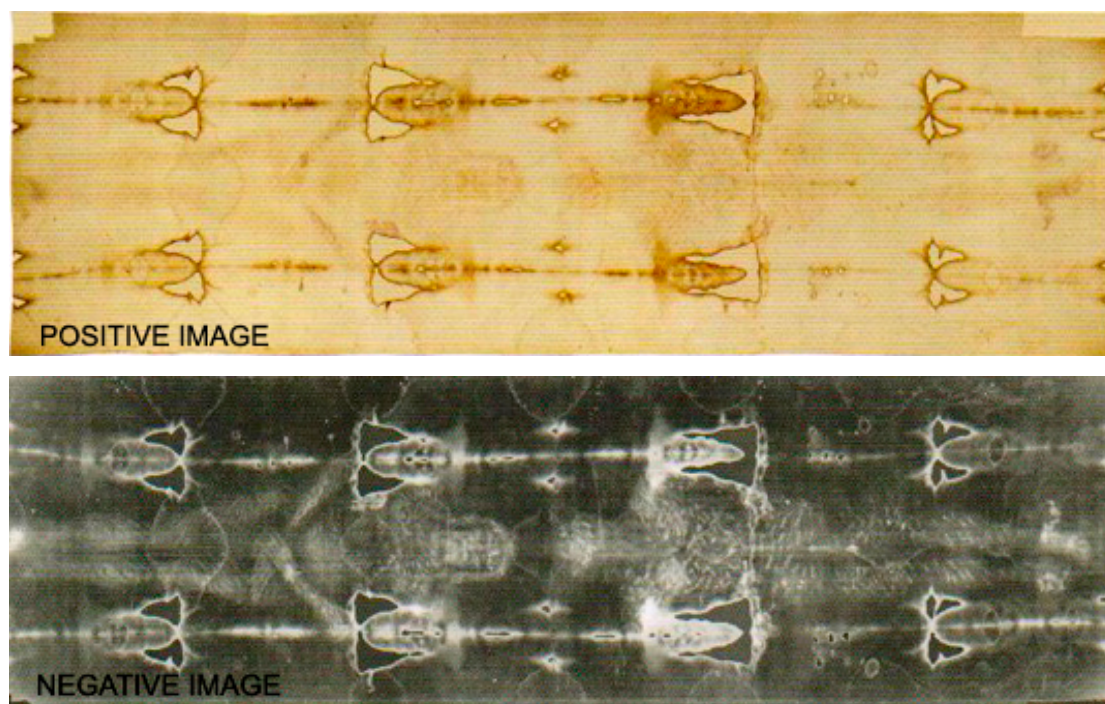


FIGURE 1. COMPUTER ENHANCED SCANS OF POSTCARDS OF THE SHROUD, OBTAINED IN TURIN, BY DAVID A. KENNEDY

Anatomical interpretations of visual images

There appeared to be a general consensus that the Shroud image accorded generally with the account of the crucifixion given in the Gospels. There was evidence that the Shroud man had been scourged, crowned with thorns, beaten and roughly treated, made to carry the crossbeam, or *patibulum*, of a cross on his shoulders, fell, was nailed to a cross and his side was pierced with a spear. But, the nakedness of the victim, the use of a *patibulum* and *stipes* cross assembly and the evidence that the nails were driven through the wrists of the victim, rather than through his palms, was not in accordance with most of the traditional depictions of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ In the 1974 film *Jesus of Nazareth*, the actor Robert Powell, who played Jesus Christ, was shown carrying a *patibulum*.¹⁹ Ginatta, 2018, wrote that the Shroud could not have been the work of a 14th century forger because they would have followed the traditional approach to depictions of the Crucifixion.²⁰ For example, *The Crucifixion* by Giotto di Bondone, painted in the 14th century, showed the nails through Christ's palms. However, two churches in Turin had crucifixes in which nails were driven through Christ's wrists. These were the Holy Shroud Church, within the curtilage of the Shroud Museum, where the crucifix was reported by a guide to have been installed in 1750 and the Great Mother of God Church, which was completed in 1830, according to local information. Perhaps the creators of these works were influenced by the Turin Shroud.

Forensic investigations

Svensson and Heimburger, 2012, reviewed papers on forensic examination of the Turin Shroud, including some of their own findings. They reported that different test methods had demonstrated that the red staining of the body image on the Shroud was human blood and that the distribution and flow of the blood and the position of the body were compatible with a victim of crucifixion. They concluded that in the light of the minimal Gospel descriptions of the Passion of Christ, from a forensic viewpoint, no findings opposed the hypothesis that the Shroud once enveloped the body of the historical Jesus.

On the other hand, Borroni and Garlaschelli, 2018, simulated a crucifixion and carried out bloodstains pattern analysis. They reported that their experiments demonstrated that the blood flow patterns from different areas of the body visualised on the Turin Shroud were inconsistent because they indicated two different methods of crucifixion of the same victim within the same timescale. In short, some experiments indicated that the victim would have been standing with his upper limbs raised at an angle between 80° and 100°, while other experiments indicated that the victim would have been standing with his arms nailed at an angle of about 45°. The authors concluded that their findings tended to oppose the authenticity of the Shroud and suggested that it was an artistic or “didactic” representation from the 14th century.²¹ This work was reported by the *Independent* newspaper on 16 July 2018 under the headline “628-year-old fake news: Scientists prove Turin Shroud not genuine [again]”²² Rucker, 2018, after an evaluation of the paper, noted the difficulties of accurately simulating Christ’s crucifixion and concluded that the experimental results did not constitute valid evidence that the Shroud of Turin originated in the 14th century or that the Shroud was not the authentic burial cloth of Jesus Christ.²³

Examination of the Shroud by STURP

In 1978, the American group known as the Shroud of Turin Research Project [STURP] arranged non-destructive tests on the Shroud; forty scientists from The USA and Italy were involved. Among the methods used were direct microscopy, infrared spectrometry, X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, X-ray radiography, thermography and ultraviolet fluorescence spectrometry. In addition, ultraviolet fluorescence photographs, raking-light photographs, normal front-lit photographs and backlit photographs of the entire Shroud were taken as well as dozens of micro-photographs of strategically selected areas of the Shroud. Computer image enhancement and analysis was carried out using a VP-8 image analyser. Sticky tape samples from the surface of the Shroud cloth and thread samples also were taken.²⁴ These samples were investigated by microscopy, pyrolysis-mass-spectrometry, laser-microbe Raman analysis and various methods of micro-chemical testing. STURP’s report, issued in 1981, concluded that the Shroud image was that of a real human form of a scourged, crucified man, it was not the product of an artist,

the blood stains were composed of haemoglobin and give a positive test for serum albumin and the VP-8 analyser showed that the image had unique, three-dimensional information encoded in it.²⁵

Microscopic examination and chemical tests

The results of any microscopical examination and chemical tests on the Turin Shroud would need to be treated with caution because frequent handling and veneration over the years inevitably would have exposed it to a wide range of contamination from external sources. For example, the Shroud website <https://www.shroud.com> revealed that it had been exhibited publically at least 33 times between 1355-2015, on seventeen occasions between 1483-2013 it was moved from place to place, by 1503, it had been *“tried by fire, boiled in oil and laundered many times”* to determine the permanency of the image of the crucified man, in 1532 it was damaged by fire in Chambéry, was repaired in 1534, and in 2002, in Turin, it underwent restoration. Furthermore, Antonio Tempesta’s depiction of the exhibition of the Shroud in the Piazza del Castello, Turin, on 4 May 1613 showed seven bishops and three other persons gripping it with their hands to hold it over the side of an elevated structure before the assembled people [Appendix 4].²⁶ According to Wilson, 1978, St. Francis de Sales was one of the bishops involved in this exhibition.²⁷ And, a painting by Giovanni Marghinotti, of 1844, showed a bishop and another person holding the Shroud out before Carlo II to enable him to venerate it.²⁸ All these activities presented an opportunity for contaminants to be deposited on the surface of the cloth and between its fibrils.

In the STURP investigation, the particles observed on the sticky tape samples included pollen, wool, parts of insects, dog hairs, wax, red silk, blue linen, glass, and several types of unclassified red and black particles. Guerrero, 2001, thought that some of the particles would have come from painted religious objects placed on the Shroud by devotees to keep as a relic and that the red silk particles came from the roll of red silk in which the Shroud had been kept when not on display. All of these particles indicated contamination at one time or another.

Walter McCrone, a distinguished forensic microscopist, not directly involved in the STURP investigations, was provided with some of STURP’s sticky tape samples for examination, but his findings were not included in the

report of 1981. In his book *“Judgment Day For The Shroud Of Turin”*, published in 1999, he stated that the Shroud image was painted on the cloth shortly before the first exhibition, at Lirey, in about 1355. Furthermore, in his opinion, an artist may have enhanced an earlier image or created a new image using an iron-earth tempera watercolour paint, and in the *“blood image”* areas, the artist used a vermilion-based paint. McCrone emphasized that he did not detect blood on the Shroud and believed that, in its entirety, it was *“a skilful and scholarly work of art”*. McCrone's book showed that he had fallen out massively with STURP over the differing conclusions about the nature of the Shroud image.²⁹

Rucker, 2018, emphasized the prevailing scientific consensus that blood was present on the Shroud. Moreover, he stated that STURP had not detected pigment, paint carrier fluid, brush strokes, clumping of anything between the Shroud's fibres or threads, no cracking at the fold seams and no evidence that a liquid had been soaked up. In his view, all of these would have been evident if the Shroud image was a painting: but none was present.³⁰ In other words, according to Rucker, STURP's findings refuted McCrone's claim that the Shroud was the work of an artist.

Other particles were detected on the surface of the Shroud. Max Friei, Director of the Zurich Police Scientific Laboratory, detected pollen from 57 different plants. While some came from pollen of plants indigenous to Europe, 33 pollens came from plants that were unique to Palestine, and to areas of Turkey, including Istanbul. *“Dirt”* particles from the foot area of the Shroud were identified as travertine aragonite, a rare type of calcite found in Jerusalem.³¹ On the face of it, these results supported the historical movements of the Shroud [**Appendix 3**].

Dating tests

Establishing the age of the Shroud by a reliable scientific method was an obvious attraction to those who wished to establish whether or not it could be dated to the time of the crucifixion of Christ, i.e., around 33 A.D. In 1988, very small samples of the Shroud were taken for radiocarbon dating by accelerator mass spectrometry in laboratories at Arizona, Oxford and Zurich. As quality controls, three samples whose ages were determined independently by archaeologists were also radiocarbon dated. In a paper

published in *Nature*, a highly regarded and influential peer-reviewed British scientific journal, the authors, who represented the participating laboratories, concluded that *“the results provide conclusive evidence that the linen of the Shroud of Turin is mediaeval”*. In fact, the age range proposed for the samples that were tested was A.D. 1260-1390.³² Before the *Nature* publication, the results were announced simultaneously in London and Turin on 13 October 1988. Then, at the press conference at British Museum, Professor Edward Hall, the Director of the Oxford laboratory, was quoted as saying of the Shroud *“...somebody just got a bit of linen, faked it up and flogged it”*.³³ *The Times* newspaper of 14 October 1988 carried a more sober Editorial about the press conference. It contained the statement, *“It can never be proved that a particular relic is genuine, though it may be provable that it is not. That is the fate that has befallen the Shroud...”*

However, Ray Rogers, who took part in the 1978 STURP project in Turin, in 2004, in *Thermochimica Acta*, a respected peer-reviewed scientific journal, proposed that pyrolysis-mass-spectrometry results, coupled with microscopic and micro-chemical observations, indicated that the radiocarbon samples dated by the authors of the *Nature* paper in 1989, were not part of the original cloth of the Shroud of Turin. Thus, in his opinion, *“The radiocarbon date was thus not valid for determining the true age of the shroud.”* In other words, Rogers said that the samples of cloth that were used in the radiocarbon dating tests were taken from a part of the Shroud adjacent to the Holland cloth that had been sewn on when nuns of the Poor Clare order carried out repairs following the Chambéry fire of 1532.³⁴ Rogers’ opinion was supported by a photograph in a publication by Barberis and Savarino, 1998, which indicated that the samples for radiocarbon dating were taken from an area where the Holland Cloth was sewn onto the original Shroud material.³⁵ The doubt about the validity of the sampling was exemplified by Benford and Marino, 2008, who concluded that the radiocarbon sampling area was *“manipulated during or after the 16th C...”*³⁶ In David Rolfe’s film of 2015, *A Grave Injustice*, Pam Moon, the producer, stated that the area where the radiocarbon dating sample was taken was one where it would have been gripped many times when the Shroud was held out for public exhibition and therefore would have been exposed to maximum contamination [see **Appendix 4**]. She said that it was

the “*worst possible place to take the one and only sample*” for radiocarbon testing. One opinion of the radiocarbon dating tests of 1988 was made clear by the title of a chapter in Thomas de Wesselow’s book, “*The Carbon-Dating Fiasco*”.³⁷

If the radiocarbon dating investigation reliably had shown that image on the Shroud originated about 33 A.D., would this have proved irrefutably that the image was that of the crucified Jesus Christ? This was addressed by Phillip Ball of *Nature* in a review of Rogers’ *Thermochimica Acta* paper of 2004. He wrote, “...*Will scientists ever accept that trying to establish the true status of the Turin shroud is a vain quest? The object itself is too inaccessible, and its history is too poorly documented and understood, to permit irrefutable conclusions. And of course 'authenticity' is not really a scientific issue at all here: even if there were compelling evidence that the shroud was made in first-century Palestine, that would not even come close to establishing that the cloth bears the imprint of Christ*”. In other words, in Ball’s opinion, because there was no established test for the imprint of Christ, the Shroud’s provenance could not be determined by scientific testing alone.³⁸

An archaeological approach

Caravaggio’s painting, *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* was a reminder that some people require more evidence upon which to base their beliefs than do others. *Doubting Thomas* became *Thomas the Believer* after he was able to see Christ’s injuries for himself. Furthermore, it was recognized that different scientific disciplines had different approaches to their investigations and each had its own standards for establishing authenticity.

In his book “*The Rape of the Turin Shroud*”, published in 2005, in his book “*The Rape of the Turin Shroud*”, published in 2005, William Meacham, an archaeologist, proposed that the question of the authenticity of the Turin Shroud could be divided into two stages. First: was it a genuine burial cloth recovered from a grave or recovered from a corpse? Second: was the Shroud the actual grave cloth of Jesus Christ? He thought that the first stage could be established from direct observation of the object and comparison with relevant data from other disciplines, e.g., the views of expert anatomists. He thought that the second stage relied heavily, but not entirely, on the historical record and on certain points on the silence in that record. Meacham,

2005, concluded that opinion at the first stage ranged generally from “probable” to “proven”, while at the second stage opinions ranged from “possible” to “probable”. He went on to conclude that, all things being considered, the Shroud’s “...*authenticity should be accorded a degree of certainty comparable, for example, to the identification of ancient city sites such as Troy, Ur, etc., to the dating of the Lascaux cave paintings, or to the description of the death of Nero...*”³⁹ In other words, in Meacham’s opinion, by the standards of archaeologists the Shroud could be considered authentic.

Formation of the Shroud image

There have been many hypotheses from scientists from different disciplines about the mechanism for the formation of the image on the Shroud. The Turin Shroud website listed approximately 170 papers about image formation. <https://www.shroud.com> There appeared to be no consensus on formation of the Shroud image and many researchers admitted that they just didn’t know how it came about.

The STURP scientists, in 1981, after their in-depth investigation of the Shroud [above] reported “...*how the image was produced or what produced the image remains, now, as it has in the past, is a mystery*”. Meacham, 2005, accepted that the image-forming process was unknown. The physicist Rucker, 2018, proposed that the image was formed by a burst of radiation from within the body.⁴⁰

Ginatta’s, 2018, review of the features of the Shroud image could be summarised as follows. 1. There was no image under the blood stains. 2. The coloured fibrils of the Shroud cloth that comprised the image somehow were altered to make them more fragile and less resistant to a “traction force” than the uncoloured fibrils. 3. The colouring of the fibrils was due to unknown process that caused a low-temperature dehydration and oxidation that accelerated aging. 4. The shades of colour held the information that produced the apparent three-dimensional appearance of the image. 5. The image was not formed by direct contact between the linen of the Shroud and a corpse. 6. The colouration was estimated to be only 0.2 thousandths of a millimetre in depth and could only be produced by modern technology: this would tend to rule out its creation by a mediaeval forger. 7. The image was formed sometime after the decomposition of a corpse. 8. All the blood stains had well

defined edges, without smudges: this supported a hypothesis that the corpse was not physically removed from the sheet. 9. The image did not result from putrefaction gases and the corpse did not remain in the sheet for more than two days. Having said this, and after considering hypotheses that that image was caused by external or internal radiation, Ginatta did not himself propose a hypothesis of image formation.⁴¹

A report of a recent lecture to sixth-form students, by the film-maker David Rolfe concluded, *“Students were left with really interesting questions about how the image was created, natural or man-made, we still don’t know how it happened”*.⁴²

Conservation of the Shroud in 2002

In 2002, it was reported that Mechthild Flury-Lemberg, an expert in the restoration of textiles, had supervised the restoration and conservation of the Turin Shroud. Thirty triangular patches, sewn-on by the nuns of Chambéry in 1534 and the contemporaneous Holland cloth backing were removed from the Shroud. A new linen backing cloth was attached and it was reported that dust and debris that had accumulated on the cloth over the centuries was removed. It was also reported that all the removed material was catalogued and placed in safekeeping.⁴³ William Meacham, in his book *“The Rape of the Turin Shroud”*, published in 2005, generally was very critical of the conservation project. He questioned the apparently cosmetic “cleaning and tidying-up” objective, the fact that the wider Shroud research fraternity was not consulted about the project and expressed his concern that opportunities for research had been lost during the five week period that the relic was made available by its custodians. Furthermore, he pointed out that the weights that had been attached to the Shroud to smooth-out the creases and wrinkles would weaken the cloth. Meacham’s opinion on the conservation project could be summarised as an attempt to obtain a *“new look”* Shroud which did not accord with the established principles of restoration and conservation and which would deny researchers the opportunity to study its history.

CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN THE SHROUD

In 1389, after the Shroud had been exhibited at Lirey for about 30 years, Bishop Pierre D’Arcis, Bishop of Troyes, sent a memorandum to the Avignon Pope, Clement VII, stating among other things, that after diligent inquiry and

examination, a predecessor, Bishop Henri of Poitiers, had discovered that it was fraudulent. Bishop D'Arcis went on to say that "*...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*".⁴⁴ According to Guerrero, 2001, Clement VII, whom he called "*the anti-pope*", never ordered an investigation into accusations made by Bishop D'Arcis. Instead, in 1390, Clement issued a Bull which permitted the exposition of the Shroud provided that it was presented as a likeness of Christ and not as the true Shroud of Christ. Furthermore, Bishop D'Arcis was ordered not to oppose the exposition of the Shroud.

Wilson, 1978, reported that in 1670 the Congregation of Indulgences in Rome granted a plenary indulgence "*not for venerating the cloth as the true Shroud of Christ, but rather for meditating on the Passion, especially His death and burial*." Wilson noted that this was a tacit acceptance that the Shroud's authenticity was not beyond dispute.

In his review of Popes and the Shroud, Guerrero, 2001, indicated that from Sixtus IV [1471-1484] to John Paul II [1978-2005] veneration of the Shroud as a *likeness* of the crucified Christ was promoted. The wording of the documents from St. Raphael's church, especially the part of the prayer attributed to Archbishop Alessandro Richiardi di Netro "*...whose blessed body, having been taken down from the cross, was wrapped in the Holy Shroud and left traces of Your presence on it...*" might have implied that the Shroud of Turin actually was the burial cloth of Christ. However, this prayer could have been deliberately made ambiguous because it could have referred to the actual burial cloth of Christ, which reasonably would have retained traces of His presence, rather than the burial cloth kept at Turin.

Pope John Paul II's [1963-1978] personal impression of the Shroud in a television broadcast in 1973, could be summed up as follows: "*...the face of Christ represented thereon appeared to us so true, so profound, so human and divine, such as we have been unable to admire and venerate in any other image. It was for us a moment of singular delight...We cannot but wish that it will lead visitors not only to deep sensitive observation of the exterior and mortal features of the marvelous figure of the Saviour, but also introduce them to a more penetrating vision of His hidden and fascinating mystery*". This

view of the Shroud was echoed by Pope Francis in a video message of 30 March 2013 associated with an exposition in Turin, *“...in front of the Shroud, as before a mirror, we contemplate the mystery of Your passion and Your death for us. This is the greatest love with which you have loved us, even to give your life for the last sinner...”*⁴⁵

Within the Royal Palace and the Shroud Museum in Turin were illustrations of the great esteem in which the Shroud was held in the past. Antonio Tempesta's depiction of the exhibition of the Shroud on 4 May 1613 showed the Piazza del Castello in Turin filled to overflowing with people. Since 1613, there have been numerous public exhibitions of the Shroud. A photograph in the Museum showed the area before the Cathedral filled with people lining up to enter the exhibition of the Shroud in 1978. In the five weeks it was on public display, 3.5 million visitors, 100,000 per day, came to see the Shroud. <https://www.shroud.com/expos.htm>

The last public exhibition of the Shroud in Turin was in 2015 when it was attended by over 2 million visitors. A travelling Shroud photographic exhibition visited Dublin in 2018 and when the talk was given it was in Cardiff [6-20 April 2019].⁴⁶ In January 2019, a back-lit, horizontally-mounted, black and white photographic negative image of the Shroud was observed in a niche in the Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned in Gibraltar. It was available for visitors for meditation upon the Passion of Christ.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

There was no evidence that, since the 14th century, the Vatican has claimed that the Turin Shroud actually was the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. Rather, generally it has been regarded as an object upon which to meditate the Passion of Christ; in particular, to paraphrase the words of Pope Francis, quoted above, to consider the great love that he demonstrated by giving up His life for the last sinner. Anatomical interpretations of photographic images generally were in agreement with the Gospel accounts of Christ's Passion. But, some of the other scientific investigations on the Shroud yielded questionable results and some may have been flawed, particularly the radiocarbon dating that was carried out in 1988.

Indeed, a view had been advanced that the authenticity of the Shroud is not a scientific issue. However, a scientific approach to investigation of the

Shroud should not be dismissed and there was little doubt that the pioneering photography of the Shroud by Secondo Pia in 1894 paved the way for lay persons, as well as experts, to have insight into the Passion of Christ. Arguably, the authenticity of the Shroud lay in its credible depiction of the great suffering and terrible, agonising death of Christ in accordance with the Scriptures and the opportunity that it presented to Christians for meditation upon His saving grace.

Now, we must return to the pieces of cloth attached to the documents from St. Raphael's Church. While there was no reason to doubt that they had once been in contact with the Turin Shroud, it remained to be seen whether the revered object in Turin actually was the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, despite the suggestion made by Meacham, 2005, that it appeared to be authentic according to prevailing archaeological standards. A lingering concern here was the big question mark over its history before it was recorded in Lirey in the 14th century. No doubt remained that the Turin Shroud and the photographs of it provided a very sound focus for meditation on Christ's Passion, especially during Holy Week, and which have been venerated over the years by countless numbers of the Faithful. And, if the Turin Shroud was not the actual burial shroud of Christ, to quote Walter McCrone [above], it was *"a skilful and scholarly work of art"*.

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APPENDIX 2. THE DOCUMENTS IN THE ARCHIVES OF ST. RAPHAEL'S CHURCH, SURBITON.

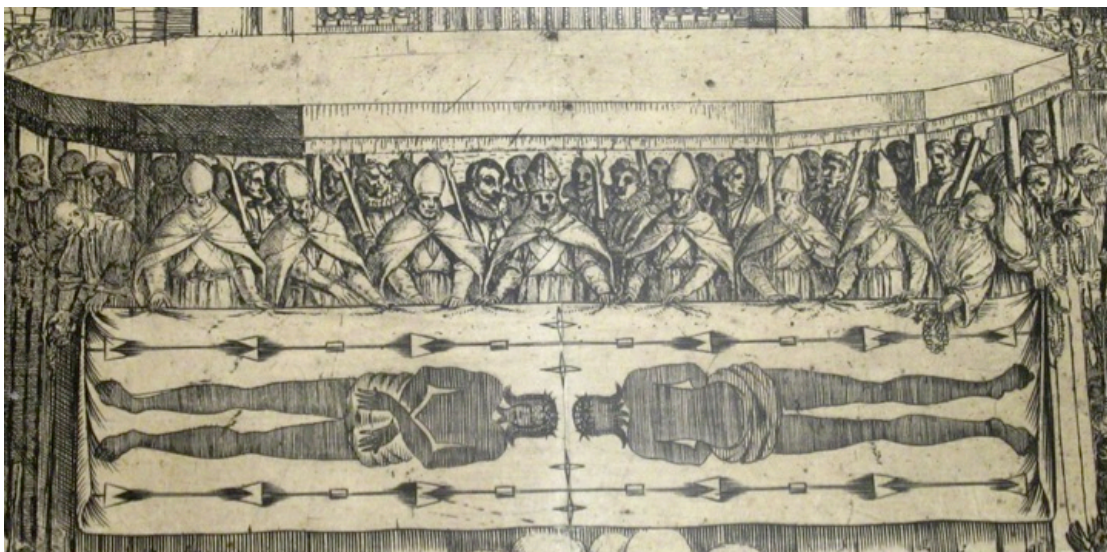


APPENDIX 3. MOVEMENTS OF THE SHROUD, BASED ON WILSON, 1978

PLACE	DATE, A.D.	NOTES
Jerusalem	30	Crucifixion of Jesus Christ
Edessa	30-944	The Mandylion?
Samosata	944	
Constantinople	944-1204	
Acre	1204-1291	
Sidon	1291?	
Paris	1307	
Lirey	1357-1418	A site for pilgrimage ¹
Montfort	1418	
St. Hippolyte-sur-Doubs	1418-1449	
Liege	1449	Exhibited
Germolles	1452	Exhibited
Geneva	1453	
Chambery	1502-1537	Based there
Bourg-en-Bresse,	1502	Exhibited
Vercelli	1494 & 1537-1561	Exhibited on Good Friday, 1494
Milan	1536	Exhibited
Chambéry	1561-1578	Based there
Turin	1578 -1939	
Avellino	1939 -1946	Wartime storage
Turin	1946-present	Permanent base

1. Wilson, 1978, has a photograph of a pilgrim's medallion of the Shroud exhibited at Lirey about 1357.

APPENDIX 4. DETAIL FROM ANTONIO TEMPESTA, EXHIBITION OF THE HOLY SHROUD, TURIN, 4TH MAY 1613, ON DISPLAY IN THE ROYAL PALACE OF TURIN, PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY DAVID A. KENNEDY, 5 MARCH 2019.



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- ¹ As destructive testing would have been required, it was not carried out.
- ² Wilson, 1978, indicated that the Shroud was owned by the Knights Templar in the 13th century, Geoffrey de Charny, whose family seat was at Lirey, in the 14th century, the Dukes of Savoy & Royal House of Savoy from the 15th century until 1983, when its ownership was transferred to the Pope.
- ³ <https://www.shroud.com> Downloaded, 11 April 2019.
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- ¹⁸ The *stipes* was the permanently-installed upright part of the cross assembly.
- ¹⁹ The *stipes* shown in this film was one of a number incorporated into a frame installed at Golgotha to accommodate the crucifixion of more than three victims. The film showed Robert Powell, as Christ, having been nailed to the *patibulum*, being hoisted into place on the top of the *stipes*.
- ²⁰ Marco V. Ginatta, 2018, The Shroud of Jesus Christ in Turin. Critical review of technical aspects and characteristics, Turin, Ontogenesi Publishers.
- ²¹ Matteo Borrani & Luigi Garlaschelli, 2018, A BPA approach to the Shroud of Turin, Journal of Forensic Science, 64[1], 137-143
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- ²⁶ On display in the Royal Palace in Turin on 5 March 2019.
- ²⁷ It was assumed that this was the founder of the Salesian Order.

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