

THE SHROUD IN GREECE

by

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Cover: The *Sainte Face* of Laon (see p.9)

A few weeks after my book *The Shroud and the Grail* had gone to press, Father Kim Dreisbach drew my attention to an article by Brother Bruno Bonnet-Eymard entitled "Le Saint Suaire à l'épreuve de la science", of which an English translation was published in *The Catholic Counter-Reformation* no. 171, September 1984. In this Brother Bruno draws our attention to a paper by Baron Joseph du Teil published in the *Proceedings of the National Society of Antiquaries of France* in May 1902, in which the baron suggests that the Shroud was brought directly from Greece to Lirey some time between 1316 and 1325 by Agnes de Charpigny, the wife of Dreux de Charny, the elder brother of Geoffrey I de Charny, founder of the church at Lirey.

Baron du Teil based this theory on a statement by the Duc de Beauffremont, a descendant of the de Charnys, which in turn was based on the duke's interpretation of a much earlier statement by Philibert Pingonius, the 16th. century historian of the House of Savoy. If Baron du Teil's guess is correct, then the theory advanced by Ian Wilson and myself identifying the Templars' so-called idol with the Shroud must be wrong, since the Order was disbanded in 1307, at least ten years before du Teil says the relic was brought to France from Greece by Dreux de Charny and Agnes de Charpigny.

The purpose of this paper is to examine Baron du Teil's theory in the light of the evidence that has come to light since he advanced it in 1902, so let us begin with Pingonius' statement, upon which the duke's and the baron's thesis is based.

Pingonius wrote à propos the Shroud:

N'y ayant plus de seureté dans la Grèce, dans l'Asie, ny la Syrie, parce que les campagnes estoient couvertes d'escadrons de ces barbares qui trainoient partout un belay ardent après eux et exerçoient des cruaucez inouyes sur les habitans de ces contrées, une grande dame appelée Marguerite de Charny ayant serré son bagage, dans lequel estoit cette sainte relique, délibéra de sortir de Grèce et changer son climat en celuy de France.

[There being no security in Greece, Asia or Syria (at that time) because the land was overrun by squadrons of these barbarians, who swept through it with fire committing unheard of cruelties upon the inhabitants of these countries, a great lady named Marguerite de Charny, having stowed away her baggage, in which was this holy relic, determined to quit Greece for the gentler climes of France.]

Baron du Teil and the Duc de Bauffremont accuse Pingonius of a gross anachronism in confusing Marguerite de Charny who transferred the Shroud to the Duke and Duchess of Savoy in 1453 with her great-aunt, Agnes de Charpigny. They base their theory upon the fact that Agnes de Charpigny, who was Dame de Vostitza in Greece in her own right, married Dreux de Charny in 1316. Because it is known that Dreux died in 1325 (in which year Agnes is described as a widow), they assume that the Shroud must have come to France between these two dates.

To explain the significance of all this it is necessary to say something about the history of Greece during the 120 years between the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and Dreux de Charny's death in 1325.

The misunderstandings and enmities which followed the sack of the imperial city and the imposition of Frankish rule in Greece became bitter in the extreme. "The accursed Latins lust after our possessions and would like to destroy our race," wrote Niketas of Chonae shortly after the fall of the city, in an outburst which suggests a total estrangement which left no room for understanding or compromise. Differences among the Latins themselves were hardly less extreme, and within weeks of the capture of Constantinople their two principal leaders, Baldwin of Flanders and Boniface de Montferrat had come close to open conflict with each other. In the end it was Boniface who came off best, for he was able to establish himself as King of Thessalonica, for which he did homage to the Latin Emperor while retaining effective sovereignty and receiving a free hand in continental Greece, with the exception of a few Venetian enclaves.

In the autumn of 1204 Boniface led his army of land-hungry Franks southward where he quickly established two vassal states. The larger comprised almost the whole of the Peloponnese and was known as the Principality of Achaia, the smaller was made up of Attica and Boeotia and was based on Athens and Thebes, and eventually became known as the Duchy of Athens. The principality had been conquered independently by the Franks under Guillaume de Champlitte and Geoffrey de Villehardouin, the nephew and namesake of the chronicler of the Fourth Crusade. Guillaume de Champlitte was then married to Elisabeth de Mont-Saint-Jean, sister of Pons de Mont-Saint-Jean, Sire of Charny, the great grand-father of Dreux and Geoffrey.¹

The principality of Achaia was divided into twelve baronies in 1209. The approach to the Gulf of Corinth was guarded by the Provençal Arnoul Aleman at Patras and

to the south the family of Tramelay (or Tremouille)² held Chalandritza. Immediately to the east along the coast, Hugues de Charpigny held the strong castle of Vostitza (the present-day Aigion). The military establishment was completed by the Templars, the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights. With the return to France of Guillaume de Champlitte in 1208 and his death en route, the principality came wholly into the undisputed possession of Geoffrey de Villehardouin, whose descendants ruled it until 1316.

The Lordship of Athens and Thebes was conferred by Boniface de Montferrat on Otho de la Roche. It did not compare in size or wealth with the Achaia of the Villehardouins, but its importance in the history of the Shroud is far greater. According to the letter written in 1205 by Theodore Angelos, the illegitimate nephew of the Emperor Isaac II Angelos (and hence, by marriage, of the ex-empress Mary-Margaret, now Queen of Thessalonica) to Pope Innocent III, the Franks had taken the Shroud to Athens.³ Whether Theodore was correct in believing this is uncertain in view of the alternative possibility that it had been taken to Salonika and placed in the church of the Acheiropoietos there.

I am inclined to accept Theodore's letter at its face value, and I now believe that if the Shroud was ever in Salonika, it was only for a short time in 1204 until a safer place could be found for it. Such a safe haven would have been the Parthenon, then the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary atop the Acropolis at Athens. I must consequently revise the theory I advanced in *The Shroud and the Grail* in the light of Pingonius's evidence. If we accept the accuracy of Theodore's letter it is an astonishing coincidence that the greatest relic of Christendom should have been kept in the most famous and the most beautiful shrine in pagan antiquity.

Dom François Chamard, also writing in 1902, supported the claims of Besançon, according to which Otto de la Roche was presented with the Shroud as a reward for his services to Boniface, and that he sent it in 1206 to his father Pons de la Roche, who entrusted it to the care of Amadeus de Tramelay, archbishop of Besançon. Pasquale Rinaldi suggested that far from the Shroud being a gift, Otto stole it. The trouble with these theories is that there is no contemporary evidence either in Besançon or elsewhere to support them. Between 1206 and 1349 there is total silence in Byzantine records on the subject of the relic, and all the theories put forward since 1902, except for Ian Wilson's, have tended to repeat this inaccurate account of events.

Was Pingonius right in believing that the Shroud remained in Greece until it was brought to France? He wrote his history of the House of Savoy two or three hundred years after the events concerning the Shroud he describes. On the other hand, I agree with Baron du Teil that we can reject Pingonius' statement about Marguerite de Charny, because by the mid-15th. century when she handed the Shroud over to the duke and duchess, the Frankish principalities in Greece had been occupied by the Navarrese Company since 1380. At the same time it has to be said that Louis de Clermont, duc de Bourbon, and Amadeus VII and VIII of Savoy all claimed them between 1386 and 1396. Since we know that the Shroud was at Lirey at least forty years earlier than this, we can reject Pingonius' statement as anachronistic.

Pingonius' statement cannot, however, be rejected out of hand, for it contains one valuable clue to help us. He says the Shroud was removed from Greece because the situation there was so unsettled ("plus de seureté dans la Grèce, dans l'Asie ny la Syrie...") This statement has the ring of truth about it, and I have based my investigation on the assumption that this was the true reason for the Shroud's removal from Greece, and the rest of this paper will be an examination of the history of the Frankish states of Greece to see if it can tell us when and by whom that removal might have taken place.

Before we start on this examination I have to state unequivocally that I support the view that the Shroud was identical to the Templars' idol, which means that the Order must have possessed it for many years before it was dissolved in 1307. This reduces at a stroke the period in which we must seek an explanation for the Shroud's removal from Greece, and compels us to look for some other explanation than the one I advance in my book of how it came into the hands of the Templars. We must also accept, I believe, the evidence of Brother Jean-Denis de Tavernay, who told the Inquisition in 1307 that Guillaume de Beaujeu was the first Grand Master to hold special chapters in honour of the 'idol'. We know that de Beaujeu was elected Grand Master in 1273 and that he died in 1291, so these dates limit our search yet further. So let us begin with him.

Guillaume de Beaujeu's father, Guichard de Beaujeu de Montpensier et Montferrand died before 1256; Guillaume was his fourth and youngest son. As his elder brother was married in 1262 we can guess that Guillaume must have been born in the 1230s. From this we can deduce that he probably joined the Order during the late 1240s or early 1250s, if he followed the usual example of younger sons who joined about the age of eighteen.

Before he was elected Grand Master he was Commander of the Templar Province of Apulia, but how long he had held this post we do not at present know, but we can safely assume that it was during the 1260s. Jean-Denis de Tavernay said that the first special chapters in honour of the 'idol' were held in France, and we know that de Beaujeu attended the Council of Lyon in May 1274 and that from 1275 until his death in 1291 he was in the Holy Land.

From this it follows that we must identify a period in Greek history between 1205 and 1273, the year of de Beaujeu's election as Grand Master, when Athens was threatened, and when the situation in Asia Minor and Syria was particularly unpropitious for the Frankish regimes in Greece. Several dates at once spring to mind:

1221 saw the fall of Damietta and the failure of St. Louis's crusade.

1222 saw the capture of Salonika by Theodore Angelos and the beginnings of the Byzantine recovery of those domains lost in 1204.

1236 saw the Tartar invasion of the Balkans, the overwhelming of Hungary, and consequent threat to Greece.

1250 saw the Crusaders defeated by the Saracens at Mansourah.

1259 saw the catastrophic defeat of the Franks at Pelagonia by the forces of the Byzantine Emperor Michael Paleologus.

1261 saw the final collapse of the Latin Empire of Constantinople and the restoration of the Byzantine emperors.

1291 saw the fall of Acre, the expulsion of the Templars from the Holy Land, and the death of Guillaume de Beaujeu.

From this it can be seen that the blackest period for the Franks in Greece, when things were going badly for them in Asia and Syria too, falls between 1250 and 1291, coming to a climax in 1261 with the recapture of Constantinople by Alexius Strategopoulos, a climax which began with their defeat at Pelagonia in 1259. It was at Pelagonia that Guillaume de Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia, was captured with all his barons and obliged to cede the fortresses that dominated the eastern half of the Peloponnese.⁴ Among the immediate military consequences of Pelagonia was the siege of Thebes, where Otto de la Roche, the reigning Duke Guy's younger brother, held out in the Kadmeia. This provided a temporary respite and allowed the Franks and their allies to regroup and force the imperial troops to retreat into Macedonia. This was but a temporary respite, for the object of Michael Paleologus was to

restore the Byzantine realm to something like its former state by recovering Constantinople and as much of the Greek peninsula as he could lay hands on. Provided he was patient, Constantinople was sure to fall soon; Epiros might take longer, but it now seemed that there was a chance of occupying the whole of the Peloponnese and possibly also Attica. The threat to the Shroud's safety in Athens was never greater, and it was unthinkable that it should fall into the hands of the Orthodox hierarchy and be restored to Constantinople from whence it had been taken. To avoid this, the best safeguard would have been to entrust it to the Templars, who not only owned strong fortresses in Greece, but also farther afield. The man to whom the Duke of Athens would have turned in this emergency was Guillaume de Beaujeu, Commander of the Templar province of Apulia, under whose jurisdiction the Templars of Greece came. To explain why, we must examine a little more closely the feudal links connecting the dukedom of Athens and the principality of Achaia with the kingdom of Naples and Sicily in which the Province of Apulia is situated.

Hugh de Brienne, great-nephew of John de Brienne, Emperor of Constantinople and King of Jerusalem, was the grandson of that Walter de Brienne who took part in the Fourth Crusade, but not in the sack of Constantinople, for he was part of the expedition which set out for the Holy Land by way of southern Italy, not Venice. Among his companions was his kinsman Robert de Joinville and both men had been recruited by Pope Innocent III in his struggle against the Hohenstaufen party for the control of Sicily and Naples. I described John de Brienne's career in *The Shroud and the Grail* but only gave a passing mention to his brother Walter, who remained in Italy, marrying Marie, the daughter and heiress of the last Norman king of Sicily, Tancred, in 1201. In return for his assistance and as the outcome of this marriage he was given the County of Lecce in the heel of Italy as well as the neighbouring principality of Taranto in Apulia. Hugh de Brienne's father, also named Walter, was born in 1205 and passed his youth in Apulia under the tutelage of his uncle John de Brienne. When he was in his early twenties this Walter went to the Holy Land, where he was made Count of Jaffa in recompense for his valiant service against the Saracens, who took him prisoner in 1241. He died ten years later. While he was in the Holy Land he married Marie of Cyprus, daughter of Hugh I, King of Cyprus. Hugh de Brienne was their second son. It is not certain when he was born, but probably around 1230, for he accompanied Charles of Anjou on his triumphant campaign of 1266 when he defeated Manfred of Hohenstaufen at the battle of Benevento and succeeded to the throne of Naples and Sicily. As soon as Charles was settled in his new

kingdom, he began to plan a second Latin conquest of Constantinople. In addition, or perhaps in preparation for this enterprise, he laid claim to Corfu and territories in Epiros, while Guillaume de Villehardouin undertook to become the vassal of the king of Naples and agreed that after his death the principality of Achaia should pass to the House of Anjou. As part of this grand plan, Hugh de Brienne married Isabelle de la Roche, daughter of Guy I, Duke of Athens, between 1269 and 1284, and from 1278 until his death in 1301 he was the *de facto* duke of Athens in the right of his wife.

In 1255 Guillaume de Villehardouin found himself a widower for the second time. His first wife was the daughter of Narjaud de Toucy. Her name is unknown, but she was the niece of Helvis de Toucy, the first wife of Pons de Mont-Saint-Jean de Charny. As I have already pointed out, Pons's sister, Elisabeth, was the wife of Guillaume de Champlitte, the first Prince of Achaia, so the de Charny family had close links with Frankish Greece from the very beginning, I believe that it is not unreasonable to hold the view that Pons's son and grandsons visited Greece during the century and a half following the sack of Constantinople, even though I have not yet found any direct evidence to say that any of them held land there. The fact that Geoffrey I de Charny and his brother Dreux both married wives with Greek connections - Jeanne de Toucy in the former case, and Agnes de Charpigny in the latter - supports this view. That the senior Templar, Guillaume de Beaujeu, during the period between 1260 and 1291 was a kinsman of the de Charnys likewise is significant. But I digress.

On the death of his second wife, Guillaume de Villehardouin laid claim to her estates in Euboea which led to war with Guy de la Roche, Duke of Athens, a war which lasted until 1255. In the course of the settlement reached at its conclusion, it was agreed to submit their differences to the King of France rather than to the Latin Emperor of Constantinople. This is important because it shows that the Frankish magnates in Greece regarded themselves first and foremost as Frenchmen owing primary allegiance to the King of France. Guy de la Roche certainly believed that his appearance before the French king could be turned to his advantage and therefore undertook the long journey to Paris.⁵

On the way he stopped for a while in Burgundy, where he showed himself off to his relatives and managed to borrow a large sum of money from the duke. During his stay in Paris, he persuaded St. Louis to create him Duke of Athens (he had previously only been Megas Kyrios, the

equivalent of Dominus, Sire or Lord), and thus a peer of the dukes of Brittany, Normandy, Aquitaine and Burgundy.

During Guy de la Roche's leisurely and profitable sojourn in France, Guillaume de Villehardouin suffered the catastrophic defeat at Pelagonia and consequent imprisonment by Michael Paleologus. Envoys were despatched from Greece to beg Guy to hurry home and take over the government not only of his own dukedom but also of the principality. Responding promptly to this invitation, and without returning to Athens, he landed at Glarentza and became, in effect, the ruler of all Frankish Greece. The result of these events was to place the dukedom of Athens firmly under the vassalage of the King of France, and subsequently of the king's brother, Charles of Anjou, once he had conquered the kingdom of Naples and Sicily.

We can only guess what effect all this had on the Shroud, but insofar as the Latin Emperor Baldwin II had bequeathed all the relics in Constantinople to St. Louis, it is not stretching the evidence too far to suppose that with the Shroud threatened by Michael Paleologus, steps would be taken to save it for France, and the surest way to do this would have been to commit it to the care of the Templars, which meant to the care of Guillaume de Beaujeu, the Commander of the Province of Apulia.

There is another grain of evidence I should like to mention at this stage. In 1249 Jacques Pantaloon sent the Sainte Face to his sister at Leon. In *The Shroud and the Grail* I suggested that it might have been painted in Hungary at the abbey of Szevaszentdemeter.

In view of this new evidence, I now doubt this. The fact that its inscription is in Slavonic surely indicates that it was painted in the Balkans, but it must be remembered that there were many Slavonic settlements in Greece at this time, even as far south as the Peloponnese, as place names such as Vostitza and Chalandritza testify. More significant, however, is the fact that Jacques Pantaloon obtained the icon in Apulia. In 1261 he was elected Pope as Urban IV and appointed as his chamberlain one Pierre de Charny. Three years later, in 1264, he instituted the Feast of Corpus Christi shortly before his death in October that year.

Let me repeat; in order to reconcile the opinion that the Templars' idol was identical with the Shroud, with the statement of Philibert Pingonius that it was removed from Greece to France at a time when the situation in Greece, Asia and Syria was disturbed, we have to presume that the Shroud came into the order's possession before 1274. How long before can only be surmised, but since

Guillaume de Beaujeu is known to have had a special veneration for it, we must assume that it was while he was Commander of the Province of Apulia and before he was elected Grand Master in 1273. But before we accept this as true, I must examine a little more closely the Duc de Beauffremont's theory as explained by the Baron du Teil in 1902. They believed that the Shroud was sent to France after the battle of Kephissos which took place in 1311, when nearly the whole of the Frankish nobility in Greece was wiped out, and before the death of Agnes de Charpigny in 1328.

It has to be admitted that this theory has much to commend it. It is simple. It explains how the de Charnys came by the relic. But does it hold water? Dreux de Charny was married in 1316, whereas his younger brother Geoffrey died in 1356 leaving an infant son. Geoffrey married Jeanne de Vergy late in life, for he was widowed from his first wife Jeanne de Toucy, whom he had married before 1336. I have already said a little about the links between the de Toucy and the de Charny families, but the Baron du Teil lays such great stress on this aspect of the problem that I should say a little more about the de Toucys. Pons de Mont-Saint-Jean's brother-in-law, Narjaud de Toucy, went to Constantinople in 1217 with the Emperor Pierre de Courtenay, and died there in 1241, after having been regent of the empire during the reign of Baldwin II in 1228. Narlaud's first wife was the daughter of Theodore Vrancas by his second wife, Agnes of France, widow of the Emperor Alexius II Comnenus. By her he had a son, Philip de Toucy, who was Baili of the Empire in 1245. After the fall of Constantinople in 1261, Philip de Toucy retired to Sicily, where Charles of Anjou made him hereditary Grand Admiral and Lord of Terza. Philip's son, Narjaud II succeeded him and died in 1292 leaving by his wife Lucy of Antioch, Countess of Tripoli, a son. Philip II, who succeeded as Prince of Antioch. Philip II married Leonora of Sicily, daughter of Charles II of Sicily, but he died before he came of age, and his widow married Frederick III of Aragon. Narjaud de Toucy was living in Apulia from about 1287, and Jeanne de Toucy, Geoffrey de Charny's first wife, was almost certainly his daughter. All this suggests to me the strong possibility, amounting almost to certainty, that Geoffrey de Charny spent some of his youth in Greece or Apulia, possibly after the death of his elder brother Dreux, which must have taken place around 1323-5. The Duc de Beauffremont and the Baron du Teil both believed that this was how the Shroud came into the possession of the de Charny family.

There are, however, two objections to this theory. The first needs to explain how the Shroud came to be at

Vostitza or in Achaia. The other is why such a young couple as Dreux de Charny and Agnes de Charpigny should have been entrusted with it. But before we dismiss the theory entirely, let us look at events in the duchy of Athens at this time.

Walter de Brienne, Count of Lecce, became Duke of Athens on the death without issue of Guy II (Guyot) de la Roche in 1308. No chronicle of the dukedom of Athens exists in any language, unlike Achaia, of which there are four chronicles, in Greek, French, Italian and Aragonese. It seems, however, that the duke counted for more and the hierarchy of barons for less than in the principality, if only because the duke's vassals were proportionately less numerous than the prince's. At the same time, Duke Guy was able to muster a powerful force of Frankish cavalry whenever he went to war. Although his territory was well furnished with harbours, he had no navy, so the protection of his coastline depended on the vigilance of coastal forts. Throughout this period the Greek mainland and islands were plagued by pirates, most of them Turkish and many of them operating from bases in Asia minor. Thus during the last illness of Duke Guyot, namely from about 1307 onwards. Athens was threatened from Asia Minor and, as I shall shortly demonstrate, from Greece itself. Syria by now was of course firmly in the hands of the Saracens, Pingonius' assertion that the Shroud was removed from Greece to France on account of the disturbed state of affairs there applies equally to the years following 1308 as it does to the period following the battle of Pelagonia fifty years earlier.

Guy II's death was much lamented. He was esteemed for his good qualities, and his subjects had looked forward to a long and successful reign. But he had no heir, for his wife was only fifteen years old, and he was succeeded by his cousin, Walter de Brienne, the son of his step-father, Hugh de Brienne, and of his aunt, Isabelle de la Roche.

Walter was known to be a gallant soldier. He had fought for the Angevins in Sicily and had been captured by the Aragonese. It is assumed he had lived in Attica as a boy, but his subsequent career had been outside Greece. He belonged essentially to the expatriate French aristocracy of the kingdom of Naples and was married to Jeanne de Châtillon, a kinswoman of the late ex-empress Mary-Margaret. Everything might have gone well with him had he not been faced with a critical situation which had begun to threaten the last two years of Guyot's reign, a threat from a band of mercenaries known as the Catalan Company.

By 1300 an equilibrium between the Latin and Greek states of Greece and between the Latins themselves had been achieved beneath the Angevin overlordship. The mainland was shared by the prince of Achaia and the duke of Athens, and the Greeks ruled over Epiros, Thessaly, Neopatras and the Byzantine province in the Morea. The French and Italian co-existed more or less amicably and intermarriage between their ruling houses was common. Now a new element was injected into this situation in the shape of a highly organised and professional army of Catalan and Aragonese mercenaries. They had been invited in 1302 to help the Byzantine emperor, Andronikos II, to support him in his constant struggle against the Turks. Far from relieving him from Turkish pressure, the Catalans shook the Byzantine regime to its foundations, reducing it to the status of a minor principality. For seven years they defied the imperial authority, smashed the emperor's armies, and dissolved his administration in chaos. They inflicted no lasting harm on the Turks, however, and indeed facilitated their future conquests.

Walter de Brienne was fully conscious of the Catalan problem, which had preoccupied the last years of his predecessor. In the spring of 1310 the Catalans at last entered the plain of Thessaly where the joint Byzantine and Thessalian forces succeeded in hemming them into an awkward position on the border between Thessaly and the duchy. There they might have been destroyed, but the chance was missed, and they were able to call up reinforcements, many of them Turkish. Opposed to them was the duke's army, enlarged by a strong body of barons and knights from Achaia. Despite his experience of the Catalans in Sicily, Walter de Brienne was careless and over-confident, and allowed them to choose a battlefield near the river Kephissos, which was protected by marshy ground across which the Frankish knights would have to attack. The duke failed to reconnoitre this terrain and consequently fell into the trap the Catalans had set for him. It resulted in the defeat and death of the flower of the Frankish nobility of Greece. Among the slain were the duke himself and Geoffrey de Charpigny, baron of Vostitza. The duchy of Athens, bulwark of Frankish rule in southern Greece, fell into the hands of the Catalan mercenaries, who were little better than bandits. Thebes fell without resistance and duchess Jeanne fled first to Argos, then to Achaia and finally to France. Could she be the 'grand dame' who took the Shroud in her baggage, as alleged by Pingonius? It is possible, but unlikely, as I shall hope to show.

But there is another scenario to be considered. In the same year that saw the battle of Kephissos, 1311, died Isabelle de Vilehardouin, Princess of Achaia in her own

right, and the mother of Mahaut de Hainault, the child-widow of Duke Guyot of Athens. The Catalan threat to Achaia after the fall of the duchy was such as to stimulate the kings of France and Naples to take drastic action to defend the principality. I do not propose to go into the complicated details of what they decided to do beyond saying that part of their plan hinged on the marriage of Mahaut to Louis of Burgundy, the younger brother of Duke Hugh. It was designed to restore the confidence of the Franks in Achaia, who would naturally welcome as their prince the brother of one of the greatest feudatories of France. Mahaut was only 18 and Louis 16 when they were married, and five years elapsed before they attempted to take possession of their principality. They eventually landed at Patras in April 1316 and four months later Louis died in mysterious circumstances on 2 August 1316. For the second time in her short life Mahaut of Hainault was widowed.

Among the knights Louis and Mahaut brought with them to Greece was Dreux de Charny. Although his precise date of birth is not known, it is almost certain that he was a close contemporary of Prince Louis, who had been born in 1297. At the very most, therefore, Dreux was twenty years old, and possibly a year or two younger. According to the French *Chronicle of Morea*, quoted by Baron du Teil, Louis wished to reward his followers with the lands of those who had fallen at the battle of Kephissos. He accordingly gave Dreux de Charny the hand of Agnes de Charpigny, daughter of the last Baron of Vostitza, as well as the barony of Nivelet. The marriage took place between April and August 1316.

There was no question of Mahaut being allowed to rule Achaia undisturbed after her husband's premature death. Instead she became the victim of the King of Naples who, in 1317, appointed one of his own barons Captain of Achaia and tried to force Mahaut to marry his own younger brother, John Count of Gravina. Mahaut, however, refused and trumped his ace by secretly marrying a Burgundian knight, Hugues de la Foliose, only to find herself thrown into prison by the infuriated king who kept her incarcerated for the rest of her life. She died in 1331 forlorn and forgotten. There was consequently no possibility of her being the 'grande dame' who rescued the Shroud and brought it to France.

It is not known for certain when Dreux de Charny and his wife returned to France, but we can assume that it was not long after Prince Louis' death. Nor is it certain when Dreux died. The Archives of the Departement of Yonne contain a document which shows that Agnes was a widow in 1325 and that she was dead by 1328. In the archives of Seine-et-Oise there is a document to show

that their daughter Guillemette had married Philip de Jonvelle-sur-Saône, Sire de Sexfontaines before 1335. In this document he is described as Lord of Vostitza and Nivelet in the right of his wife. They seem to have gone to Greece soon after, for he signed a document in October 1344 at the castle of Roviata in the Morea, and he was appointed bailie of the principality in 1352. In 1359 he sold his two baronies to Marie de Bourbon, but he had already returned to France by 1354 when his daughter, Agnes de Jonvelle married Philip de Beauffremont, and their son was the first husband of Marguerite de Charny who transferred the Shroud to the duke of Savoy.

Assuming that the Shroud left Greece after the battle of Kephissos it is hard to understand why it should have been entrusted to two such young and comparatively unimportant people as Dreux and Agnes de Charny. By far the most likely person to have taken it is Duchess Jeanne, Walter de Brienne's widow, but there are serious objections to this theory too. In the first place it is difficult to understand why, if she did indeed take the relic, she gave it to Geoffrey de Charny or his father Jean de Charny. Her first place of refuge, according to Pere Anselme, was at the court of King Robert of Naples, from where in November 1312 she authorised her father, Gaucher V de Châtillon, Constable of France, to administer the county of Brienne in her absence and her other estates in France belonging to her children. If she had been the de facto owner of the Shroud then, why should she have let it go out of the Brienne or Châtillon families? She made efforts to regain the duchy of Athens for her son as late as 1320 and did not return to France until much later. She died in January 1354 'fort agée' and was buried at Troyes. This is another reason against her having rescued the Shroud. Her son, Walter VI, Count of Brienne and Lecce, Duke of Athens, Constable of France, was, like his kinsman Geoffrey de Charny, Porte Oriflamme of France, killed at the battle of Poitiers on 19 September 1356.

All in all, the evidence seems to point to the Shroud's removal from Greece during the years immediately following the battle of Pelagonia. It was then that the threat to its safety from the Orthodox Byzantine Greeks was at its greatest, and since it is, after all a religious relic, its guardians would have been more concerned to prevent it falling into the hands of the Orthodox church than into the hands of Catholic Catalans, no matter how barbarous they may have been. The safest course to adopt after Pelagonia would undoubtedly have been to entrust it to the Templars or Hospitallers, and in support of this we have the massive quantity of evidence cited in *The Shroud and the Grail*.

That it ultimately came into the possession of the de Charny family in 1307 cannot be doubted because of its subsequent history, and it is perhaps relevant to point out once more that the Grand Master, Guillaume de Beaujeu's great aunt was Elisabeth de Mont-Saint-Jean, a first-cousin-once-removed of Jean de Charny and of Geoffrey de Charny, the Templar who was burnt at the stake in 1314. It is likely that the transfer took place before Guillaume de Beaujeu was elected Grand Master and while he was Commander of the Templar province of Apulia, and that he took the first opportunity after his election in 1273 to take it to France where he attended the Council of Lyon in May 1274. In order to reach Lyon from Apulia he must almost certainly have passed through Aigues Morte and Montpellier, and would have made arrangements there for the Shroud's safekeeping. What happened next has been described in *The Shroud and the Grail* so I do not need to repeat it here.

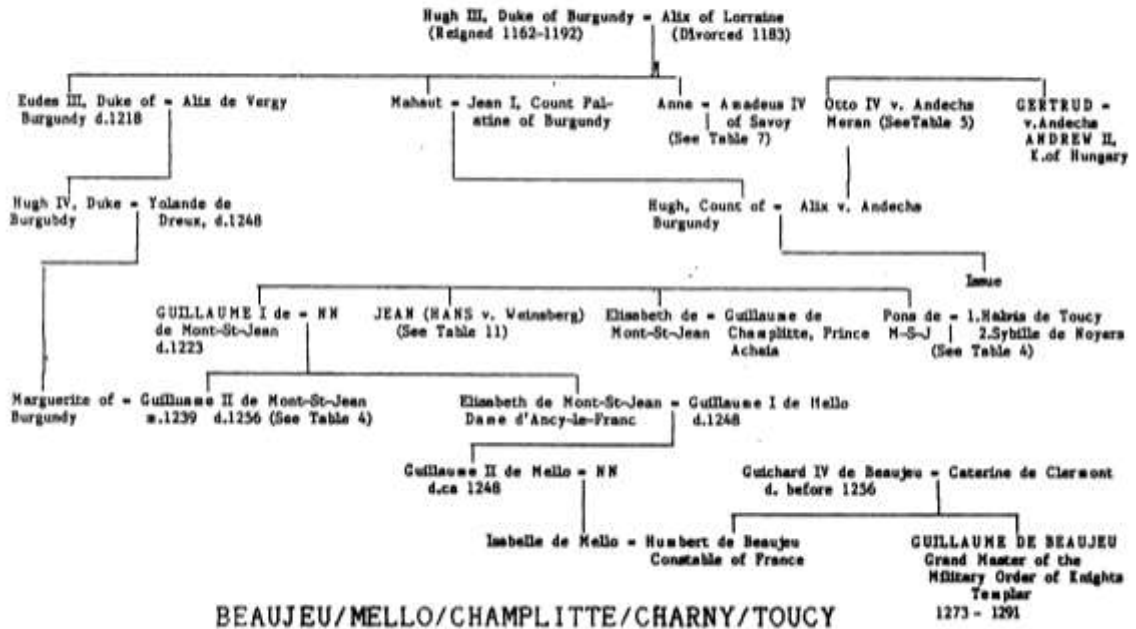
This scenario does not, of course, explain the evidence I found associating the Shroud with the families of Hohenlohe, Henneberg, Andechs and Weinsberg in Hungary and Germany. Could it be that that Shroud was the one which eventually found its way to Besançon? After all, Otto, Duke of Andechs-Meran became Count Palatinate of Burgundy, whose capital is Besançon, in 1231, and his daughter Adelheid, married as her first husband Hugh, Count of Châlon-Salins, first cousin of Jean de Joinville, father-in-law of Jean de Charny. He and the Chapter of Besançon would be reluctant to admit that their Shroud was a copy and not the genuine article, which goes some way to explain why there should have been accusations of fraud against Geoffrey de Charny when he exhibited his Shroud at Lirey. Whichever way you look at it, the Shroud Mafia was determined to keep both the original and the copy very firmly in the family.

NOTES:

1. Pons himself was married at that time to his first wife Helvis de Toucy, sister of Narjoud de Toucy, who later became regent of the Latin empire during the reign and absence of the emperor Peter de Courtenay.
2. Amadeus de Tramelay of this family was archbishop of Besançon at this time.
3. See Chartularium Culisanense in the Archives of Naples.
4. See S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, vol 3, p.287.
5. N. Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, Yale University Press, 1981, p.93.

GENEALOGIES

ANCESTRY OF GUILLAUME DE BEAUJEU
GRANDMASTER OF THE TEMPLARS



BEAUJEU/MELLO/CHAMPLITTE/CHARNY/TOUCY

