

# **The Turin Shroud**

## **New Facts and a New Historical Theory**

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**A formal, written summary of new findings on the Shroud's history that were presented as part of lectures given in Bristol, Leeds and Orange County, California September/October 2018**

# Part I: The New Facts

## **Introduction: Can the Carbon Dating ‘Verdict’ be overturned?**

For anyone who supports the Shroud’s authenticity the ongoing public perception that the 1988 carbon dating ‘proved’ the Shroud a medieval fake remains frustrating in the extreme. Unconvinced by arguments such as that the sample used for the dating was from a corner area that was rewoven in mediaeval times, my stress has been on the seriously contaminating effect of the hundreds of well-documented historical occasions when the Shroud has been prolongedly handled and held up by this very same corner. No amount of reasoning, however, has significantly shifted the tide of public opinion, nor has there yet emerged any new technological development that might offer a credible alternative for determining the Shroud’s true date of origin.

In the absence of any such scientific development and having in any case been trained only as a historian, in recent years I have been taking a fresh look at the Shroud’s history. For had the Shroud possessed a clear, firm and unbroken chain of provenance stretching from the first century AD, then carbon dating’s ‘medieval’ verdict would have carried significantly less credibility. Quite undeniably, however, the Shroud’s provenance chain is flawed, for after the first eleven centuries of what I have argued to have been its time as Byzantium’s Image of Edessa, there follows a ‘missing years’ period that even back in my 1978 book I acknowledged could only just possibly be explained by a period of ‘secret’ Templar ownership. Then, even on the Shroud’s re-emergence in the mid-fourteenth century its Charny family owners prove evasive about how, when and from whom they acquired it. Only from 1453, the point at which it passed to the Savoy dynasty, does a fresh, well-documented provenance sequence resume that continues unbroken all the way to its current ownership by the Holy See. Since retiring in 2010 my prime leisure-time pursuit has therefore been to trawl exhaustively through all original documentary material pertaining to the Charny family, irrespective of whether this contains any reference to the Shroud, in an attempt to turn up some overlooked insight into how, when and from whom the Charnys could have acquired such a remarkable object. In particular this exercise has been prompted by a lot of long-term puzzling

on matters such as why during its time in Charny care the Shroud was referred to, not as a *linceul* (the more normal French word for a funeral wrapping), but as a *suaire* (in the Latin versions, *sudarium*), literally, a sweat sheet; why at least two members of the family chose to refer to it publicly as merely a representation of this *suaire*; why they kept it in a simple wooden box decorated with the Charny coat-of-arms rather than in a devotionally more appropriate gilded reliquary; and why they showed little or no serious interest in being buried at the Lirey church, despite their long having been supposed to have founded it as the Shroud's permanent home.

## **The Charny Family – Key to Overturning the Obscurities of the Shroud's Earlier History?**

### **(1) Geoffroi I de Charny c.1306-1356**

Chronologically the first Charny to be studied had to be Geoffroi (I) de Charny, the doughty standard-bearer of France famously killed at the battle of Poitiers in 1356. To learn more about him a first task, undertaken in partnership with Hugh Duncan, was the translation of his never-before-translated poem the *Livre Charny*, also his *Demandes*, a set of questions on chivalric matters that he addressed to France's very short-lived Company of the Star, France's equivalent of England's Order of the Garter. Much to our surprise two original manuscripts of these same Charny works that historians had hitherto overlooked proved dateable to the single year of the Company of the Star's existence, 1352 - therefore from within Geoffroi's lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, they shed intriguing fresh light on Geoffroi's close involvement both with the Company of the Star's lavish founding by France's king Jean II in January 1352 - when members were required to swear a Templar-like oath never to retreat in battle - and with the Company's abrupt abolition that same August, the two Charny manuscripts thereupon being abandoned and their original intentions never ever realised.

Translation of the *Livre* poem provided insights on how the young Geoffroi, as an impoverished third son - therefore not entitled to anything of his father's estates - needed to earn a living for himself by performing at

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<sup>2</sup> A fully comprehensive study concerning these two manuscripts, one in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (see BSTS Newsletter 32, September 1992), the other in the Spanish National Library, Madrid, currently awaits academic publication.

jousting tournaments. Other documents revealed his stellar rise during the first two decades of the Hundred Years War from humble serving soldier to trustworthy royal councillor. A further insight was that Geoffroi was not a member of a useless crusade to Smyrna led by Dauphin Humbert II in 1345-7, as has long been supposed by professional historians. Instead, transported from Greece on swift Cypriot galleys, along with other 'brave knights' as they were dubbed, he took part in a daring commando raid that seized Smyrna's harbour fortress from the Turks as the opening salvo of a lesser-known papally-sponsored Smyrna crusade of the previous year.

From the Shroud history viewpoint, however, a particularly revelatory document proved to be the Act of Foundation for the collegiate church that Geoffroi founded at his fief of Lirey between 1353 and his death in 1356.<sup>3</sup> Because this Lirey church was the very same where – according to the famous Memorandum of Bishop d'Arcis - the Shroud would be so very controversially exhibited before the end of that same decade, it has long been assumed that Geoffroi must have been founded this church specially for housing and exhibiting the Shroud. Precisely because of that assumption the Shroud's first appearance in European history is often dated to 1353. Proper study of the Lirey church's Act of Foundation, however, supports no such assumption. In what is nitpickingly micro-managing, turgidly lengthy legal document, Geoffroi instructed the church's staff of a dean and five canons that their prime duty was to say daily prayers for his soul and for that of his first wife Jeanne de Toucy, who had died in the Black Death. He made not the slightest mention of the Shroud, let alone any provisions for its cult, its care and its security, all of which should have been essential for any church housing such a high-grade Passion relic.

Reinforcing this observation is the fact that although Geoffroi is well documented as having had perfectly cordial dealings with his two most immediately contemporary popes, Clement VI (whom he at least twice visited in Avignon), and Innocent VI, also with his local bishop Henri de Poitiers, to none of these high-ranking Roman Catholic prelates did he drop the slightest hint that he had the Shroud in his care. This despite the transparently sincere Christian piety expressed in his *Livre* poem, also the fact that if he had taken these same dignitaries into his confidence, and had

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<sup>3</sup> This was one of many original documents that Hugh Duncan very assiduously photographed in the archives of France's Département of the Aube at Troyes

sought their appropriate official recognition and sanction (as the immediately contemporary Charles IV of Bohemia achieved with a most dubious third candidate for the Holy Lance), he might easily have saved all the scepticism and opposition towards the Shroud that would erupt subsequent to his death.

Remarkably, therefore, although Geoffroi I's son and grand-daughter would both later attest that it was definitely he, the Charny who died in 1356, who had brought the Shroud into the family,<sup>4</sup> all the indications are that throughout his lifetime he maintained a very discreet public silence that he had the Shroud in his care. This reticence duly exonerates him from any of the charges of his having 'faked up and flogged' the Shroud for money-making purposes as alleged at the time of the 1988 carbon dating. Inevitably, however, it requires that the spotlight should now be turned onto whatever can have happened after his death, during the lifetime of his son and successor Geoffroi II de Charny, when the Shroud most certainly did come to the attention of the Roman Catholic church's highest dignitaries, both swiftly and very unfavourably...

## **(2) Geoffroi II de Charny c.1355-1398**

According to the Memorandum of Bishop d'Arcis, written in 1390, the first-ever showings of the Shroud at Lirey were held 'thirty-four years or thereabouts' earlier than the bishop's time of writing, necessarily therefore, very soon after Geoffroi I de Charny's sudden death at the battle of Poitiers in September 1356. Which means that Geoffroi's son Geoffroi II de Charny, in his turn, can have had no responsibility for this first set of showings. This is because he was but the tiniest of infants at that time, his mother Jeanne de Vergy having married Geoffroi I little more than months before the latter's death. As for Jeanne de Vergy herself, because she would live on until 1428 – an astonishing seventy-two years after her husband - she too can only have been very young at the time, in all probability a mere teenager, and therefore another very unlikely candidate for launching western Europe's first-ever

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffroi II de Charny made this attestation in a 1389 petition to papal legate Cardinal de Thury, the text of which, although lost, is known from a preamble by Pope Clement VII quoting its substance; Marguerite de Charny made her attestation before a Besançon court of law when the canons of Lirey tried legal action to force her to return the Shroud to them in 1443.

## Shroud showings.

In fact, Bishop d’Arcis’ Memorandum identifies the Lirey showings’ instigator readily enough. He was ‘the dean... of Lirey, falsely and deceitfully, being consumed with the passion of avarice...’ Here, although we may accept Bishop d’Arcis’ identification of the culprit, the base motive that he ascribes to him needs a little more caution. Yes, the showings undeniably were held for money-making purposes, a fact corroborated by the recently discovered ‘Machy’ mould for making Shroud pilgrim badges,<sup>5</sup> this curio in my opinion now quite definitely having been created locally – i.e. in Lirey’s immediate environs - to make souvenir badges specifically for this set of showings.

In the case of Bishop d’Arcis’ ‘avarice’ charge, however, needing very much to be considered are France’s social and economic circumstances following its massive 1356 defeat at Poitiers. Its king had been shipped to England for a massive ransom to be raised from him, bands of disgruntled peasants and unemployed soldiers were roaming everywhere wreaking havoc, food prices shot through the roof, and Lirey’s still newly-founded little community had lost its breadwinner. If as is quite likely the Shroud had been brought to the Lirey church as a temporary measure in the wake of Geoffroi I de Charny’s death, it may well have been sheer economic necessity that drove the dean to use it for money-making purposes, mindful of how only a few years earlier (1350), great crowds that had been drawn to Rome to view what they believed to be Jesus’ facial imprint on the Veronica cloth. Where the dean seriously blundered, however, would seem to have been that in his claiming the Shroud to be the genuine *suaire* of Christ (*see fig 1*) - an unbelievably priceless Passion relic for the tiny Lirey church to possess - he completely misjudged the volume of hostility and scepticism that this would provoke from local bishop Henri de Poitiers.

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Wilson ‘A (Very Tangled) Tale of Two Pilgrim Badges’ *Shroud Newsletter* December 2017





Figure 1: Reconstruction of the 'Machy' pilgrim badge, showing its inscription 'SVAIRE IhV. explicitly claiming the cloth as a genuine relic of Jesus

Readily indicative of some quick recognition of this claim's inadvisability – whatever its truth - is the fact that no-one at Lirey, clerical or lay, seems to have made any attempt to defend themselves or to explain to Bishop Henri how such a remarkable object had come into their care. Instead, as the later Bishop d'Arcis would attest, the Shroud was simply hidden away, like some guilty secret, for well over three decades.

Which in turn raises the issue, when 'thirty-four years or thereabouts' later the second set of Shroud showings came to be held, in 1389, who lay behind this decision, particularly given that the new bishop, Pierre d'Arcis, again alleged that the showings were for base money-making motives? This time Geoffroi II de Charny cannot be exempted. Not only was he now in his mid-thirties, married and well established amongst the minor nobility, he actually took personal charge of the Shroud showings, having earlier formally applied, via Cardinal Pierre de Thury, legate to Pope Clement VII (fig.2), for papal permission to hold them, the vital piece of ecclesiastical bureaucracy that his father had so puzzlingly omitted back in the 1350s.



Figure 2: Avignon Pope Clement VII, whose permission Geoffroi II de Charny sought in order to show the Shroud merely as a 'picture or representation'.

Except that yet another puzzle, long a thorn in the flesh for proponents of the Shroud's authenticity, is that in making this application Geoffroi II described the Shroud, not as the genuine *suaire* of Christ, but simply as a 'picture or representation' of this that had been shown at the church decades earlier, and

which the faithful desired to view again. Presented with this innocuous-sounding request, papal legate Thury readily approved it, and Bishop d’Arcis might similarly have raised no objection but for the underhand way in which the showings were then apparently conducted.

For as d’Arcis fulminated in his Memorandum to Pope Clement VII, ‘although it [the Shroud] is not publicly stated to be the true *suaire* of Christ, nevertheless this is given out and noised abroad in private, and so it is believed by many.’ Which immediately raises the question: if Geoffroi II de Charny truly believed the cloth to be the authentic relic, why had he not openly represented it as such to his contemporary Roman Catholic hierarchy, and gained the appropriate recognition for it? It should have been particularly easy for him to do so because his mother Jeanne de Vergy, for her second husband (who became Geoffroi II’s step-father), had married Aymon of Geneva, Pope Clement VII’s nephew. Furthermore, obtaining the increased papal indulgences appropriate to an authentic relic would automatically have swelled income from the showings. Yet for some unexplained reason Geoffroi II did not want to take even such an ‘in-the-family’ pope into his confidence on this matter.

With this oddity still unresolved, the next question becomes: why, after the Shroud had been kept hidden away throughout the last thirty-four years, should Geoffroi II have wanted to show it at all at this time? Study of Geoffroi II’s never-before-properly-explored career reveals the answer readily enough. Shortly beforehand he had been a valued aide to Duke Philip of Burgundy, who was then exercising royal powers as Regent on behalf of France’s then under-age King Charles VI. In 1388, however, Charles dismissed his Regent uncles, inevitably demoting Geoffroi II’s status in the process. Whereupon at precisely this point in his career Geoffroi II seems to have decided to follow his father’s example by going on crusading ventures. But the one problem to crusading, as his father had sagely warned in his *Livre* poem, was that it required a big ‘pile of money’,<sup>6</sup> indeed, an even greater pile in Geoffroi II’s time because of the very high cost of the

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<sup>6</sup> Charny *Poem* lines 611-12



recently-developed full-body plate armour. Yet that Geoffroi II somehow found the funds to purchase such a full suit of armour is readily apparent from his tombstone effigy [fig 3]. So in Geoffroi II de Charny's mindset was crusading against Christ's enemies – i.e. the Muslim occupiers of the Holy Land - the one utterly noble purpose whereby the Shroud could be used for fund-raising purposes, albeit in a studiously understated manner?

Certainly, exactly such crusading, first in North Africa, then in eastern Europe, occupied the remaining years of Geoffroi II's life, his final, and ultimately fatal venture being the disastrous Nicopolis crusade of 1396. Though he was spared the beheadings suffered by many in the immediate aftermath of the crusaders' defeat, appalling Turkish prison conditions seem to have so seriously damaged his health that he died very shortly after returning to France in early 1398. Whereupon, because he left no son, Lirey and his other family estates, together with the Shroud, passed to his elder daughter Marguerite...



Figure 3: The effigy on Geoffroi II de Charny's now lost tombstone at the Cistercian abbey of Froidmont, showing the expensive full-body plate armour that he had apparently purchased for going on crusade. From a drawing in the Gaignières collection, Paris

### **(30) Marguerite de Charny c.1385-1460**

If the four decades of behaviour of Charny father and son vis-à-vis the Shroud may have seemed puzzling enough already, its remaining fifty-five years under the charge of next generation Marguerite de Charny can only appear even more so. Hard upon the resumption of the Hundred Years War with England, the 1415 battle of Agincourt claimed the life of Marguerite's first husband, Burgundian noble Jean de Bauffremont. Three years later

Marguerite remarried, to widower Humbert de Villersexel, Count de la Roche, and because France's Agincourt defeat had brought fresh lawlessness and disorder, the couple transferred the Lirey's church's valuables, inclusive of the Shroud, to Humbert's altogether safer domains in the Doubs region close to France's border with Savoy. Intriguingly, on the inventory/receipt that they gave to the Lirey clergy,<sup>7</sup> they studiously listed the Shroud as merely a 'picture or representation' of Christ's true *suaire*, the exact same terminology that Geoffroi II had used to describe it, for official approval purposes, back in 1389. Yet as if with a now familiar-sounding duplicity, they set it at the very head of the list, therefore treating it as somehow more important than anything else in the collection, even though this included a number of ostensibly authentic relics, such a fragment of the True Cross and a hair of the Virgin Mary, both of these latter encased with silver and gold.

As had beset her first marriage, Marguerite's second marriage, to Humbert, proved to be similarly childless, prompting the couple to 'adopt' an orphaned niece of Humbert's, Jeanne de la Petite-Pierre. In 1432 Jeanne married François de la Palud, heir to Varambon, a strategic castle at Savoy's border with France, whereupon Humbert made Palud heir to all his estates, and in 1435 Marguerite followed suit, ceding to Palud all her Charny estates except for Lirey and its church, the relics of which, inclusive of the Shroud, she still retained at her marital home in the Doubs. Yet as if she did not entirely trust Palud, she required of him a stake in his castle of Varambon by way of contra-arrangement.<sup>8</sup>

Then in 1443, with Humbert now deceased and a Joan of Arc-rejuvenated France well on the way to extricating itself from its post-Agincourt woes, the Lirey clergy took legal action against Marguerite, pressuring her to return all their valuables, to which she fully complied, with the single exception of the Shroud. This she successfully pleaded to be allowed to retain for another three years (subsequently repeatedly extended), because, as she told the law court, it was actually the authentic *suaire* of Jesus, and therefore far too exalted and precious a relic to be kept in so insecure a

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<sup>7</sup> Archives of the département of the Aube, file 9 G 4, quoted in Ulysse Chevalier, *Étude Critique...* Paris, 1900, document Q, pp.XXI-II

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the département of the Côte d'Or B 751. For the purposes of this study photos of the original document were very kindly supplied by the archivist.

location as tiny Lirey.<sup>9</sup> This documented statement actually deserves recognition as one of the most important of the entire Charny period because it is the very first instance, in all the decades of the family's known custody of the Shroud, that a Charny publicly attested to the Shroud being the genuine relic rather than merely a 'picture or representation' of this same. And so far as can be gauged Marguerite made this declaration only very reluctantly, under the duress of having the Shroud taken away from her, and purely in the interests of best safeguarding it for posterity.

Whereupon for the next ten years the Charny-Shroud saga became even more tangled as the sexagenarian and still childless Marguerite, now that she had publicly 'outed' the Shroud as genuine, struggled to gain proper recognition for it, together with finding an appropriate elevated long-term heir for it, whilst brushing aside the Lirey clergy's ever more determined efforts to get it returned to them. All too typically, when in 1449 Marguerite attempted to stage public showings at Chimay, in the diocese of Liège, yet again the local bishop voiced objections, demanding to see her paperwork, and duly establishing from this that the Shroud was officially recognised only as a 'picture or representation'.<sup>10</sup>

As if to complicate matters further, at much this same time quasi son-in-law François de La Palud blew any chance of Marguerite recognising him as a suitable heir to the Shroud by his taking a leading part in the attempted murder of one of Duke Louis of Savoy's favourite courtiers. Duke Louis' father was the recently abdicated Pope Felix V (formerly the wise and well-respected Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy), who



Figure 4: Wall-painting thought to depict the marriage of Duke Louis I of Savoy to Cypriot princess Anne de Lusignan. Church of the Annunciation, Evian-les-Bains. High Savoy.

<sup>9</sup> A full original text of this court proceedings survives in the archives of the département of the Aube, Troyes, file 9 G 4, and for study purposes was photographed by Hugh Duncan

<sup>10</sup> From the chronicle of Belgian Benedictine monk Cornelius Zantifliet, after Dom E. Martène and Dom U. Durand, *Cronicon Cornelii Zantfliet*, in *Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum Historicorum... amplissima collection*, vol V, Paris 1729, col461-65



strongly advised his son to treat Palud with caution. However, when his father died in 1451 the pacific-minded Duke Louis became pushed by his forceful Cypriot wife Anne de Lusignan into banishing Palud from Savoy and destroying his castle of Varambon, actions which gave the miscreant little option but to seek protection at the neighbouring court of France. There France's King Charles VII, with his own grudge against Duke Louis, swiftly led a large army threateningly close to the Savoy border, whereupon Duke Louis, with no option but to negotiate, needed to work out how best to restore the destroyed Varambon to Palud with the least loss of face. Which is where Marguerite de Charny helpfully stepped in and her 1435-acquired stake in Varambon proved to be very useful. By an Act signed in Geneva on March 22 1453<sup>11</sup> she 'sold' to Duke Louis her rights to Varambon in exchange for Miribel, a substantial castle and estate that may be guessed to have been what Palud was prepared to accept as a temporary substitute for Varambon whilst the latter was being rebuilt.

All of which understandably raises the question: what has all this got to do with the Shroud? Plenty, because it was none other than this very same Act – with its cryptic reference to Marguerite's 'valuable services' - which has always been supposed to have been the one by which the Shroud became transferred from the Charnys into the ownership of the Savoy dynasty. Yet once the true background historical circumstances are realised, the Act may be perceived to have had nothing to do with the Shroud, and all about Marguerite helping Duke Louis save face.

But even if this was indeed so, what benefit was there to Marguerite helping Duke Louis in this face-saving way, apart from her altruistically atoning for the sins of a miscreant quasi-'son-in-law'? Also, and again only if so, how, when and where was it that the Shroud's transfer to Savoy did occur, particularly in the light of the fact that Duke Louis issued a commemorative medallion that essentially confirmed 1453 to have been the year in which he had acquired the Shroud?

### **1453 and the Savoy dynasty**

Here a hitherto virtually unknown set of showings of the Shroud, held in the year 1453, in Duke Louis of Savoy's territory, yet under Marguerite de

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<sup>11</sup> State Archives of Turin, Corte, Protocolli Camerali, prot 109, f.231r-v

Charny auspices, help to explain a great deal. Solely thanks to a surviving set of accounts it is now known that Marguerite de Charny – under the title Countess de Villars - successfully staged a series of public and private showings of the Shroud in Duke Louis' city of Geneva during the Lent and Easter period of 1453, i.e. synchronous with her being in Geneva for signing the Act exchanging Varambon for Miribel.<sup>12</sup> The accounts in question itemise the costs of scaffolding and other materials



Figure 5 Geneva's Plainpalais, where Marguerite de Charny showed the Shroud in 1453, from an early view of Geneva

that were used for the platforms on which the Shroud was displayed in Geneva's public places (one of these the still extant Plainpalais), in much the same style of the later Shroud showings in Turin when this became the Savoy dynasty's capital. Also itemised in the Geneva accounts are payments defraying some of Marguerite de Charny's expenses. Furthermore, the Shroud is explicitly described as the holy suaire,<sup>13</sup> therefore now apparently fully recognised as the genuine article.

All of which inevitably raises the issue: how could it be that on this 1453 occasion, after all the episcopal objections that had been raised throughout the last century, Marguerite suddenly had no difficulty obtaining the local bishop's permission to stage such high-profile public showings, even being

<sup>12</sup> Walter Zurbuchen, 'Le Saint Suaire à Genève en 1453', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève*, Troisième Livraison, 1978, pp.255-284. Because of the relative obscurity of the Bulletin in which this important article was published, its importance for Shroud studies has hitherto gone unrecognised. A full account of this highly important set of 1453 showings will be included in an academic study of the lives of Geoffroi II de Charny and Marguerite de Charny currently in progress

<sup>13</sup> Because the accounts are in Latin, the actual word used is the Latin equivalent, *sudarium*, the importance being the continuing usage of the same 'sweat-cloth' appellation used in the earlier Charny documentation

able to openly declare the Shroud as the genuine relic? Fortunately, a simple check of the identity of Geneva's bishop easily answers this question. In 1453 he was Pierre de Savoy, none other than Duke Louis' eleven-year-old son.<sup>14</sup> During his father's pontificate Duke Louis had been granted the right to choose Geneva's next bishop and with a nepotism far from unusual at this period he had appointed Pierre, then aged only eight. Therefore, just as long as Duke Louis approved the showings, the 'bishop's' permission for them could essentially be guaranteed. From all of which we may gauge that Marguerite and Duke Louis, having each helped the other out with their respective problems, had formed a very useful bond of trust and understanding, such that the Shroud could now not only be publicly exhibited as the genuine relic, it could also be transferred to Savoy tutelage, Marguerite clearly having decided, despite continuing legal pressure from the Lirey canons, that Louis and his dynasty were the right candidates for its ongoing care.

### **The peculiarities of the Charnys' behaviour towards the Shroud...**

From all these findings, many of them brand-new to Shroud studies, it should hopefully have become apparent that there was something very, very peculiar about the Charnys' behaviour in respect of the Shroud. Throughout the three key Charny generations they never behaved as though they regarded themselves as *permanent* owners of the genuine *suaire*/sweat sheet of Jesus that they apparently very sincerely believed the Shroud to be. As evident from the Lirey church's Act of Foundation – to which they could have added an appropriate codicil at any time – they never formally installed the Shroud at that church, nor did they ever make any formal application for the papacy to recognise it as the true *suaire* of Christ, nor did they ever have made for the Shroud any special casket appropriate to its status as a major Passion relic. Even when Marguerite de Charny so very momentously transferred the Shroud from her family to that of the Savoys, she drew up no formal contractual agreement, whatever understanding that she came to with Duke Louis seemingly having been agreed between the two of them in the strictest privacy, and without lawyers' involvement. Elderly though Marguerite now was, it is as if, instead of her bequeathing the Shroud as a

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<sup>14</sup> Genealogies differ on Pierre's birthdate, some giving him a birthdate that would make him even younger, but by any measure he was extremely young!



possession to Duke Louis and his Savoy dynasty, she was passing it over to him some kind of inherited sacred obligation or responsibility, apparently because there were certain circumstances peculiar to 1453 that allowed her to do this (for she would live on to 1460, hence did not have to choose 1453), also because she was satisfied that Duke Louis and his Cypriot wife Anne de Lusignan - an ultra-pious couple who both surrounded themselves with a retinue of Franciscans - were the most worthy and suitable continuators of this responsibility.

Here the fact that Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the last of its Eastern Orthodox Byzantine Emperors, Constantine XI, dying amidst the carnage, may well be no coincidence. This is because if the Charnys' tutelage of the Shroud was indeed connected to some inherited sacred vow or obligation to the emperors of Byzantium (an obligation which would have terminated with the Empire's collapse), this would certainly explain why all three generations of the Charny family so long and so studiously avoided informing their own western official Roman Catholic hierarchy that they had the genuine relic in their personal care. But even if so, how could such an obligation have fallen to so relatively lowly a family as the Charnys? And why could they not have simply returned the Shroud to the Byzantine empire while this still existed? For those of us supportive of the Shroud's authenticity it is at this point that everything that we may have thought we knew concerning the Shroud's earlier history, certainly during the quarter millennium prior to it coming into Charny hands, needs to be considered afresh....

## Part 2: The New Historical Theory

### Reprise the Knights Templar...

Particularly now needing to be reconsidered is an argument first suggested by me back in 1978,<sup>15</sup> that the Shroud's pre-Charny tutelage may have been by the Order of Knights Templar. Amongst the accusations of heresy that France's King Philippe IV levelled against the Templars was that they secretly worshipped some form of bearded male head. A mysterious medieval panel painting found hidden on the site of a Templar preceptory at Templecombe, Somerset, not only seemed to answer this description, it strikingly resembled the face on the Shroud. Furthermore, of the two highest Templar dignitaries burnt at the stake in Paris in 1314, one bore the name Geoffroi de Charny, and was therefore possibly related to the Charny family of the Shroud.

Yet as I fully recognised even four decades ago, the Templar argument needed a lot more substance. For if the Shroud truly was indeed one and the same as the Image of Edessa supposedly stolen when the Fourth Crusade captured and sacked Constantinople in 1204, how did the Templars acquire it? As historian Malcolm Barber very cogently observed back in the early 1980s, the Knights Templar played no known part in the Fourth Crusade.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, if the Shroud really had been looted from Constantinople, the Charny family would never have needed to behave towards western Christendom's popes and bishops in the so furtive manner noted in part I. Exactly as had happened with so many of the items that western nobility had stolen from eastern Christendom, it would have been welcomed with open arms.

In recent years, however, the Templar argument has gained unexpected fresh strength thanks to some very assiduous researches on the part of Dr Jochen Schenk, a historian based at the University of Glasgow. Oblivious to any

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<sup>15</sup> The argument is to be found in Ian Wilson *The Turin Shroud*, Gollancz, 1978, chapter XIX.

<sup>16</sup> Malcolm Barber, 'The Templars and the Turin Shroud', *Catholic Historical Review*, April 1982

Turin Shroud considerations, Schenk has shown the Charnys to have been part of a network of leading Burgundian families who generation after generation supported the Knights Templar with funding and providing their 'spare' sons as recruits for the Order.<sup>17</sup> Not only do these findings substantially strengthen the likelihood of a close family tie between Geoffroi de Charny the Templar and the Geoffroi I de Charny of Lirey, there is even a hitherto unsuspected geographical connection.

This is because Geoffroi the Templar, who is now known to have been the Order's Draper<sup>18</sup> (notably, its third highest dignitary), departed from the Templars' headquarters on the island of Cyprus when he and the Order's Grand Master were so fatefully summoned to France in 1306. And as earlier noted, it was on galleys loaned from the King of Cyprus that Geoffroi I de Charny was carried for his and his fellow 'brave knights' daring assault on Smyrna's harbour fortress in 1344. The possibility is thereby raised that Geoffroi I collected the Shroud from some unidentified Cypriot guardian or guardians when he and his companions returned the vessels to Cyprus the following year.

But even if this was so, how, when and from whom did the Knights Templar come to have the Shroud in their care? Inevitably attention needs to turn to the Templar order's history. Cyprus was the Knights' headquarters only from 1291 to their infamous suppression during the second decade of the fourteenth century. For over a century prior to Cyprus they were based at Acre, which until 1291, when it was overrun by Muslims, was the last crusader stronghold in the Holy Land.

## **When Jerusalem was a Christian City...**

Before Acre, however, from the Order's very foundation in the 1120s right up until 1187, the Templars' headquarters and their core spiritual base had been the Holy City of Jerusalem, the two poor French knights who were the

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<sup>17</sup> Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families, Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c.1120-1307*, Cambridge University Press, 2012

<sup>18</sup> See the entry for him in Jochen Burgdorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars, History, Organization and Personnel (1099/1120-1310)*, Brill, Leiden & Boston 2008

Order's founders having done so expressly to protect from any attackers the fledgling Kingdom of Jerusalem's holy sites and the pilgrim routes leading to these. For from the First Crusade's surprise capture of Jerusalem from the Muslims in 1099 - a venture at that time supported and applauded by the Empire of Byzantium - Christianity's holiest city enjoyed nearly nine decades of Christian suzerainty, ruled by westerners who styled themselves Kings of Jerusalem. During this period the city's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which all Christendom recognised as its ultimate Holy of Holies, underwent major repairs and refurbishments, with eastern and western Christian clergy conducting their respective liturgies within its walls with surprisingly little known internecine friction. Encompassing the hitherto Muslim-ravaged sites where Jesus was believed to have been crucified and buried, the Holy Sepulchre church had not only been rendered safe for housing any Passion relics appropriate to its location, it would have positively cried out for these.

### **On the Image of Edessa becoming a Passion Relic...**

Reminding us - as argued in my 1978 book - that sometime after the Image of Edessa/Shroud's 944 transfer to Constantinople it was very secretly unfastened from its face-only 'doubled in four' mounting arrangement, stunningly revealing the full-body Passion-stained imprint hidden beneath. Duly raising the question: might the Image/Shroud equally secretly have been transferred to Jerusalem sometime during the near ninety years that the Holy City was in Christian hands, only to need to be rescued from there, arguably by a posse of Templars, when the city fell in 1187, then remaining with the Templars, first in Acre, then in Cyprus?

Initially, for those familiar with crusader Robert de Clari's report of seeing a seemingly very Shroud-like *sydoine* exhibited in Constantinople in 1203, any such suggestion might seem tenuous and far-fetched in the extreme. Indeed, it might never have occurred to me but for an authoritative Latin document, part of manuscript Tarragonensis 55, that was first brought to my attention by Mark Guscin.<sup>19</sup> Writing around the late eleventh century, the Tarragonensis author, who had lived several years in Constantinople,

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<sup>19</sup> See Mark Guscin, *The Tradition of the Image of Edessa*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2016, pp.57-8 after Krijnie N. Ciggaar, 'Une Description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53 (1995), 117-140

reported that on some unidentified occasion when the Image of Edessa was opened up for viewing, an earthquake struck Constantinople so violently that it was interpreted as a sign of severe divine displeasure, any further such intrusions into the Image's privacy becoming strictly prohibited.

Historically, only a Byzantine emperor could have authorised any such an opening-up of the Image of Edessa. Furthermore, although seismic disturbances were not uncommon in the region, Constantinople suffered a particularly serious earthquake in 989, when many of its churches, including Hagia Sophia, suffered such serious damage that several years of repairs were needed. So if this or any later earthquake had indeed coincided with a Byzantine emperor and his immediate entourage uncovering the Image of Edessa/Shroud's bloodied, full-body imprint, the awesome knowledge gained could only have been highly disquieting both for those present and for the very closed circle who would learn of it subsequently. Hence when Jerusalem came under pan-Christian control from 1099 it can hardly not have occurred to the same elevated elite that the rightful place for the Image/Shroud, particularly now that they were privy to its fearsomely sacred Passion relic identity, had to be Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where eastern orthodox and western clergy near uniquely operated side by side.

Furthermore, as a fresh Muslim threat to the Holy Land gathered momentum in the course of the twelfth century there was a very special secular characteristic of the Image of Edessa that would again have marked it out as positively needed for Christianity's holiest city. This was its well-known property as a magical palladium or protector of cities, famously demonstrated half a millennium earlier when it had reputedly saved Edessa from capture by a huge army of Persians. For Christians there was no city more deserving of protection than Jerusalem – literally the centre of the world as evident from medieval maps such as Hereford's famous Mappa Mundi. Yet any such transfer of the Image/Shroud to Jerusalem would necessarily have had to be conducted in secret, because Constantinople's populace would never have tolerated their losing such magical protection had they learnt of it, which they did not. Indeed it is quite possible that even Byzantium's highest clergy were kept in the dark by the ruse of the Image's

casket being left still in situ but empty in its home chapel.<sup>20</sup> Almost uniquely, however, the mid twelfth century would have been particularly opportune for such a clandestine international political arrangement, because it was a period of unusually good relations between westerner King of Jerusalem Baldwin III, and Byzantium's pro-western Emperor Manuel Comnenus, with both parties being known to have had an unusually strong interest in anything associated with Jesus' Passion, death and burial.

### **1187 – and Christianity's Loss of Jerusalem**

But if indeed such a protection-minded transfer did occur historically, the hand of fate would prove altogether more potent than the deployment of any 'magical' palladium, even the Image of Edessa/Shroud. In 1187 the Templars, having just lost a whole army of their members at the battle of Hattin - a military disaster that had rendered Jerusalem effectively defenceless – hastily transferred all their valuables northwards to Acre, with the now otherwise defunct 'Kingdom of Jerusalem' necessarily following suit. Clearly, if the Image of Edessa/Shroud had indeed become housed at Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, this too would have had to be transferred to Acre under the same Templar military protection, the Templars having become recognised throughout Europe as *the* trusted guardians of royal valuables, with all the discretion and the security today associated with a Swiss bank. Particularly in the heat of a very desperate moment, all that the Emperor of Byzantium's local representatives could have asked for from the Templars was a solemn, secret undertaking that they would most diligently protect the Image/Shroud from all comers – and particularly from any predatory Catholic clergy wanting it for their western cathedrals - until Jerusalem could be properly restored to Christian suzerainty, and its Church of the Holy Sepulchre once again be safe for the relic's housing.

But what no-one making this secret arrangement could ever have anticipated was just how impossible it would become for its far-from-unrealistic objective to be realised. First there occurred the so divisive 1204 Fourth Crusade, initially and laudably aimed at recapturing Jerusalem, only for its

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<sup>20</sup> This rather neatly accounts for the recent argument that during the mid-thirteenth century the Image of Edessa was acquired for the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, along with the relic of Jesus' Crown of Thorns, but its casket was found to be empty.



leaders horrifyingly to unleash their armies onto fellow-Christian Constantinople, near irreparably ruining all-time east-west relations, both political and religious. Next, and despite the most heroic Templar efforts to prevent it, there occurred the 1291 fall of Acre, Christianity's last stronghold in the Holy Land, necessitating that all that the Templars had in their care be transferred to the island of Cyprus. Then in 1306, despite the Templars' immensely high reputation for discretion and integrity, a cash-strapped King Philippe IV of France set his sights on seizing as much as he could of their wealth, infamously orchestrating the Order's universal suppression, aided and abetted by a pusillanimous pope.

### **The Cyprus Mystery...**

Hence when in 1306 the Templar Masters Geoffroi de Charny and Jacques de Molay left Cyprus in obedience to the then France-based Pope Clement V's summons to confer with him in France, they had no inkling of the horrifying fate awaiting them. Fully expecting to return to their headquarters, they had left behind on Cyprus all the Order's most central valuables, arguably inclusive of the Shroud. And intriguingly, when those Templars who had been left in charge on Cyprus eventually came under interrogation, local witnesses spoke so favourably on their behalf that they experienced little if anything of the harsh repression suffered by their counterparts elsewhere. Even so, on their fate and that of everything that had been left in their care, inclusive of the Templars' central archive, historians have mostly drawn a baffling blank.<sup>21</sup> Which makes it hardly surprising that similar mystery still surrounds exactly how, a generation later, the Shroud passed into the hands of Geoffroi I de Charny – except for the already noted possibility that he may have collected it from unknown guardians on Cyprus, very possibly already housed in the same simple wooden casket with the Charny coat-of-arms in which the later Charnys would continue to keep it, when he and his companions returned the Cypriot galleys borrowed for their 1344-5 Smyrna escapade.

### **A Sacred Responsibility?**

Despite the frustration of such an ongoing historical gap, a sacred responsibility that had been inherited from a high-ranking Knights Templar

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<sup>21</sup> See Anne Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, Leiden, 1998, a summary of which can be accessed online

family member, faithfully upholding a very solemn, secret vow that had been made to a Byzantine emperor's representative right back at the time of Jerusalem's 1187 fall, would certainly account for the remarkable furtiveness about the Shroud, particularly towards the highest western Christian prelates, that we have seen exhibited by no less than three generations of Charnys. One of the most notable features of Geoffroi I de Charny's life and writings is the utmost sanctity in which he held the sworn word.

Furthermore, such a scenario makes sense of why it should have been specifically in the year 1453 – i.e. that of Constantinople's fall to the Turks and (crucially), the death of its very last Emperor – that the then elderly and childless Marguerite de Charny should have felt at last at liberty to pass her sacred responsibility on, and on specifically to Duke Louis of Savoy, steadfastly ignoring the Lirey's canons ongoing legal clamour in doing so.

For an especially strong consideration on Marguerite's part is likely to have been the fact that Duke Louis' wife Anne de Lusignan was from Cyprus, also that she was daughter of King Janus of Cyprus who had been horrendously abused by the Turks, but whose Lusignan dynasty possessed one of the best ongoing claims for becoming a true King of Jerusalem should Christianity's holiest city ever again be re-acquired for Christianity. Strongly supportive of this same consideration is the fact that future Dukes of Savoy would specifically include King of Jerusalem amongst their claimed titles, likewise the Jerusalem cross amongst the quarterings of their coat of arms.



*Figure 6 Jerusalem Cross (arrowed)  
seen at top left on the later Savoy  
coat of arms*

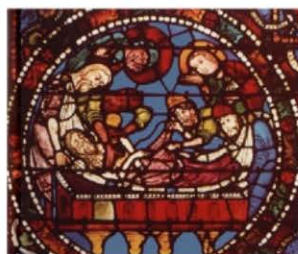
Needing the strongest emphasis at this point is that this so radical 'Jerusalemic' revision of the Shroud's pre-Charny history remains as yet only a theoretical possibility, a 'work in progress' that is necessarily subject to major and minor modifications in the light of ongoing research by myself and counter-argument from others. Only if it can survive the fullest academic scrutiny – and two preliminary academic books on the three

generations of Charnys are already well-advanced - will it be appropriate to rewrite Shroud history books. Hence no-one should yet abandon the Robert de Clari-supported notion that the Image of Edessa/Shroud remained in Constantinople up to 1204.

### **Some additional indicators...**

Nevertheless, such a radically revisionist theory would never have been suggested had I not felt strongly supported by further indicators. First, albeit recognised only late in the day, is the surprising fact that certain Savoyard writers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries actually put forward some very sketchy Shroud 'histories' not altogether dissimilar to that advanced here. For instance, shortly after the Shroud's 1578 transfer to Turin the courtier Emanuel-Philibert de Pingon traced the Shroud first to King Abgar of Edessa, then to the kings of Jerusalem, then Cyprus, albeit very vaguely and supposing that Marguerite de Charny brought it from Greece when Constantinople fell to the Turks. Nevertheless, there is a tantalising hint of at least some distantly passed-down truth in Pingon's outline, likewise two generations later when the antiquary Jean-Jacques Chifflet produced a similarly Jerusalem and Cyprus-associated sketch of the Shroud's origins.

Rather more solid and substantial, however, is the fact that broadly synchronous with the time that we have postulated that the Image of Edessa/Shroud was quietly switched from Constantinople to Jerusalem, certain developments that were arguably closely related to it occurred in literature and art, western and eastern. In literature western writers such as Ordericus Vitalis (c.1130), began referring to the Image of Edessa as bearing the full-length imprint of Jesus' body, not just a facial imprint as had hitherto been universally supposed. Likewise, in art there surfaced depictions of Jesus' dead body being brought down from the cross (the Deposition), innovatively followed by an emotional scene of it being laid out on a large sheet for mourning by the Virgin Mary and St John (the Lamentation) (fig 7). Such depictions repeatedly link this Mary-and-John Lamentation to the Deposition, the Lamentation's timing



*Figure 7: Stained glass window at Chartres, c.1150, depicting the post-Deposition Lamentation over Jesus' dead body by the Virgin Mary and*

apparently therefore being distinct from, and preceding, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus lodging of Jesus' body in the tomb proper.

### **Sweat-Cloth of the Lamentation?**

Most importantly in this context, whilst our twenty-first century minds automatically assume that the sheet on which Jesus' necessarily sweat-soaked, blood-stained body was laid for the Lamentation must have been one and the same as the 'clean' *sinдон*/'shroud' that was reportedly used to wrap Jesus in the tomb, this is not how it would have been perceived in the Middle Ages. Back then, and particularly during the twelfth century there was a widespread belief that Jesus' body was cleansed before burial – in 1169 the Emperor Manuel Comnenus carried on his back into Constantinople the very stone slab on which this rite was reputedly performed. Yet it would also have been unthinkable for anything belonging to the sacred body and blood to have trickled to waste. Accordingly, from the very moment when, as previously postulated, the Image of Edessa was undone from its 'doubled-in-four' mounting and its hitherto hidden 'sweat and blood' imprint revealed, it would have been very understandable for those present to identify it – no doubt with a great deal of spiritual fear and trembling – as the very receptacle in which Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had collected Jesus' sacred fluids, an awe-inspiring discovery in the extreme, even without any accompanying earthquake...

Arguably therefore, the cloth that the Byzantines had known as the Image of Edessa, and that is today called the 'Turin' Shroud was perceived back at this 'middle' time, not as the clean linen *sinдон* used for Jesus' burial proper, but instead as a preliminary 'sweat-sheet' that had been used for collecting the sweat and blood immediately prior to that same burial. It is a perception that is actually aided by St. John's gospel which, ignoring the synoptics' consistent reference to the *sinдон*, refers to a *soudarion* (the Greek word for sweat-sheet), lying 'rolled up and in a place by itself' in Jesus' Empty Tomb on the first Easter morning. Whilst whether St. John's *soudarion* was actually a separate cloth or one and the same as the synoptics' *sinдон* is a matter of perennial debate, it could certainly have been the reason why twelfth century artists included St John in their depictions of the 'Lamentation'...



## Between the Edessan ‘Image’ and the Turin ‘Shroud’ a Hitherto Unidentified 3rd Phase?

The great value of recognising this absolutely fundamental distinction – i.e. that back in this ‘middle’ period of its history the Shroud was perceived as a ‘Sweat Sheet of the Lamentation’ rather than as a definitive burial cloth - is that it opens up a hitherto unidentified historical phase that we may chronologically now locate between the Shroud’s early guise as the Image of Edessa, and its late guise as the Shroud of Turin (see Table 1) And once properly recognised, this third phase, because of its intermediate nature, not only acts as a joining mechanism precisely where the Shroud’s chain of provenance has hitherto seemed to be so irretrievably broken, it immediately enables us to explain the puzzle mentioned early in our discussion of the Charny period: why the Charnys should have so consistently referred to the Shroud as a *suaire*, a sweat-sheet, rather than as a *linceul*, the more expected French word for a funerary shroud proper. Arguably the Charnys had inherited via their Templar antecedents the very same ‘sweat-sheet’ perception that had originated in the minds of the Byzantines when the full body imprint had first been discovered in late tenth century Constantinople on the cloth that was then known as the Image of Edessa.

And fascinatingly, this very same perception then became passed on to the Savoy. This is quite certain because the well-known early seventeenth century aquatint of the Shroud by the Savoy-employed artist Giovanni Battista della Rovere (back page), clearly has as its ancestry exactly the same post-Deposition Lamentation scene that Byzantine artists had first originated in Constantinople half a millennium earlier.

<p>Phase 1 ‘Image of Edessa’ (c.30 AD- c.989)</p>	<p>c.30 AD ‘<i>soudarion</i>’ cloth reported in Jesus’ tomb. A cloth bearing Jesus’ imprint is transferred from Jerusalem to Edessa where it is mounted ‘doubled in four’ style so that only the face section is visible, c.57 AD hidden due to persecution c.525 AD Rediscovered c.944 AD Transferred to Constantinople where its facial image is described as composed of sweat not pigments c.989 The old Edessan face-only mounting is undone, startlingly revealing the blood-and-sweat-stained full body imprint hidden beneath</p>	<p>c.30 AD – 944 the Edessa cloth is broadly the property of Edessa’s Christian community 944 Forcibly wrested from a Muslim-controlled Edessa by a Byzantine army, the cloth becomes the property of the Emperor of Byzantium</p>

<p><b>Phase 2</b> <b>‘Sweat-Sheet’ of the Lamentation</b> (c.989-1578)</p>	<p>1150, As a Passion relic, transferred to Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulchre under the auspices of the westerner King of Jerusalem. Contemporary artists depict Jesus’ body laid out on a ‘sweat-sheet’ at the foot of the cross being mourned by Mary and St. John. 1187 With Muslims about to capture Jerusalem, transferred to Acre under the protection of Knights Templar 1291 Transferred to Cyprus, its whereabouts temporarily undetermined when the Templar Order is suppressed. 1345 Collected from Cyprus by Geoffroi I de Charny. 1358(?) Shown by Lirey’s dean as Jesus’ true <i>suaire</i>. 1389 Shown by Geoffroi II de Charny as a ‘copy or representation’ of Jesus’ <i>suaire</i>. 1443 Marguerite de Charny describes it as Jesus’ true <i>suaire</i>. 1453 Shown in Geneva as Jesus’ true <i>suaire</i>, though in this same year Duke Louis of Savoy issues medallion referring to it as the ‘<i>Santa Sindone</i>’. 1502 Installed in Savoys’ Sainte Chapelle at Chambéry.</p>	<p>c.1150 Becomes property of the King of Jerusalem 1187 Becomes the responsibility of the Knights Templar 1306 Becomes the immediate responsibility of the Templar Geoffroi de Charny on Cyprus 1345 Becomes the responsibility of the Charny family in France 1453 Marguerite de Charny transfers responsibility to the Savoy dynasty, who become its formal owners</p>
<p><b>Phase 3</b> <b>‘Shroud’ of Turin</b></p>	<p>1578 Transferred to Savoys’ new capital, Turin, still described as <i>Santissimo Sudario</i>. 1608 Exposition engraving refers to it as <i>Sacrosanta Sindone</i>. 1625 Savoyard writers and artists continue to refer to it as used to mop up Jesus’ sweat and blood pre-burial. 1694 Installed in Turin’s Cathedral, its ongoing home.</p>	<p>Successive dukes resist it coming under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic church 1983 Umberto II of Savoy bequeaths it to the pope and his successors</p>

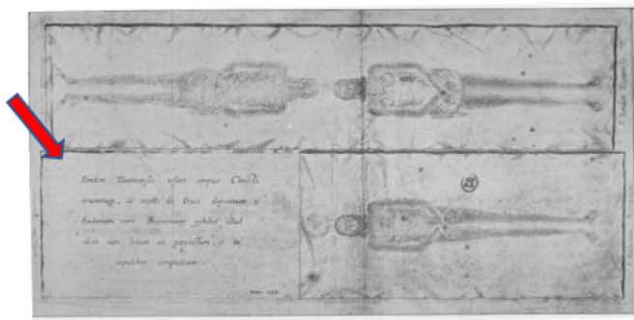
Table 1: A theoretical reconstruction of the three broad phases of the Shroud’s history, showing the very gradual shift towards understanding it as Jesus’ ‘sindon’ or definitive burial shroud.

Likewise, and again in the early seventeenth century, the antiquary Jean-Jacques Chifflet carefully distinguished the Turin Shroud from its Besançon Shroud rival (since destroyed), specifically by identifying the Turin cloth as having been used for soaking up Jesus’s sweat and blood after being brought down from the cross (fig 8), whilst the altogether cleaner Besançon cloth had allegedly been used for the burial proper.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Jacques Chifflet, *De Linteis Sepulchralibus*, Antwerp, 1624



Figure 8: Engraving from Chifflet's 'De Linteis...' with inscription (arrowed), specifically interpreting the Shroud's imprint (top), as created when Christ's body was brought down from the cross, distinguishing it from the Besançon burial shroud proper depicted bottom right



Complex and convoluted though it may seem arriving at these 'Jerusalem' and 'Sweat-cloth of the Lamentation' deductions, I strongly believe them to be more promising developments than there have been for a very long while in the field of Shroud historical research. For once freed of the constraints of the Image of Edessa/Shroud's whereabouts being necessarily pinned to Constantinople up to the crusader sack of 1204, likewise that we should necessarily expect it to be referred to as a funerary shroud, altogether greater relevance may at last be accorded to several tantalisingly Shroud-related developments that are firmly dateable as prior to 1204. These include the first artistic depictions of the Image of Edessa in suspended form (e.g. at the church of St.Nicholas tou Kasnitze, Kastoria, Macedonia, date c.1190), likewise of the Christ of Pity (c.1150), and of the Melismos, also in Byzantine liturgy the introduction of the so Shroud-like *epitaphios*, all of these developments rather unexpectedly emerging shortly before, rather than after, 1204, for reasons that have never previously been clear. Likewise in the field of secular western literature, perhaps it may eventually be seen to be more than coincidence that the Grail stories, concerned as these are with a group of knight-guardians<sup>23</sup> and their adventures with a mysterious, fear-provoking, Joseph of Arimathea-connected receptacle for Jesus' body and blood, also happen to surface during the last quarter of the twelfth century. That is, during that very same period when, as theorised here, the Knights Templar took over charge of the Image/Shroud to save it from capture when the Muslims decisively retook Jerusalem...

<sup>23</sup> In one version specifically called 'Templeisen'.

Needing to be very firmly repeated is that the radically fresh theorising that has been put forward here remains a tentatively advanced ‘work in progress’ rather than anything to be trumpeted to the world-at-large as some sensational new historical fact. Quietly circulated amongst interested parties the theorising will undoubtedly undergo future corrections, modifications and adjustments by myself - quite aside from by others – perhaps even needing to be abandoned altogether.

However, the new historical findings on the Charny family are altogether more solid. Firmly based on original documentation they totally undermine the glib assertion, made at the time of the 1988 radiocarbon dating announcement, that someone of the Charny era simply ‘faked up’ the Shroud, then ‘flogged’ it to a lucrative and gullible pilgrim trade. Quite clear is that the Charnys were unusually circumspect about the Shroud, behaving in an intriguingly lowkey manner towards it, rather than cynically ‘flogging’ it for all it was worth. Admittedly, such findings are unlikely to shake the still so all-pervading public perception that the Shroud has been ‘proved’ a medieval fake. Nevertheless, any greater understanding of the most enigmatic period of the Shroud’s historical provenance has to be a step in the right direction....



*Figure 9: G.B. della Rovere aquatint depicting the Lamentation at the foot of the Cross, a scene descended from similar depictions by Byzantine artists half a millennium earlier. Galeria Sabauda, Turin*