

## RESEARCH ARTICLES (1)

## DID JOAN OF ARC SEE THE TURIN SHROUD?

Hugh Duncan

From Humbert de Villersexel's well-known receipt for the Shroud from the canons of Lirey in 1418, the Shroud's whereabouts can be pinpointed as moving from Lirey, where it was in danger from the advancing British and the retreating French, to the safety of Montfort (whichever Montfort it was!), one of de Villersexel's properties. He was the second husband of Marguerite de Charny, granddaughter of original Shroud owner Geoffroy de Charny I. It is still uncertain where the Shroud was kept during the first years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Maybe now, there is a clue.

The more recent part of this story starts in the summer of 2014 when BSTS member Graham Brown made me aware of American tour operator Chris Snidow's Joan of Arc pilgrimage website. It claims, on the authority of the present owner of Beaufremont castle, that at some time the Turin Shroud was kept either in the castle at Sully or the castle of Beaufremont, as Marguerite de Charny married her first husband there in 1412, and that the Shroud was exhibited at the wedding. Another claim is that one of Joan of Arc's godmothers lived at the castle, and that Joan of Arc herself was often there. Thus began an investigation to see if such tales could be verified.

The castle of Beaufremont is in the French department of Vosges in the Lorraine area and only a few kilometres from Domremy, where Joan of Arc grew up. As I live in France and was passing close to this area on my return from a summer in the UK in 2015, a visit was considered. The castle is owned by Prince Charles-Emmanuel de Bauffremont, a living descendent of the very family that owned the castle at the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century! Bauffremont is an early spelling of Beaufremont. Unfortunately, it was not possible to meet him then, but a later meeting was fixed for the summer of 2016.

The Bauffremont tradition is that the Shroud stayed for some time in their castle and that Joan of Arc visited and stayed at the castle during the same period.

Marguerite de Charny, granddaughter of Geoffroy de Charny (owner of the Shroud at the time) married Jean de Bauffremont very soon after the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Charles-Emmanuel said it was about 1402/3 while websites quote 1400 with no specific date in the year. Charles said the couple spent some time in Beaufremont castle from then on. Also, the Shroud remained with them in the castle. Jean de Bauffremont had a sister, Catherine, who married Jean de Bourlemont. This Jean was the Seigneur of Bourlemont and Coseigneur of Domremy, which is of course where Joan of Arc came from. Joan was born in 1412 and as a young girl, according to Charles, she would look after her sheep and often visit Bauffremont castle as it was only seven kilometres from her home. Charles described Catherine de Bauffremont as Joan's 'Sunday School' teacher or catechist (so not exactly her godmother) who gave Joan her religious instruction.

Jean de Bauffremont died at the battle of Agincourt in 1415 (when Joan was three) and Marguerite de Charny remarried Humbert de Villersexel in 1418 (when Joan was six). If Catherine was her catechist, then the instruction isn't likely to have started until Joan was at least six, by which time the Shroud (if it had been there) had moved on, as we know it was at Montfort that year. So if the Shroud was ever at Bauffremont it is most likely to have been between 1400, after Marguerite married into the Bauffremont family, and 1415, when Jean died. As it is not yet known for sure where the Shroud was during these years, it is a possibility that Marguerite (like all its medieval owners) kept the Shroud as close as she could. I haven't yet found a death date for Catherine and I don't know when she stopped being Joan's teacher, but it was probably before 1429, when Joan started her campaigns, and definitely before 1431, the year she died.

On 13 July 2016, on our annual drive through France to the UK, we made a slight detour to the Château Beaufremont at the invitation of the prince. Charles-Emmanuel kindly gave my wife, my daughter and myself a guided tour around the ruins of his castle.



The Duncan family and the Prince de Bauffremont at the ruins of the castle.

He also gave me a recent architects' drawing of what the castle would have looked like during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, so a clear comparison could be made, and ended the tour by showing us a framed silk print of the Shroud, obtained at some moment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

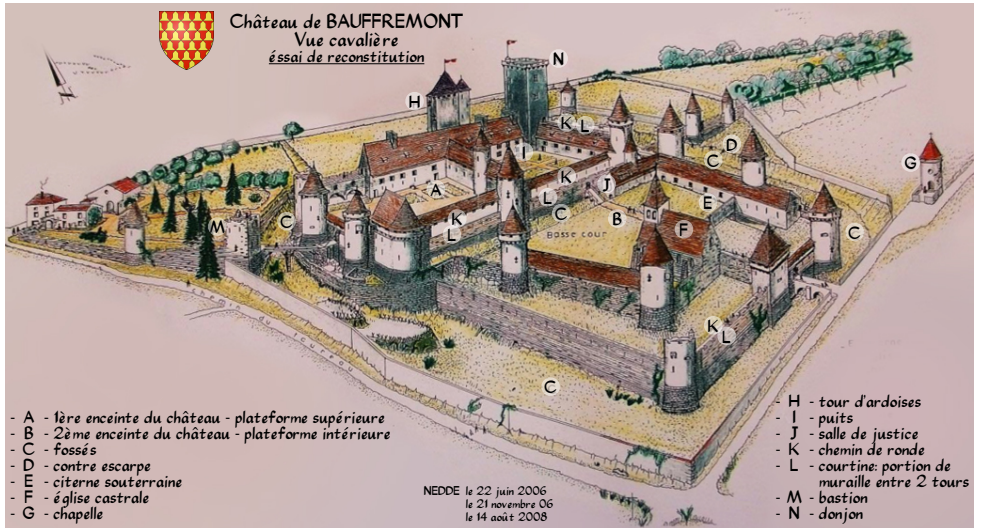
Some time in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Bauffremont family obtained permission to have a colombier (dove tower) built, which was a sign of wealth, and is the only part of the old castle that remains complete today (arrowed in the photo above). It was at some point turned into a



The Bauffremont Chapel in a 19<sup>th</sup> century postcard and today.

chapel dedicated to St Joseph (see the old postcard above) and it also became the official parish church of the village. This fact was only rediscovered when the village wanted repairs to their supposed parish church, only to find, when the records were checked, that it was the dove tower that was officially registered. So their request was rejected and no central funding was given for the 'false' parish church! There was also originally another chapel within the grounds of the castle (the 'église castrale' marked 'F' on the drawing opposite), but it no longer exists. If the Shroud did stay at the castle during the period 1400-1415, then this chapel would have been a very likely place to have housed the relic. The 'colombier' chapel is marked 'G' on the drawing.

Charles-Emmanuel explained that his grandfather had been an archivist and that due to the major wars in France in the last century, the



Bauffremont Castle as it may have appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

family's archives were moved around and hidden in safe houses until the troubles were over. Those that had survived these troubled times were gathered and placed in the dove tower and there they have stayed untouched until now. Charles has only just begun to sort through the documents, but he says his grandfather was aware of documents among the family archives pertaining to the Shroud's stay at Bauffremont and these are what he is now attempting to find. In a recent phone call, he said he had located a couple of references and was going to send copies, so I await his next communication with interest.



Prince Charles-Emmanuel  
de Bauffremont



## The Silk Print of the Shroud

Housed in what might be called the porter's lodge (the existing building in the westernmost corner of the grounds - see architect's drawing), is a framed silk lithographic print of the Shroud (below).



Charles-Emmanuel says it was given as a gift to his family by the pope around 1868 as recognition of his family's links with the Shroud. The room lighting was low and the glass sheet protecting the print made it very difficult to photograph the image due to glare. It was also very difficult to read the writing above and below the central section as that had also faded. Within the central rectangular space in the frame is a print of the image on the Shroud, but it has faded too - so much so, one could barely see the hint of a silhouette. Fortunately, other copies of this silk print exist elsewhere. There is a copy kept in ex-King Umberto's

collection, dated 1898 but which has been printed from the same lithographic printing plate as that of the Bauffremont family (below).<sup>1</sup>



In the timeline of the Turin Shroud in BSTS Newsletter 45, there is mentioned the 1868 exhibition of the Shroud and one wonders if perhaps representatives of the Bauffremont family were present. Quoting from the timeline (abbreviated):

*1868, 24-27 April. During the archbishopric of Alessandro Riccardi dei Conti di Netro, the Shroud is shown to mark the marriage of Prince Umberto of Savoy with Princess Margaret. Instead of a brief holding up of the cloth in the cathedral or from a balcony of the Palazzo Madama as before, the Shroud is displayed on a board on the cathedral high altar for four days.*

*28 April. Working on her knees, the 25 year old Princess Clotilde of Savoy (1843-1911), daughter of Victor Emanuel II and wife of Prince Gerolamo Napoleon, changes the Shroud's former lining cloth of black silk (sewn on by*

<sup>1</sup> These were made in some number as souvenirs of the 1898 ostentation.

*Blessed Sebastian Valfre in 1694), replacing this with one of crimson taffeta.<sup>2</sup> She also removes a thread that 110 years later will be considered, and rejected, for radiocarbon dating. The Shroud is also 'scrupulosamente' measured by Monsignor Gastaldi, bishop of Saluzzo and later archbishop of Turin, and found (wrongly) to be 410 cm x 140 cm.*

This information really makes it clear why the prince's lithograph must be of a later date than 1868. Given that the measurements of the Shroud were taken by Gastaldi only after the 1868 public showing was over, there would have been no time for an artist to create and publish a souvenir lithograph. The then Mons. Gastaldi became Turin's archbishop around 1874, and this appointment would seem to have been what sparked the making of the lithograph. It would have been Archbishop Gastaldi, or the then duke of Savoy, king of Italy Victor Emanuele II, who gave the lithograph to the prince's ancestor, rather than the pope.<sup>3</sup>

The corners of the frame carry the names and arms of four families associated with the Shroud, clockwise from top left: Charny, Bauffremont, Savoie and Villersexel la Roche.



<sup>2</sup> See Luigi Fossati 'L'Ostensione del 1868' *Collegamento Pro Sindone*, Jul/Aug 1993, p.10 for a full record in Italian.

<sup>3</sup> Very similar prints on silk were made as souvenirs of the 1898 exposition. See below.



Across the bottom of the frame is the legend



meaning *The Holy Shroud of Turin, previously at Lirey, near Troyes.*

Above the decorative border which surrounds the Shroud image itself, one finds the following Latin inscription:

"IMAGO SS. SINDONIS D. N. JESU CHRISTI AUG. TAURIN ASSERVATAE", and in very small letters:

Longi. S. Sindonis M.4.10, Lat. M.1.40, Longit Figura Christi M. 1.76, Signa subnigra sunt adustiones quas passa est in incendio Camberiacia 1532." These inscriptions mean

*"Image of the Holy Shroud of Our Lord Jesus Christ as seen in Turin. Length of the Holy Shroud 4.10 metres; width 1.40 metres. Height of the figure of Christ 1.76 metres. The black marks are burns from when the Shroud was involved in a fire at Chambéry in 1532."*<sup>4</sup>

On the decorated border itself are the words: Tuam Sindonem Veneramus Domine, or *"We venerate your Shroud, Lord"*

On the backing cloth below the print are the words: EFFICTA AB EXEMPLARI ANNO MDCCCLXVIII / CURA ET SUMPTIBUS CLERI TAURINENSIS VULGATA ANNO MDCCCLXXIII / PONTIFICATUS D PII PAPAE IX VICESIMO OCTAVO

I think this roughly means: *Originating from a copy of 1868. Under the care and at the expense of the clergy of Turin, published in 1873, in the 28th year of the pontificate of Pope Pius IX.*

---

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation 'AUG' defeats me - Editor.

The dimensions that are given derive from measurements that were made in 1868 by the then archbishop of Turin, but which are actually wrong. This clerical error caused the frame for the 1898 exposition to be made to the wrong size. The Latin inscription below the Shroud space on the prince's print (*'Effecta ab exemplari.... vicesimo octavo'*), seems to be telling us that although the original artist's copy (*exemplari*) used for the lithographic plate was made in 1868, this particular print of the prince's was made neither in 1868, nor in 1898 (the year of Umberto's example), but in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of Pope Pius IX's pontificate, i.e. 1873. But Charles-Emmanuel's grandfather Theodore was not even born then. So if the print and the frame were made around 1873 the picture would have been a gift to Theodore's father Gontran. It would then have been Gontran or (a few years later) Theodore who commissioned the frame with its heraldic shields.

In conclusion, it is likely that the Turin Shroud stayed in the Château de Beaufremont for some or all of the time between 1400 and 1415, as that is where owner Marguerite de Charny would have been based. However, if Joan of Arc was to have been present, then she would have only been three when Marguerite's husband died (and with no offspring, ending her link with the Bauffremont family), or at most six years old if the Shroud stayed to the latest possible date before being returned to Lirey in 1418 only to be moved on straight away! I'm inclined to think the Shroud would have moved back to Lirey once Marguerite became a widow. So there is a possibility that Joan of Arc as a very young child could have seen the Shroud and we await with interest any evidence that Charles-Emmanuel uncovers.



[Another copy of the 1898 souvenir print, available on ebay.it for £500, but, as with the Beaufremont copy, the image has almost entirely faded away. Editor]

