

HASADEEN HAKADOSH:
THE HOLY SHROUD IN HEBREW

REBECCA JACKSON

A convert to Christianity, Mrs. Jackson gives her credentials, so to speak, as a Jewess of Orthodox milieu and education. She surmises that she is, "at this time, probably the only Sindonologist of Orthodox Jewish ancestry in the world actively working on the Jewishness of the Shroud".

In this paper, she proposes to concentrate on four areas: 1) Racial/cultural studies; 2) Jewish legal dimensions of the Shroud; 3) Scriptural aspects; 4) History of the Jews and its relevance to the Shroud.

The first section assures us that the Man of the Shroud "would not stand out in a crowd of Jews". Backed by her thirty years' experience as an ethnologist, she examines the Semitic and Negroid facial characteristics of the Man of the Shroud, and finds there the typical Afro-Semitic features of full-blooded Jewish people.

A discussion of Jewish burial customs is mainly based on two modern Jewish historians and carried forward on Jewish words for burial garments, prayer shawl, ornaments, for the illegal mixture of wool and linen as well as the rites of purification of the corpse.

Jewish words again punctuate the section on New Testament texts related to Jewish mourning and burial customs.

In her final section, "Jewish History and The Shroud", Mrs. Jackson strongly emphasizes Semitic and Jewish modesty, remarking that no Jew would voluntarily pose in the nude, nor agree to be a model for a graven image.

She notices that from the earliest centuries of Christian iconography and all through the Middle Ages, Jesus has been depicted with distinctly European features. Due to the hatred of the Jews in the Middle Ages, no artist would have portrayed a Jewish Christ. Rebecca Jackson remarks that an image of Christ with Jewish features would not have been acceptable to Gentiles, who had come to detest the Jewish race. She concludes that "The Shroud of Turin has characteristics that are authentically Jewish and consistent with Jewish customs at the time of Christ."