

SHROUD OF TURIN AND SUDARIUM OF OVIEDO, POSSIBLE BURIAL FABRICS AT THE TOMB OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

SUMMARY

The following written notes aim to explain current responses from the Spanish Centre for Sindonology concerning the ensuing issues:

Can we relate the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin as belonging to the same corpse? If so, is it reasonable to believe this may have been the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth?

In other words: Are the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin, the burial cloths mentioned in the Gospel texts as "Shroud" in the Synoptics¹ and "Sudarium" in the Gospel of John²?

The Spanish Centre for Sindonology gathers a number of people who, in this day and age, believe the answers to all of these questions are affirmative. We have reason to believe that both fabrics are the actual burial cloths of Jesus of Nazareth, mentioned in the Gospels. In fact, our interest is to thoroughly explain the process by which we have reached this conviction. However, we are perfectly aware that third parties may not share with us all these issues, which, to our understanding, are not only basic and coherent but also ultimately represent the foundation validating our claim.

Nonetheless, our purpose is not to persuade anyone but rather to expose cogent facts.

We have attempted to analyze both the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo as archaeological objects, which is definitively what these fabrics are. Absolute statements have no place here. Our methodology is based on logical inference and a careful scrutiny of all the emerging working hypotheses.

On the other hand, we must not forget that this is a "living" project, which is likely to present new research details, and may even correct estimates given to be almost definitive. However, this article will attempt to outline the series of data and interpretations of the information contained in each fabric that incline us to present them as authentic and worth studying in further depth.

¹ Mt 27,59; Mc 15,46; Lc 23,53.

² Jn 20,7

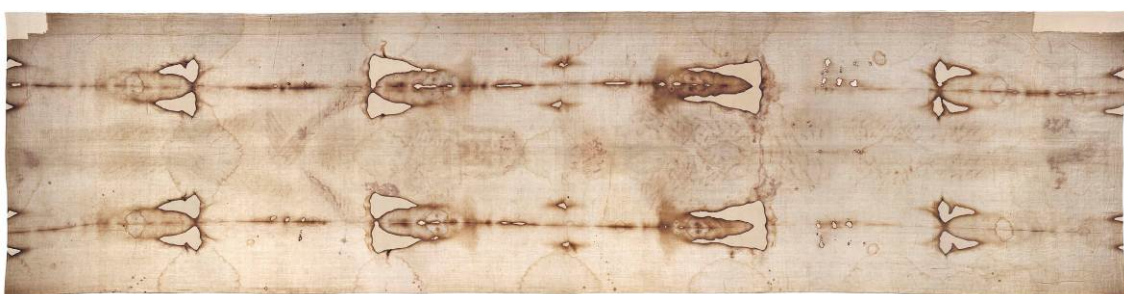
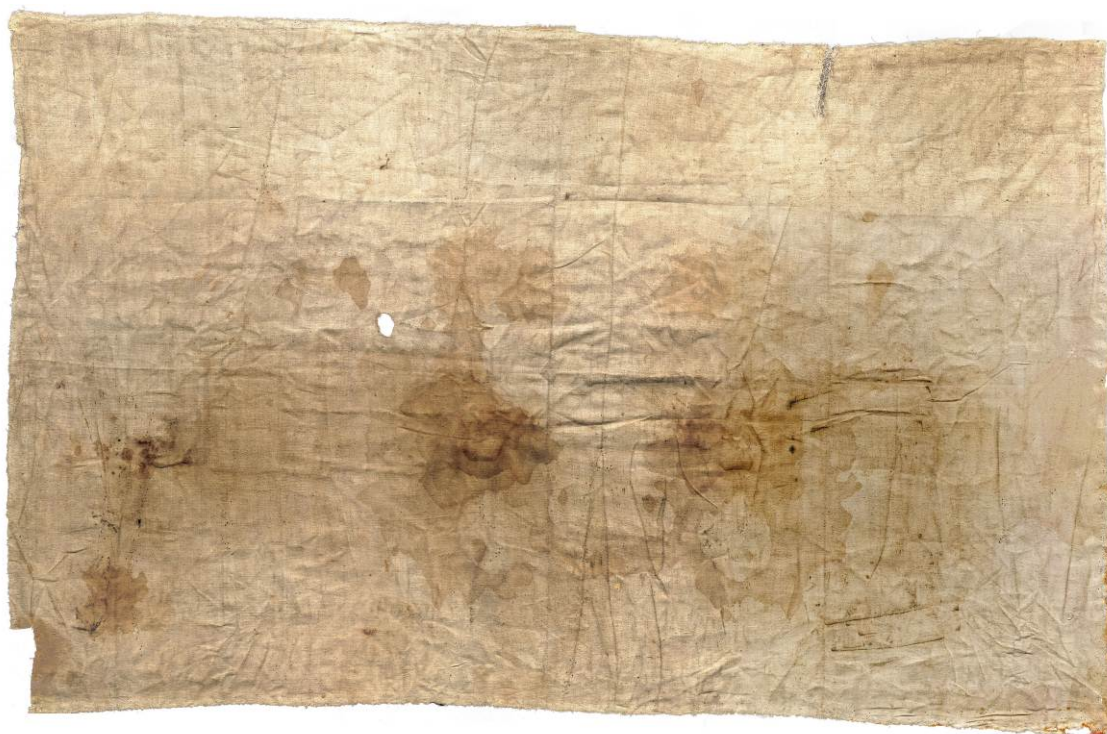
Why do we think that the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin are the burial fabrics of Jesus of Nazareth? The response is simple: Because both have covered the head of the same corpse and this cannot be any other corpse than that of Jesus of Nazareth, the historical figure crucified by order of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem in the 30s AD³.

The conclusion is straightforward but the process that has led us to this conclusion has been and remains remarkably long and complex.

Herein we schematically present some our reasoning, matured throughout more than 25 years. For more information, see www.linteum.com

³ The estimated dates corresponding to the crucifixion of Christ are 7 April of the year 30, commonly accepted by scripturists, and 3 April of the year 33 which is a proposal based on the astronomical and historical considerations explained in “Sudarium of Oviedo. Recent Discoveries”, CES 1998(/“Sudario de Oviedo. Hallazgos recientes”, CES 1998).

SHROUD OF TURIN AND SUDARIUM OF OVIEDO, POSSIBLE BURIAL FABRICS AT THE TOMB OF JESUS OF NAZARETH



Geometry is the art of reasoning well about badly-drawn figures

Can we relate the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin to the same corpse? If so, is it reasonable to believe that this may be Jesus of Nazareth?

In other words: Are the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin the burial cloths mentioned in the Gospel texts as "Shroud" in the Synoptics⁴ and "Sudarium" in the Gospel of John⁵?

In the first case, we must proceed with the information obtained from both fabrics. In the latter case we must do so according to the texts cited and the historical time frame of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth.

By confronting the results from both points of view, we may assess the compatibility of both approaches and, ultimately, the authenticity of both fabrics as well as the importance of the information obtained from each of them.

In any case, both fabrics are archaeological objects. We must therefore reason as is done in this branch of knowledge: estimating the nature of objects studied (in the past) from logical inferences deduced from the current information (herein) provided and susceptible to interpretation.

Needless to say, this is the approach that was taken over 25 years ago, when the Spanish Centre for Sindonology (CES) began to study the Sudarium of Oviedo. For more information concerning this process, see the CES website: www.linteum.com

The content of this article is merely a brief summary of the excellent work of Juan Manuel Miñarro⁶ (soon to be published) concerning this issue as well as the recent contributions of the Dr. Alfonso Sanchez Hermosilla⁷, Director of the Research Team of the Spanish Centre for Sindonology (EDICES) and his Deputy Director, Don Felipe Montero Ortego⁸. The use of this article alone, without prior in-depth knowledge of these works, makes no further contribution towards an improved understanding on the matter under study.

Indeed, the passing of time allows us to mature the knowledge acquired in any field. Unsurprisingly, after all these years we realize that the now important issues once went unnoticed and, "sensu contrario", other issues that are practically irrelevant now, were once considered exceedingly relevant.

⁴ Mt 27,59; Mc 15,46; Lc 23,53.

⁵ Jn 20,7

⁶ Associate Professor at the University of Seville.

⁷ Forensic Doctor.

⁸ Chemical Engineer.

Specifically, the study of said fabric presents peculiarities that are extremely hard to estimate. The difficulty of establishing a rigorous and necessarily newly minted methodology comes together with that of properly assimilating and interpreting all of the information gathered.

Monsignor Giulio Ricci confronted a fundamental question when he first came face-to-face with the Sudarium of Oviedo⁹ and presumed the stains could be blood: Where could so much blood have come from and how could this fabric have been used? Yet an immediate response to these questions could not be readily provided.

Nonetheless, Monsignor Ricci did realize that the morphology of the large central bloodstain on the Sudarium of Oviedo¹⁰ could be consistent with that of the facial image presented on the Shroud of Turin¹¹.



For the first known time in recent and ancient history, someone associated the information from the Sudarium of Oviedo with the information contained on the Shroud of Turin¹² *without referring to narrative accounts in the Gospel.*

Regardless of any subsequent assessment and the archaeological importance of the Sudarium of Oviedo in and of itself, the facts speak for themselves, as does the history of each of the fabrics.

At this stage of study concerning both fabrics and bearing in mind all that they have meant to us over the years, let us now present the following scheme:

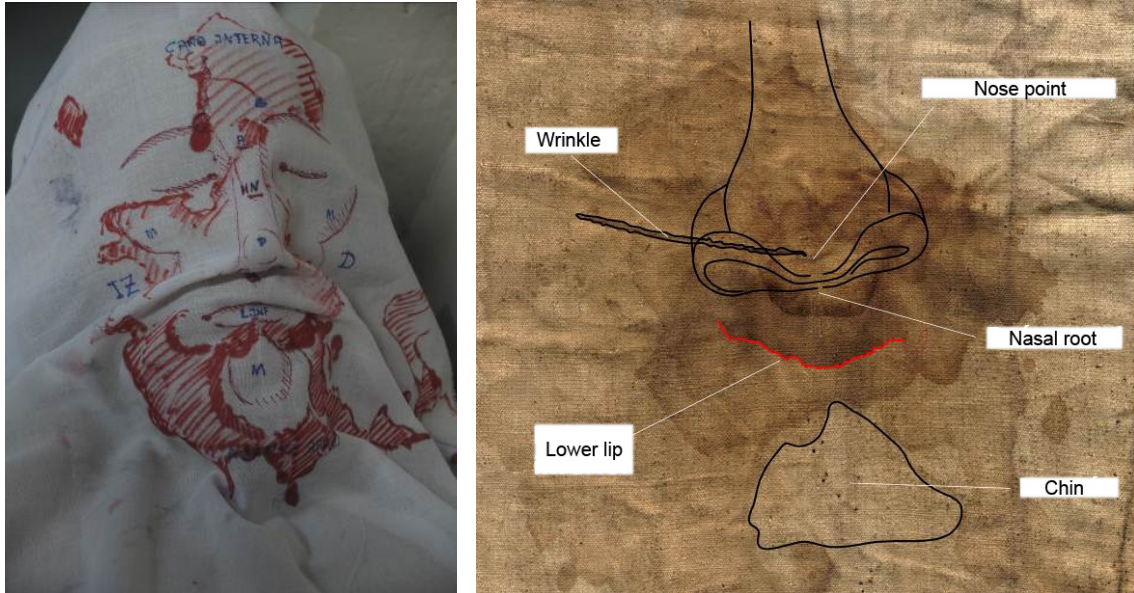
⁹ The later Notary of the Cathedral Chapter, Mr. José Monte, who eye-witnessed the moment G.Ricci came in contact with the Sudarium of Oviedo, transmitted this comment to us.

¹⁰ IR side for us. Monsignor Ricci kept the image of the Sindone in mind.

¹¹ Above all, the correct image of the imprint. The bloodstains of the Face of the Sindone/Holy Shroud are small as compared to the stains on the Sudarium.

¹² L'Uomo della Sindone è Gesù.1965. The Sudarium of Oviedo was first cited for its possible connection with the Sindone.

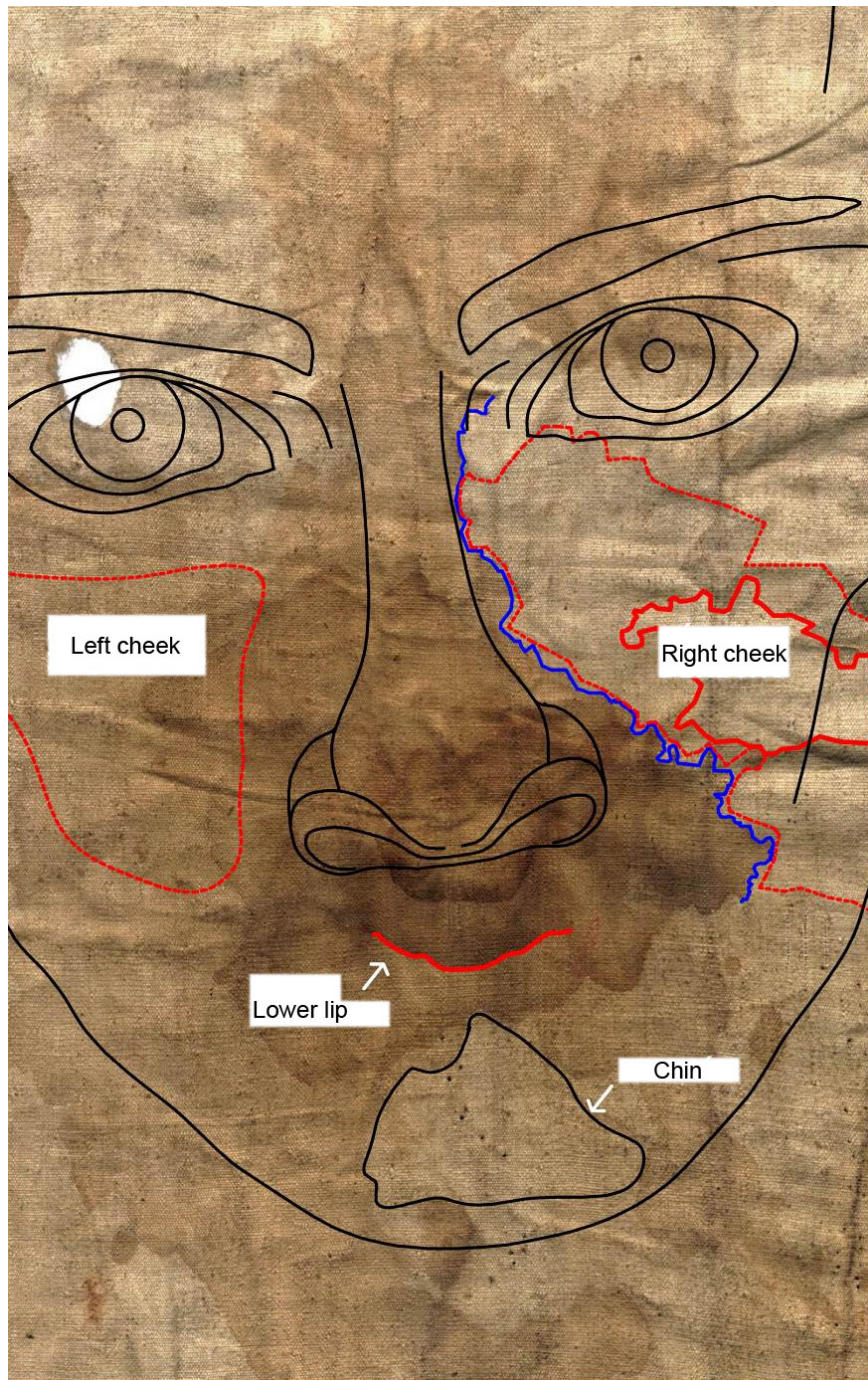
1-. Our current knowledge of the information contained in the Sudarium of Oviedo has allowed us to directly associate it to the "Sudarium" mentioned in chapter 20 of the Gospel of John as the burial cloth of Jesus of Nazareth, *without making any reference to the Shroud of Turin*¹³. We think that the Sudarium of Oviedo may well be the Sudarium of Jesus of Nazareth for reasons derived from explicitly studying it.



2-. From the outpourings of bloody fluid that took place through the nose and mouth and the way the corpse was handled, we have been able to estimate the topographic relief of the face covered by the Sudarium. This relief presents a number of morphological and topographical accidents, corresponding to a series of injuries of all types on it¹⁴. The information sharply transferred from the face to the Sudarium because the Sudarium was placed snugly on the head and remained firmly anchored to the area where it came in touch with the face until it was separated from it. This precisely has enabled us to interpret it, estimate the relative positions of the wounds causing the associated bloodstains and identify the areas of the face that were swollen probably due to traumas.

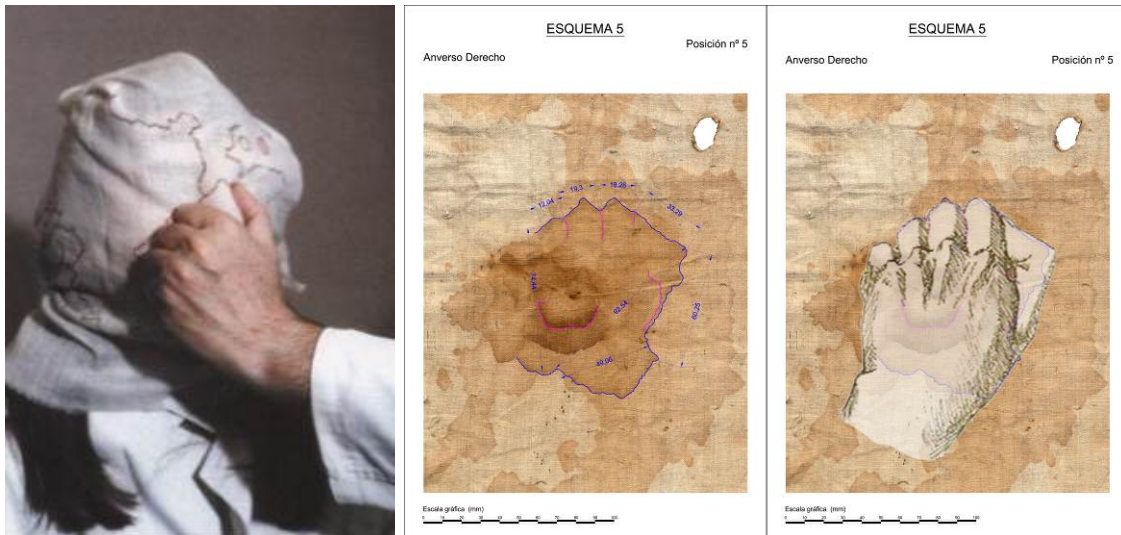
¹³ We may cite the following as important archaeological discoveries: the strand of thread with which the Sudarium of Oviedo was sewn on the hair and beard (Mr Felipe Montero), the iconographic reference found by Ms. Paloma Díaz de Aguilar, the reference to the paraphrase of the Gospel of John of Nonnus of Panopolis, the compatibility of the legal medical study with the case of Jesus of Nazareth and the History and the extent to which the fabric has been venerated.

¹⁴ These accidents/features, consequent to the wounds and traumas received by the Person whose head it covered, were produced before the death of the Subject. Precisely, the facial structure that may be obtained from the Sudarium of Oviedo must bear them in mind, given that all these deformities were already permanently present on the head of the corpse when the fabric was put to use.



Morphology and topographical relief of the face.

3. However, what strikes us the most upon first inspection are the areas the bloodstains occupy, not the aforementioned elements. The outlines of these stains are well defined given the process through which they were formed and the extreme care with which the corpse was handled. It follows to state that at no time the Sudarium was rubbed on the face to cleanse it. Quite the contrary, it remained firmly attached to the face, collected all the liquid discharged from nose and mouth and served to support the hands attempting to plug both of these anatomical elements.



4-. We have no doubt that the information on the Sudarium of Oviedo was generated because it was wrapped around the head of a corpse in the conditions we have repeatedly explained, and it was subsequently removed from the corpse when the blood spilled on it was still fresh. Even so, we are fully aware that many aspects remain to be elucidated.



5-. From the historical point of view, the latest references to the Sudarium of Jesus of Nazareth are remarkably consistent with the information obtained from the Sudarium of Oviedo. The archaeological assessment concerning knot traces, iconographic references, and the identification of the strands of thread that may have literally sewn the fabric onto the hair and the beard of the head it covered is very positive¹⁵.

¹⁵ Mr. Felipe Montero y de Ms. Paloma Díaz de Aguilar made these discoveries/findings.



Finding of Mr. Alberto Villar Movellán



Finding of Mrs. Paloma Díaz de Aguilar



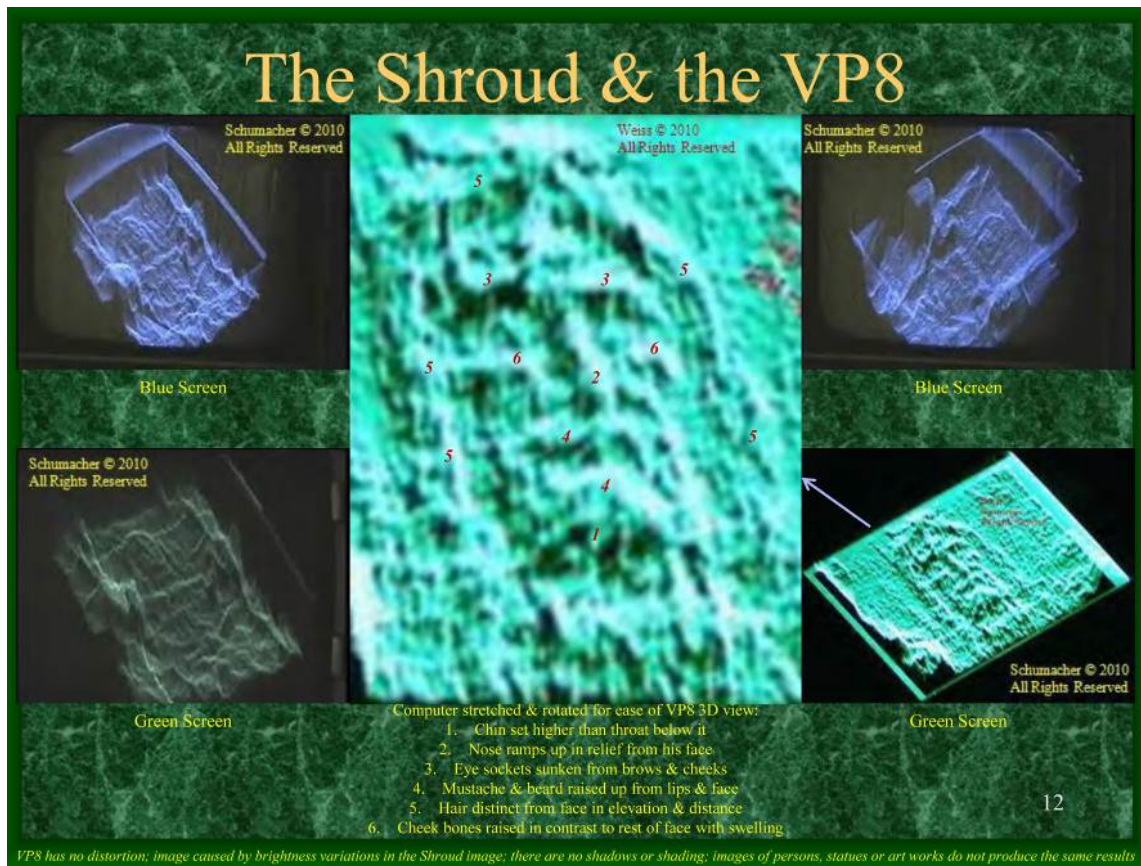
Finding of Mr. Felipe Montero Ortego



Sewing thread.

¹⁵ Findings of Mr. Felipe Montero Ortego and Mrs. Paloma Díaz de Aguilar. The torsion of the thread end that served to sew the Shroud of Oviedo to the hair and beard is in "S", characteristic of Palestine, while the torsion of the rest of threads of the Shroud of Oviedo is in "Z", characteristic of the Roman Empire of Occident.

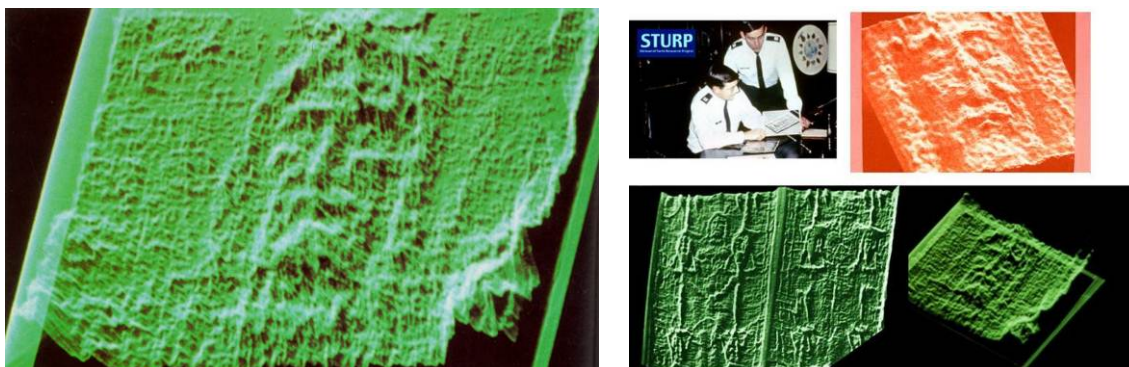
6. Our knowledge of the Shroud of Turin is based, from a physical point of view, on the STURP studies carried out in 1978 and directed by John Jackson, who is now a member of the Research Team of the Spanish Centre for Sindonology (EDICES).



7-. Everything related to the study concerning the process of the image formation may be seen on the Turin Shroud Centre of Colorado Springs website, where the authors have placed all of their substantially self-explanatory work.

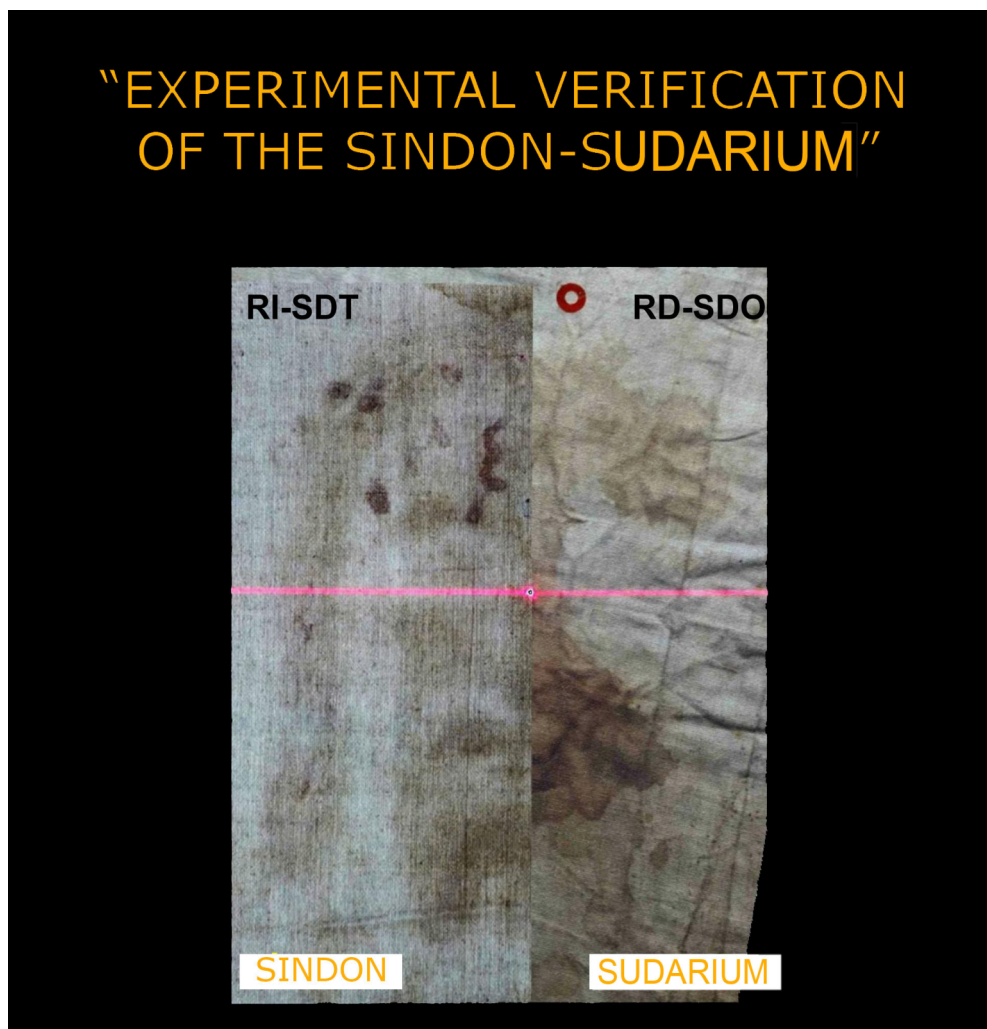
<http://www.shroudofturin.com/>

8-. Everything surrounding the analysis performed by the analogue-digital computer, known as VP-8, has become particularly relevant. There is plenty of information about this on the net, especially on the Turin Shroud Centre of Colorado Springs website.

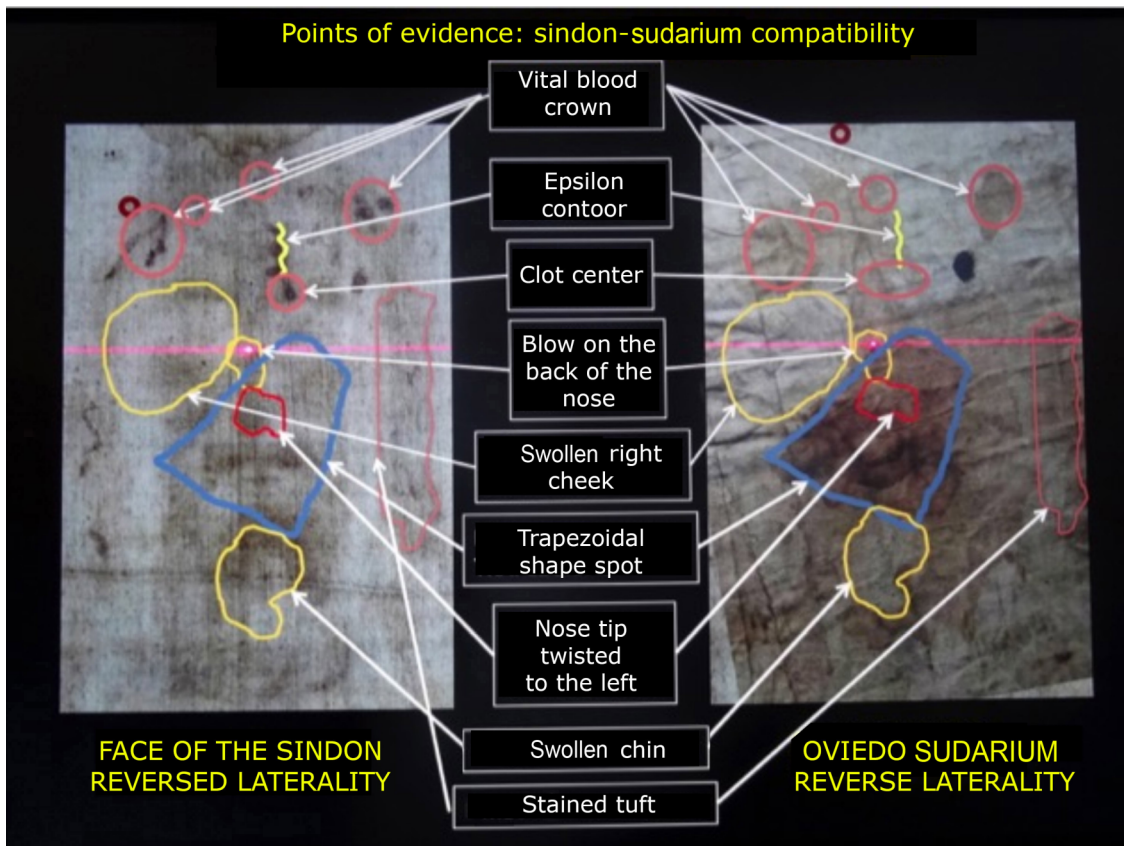
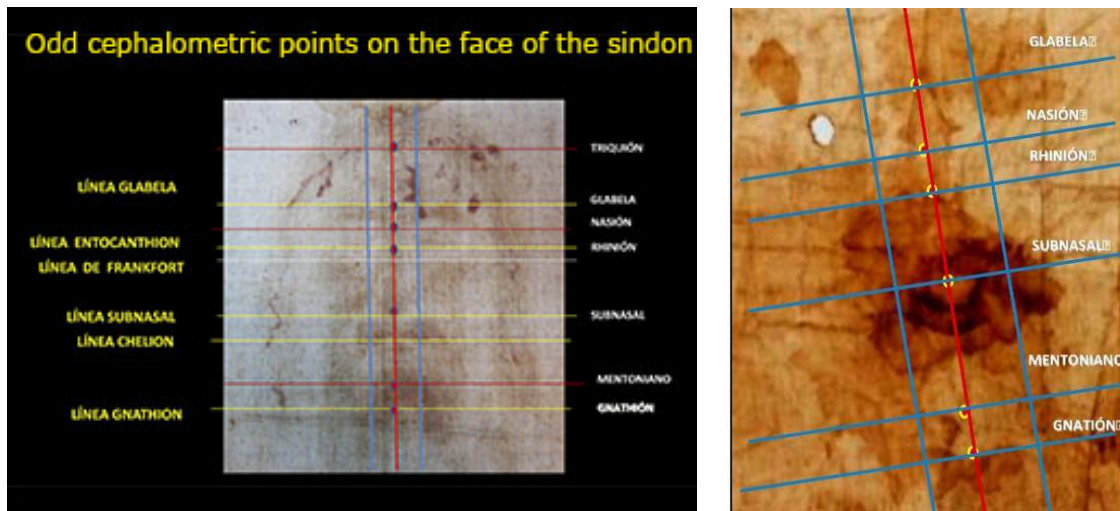


As far as we are concerned, we must point out that thanks to this image analyzer we obtained a relief of the face covered by the Shroud of Turin and all its topographic features. This study was conducted as a result of the intervention of the STURP in 1978. At that time nobody had the slightest idea about the kind of information contained on the Sudarium of Oviedo. This therefore makes it a completely distinct source of information, totally independent from the information contained on the Sudarium of Oviedo. As we will see later on in this document, this circumstance has become a decisively relevant one.

9-. Let us compare the reliefs on both faces. On the one hand, in the case of the Sudarium of Oviedo, we have a relief resulting from simple geometric and physical considerations concerning how the bloody fluid effusing from the nose and mouth could have travelled around the surface of the face. On the other hand we have the analysis conducted by the VP-8 on the image of the face of the Shroud of Turin. What it all comes down to is that the resulting topographic features, present in one fabric and the other, are almost identical and show remarkable peculiarities. This important coincidence calls our attention for a simple reason. It is nothing else but proof of what tradition and history already claim: that both fabrics are the burial cloths of Jesus of Nazareth.



This crossed information, obtained as previously mentioned, was totally unexpected and unthinkable. So, as is both logical and natural, it went unheeded for a long time. Professor Juan Manuel Miñarro's excellent work reveals this information along with a great deal of anthropometric data and makes a serious geometric and anatomical argument in favour of the authenticity of each fabric apart from stating other considerations taken both from a legal and forensic medical point of view.



Let us be clear: we believe that both fabrics covered the head of the same corpse for purely geometrical reasons in addition to legal,

historical and medical reasons as well as the reasons exposed in several other studies.

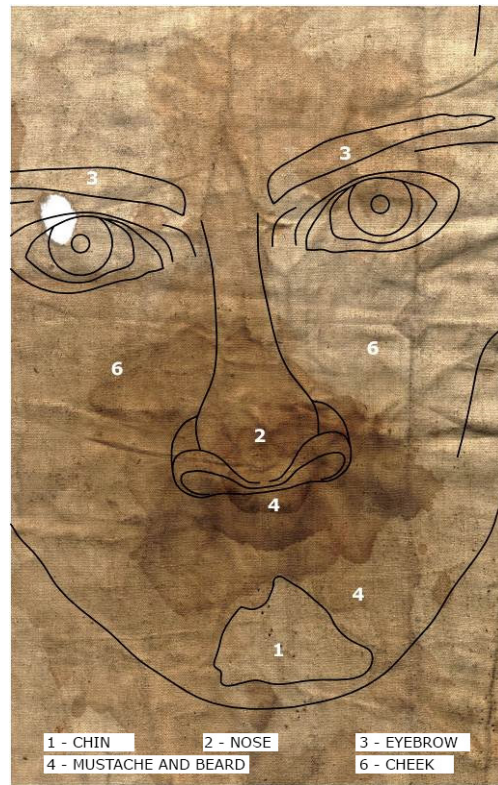
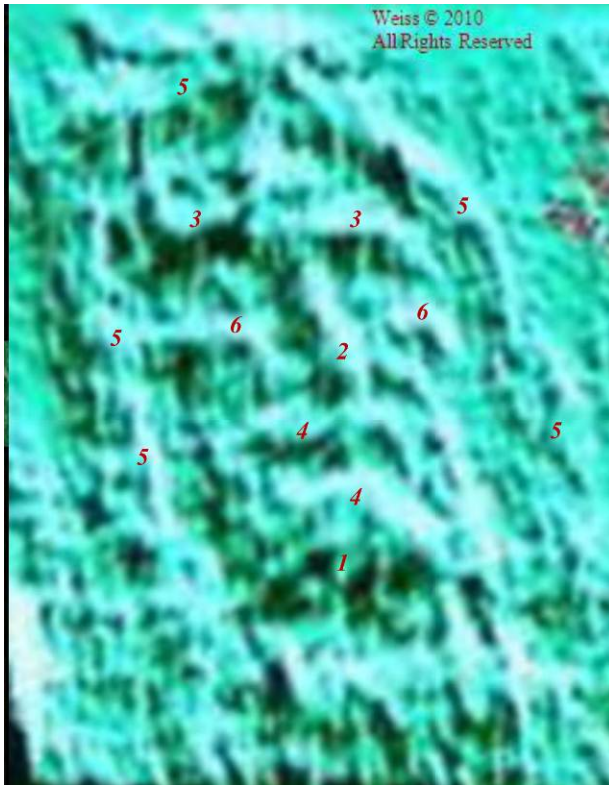
The corresponding areas are not those of the bloodstains currently seen on both fabrics stretched out on a plane, but rather the relief of both faces obtained by means of completely distinct and unrelated procedures carried out at a nearly 20-year time difference. It seems unreasonable to think that information obtained this way can be due to any cause other than what we have stated. That is to say, the two cloths covered the same head in the sequence we have repeatedly pointed out: the head was first wrapped in the Sudarium of Oviedo and then it was wrapped in the Shroud of Turin.

Let's further clarify this: the relief of the face that covered the Sudarium of Oviedo was obtained by thoroughly analyzing the anatomical elements described by the circulation of the bloody fluid emanating from the nostrils and mouth. This was the direct result of how the corpse had been handled. Had the corpse not been handled the way it was, we would not have had the information to make its genesis perfectly understandable (as we have explained on repeated occasions)¹⁶.

However, an absolutely unknown process involving the use of an image analyzer, the analogue – digital computer known as VP-8, rendered the relief of the face despite the absence of a physical explanation of its genesis¹⁷.

¹⁶ From the geometric point of view, the bloody liquid followed the lines of maximum inclination of the surface defined by the face. From a physical point of view, the liquid travelled adjusting to the different receding and protruding features of the face. This is why, in view of the information it left, we were subsequently able to deduce what these facial features were like. Highly distinguishable are the promontories of the chin, the swollen right cheek and the injury produced by a blow to the central region of the nose.

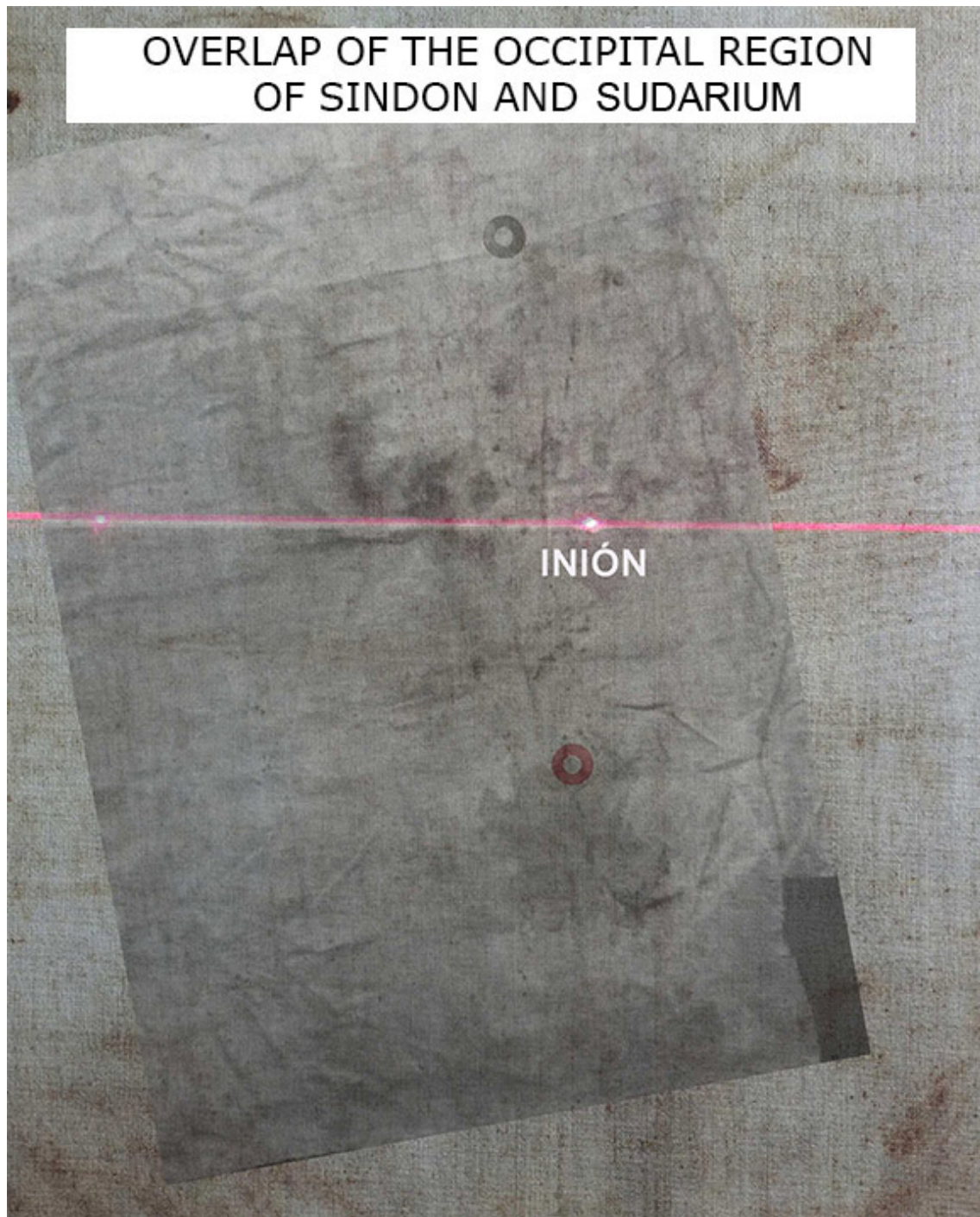
¹⁷ The STURP team worked with photographs of the Sindone. So, from our point of view we can accept its deductions even if we have not directly studied the Sindone ourselves. In other words, the direct inspection of the Sindone does not supply any better information than the one supplied to us by the VP-8. If this were all repeated now, the result would undoubtedly improve but it would essentially be the same: the information contained in the Sindone allows us to obtain a relief of the face it wrapped because it enabled us to correlate the intensity of the stain with the distance from the fabric to the corpse wrapped by it. The closer the fabric was to a specific area, the more intense the stain was without the contact being the cause of the stain. This is what happens, for example, with the chin and the right cheekbone.



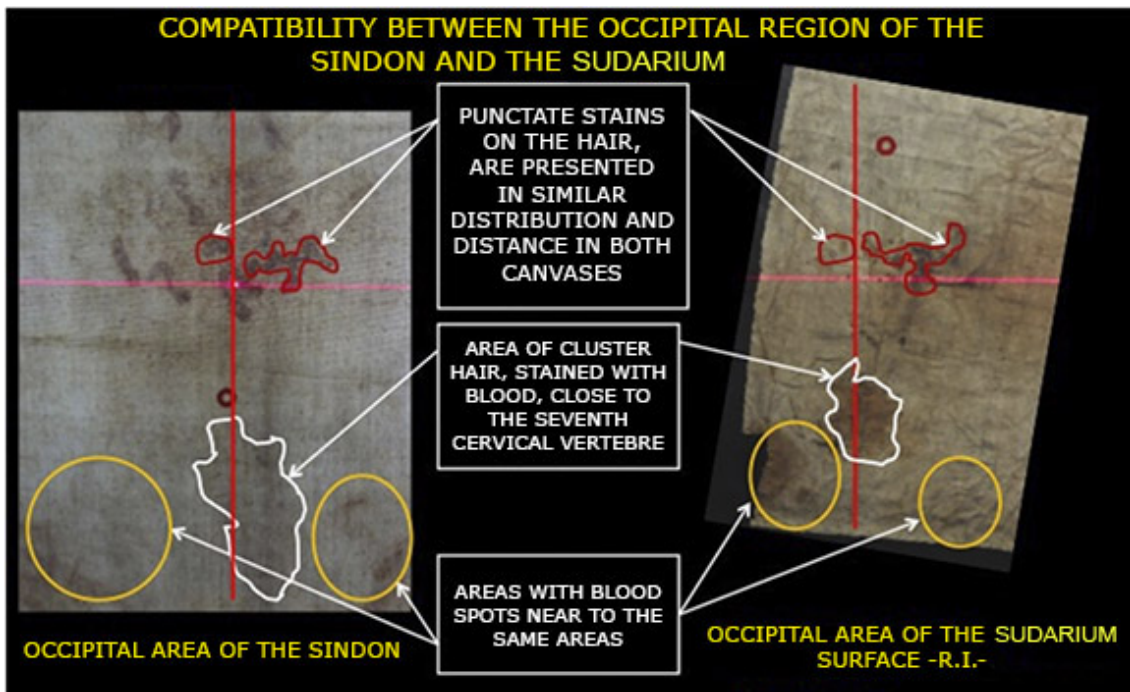
Swollen Right Cheek at Sindon and Sudarium

As shown by Professor Juan Manuel Miñarro in his masterful work, both reliefs corresponded and overlapped. Once all the aspects surrounding the fabric are understood, it seems rather clear that the

fabrics can only be the way they are as a consequence of what caused them. It seems rather absurd to think the fabrics could have been manipulated or falsified before anything at all was actually known about it.



I reiterate: the Spanish Centre for Sindonology finds this situation extremely remarkable. This is practically the only reason why we think that both fabrics are authentic and we have only just begun to understand the information contained on them. In addition to what we have just stated, everything else we know about each one of the fabrics only further reinforces our conclusion.



10-. Who is the person we are dealing with? Answering this question requires nothing more than a simple fact: the history of the Sudarium of Oviedo and the history of the Shroud of Turin reveal that these fabrics have been unable to coincide in any geographic area other than Jerusalem, just like tradition says. Therefore, this corpse may not be of anyone other than Jesus of Nazareth Himself.

11-. In view of the above, it is clear that the Shroud of Turin needs to be studied in depth by the very same people who have a thorough grasp on the data contained in the Sudarium of Oviedo and vice versa. This is for quite obvious reasons: if both cloths covered the same head in the expected sequence, all the findings and information concerning their traces must be compared. Something will always remain unsettled until this is done.

However, we must insist that it is perfectly plausible to compare information from the Sindone resulting from the image analyzer VP-8, and the corresponding information on the Sudarium of Oviedo because we know how this information was generated. Further and repeated inspection of the fabrics would add no more information to what we already have. This is why our information has become so fundamentally relevant.

12-. What have we now to say about the blood stains present on both fabrics surrounding the face and the surfaces/areas they occupy?

The first thing to remember when assessing the importance of the stains is the process that generated them on each of the fabrics and how they came to be there. Let's see:

As for the Sudarium of Oviedo, we know that the head it wrapped had been subjected to a series of injuries; as a result, there was bloodshed. This happened while the person was still alive. The blood from these wounds obviously remained on the head and stained the fabric by simple contact when this fabric was applied to the head. Later, once this person was already dead, came the outpouring of bloody fluid from the nose and mouth.

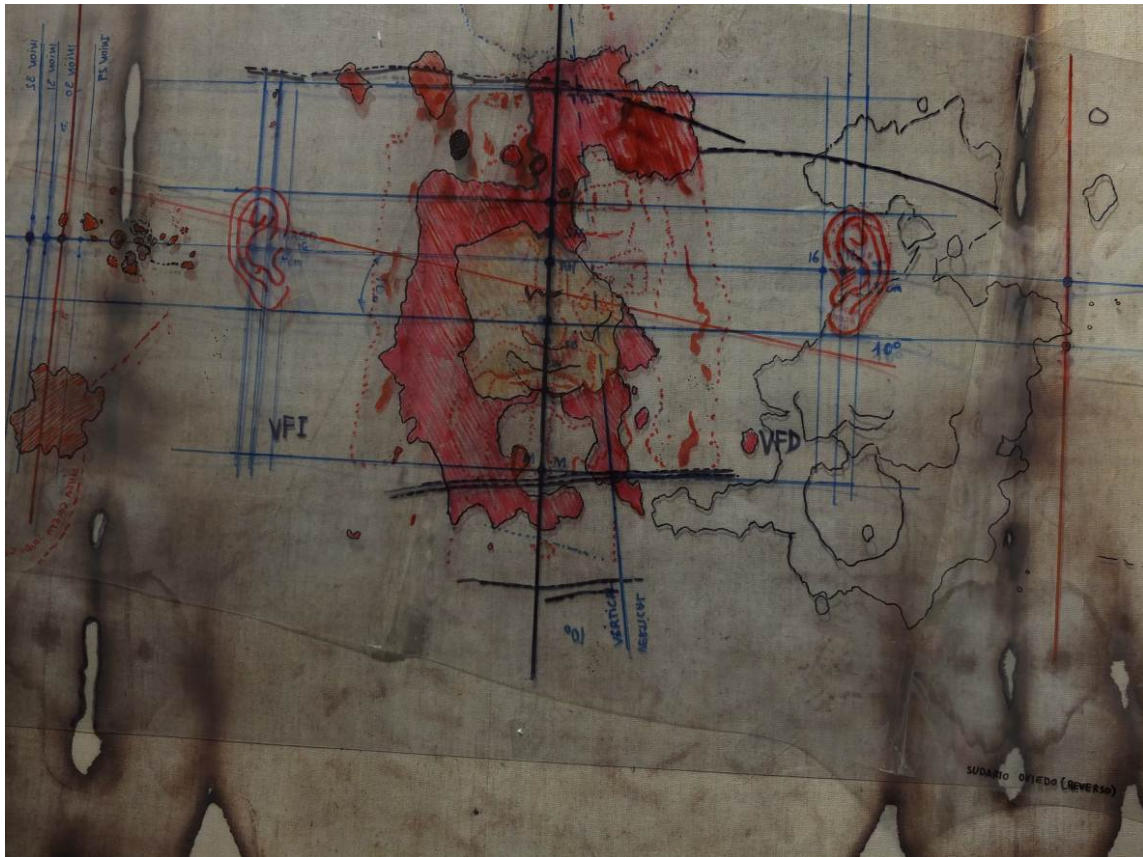
Naturally, the head of the corpse is unavailable to us. However we do have the fabric that wrapped it and this has enabled us to posit the relative position of these wounds and assume that the blood on the surface of the fabric must be greater than what was actually on the corresponding area of the head simply for physical reasons. Thus, we can estimate the estimated position of these injuries relative to the position of the stains produced by the blood emanating from the wounds of this living person, regardless of the area these stains occupy on the fabric. One same wound can generate bloodstains of several different sizes.

Yet on the Sudarium of Oviedo we found some bloody fluid that came out through the nose and mouth when this person was already dead. This fluid circulated according to the movements to which the corpse was subjected by the people handling it (we have previously referred to this). In addition, the fluid stained the face, thereby defining its topography, and transferred onto the fabric by contact. This resulted in stains of a certain size according to the physical conditions present at that moment. Clearly this surface could vary in one way or another to contain the same effusion of this liquid. So the area of the surface we now contemplate extended on a plane contributes virtually nothing new to our findings.

On the other hand, the fabric has deformed over the years. So, the value of the estimated sizes of these spots is clearly very relative.

In sum, bloodstains of very different sizes can be generated by the same staining sources in the same relative position and this may, in turn, vary when transferred to the fabric and extended on a plane.

Considerations akin to these may be made concerning the bloodstains from the face of the Sindone. This is especially due to the character and nature of the liquids staining the fabric surrounding the head; but this remains to be observed in detail. Besides, the Sudarium was fixed onto the corpse while it was in supine position. Thus, the bloodstains seen on this fabric were formed by the simple contact of the fabric with existing blood from the surface of the face.



Conclusion: The relative position of the wounds that gave rise to the effusing blood may be determined from the size of the bloodstains present on both fabrics. However, the value of their sizes cannot lead us to any other conclusions, and this is even more so because they have been extended on a plane.

However, those who see the study by Monsignor Ricci¹⁸ will understand that it constituted a first clue or hint. Curiously, despite all of the aforementioned, the corresponding bloodstains of both fabrics¹⁹ coincide quite well when placed side-by-side spread on a plane. Let us point out here that in the case of the Sindone they must not be confused with the stains from the image.

The bloodstains have also made it possible for us to deduce that the relative positions of the wounds are the same in both cases, regardless of the size of the bloodstains. The same face may produce very different bloodstains at different times and very different faces may produce very similar stains of blood because all heads have the same anatomical and morphological elements. Yet the relative position of the injuries that originated them provides much more accurate information.

¹⁸ Op. Cit.

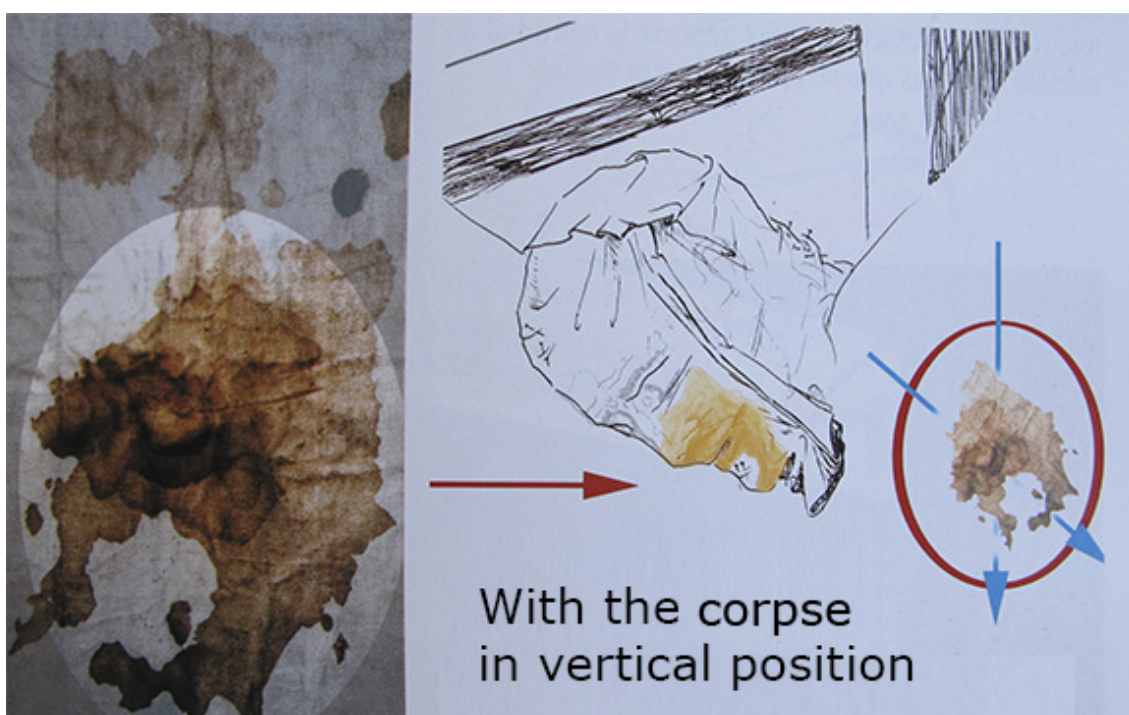
¹⁹ Owing to the lack of observation equipment, Monsignor Ricci made a mistake when comparing said stains because he was unable to determine the exact area of the Sudarium of Oviedo, which was really in contact with the face. See the cited work.

Let us recall that from the Sudarium we have deduced that the circulation of blood to the face, due to the movements to which the corpse was subjected, can provide topographic details about the face and help us reconstruct the area throughout which the blood circulated.

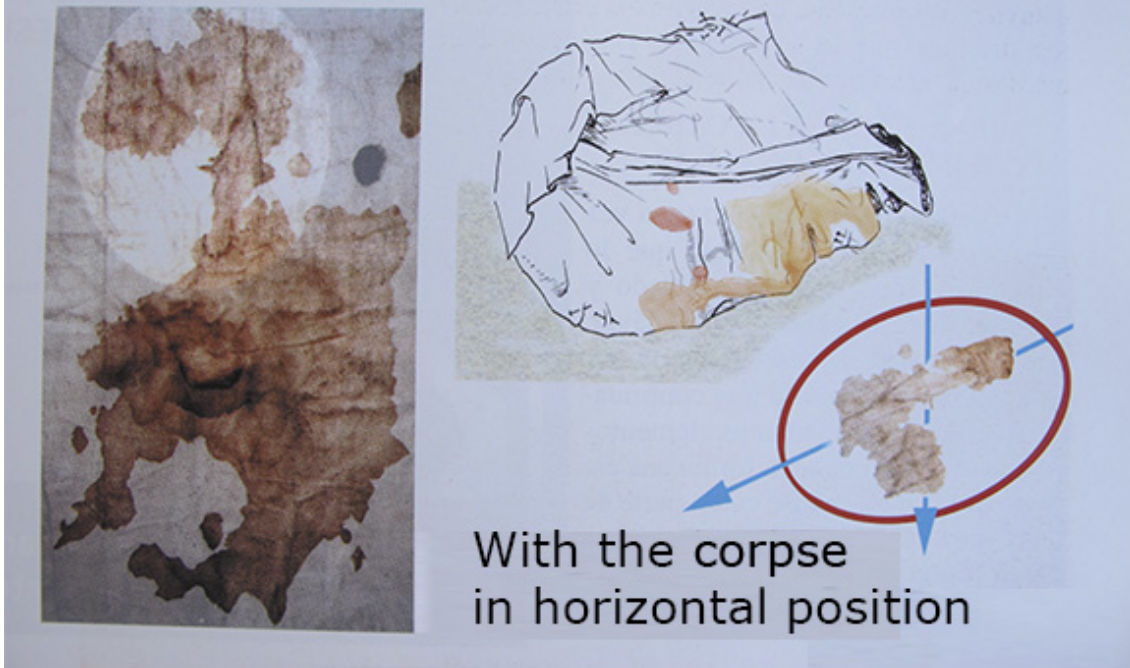
This information was generated because the Sudarium was sewn to the hair and beard, and it remained firmly fixed on the head throughout the whole process: from the vertical position on the cross, to the descent of the corpse and its placement in a prone position, to the moment when the fabric was knotted around the head forming a hood, the transfer of the corpse in this prone position from a site near the Golgotha, then to the grave and, finally, the moment the Sudarium was removed by simply un-sewing it and gently pulling the top knot.

To this day and age, thanks to the great care taken with the corpse at all times and the fact that the fabric was not used to wipe or rub the blood off the face, the stains have provided us with all of this important information.

In short, the position of the Sudarium in relation to the head remained invariable in both of the positions the fabric was used. Thanks to this and the careful motion of the hands on the fabric during the movements to which the corpse was subjected, we can now reconstruct the surface of the head.



The top of the bottom spot is formed



As for the Shroud of Turin, the information that allows us to reconstruct the three-dimensional face comes from the image. The process by which this information transferred to the fabric is unknown, so we can only highlight some important aspects:

First, this transfer of information occurred with a strictly and absolutely motionless corpse. The top of the fabric collapsed onto the bottom, because this is the only way a point of fabric "knows" what it has underneath it²⁰.

Second, thanks to the discovery that took place using the VP-8, we have learned that the image provides information on the relief of the face itself as well as the whole head. This information allows us to compare the face obtained from the Sindone with the one obtained from the Sudarium.

Finally, let us not forget that according to the study of the evolution of the "rigor mortis" of the corpse wrapped in the Shroud of Turin, conducted by Dr. Delfin Villalaín, the information was transferred from the corpse almost immediately after it was wrapped in the fabric. It therefore seems obvious that this information is unfalsifiable, given the unknown nature of the process that generated it.

²⁰ John Jackson's hypothesis on the formation of the image.

And, for the time being, we must note here that if we add all the complementary information we have regarding the fabric to everything mentioned in the above outline, it seems legitimate for us here at the Spanish Centre for Sindonology, to affirm that our conclusion is quite reasonable and verifies what tradition states: that the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin are the burial cloths to which the Gospel narrations refer in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, crucified by order of Pontius Pilate²¹ and then buried in the tomb prepared for Him by Jose of Arimathea.

Since then, an unanswered question has inevitably haunted us: what happened to his corpse after all of this? According to the Gospel, neither his disciples nor the women, who visited his grave as soon as they could, found it.

We face the question of the so-called “empty tomb” according to scholars of biblical texts²².

In light of our findings, can the Spanish Centre for Sindonology say anything to this respect?

I dare say so; but we will have to leave this matter for another moment.

GUILLERMO HERAS MORENO
VICE PRESIDENT - RESEARCH AND TRAINING
SPANISH CENTER FOR SINDONOLOGY

August 2016

²¹ 7 April of the year 30 or 3 April of the year 33, as cited in the “Summary”.

²² The question of the empty tomb was amply referred to in two International Conferences on the Sudarium of Oviedo, in 1994 and 2007. The acts of both events may be consulted.