

THE IV CIELT INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM, PARIS 2002

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The IV International Scientific Symposium organised by the *Centre International d'Etudes sur le Linceul de Turin* (CIELT) was held in Paris on 25th and 26th April 2002. Two members of the CES read presentations, myself and Gonzalo Deschamps. Many speakers read presentations that have already been given, and so there was nothing new in the talks by Whanger, Lidner and Hesemann.

My trip to the symposium had a before and an after, and so I will relate it in chronological order. Two days before the proceedings started I had an interview with Jannic Durand in the department of Conservation of Objects of Art in the Louvre. First of all I showed him a lot of documents with text and images about the collection of relics in the cathedral of Toledo, sent there by King Louis IX of France. He was very interested and called various workmates over to see. I then showed him the presentation for the symposium on his computer screen to see what he thought. He agreed with almost everything, which is not too surprising given that 40% of my work is based on a catalogue that he wrote himself. I incorporated his last-minute corrections and thus felt more than ever that I would be able to contribute something trustworthy. However, in the latest edition of the CIELT magazine, that I had received a couple of days before leaving, E. Poulle had written an article that contained some of the points in my presentation. On the one hand this would reduce the novelty but on the other it strengthened the conclusions – there were various linen cloths and images in Constantinople that by some authors have been thought to be the Shroud of Turin. Fragments of at least two of these cloths were sent to Louis IX and are definitely not from the Shroud of Turin. The shroud that was kept at the church of Blachernae was most probably the one taken to Athens and is still the best candidate for being the Shroud of Turin.

During the symposium I was feeling a little confused by the wide range of quality of the different presentations. Some indeed contributed something new, while others hardly seemed trustworthy and some even had little to do with the Shroud. The demand to use rigorous scientific methods was heard often, but curiously enough it seemed to come from those who considered themselves the only rigorous ones as they showed little respect for others and contradicted their results. Just about everything was questioned. At times I didn't know if we were going forwards or backwards. For Dr Zugibe, the nails were in Christ's palms and even though his feet were bound and he couldn't push himself up, this caused no breathing problems. He has carried out experiments with volunteers who remained in this situation for up to an hour with no problem.

For Diana Fulbright some of the Vignon marks apparent on various icons of Christ do not proceed from the Shroud. They can be found even on statues of Buddha.

For Robert Babinet the sudarium that had been on Christ's head, mentioned in John's gospel, is not the sudarium of Oviedo but rather a "cap" that is kept in Cahors. It is a kind of sleeping cap that is fastened under the chin, which according to local tradition was used in Christ's burial.

For Flury Lemberg, who was able to observe the Shroud directly in 2000, the four L shaped holes that were produced before the fire of 1532 were made by concentrated acid. Some of these proposals were contested in other presentations.

Another popular topic in various presentations was the similar appearance of various icons, sculptures, portraits etc with the face on the Shroud. Yet it is clear that anybody with long hair, a beard, nose, eyes and mouth is going to have many points of congruence with the face of Christ. The clearest example of this was given by Roberto Falcinelli, who showed the similarities between the Shroud face and a self-portrait of Albert Durer.

There were, however, presentations with new information. The best in this respect were those read by Baima Bollone and Nello Balossino, who showed the images of the reverse side of the Shroud. The only marks visible on this side are bloodstains, although not all the ones visible on the front. This is something to look into, according to Baima Bollone. In between presentations I asked Balossino about the supposed inscriptions around the face. Some of the theories about these inscriptions imply that they are also visible on the reverse side of the cloth, although with the new information this seems not to be the case.

Another interesting talk was the one presented by Aldo Guerreschi and Michele Salcito. At first sight it seems like a convincing analysis of the way the Shroud was folded when it suffered damage from the fire in 1532. Their study corrected the traditional thinking on this, although if water was used to put the fire out, it would not be the same water as left the halo marks on the cloth. These would proceed from a previous event, as the way the Shroud was folded in each case is different. Along with others, they agreed that the four L shaped groups of holes must have been made when the Shroud was being used as an altar cloth.

Gian-Maria Zaccone has investigated the known history of Geoffroy de Charny, with a reference to the Aragonese Chronicle *Libro de los fechos et conquistas del principado de la Morea* compiled by Juan Fernández de Heredia in 1393. Giovanna de Liso explained her experiences of image formation in the presence of earthquakes. She informed us about how environmental, electromagnetic and radioactive changes related to earthquakes can reinforce the formation of images on damp cloth with both inert and biological objects.

Marcel Alonso presented a study of the dating of certain cloth samples from a Belgian cathedral, with a very strict protocol. The existence of contaminating elements resistant to laboratory cleaning methods was confirmed. However, it was most probably due to starch and not to the kind of fungus proposed by Garza Valdés.

John Jackson spoke about the reconstruction of the device that makes the identification of the *pietatis imago* (Man of Sorrows) with the Shroud most probable. The theory is based on the creases that are still present on the Shroud. Jackson is not the only one who relates the Shroud to the Man of Sorrows. He also presented the preliminary results (obtained just four days before) of a new experiment related to radiocarbon's appearing "younger" after being exposed to heat. This gave rise to the first ovation of the symposium. The last one was for CES member Gonzalo Deschamps when he told the public exactly what they wanted to hear – "The Shroud shows us the resurrection of Christ".

Several presentations included invitations for everyone's collaboration. Taking note of this that same night I went to have dinner with Roberto Falcinelli and Alberto Di Giglio, and over the weekend I went to visit Lirey and Ray-sur-Saône in the company of an Italian and an Englishman.

The first of these two villages is well-known. The present-day church is built on the same site as the old church where the Shroud was first publicly shown in France. There are various photographs of the Shroud face in both positive and negative, and one of the whole Shroud.

The second village boasts the castle where Otho de la Roche's son lived (the son had the same name as the father). The French crusader, ruler of Athens, is one of the firmest candidates for having taken the Shroud during the looting of Constantinople. His grand-daughter, Isabel, who also lived in the castle, apparently married Henri de Vergy, great-grandfather of Jeanne de Vergy, the first unquestionable owner of the Shroud. The castle has two medieval towers still standing from the original building. It is owned by Countess Diane de Salverte, through whose veins runs the blood of Otho de la Roche, given that she is a direct descendent of the crusader. There is a fragment of the True Cross in the castle museum, which according to tradition Otho brought from Constantinople. The most interesting object is the chest which according to family tradition was used to transport the Shroud from Athens to France. We took numerous photographs and measurements. The castle archives might contain clues about all this and are being analysed.