

RECENTLY PUBLISHED...

Malcolm Barber: *The Templars and the Turin Shroud*; in THE CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW, April 1982.

Of the numerous Shroud books published just in time to coincide with the great Exposition of 1978, one which immediately found wide public success was Ian Wilson's *Shroud of Turin*, Doubleday, 1978; published also by Gollancz, London, 1978, with the title *The Turin Shroud*. In this book, Mr. Wilson proposed that after the fall of Constantinople (1204), the Shroud was in the possession of the Knights Templar until the Order was suppressed; and that at some indeterminate period between his arrest (1307) and his execution at the stake (1314), Geoffroy de Charnay, Preceptor of Normandy, passed the relic on to Geoffroy de Charny, first known European owner of the Shroud.

In a masterly condensation of pertinent facts and incisive arguments, Mr. Barber challenges the Wilson theme which associates the relic with the Templars.

Malcolm Barber is Lecturer in History at the University of Reading, England and an authority on Templar history. His book, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge University Press), is a solid and soberly exhaustive examination of trial documents and related material.¹ As this book also appeared in 1978, it is safe to assume that Mr. Wilson did not have an opportunity to consult it before he published his own. However, it is to Wilson's revised edition (Harmondsworth, 1979), that Barber refers.

The author explains that this paper is not concerned with discussions about the authenticity of the Shroud, but aims only to examine the validity of four points of the Wilson hypothesis. In doing so, he reveals a sound knowledge of Shroud history; his spelling of "Charney" seems to indicate that he had studied the Latin documents, in which the name is often — but not always — Charneyo. However, we see that in the medieval French archives, Geoffroy himself consistently signs his name 'Charny' and while these medieval documents write 'Geoffroy' in many variations, Charny is, almost without exception, 'Charny'.

Summarizing the four points examined:

1. Wilson postulates that the Templars concealed the Shroud for nearly a century. Barber observes that such a deep secret would have been extremely difficult to maintain. Moreover, as he demonstrates from examples, concealment of the Shroud would have been inconsistent with the Templar conduct in regard to other relics in their possession.
2. Wilson agrees that the arrests were a complete surprise, yet he believes that the victims put up a "fierce resistance" — long enough to smuggle the Shroud away. Quoting contemporary chronicles and trial depositions, Barber shows that when the soldiers of Philip IV suddenly

pounced upon the unsuspecting Templars, simultaneously all over France in the pre-dawn hours of 13 October 1307, no resistance was given. As many Templar estates were farms, not military establishments, inventories of the Templar property show that the men were not heavily armed.

3. In support of his identification of the Shroud with a "head" or idol portrayed in the Byzantine manner and supposedly worshipped by the Templars, Wilson cites the deposition of five witnesses. In fact, 28 Templars, after horrible torture, admitted having seen an idol. Their descriptions differ, but all have one thing in common: none suggests a cloth or two-dimensional object. The five selected by Wilson also contradict his statement that "viewing of the head was the privilege of only a special inner circle", for those five whose testimony he relies upon were four French serving-brothers and a Franciscan of Yorkshire (in the English trials) who was not even a Templar and did not mention an idol. Barber asks: If the cult was indeed secret, why does Wilson claim that copies were kept even in places as peripheral as Templecombe? And if there were copies, why were none found when the inventories were taken?

A key factor in Wilson's hypothesis is his suggestion that Geoffroy de Charnay, Preceptor of Normandy, was related to Geoffroy I de Charny, first owner of the Shroud; a tentative assumption based on homonymy. Wilson backs this up by a circumlocution meant to convey the impression that Anjou, from whence he believes the Preceptor originated, is not too far from Lirey, where the Shroud is first documented as belonging to the Charny family. Barber finds this an inconclusive argument in favor of kinship, "a fragile connection"².

And this leads to the fourth point under scrutiny, which concerns Wilson's postulation that the Charny family was reluctant to reveal information on how Geoffroy I had obtained the Shroud. Wilson's interpretation of the Charny family's "reticence" is, as Barber comments, based on speculation. He points out that a better reason for hiding the origin of the Shroud — if indeed it had come into the family through the Templars — would have been that the Pope, to whom alone the Templars were answerable, would have claimed it. Instead, Clement VII, antipope, peremptorily silenced the angry bishop Pierre d'Arcis and recognised the right of Geoffroy's heirs to retain the relic.

The whereabouts of the Shroud between 1247 (and not 1204; please read the article on page 24) and circa 1355 are still undiscovered. Mr. Wilson offered his hypothesis with courage and sincerity, but the argil link he fashioned crumbles under the weight of Malcolm Barber's disputation.

D.C.

NOTE:

1. See also his articles- "The Origins of the Order of the Temple" in *STUDIA MONASTICA*, Vol. 12, Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, 1970: and "James of Molay, the last Grand Master of the Order of the Temple" in *STUDIA MONASTICA*, Vol. 14, Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, 1972.
2. The idea that Geoffroy the Templar would convey or otherwise transfer the precious and "incriminating" relic to Geoffroy I is inconceivable, indeed preposterous, in view of the fact that Geoffroy I was born between 1300 and 1307, therefore still in infancy when the Templars were arrested. Nor was he sire of Lirey until many years after the Templar tragedy. There was not even a castle on the land when Lirey came to Geoffroy I as part of the dowry of his second wife, Jeanne de Vergy. The year of their marriage is not known, but a few dates might circumscribe the approximate period:

1343: Lirey is first mentioned in Charny documents when Geoffroy petitions the king to amortize the construction of a chapel for the salvation of the souls of himself, his wife and his predecessors.

1354: Geoffroy petitions the Pope for approvation of the church built for the spiritual benefit of himself and his successors, lords of Lirey.

1356: the year of Geoffroy's death, his only child, Geoffroy II, was still very young (en bas aage).

Editor's note.

This year's Jan.-April issue of *Scienza e fede* (Science and Faith) is a special number devoted to the Shroud. The director, Salvino Leone, has written a Presentation and the first article, entitled "Hemopericardium as the Physical Cause of Jesus' Death".

Rev. Salvatore Lentini, S.J., concludes the issue in "The Man of Sorrows".

The two intervening articles are by Dr. Sebastiano Rodante of Syracuse: "The Shroud and Science" and "Pictorial Representation of the Sindonic Face".

In the May-Aug. 1981 issue of *Scienza e fede*, Dr. Rodante contributed an article entitled "Introduction to the Study of the Shroud". Readers will recall his magisterial study, "The Coronation of Thorns in the Light of the Shroud", which appeared in the first issue of *SHROUD SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL*.

D. C.

CARLO PAPINI: *Sindone, un mistero che si svela* (The Shroud; A Mystery Revealed) Claudiana, Turin, 1982. This book, published in Italian, carries the subtitle: 'The American "verdict" does not confirm authenticity'.

We thank the author and editor who have sent this recent book to *SPECTRUM* for reviewal.

Contrary to the conclusions of STURP (Shroud of Turin Research Project) researchers, the Author holds that the imprints seen upon the Shroud were artificially produced. He describes the operations of the clever artist thus:

1. From the corpse of a man of about 30 years—properly positioned —one makes two plaster molds, one of the front of the body and one of the back.
2. Two bronze reliefs are then cast, filing and retouching wherever necessary.
3. The bronze is submitted to a high temperature which is kept constant at about 250°-350° by means of a brazier, burning wood or coal, and placed beneath the bronze reliefs.
4. For a certain period of time, a linen cloth is suspended a short distance above the relief. The linen is suspended from a frame and is slightly undulated to follow the curvature of the bronze relief. One allows the fibers to heat slowly without direct contact; first the top of the relief, then the bottom—or viceversa.
5. Then one proceeds to a manual retouching, to add all the marks of the Passion of Christ according to the indications in the Gospels (scourging, nail holes, beatings, crown of thorns, etc.), with real blood or with a coloring agent still unknown but which could be the origin of the traces of ferrous oxide ...
6. Finally the various bloodstains are added (flows on the arms, the wound in the side, etc.) probably using human or animal blood (pp. 20-22).

After a careful reading of all these details which the Author imagines had been accomplished by this unknown craftsman, we ask ourselves:

— How does it happen that we have not found the bronze reliefs which were used in this complex operation? They would be the most certain proof of the proposed hypothesis.

— How come the Author, who has so minutely described all the phases of the operation, did not proceed from theory to practice, to give us a total imprint, front and back, of a cast purposely prepared? Only in these conditions could the hypothesis gain credibility and consistency.

For obvious reasons of space, we cannot comment upon the historical aspects which the Author submits in demonstration that his hypothesis is in full accord with known facts.

In the present state of research, we would prefer to accept the conclusions of the STURP scientists, who clearly affirm that the imprints seen upon the Shroud cannot have been produced artificially nor manually, but are the result of a physicochemical process, even though, so far at least, science has not yet explained all the details of this process.

Lewis Pitt