

## When the Shroud was transferred to Turin

Turin must be grateful to San Carlo Borromeo: thanks to his vote against the plague of 1576, the Shroud is transferred to the capital of the Savoys. In this storm of the coronavirus it is worth remembering it on the eve of the extraordinary veneration of the Shroud on April 11, 2020 (Holy Saturday) in the Cathedral of Turin.

**Emanuele Filiberto (1528-1580), "iron head"**, understands that Italy is the field open to the fortunes of the dynasty and shifts the center of gravity over Piedmont which is involved in many wars between France and Spain. The duke, who returned to the land in 1559 with the peace of Cateau-Cambresis, began a radical reorganization of the state. Turin, only 30,000 inhabitants, is enlarged and defended with the Citadel and in 1563 it was proclaimed the capital. On 25 January 1563 seven citizens founded the "Company of the Catholic faith under the protection of San Paolo" to help the population reduced to poverty by foreign domination, and to stem the expansion of the Protestant reform. Since 1579 the pawnshop lends money to very low interests to subtract the needy from the usury loop. They are the foundations of the bank today IntesaSanPaolo. In May 1515 Turin had been promoted to a metropolitan archdiocese, escaping the jurisdiction of Milan, thanks to the marriage between Filiberta di Savoia and Giuliano de Medici, brother of Pope Leo X.

**The right opportunity to transfer the Shroud** occurs when the holy archbishop of Milan Carlo Borromeo wants to go to Chambéry to venerate it and dissolve the vow made during the plague of 1576, called "di San Carlo", which had raged in Lombardy since July 1576 at Lent 1577 reaping 18,000 dead, a tenth of the population. The plague is recalled by Alessandro Manzoni in chapter XXXI of "I promessi sposi", when the description of that of 1629 begins, also called "the plague of Cardinal Federigo". Carlo's reputation for holiness is such that Emanuele Filiberto has the Shroud transported to Turin to shorten his journey and to avoid a strenuous crossing of the Alps. The reason given is technical and devotional but the real one is political: strengthen the dynasty and give prestige to the new capital. In order not to hurt the ladyfingers too much and not to provoke rebellions and unrest, the transfer, through the Piccolo San Bernardo and the Valle d'Aosta, takes place in the most secret way possible, also for the fear that it will fall into the hands of the Huguenots and Calvinists. After almost half a millennium Turin makes a gesture of reparation towards Chambéry: on March 31, 2014 the archbishops Cesare Nosiglia and Philippe Ballot sanctioned, in the name of the Shroud, a sort of twinning.

**On 9 September 1578 the Canvas was accepted in Turin** by Archbishop Gerolamo della Rovere and Duke Emanuele Filiberto and was transferred to Piazza Castello in the ancient ducal chapel of San Lorenzo. On October 7 Carlo Borromeo begins the pilgrimage Milan-Turin on foot, in the rain and amid austere penances. On the 10th evening at the Porte Palatine he is welcomed by Emanuele Filiberto, by the bishops and the great men of the state. The Shroud is transferred to the Cathedral and is shown to the crowd in Piazza Castello by cardinals Borromeo, Guido Ferrero di Casalvellone and by the bishops of Aosta, Asti, Montiers, Pavia, Saluzzo, Savona, Vance, and Vercelli. The scientist priest Alfonso Paleotto collects the material for a complete description that he publishes in Bologna twenty years later, the first Italian treatise on the Shroud. Among the visitors Torquato Tasso composes and sends a sonnet to Borromeo, who in a letter underlines the usefulness of a fixed structure that avoids "folding and unfolding" the Canvas. For some years it found different arrangements: chapel of the Doge's Palace, San Lorenzo, Cathedral, which was completed in 1498 on the foundations of three pre-existing churches, the only Renaissance example in Turin, the work of the Florentine designer Amedeo de Francisco da Settignano, called Meo del Caprina (or Caprina).

**These are times of extraordinary fervor**. The Savoys hired the best architects and artists. Ascanio Vitozzi, Amedeo and Carlo di Castellamonte, Guarino Guarini, Filippo Juvarra, Benedetto Alfieri, Pelagio Pelagi transform the city into the capital of the Piedmontese Baroque which softens numerous towns and cities in the region. For the Shroud the Savoys want a worthy construction between the apse of the Cathedral and the Royal Palace. The abbot-architect Guarino Guarini, chief general of the Theatines, ventured there with a bold and graceful project: his chapel is ingenious and fascinating, the two-sided marble altar is by the military architect Antonio Bertola.

**«Thousands and thousands of messages reach me from the people** - elderly, adults and young people, healthy and sick - to ask me that, in the moment of serious difficulty we are going through, we can pray in Holy Week in front of the Shroud to implore from the dead and risen Christ the grace to overcome evil, trusting in the goodness and mercy of God ». This is how Archbishop Cesare Nosiglia explains the virtual exhibition: «I gladly accepted this request that we will fulfill Holy Saturday (April 11). At 5pm he will preside over the veneration prayer before the Shroud: «Thanks to television and social networks, the image of the towel will be available to everyone, all over the world, which reminds us of the passion and death of the Lord, and also opens our hearts to resurrection. The love is stronger: this is the Easter announcement that the Shroud brings us. The love of Jesus that we celebrate in Holy Week is stronger than any suffering, any disease, any contagion, any trial and discouragement. Nothing and nobody can ever separate us from this love ».