

Templars and the Shroud, The Mystery Unfolds (10 parts)

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined

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A series exploring the Shroud of Turin and a possible connection with the Ancient Templars

by Sir Knight John L. Palmer

Back in October of 2008, soon after I had the good sense to accept the offer to edit the magazine and this wonderfully interesting job, I stumbled across a mystery. That mystery had to do with the trials of the ancient Templars and the "recent discovery" of some documents that may have had an impact on Templar history as I had perceived it. Loving a good mystery, I decided to investigate and to share my findings with you folks on the off chance that you also loved a good mystery. The

result was a series of eleven articles during the next year, and your response was overwhelmingly positive.

Toward the end of my investigation and the publishing of the series, I discovered another mystery. The same researcher who had "discovered" the lost Vatican documents and published the book about them had written another book on a totally different subject (or was it?). At any rate, Dr. Frale had published a new book about the relationship between the Shroud of Turin and the ancient Templars in which she apparently took the position that the Templars had helped to preserve the Shroud on its journey down through the centuries. I say apparently, because I was unable to find a copy of the book printed in English, and my repertoire of languages is limited to the southern-American variety of English and just enough Latin to read a few mottos. I remembered reading a couple of books about the Shroud of Turin about twenty years ago and finding the subject very interesting, but I couldn't remember much else, so I decided once again to investigate and see if I could find anything that might be of interest to you.

So I started a web search and bought a stack of books about three feet high. The web search revealed that the Shroud is not often on display and that it had been scheduled for exhibition next in the year 2025, but that some special circumstance had occurred and that they were going to put it on display for a short time in the spring of 2010. I took this as an omen and decided to go to Italy and have a look for myself.

Over the next few months, I will share with you what I found out about the Shroud, the theory of its connection with the ancient Templars, how all this might relate to the trials we investigated before, and even how the connection might give us a clue about a possible connection between the ancient Templars and the many legends about the quest for the Holy Grail!

Like before, since this is a mystery story and not a term paper, I am not going to footnote every other sentence, but I will include references to the sources of my information, and like before, I will give you all the conflicting theories and let you decide for yourselves what you wish to believe. Be patient, because before we get into the connection between the Shroud and the Templars, I will need to fill you in on the basic history of the Shroud and the scientific investigations that have been performed on it.

The basics are this. The "Shroud of Turin" is a piece of cloth which exhibits the faint impression of a nude man, front and back, from head to foot. Many think that it is the burial cloth in which Jesus Christ of Nazareth was wrapped after He was crucified in Jerusalem. Some think that it is the specific piece of cloth referenced in the Holy Scriptures as having been found in the empty tomb of Christ. Since there is not agreement about how the image was formed, many believe that it was formed in some miraculous way when the Savior was resurrected. It is currently stored in a church in an Italian city named "Turin" or "Torino" and is owned by the Vatican.

About thirty years ago, a team of scientists was allowed to do an intense investigation on the cloth, and several years after that investigation, it was widely published that carbon 14 dating had indicated that the Shroud was a fake, forged in the 1300s. The scientists involved are not in agreement on this finding, and a good deal has been written since about why this finding might have been in error.

Interestingly, whether the Shroud is or is not the genuine burial cloth of Christ may have no bearing on whether it is connected to the ancient Templars. We will take a look at the various theories about what the shroud really is, how old it is, and how the image was formed. We will explore the various theories about where it has been from the time it was found in the tomb until it found its way to Turin. We will look at how its very existence may have impacted history down through the years. And we will look at the theories about how the Templars may have preserved it or even how it may have contributed to their demise.

First, we will go into detail about the Shroud's physical characteristics. You will probably think at first that I am giving you way too much detail, but humor me. This piece of cloth has been the subject of the most intense scientific debate and scrutiny of any object I have heard of with the possible exception of moon rocks. I want you to pretend that you are a detective or forensic investigator as we explore the facts, the legends, and the mysteries of this cloth.

The cloth is 14' 3" long and 3' 7" wide. Running lengthwise down the left edge is a border about 3-1/2" wide. This border is either part of the original cloth which was at some point "tucked" to make the cloth narrower or is woven into the fabric rather than sewn to it. If it was woven onto the original, it is called a "selvage" and presumably was placed there to prevent unraveling. It may also have been added in order to center the image on the shroud for viewing.

The cloth is woven from linen which is, of course, made from the flax plant. The type of weave is a little unusual in that it is a three to one "herringbone" twill weave. The flax is of the type that can be found all around the Mediterranean Sea, and the cloth weighs about 5-1/2 pounds. The yarn used to make the cloth is fairly heavy, about .013" thick. The yarn was manufactured with a "Z" twist as opposed to an "S" twist.

The cloth itself is a little over 1/100th of an inch thick. Traces of cotton can be found in the cloth in amounts and distributions that would indicate that the same loom had been previously used to weave cotton cloth. The cotton is believed to be of an Egyptian variety. No similar traces of wool can be found. There are also some twelve patches that have been sewn over holes in the cloth which are not original material.

Although the shroud was, until recently, kept rolled up in a red silk cloth around a velvet covered wooden staff in a silver clad box, there are creases indicating that it was once stored folded in eight sections resulting in a top layer showing only the image of a face approximately 3' 7" wide and 1' 9" tall. The cloth has been

damaged in several ways. The most noticeable damage is sixteen burn holes covered by the patches mentioned above. These are the result of a single burn to the cloth which was folded at the time. This damage we know was caused by a fire in 1532 which melted part of the silver box in which the cloth was stored. The molten silver burned through one corner of the folded cloth resulting in the sixteen triangular holes running in two parallel rows the length of the shroud. The patches were sewn over these holes by the Nuns of Poor Clare, Chambery. There are scorch marks around these patches, but the burn missed the image on the cloth. There are sixteen other smaller burn holes commonly referred to as the "poker" holes because they seem to have been made by thrusting some red hot object like a poker through the cloth four times when folded. No record has been found of how these holes were made, but some speculate that they might have been the result of some medieval magical test of authenticity.

There are also stains on the cloth of three distinct types. First, there are what are often referred to as the "blood stains." Surrounding these are stains which appear to have been made by a clear liquid such as blood serum. Finally, there are stains left on the cloth by water used to extinguish the burning cloth in 1532. At least we know where the last ones came from and how they were made.

The cloth is also contaminated with pollen, wax, threads, paint pigments, and just plain old dust, and had, until recently, its own colony of microbes living in it. There was a cover cloth made of red taffeta sewn to one edge of the linen. This was done by Princess Clotilde of Savoy in 1868. In addition, there was a backing cloth of sixteenth century Holland cloth. Completely surrounding the shroud was a border or frame of blue fabric to protect the edges. The cloth itself is a light brown, yellow, or sepia color typical of old linen.

At the lower left corner of the linen cloth is a place where some of the material has been removed. One patch of cloth was removed during a 1973 scientific study and one in 1988 for carbon 14 dating. At least one other piece had been removed prior to 1973, but it is not known for sure why this was done.

That completes a fairly comprehensive description of the object itself. Next month, I will take you across the Atlantic to Torino, Italy where we will share the experience of a pilgrimage visiting this amazing relic.

End of Part One

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Shroud of Turin Website www.shroud.com

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A Visit to the Shroud

Up Close and Personal - Part II

It is May 12, 2010, Torino, Italy. We were finally here after a challenging trip from Nolensville to Nashville to Atlanta to Milano, Italy! Our flight from Nashville to Atlanta had been delayed an hour. It turned out that this was not a connection problem for us, since the flight from Atlanta to Milano was also delayed - by six and one half hours. We almost didn't make it. Plane troubles, FAA regulations requiring a new flight crew, and volcanic ash from Iceland almost stranded us in Atlanta, but we had an appointment to keep in Turin. We arrived in Milano only in time to eat and turn in for the night. The next day we toured Milano to see the Last Supper by Leonardo DaVinci and to recover from jet lag.

This morning, we boarded the 9:00 AM train for the two hour ride to Torino (Turin). It had been raining on and off for two days since we arrived in Italy. I could see the snow covered Swiss Alps to the north.

Arriving in Turin, we changed from train to an electric street car jammed with people. It apparently operated on the "honor" system, and we Americans seemed to be the only ones paying for tickets. After temporarily losing some of our party in the mad dash to exit the street car, we finally found each other and arrived at Saint John's Cathedral. From the outside, it was not so impressive; certainly no match for Notre Dame in Paris or the Cathedral of Saint Mary we had seen the previous day in Milano. A rather plain stone church next to a freestanding bell tower, obviously built on the ruins of previous structures, pagan and then Christian.

We were apprehensive about what to do. We had reservations to see the shroud at 1:00 PM, but we didn't know what the process was. We had heard about the eight hour waits and long lines which plagued visitors when the shroud was last on display in the year 2000, but there were no lines in front of the church. People seemed to be wandering in and out of the church at will. This must be the right place. There were police and emergency personnel everywhere including what appeared to be Swiss military, no doubt guarding one of the Pope's most prized possessions.

I finally found a policeman who looked at my "reservation" and directed me to the next corner and around the block behind the church. I saw the line or "queue" as they called it when I rounded the second corner. It was about five people abreast and at least a half mile long before it entered the rear of the complex. It wound around through a park and was periodically punctuated by white tents containing people who looked like volunteers wearing lavender smocks with a Rotary International logo on them who checked our reservations every two hundred yards or so and gave us instructions such as "please remove your backpacks."

Surprisingly, security was not strict. There were no metal detectors and no one looked in my backpack or my camera bag. A dentist from France and his wife stood behind us in line. They were from a nearby town in France which, when translated into English, means "Knight's Mountain" and had driven about 120 kilometers to Turin that morning to see the Shroud.

We were lucky that it didn't start raining again until we were under cover. The line was moving right along. Being the engineer geek I am, I calculated that they were pushing about 5,000 people per hour through the line. I became concerned that after standing in line for two hours, we would only get a fleeting glimpse of the shroud at the end. Periodically, some senior citizen dressed in lavender or in a nun's habit would come up behind us pushing a person in a wheel chair. The crowd always parted and let them through toward the front of the line. Although I wouldn't call the mood jovial, people were really well behaved; not entirely reverent, but patient and congenial.

A series of covered ramps had been constructed for the exhibition that seemed to be attached to the exterior walls of the centuries old buildings that comprised the complex. They wound back and forth in a complex serpentine pattern.

Suddenly the queue stopped. An older lady was down on the floor ahead. EMTs swarmed to her rescue with oxygen and stretcher, some wearing pins emblazoned with the cross of the Hospitallers. No one filed past her - we waited. When she revived, to my surprise, she insisted on continuing on ahead to see the shroud, so they found her a wheel chair, and she joined the ever increasing parade of wheel chairs whisking past the queue to the front. Finally, after we viewed, in a group of about 200, a short film in Italian apparently pointing out the features and markings on the shroud, we entered the final queue. I was thinking that I had never seen so many people in wheel chairs when it dawned on me that all these people had come here with the hope that they would be healed by the shroud! For centuries, people have believed that the shroud could miraculously heal them. It made me a little sad, this parade of illness and affliction. I stepped aside and prayed that each would find the healing they sought.

Finally, we arrived at the Cathedral side entrance near the front door. Inside, it was dark and elaborate. Rose stained glass windows, gothic arches, huge oil paintings in the niches, one prominently of St. John the Baptist baptizing Christ, all contrasting with the large big screen plasma TVs displaying live images of the shroud from

behind the altar in the other end of the church. We finally reached the front of the queue. Only one hour and fifty-five minutes had elapsed. They were letting us enter in groups of fifty or so. We were in three tiers so everyone could see. Velvet rails, "no photos, no flash, silence, please." Everyone was quiet although occasionally a flash would go off - no one objected. A nun was to the right of the shroud signing for the deaf. A soft female voice over a speaker system was describing the image and other features of the cloth less than twenty feet away. It was in a massive dark oak frame behind six inches of bullet proof glass, in an atmosphere of inert gas, but, unlike our Declaration of independence in the National Archives, it was crystal clear in every detail. The image was faint, but the shroud was well lit. Perhaps too much light some would say. I felt someone behind me struggling to see. A very short Italian lady who had stood in line for two hours and couldn't see. I stepped aside and helped her to the front. We had five minutes, longer than I had expected. People all around me were weeping as they respectfully filed out on the opposite side of the cathedral. Then it was over. My once in a lifetime opportunity to stand within twenty feet of an object that may actually have been witness to the resurrection of my Savior. I would never know for sure in my lifetime, but I suppose that it is like all religion - faith based.

We then focused on getting to our next destination, a lecture about the Shroud of Turin by Barrie Schwartz, the photographer who documented the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP). After a long walk in the rain and another tram ride, we found the hotel and were ushered into the meeting room just in time for the start of the lecture.

Barrie is Jewish and had told me that when he was called to serve on the STURP team in 1978 that he was sure that the Shroud was not authentic. After thirty-two years of research, he is now convinced that the Shroud is, indeed, the burial cloth of Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified around 1,987 years ago. Barrie has a fantastic web site on the subject (www.shroud.com), and we are most grateful that he has allowed us to use some of his photographs. See Barrie's web site for more of his photos.

Last month we discussed some of the physical characteristics of the Shroud. Next month, we will discuss the image on the shroud.

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part III

In the October issue, I told you that the Shroud of Turin is a piece of cloth. Last month, I related our experience of actually getting to visit the shroud. This month we will go into detail about its physical characteristics. You will probably think at first that I am giving you way too much detail, but humor me. This piece of cloth has been the subject of the most intense scientific debate and scrutiny of any object I have heard of with the possible exception of moon rocks. I want you to pretend

that you are a detective or forensic investigator as we explore the facts, the legends, and the mysteries of this cloth.

The cloth is 14' 3" long and 3' 7" wide. Running lengthwise down the left edge is a border about 3-1/2" wide. This border is either part of the original cloth which was at some point "tucked" to make the cloth narrower or is woven into the fabric rather than sewn to it. If it was woven onto the original, it is called a "selvedge" and presumably was placed there to prevent unraveling. It may also have been added in order to center the image on the shroud for viewing.

The cloth is woven from linen which is, of course, made from the flax plant. The type of weave is a little unusual in that it is a three to one "herringbone" twill weave. The flax is of the type that can be found all around the Mediterranean Sea, and the cloth weighs about 5-1/2 pounds. The yarn used to make the cloth is fairly heavy, about .013" thick.

The yarn was manufactured with a "Z" twist as opposed to an "S" twist.

The cloth itself is a little over 1/100th of an inch thick. Traces of cotton can be found in the cloth in amounts and distributions that would indicate that the same loom had been used to weave cotton cloth. The cotton is believed to be of an Egyptian variety. No similar traces of wool can be found. There are also some twelve patches that have been sewn over holes in the cloth which are not original material.

Although the shroud was, until recently, kept rolled up in a red silk cloth around a velvet covered wooden staff in a silver clad box, there are creases indicating that it was once stored folded in eight sections resulting in a top layer approximately 3' 7" wide and 1' 9" tall showing only the image of a face. The cloth has been damaged in several ways. The most noticeable damage is sixteen burn holes covered by the patches mentioned above. These are the result of a single burn to the cloth which was folded at the time. This damage we know was caused by a fire in 1532 which melted part of the silver box in which the cloth was stored. The molten silver burned through one corner of the folded cloth resulting in the sixteen triangular holes running in two parallel rows the length of the shroud. The patches were sewn over these holes by the Nuns of Poor Clare, Chambery. There are scorch marks around these patches, but the burn missed the image on the cloth. There are sixteen other smaller burn holes commonly referred to as the "poker" holes because they seem to have been made by thrusting some red hot object like a poker through the cloth four times when folded. No record has been found of how these holes were made, but some speculate that they might have been the result of some medieval magical test of authenticity.

There are also stains on the cloth of three distinct types. First, there are what are often referred to as the "blood stains." Surrounding these are stains which appear to have been made by a clear liquid such as blood serum. Finally, there are stains left

on the cloth by water used to extinguish the burning cloth in 1532. At least we know where the last ones came from and how they were made.

The cloth is also contaminated with pollen, wax, threads, paint pigments, and just plain old dust and had, until recently, its own colony of microbes living in it. There was a cover cloth made of red taffeta sewn to one edge of the linen. This was done by Princess Clotilde of Savoy in 1868. In addition, there was a backing cloth of sixteenth century Holland cloth. Completely surrounding the shroud until recently was a border or frame of blue fabric to protect the edges. The cloth itself is a light brown, yellow, or sepia color typical of old linen.

At the lower left corner of the linen cloth is a place where some of the material has been removed. One patch of cloth was removed during a 1973 scientific study and one in 1988 for carbon 14 dating. At least one other piece had been removed prior to 1973, but it is not known for sure why this was done or by whom.

That completes a fairly comprehensive description of the object itself. Next month, we will discuss the image on the shroud.

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part IV

Last month we considered the physical makeup of the Shroud of Turin, but that is not the thing which distinguishes it because it is certainly not the oldest piece of linen in existence. The distinguishing feature of this particular cloth is the image which can be seen on its surface; an image that many believe is the death mask or perhaps the "resurrection" image of the crucified Jesus Christ.

There are actually three kinds of images on the cloth, the image of a man, the images which appear to be blood stains, and faint images of other items. Let's start with the "images" of the "blood stains."

The stains are commonly referred to as the "blood flows." The blood flows are dark brown, consistent with dried blood and were formed by a foreign substance, possibly blood, adhering to the cloth.

There are numerous "blood stains" on the head which are consistent with a "crown" of thorns having been placed on the head and repeatedly beaten down onto the skull. Unlike the depictions we generally see of the crucifixion, the crown appears to be more of a cap of thorns which covered the entire head rather than a "wreath" placed in a circle around the head. The nose on the image appears to have been scraped and perhaps broken. The eye on the right side is swollen and appears to have taken a blow. On the left of the body image or the right of the man, at the rib cage is a large blood flow between the fifth and sixth ribs with the wound appearing to be elliptical and about 1-3/4" long. Remember that the image of the body is

similar to a photographic negative of the body itself. This wound is consistent with the shape of a Roman "Lancea" or spear from the era of the crucifixion and is located between the fifth and sixth ribs of the image.

The body is covered front and back by more than 120 barbell shaped skin injuries in groups of two or three which might be the indication of having been beaten by a Roman whip or flagrum which was a stick with two or three thongs tied to it and dumbbell shaped pieces of bone or lead attached to the ends. The indication is that the beating was administered from behind with the whip at times wrapping around the body. They extend from the shoulders down onto the legs.

There is evidence of chafing marks on both shoulders which occurred after the whipping. These marks are consistent with the victim having carried a heavy wooden beam. In addition, there is a serious injury to the left knee and dirt deposited on the cloth in the area of the left knee, the left eyebrow, and the left cheek consistent with a fall. There is also dirt on the right heel. There are significant blood flows at both wrists (not the palms) and at the feet. There is no evidence of bones being broken except the cartilage of the nose.

Each wrist has a blood flow coming from a wound in the wrist rather than the palms as depicted in many images of the crucifixion. This is consistent with the fact that a nail through the palms will not support the weight of a human body without ripping out. The "flows" are consistent with a man who is constantly shifting positions. Researchers have demonstrated that a victim of a crucifixion must constantly shift his weight in order to breathe. Some of the flows seem to have changed direction briefly when the body was removed from the cross. The wounds in the wrists seem to have severed a nerve which caused the thumbs to contract into the center of the palms. The wounds on the feet seem to have been caused by a single nail driven through both feet.

Two independent DNA laboratories have confirmed that the substance forming these "blood flow" parts of the image is indeed composed of human blood, type AB and containing both the X and the Y chromosomes indicating a male.

The second type of image found on the shroud is that of objects other than the body. In 1983 a researcher made an observation that flowerlike patterns appeared around the face of the image. Two years later a study was done applying computer based imaging techniques similar to those used in identifying fingerprints and images on remote planets to photographic images of the shroud resulting in a report that the images of 23 types of flowers, three species of small bushes, and two types of thorn plants were identifiable. It was reported that all these plants grow in Israel and twenty of these in Jerusalem. Using this same technique, researchers have reported that they have identified what appear to be loose nails which might have been buried with the body. One of the Jewish customs of the time was to bury any items which were covered in the blood of the deceased with the deceased. This would explain the presence of the nails. The final images of foreign objects, if you discount the dirt on the feet and knee, are of what appear to be coins over the eyes.

Using these image analyzers, researchers claim to have identified a coin placed over each eye and have identified one of the coins as a rare Roman "Pontius Pilate" lepton coin minted from 29-32 AD. Interestingly, the coin has a misspelling which would lead one to think that the image was a fake; however, three examples of the coin with the same misspelling have been located indicating that at least one die used to make these coins contained the misspelling. The other coin has been identified as another Pontius Pilate lepton known as the Julia coin which was struck only in the year 29 AD in honor of Pilate's mother.

Next month we will begin to explore the actual image of the man on the shroud and the characteristics of that image. How are your forensic skills shaping up?

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part V

So far we have explored the physical characteristics of the shroud and the appearance of the various images on the cloth. This month, I will try to share with you some of the theories about how the image of the man might have been formed. A scientific team, known as the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) obtained permission to examine the shroud in 1978 and did so using the most modern equipment and methods available at that time regarding physical, chemical, and optical properties. A variety of imaging methods were used including the three dimensional imaging processes used by NASA. There are four broad categories of theories about how the image might have been formed. First, it could have been painted or drawn on the material. Second, it could have been formed by a rubbing process where the material is placed in contact with an object and color transferred from the object to the material. Third, it may involved some sort of chemical process associated with a dead body. Finally, that it could have been formed by some sort of radiation process including heat, light, or other forms of radiation.

Some have taken the position that the object was painted on the cloth. This would have involved the transfer of paint or some other pigment being brushed, sprayed, or rubbed onto the cloth. Microscopic examination of the fibers in the cloth and chemical analysis revealed that no foreign pigment penetrated or soaked into the fibers of the cloth. The image is strictly superficial and on one side. Although there are traces of several pigments on the cloth, they are not concentrated in the places where the image appears and are not in amounts sufficient to have formed the image. The pigments are thought to have been deposited on the cloth by the many objects which have been pressed to it over the ages with the hope that the shroud might magically impart a blessing to a painting or sacred art object. More convincingly, the fibrils of the yarn (the smallest fibers making up the thread which is wound into yarn) are colored only on the front side of the surface. The back side of each fibril is not stained or colored. If a liquid paint were used, the liquid color would have presumably soaked into the fibril and colored the entire thread front and back. The threads which go under the front threads are not colored in the places

that they were behind the front thread thus exhibiting a pattern like a shadow or a strap mark on an overly tanned lady wearing a swimsuit. Few if any scientists still cling to the paint theory. Also, an artist would have had to paint the image in the negative and at a distance of six feet in order to produce the image found on the shroud. The image is really not discernable closer than six feet away. The STURP team came to the general conclusion that the image was not formed by painting.

Some have concluded that the image was formed by placing the cloth over a statue of some sort containing pigment and rubbing the cloth in contact with the statue to transfer a dry pigment which would not soak into the fabric. They conclude that iron oxide (rust) may have been used as the pigment. Iron is found as a part of the chemical makeup of the cloth, but the method used to wash and set linen in ancient times resulted in relatively high levels of iron being absorbed by the cloth. Also, the levels of iron do not vary between the areas where the image appears and where there is no image with the exception of the bloodstain areas where the presence of increased amounts of iron would be consistent with the presence of blood. The STURP team also ruled out the rubbing theory. The use of heat to form an image or scorching it into the cloth is consistent with this theory except that there are areas on the cloth where it was indeed scorched by the molten silver during the fire and what is sometimes referred to as the "poker burn holes" and are more accurately called "L shaped burn holes", and these areas are nothing like the areas where the image appears.

One scientist has claimed to be able to produce a similar image on cloth. This required the use of a fourteen foot by four foot piece of clear plate glass which did not exist, because the technology was not sufficiently advanced when the image was formed. Another constructed a camera obscura the size of a building and photographed a hanging dummy using chemicals and materials which would have been available at that time. He did produce a somewhat similar image. However, his cloth contained an amount of silver residue left behind in the photographic process which is not present in the shroud. Also, the edges of his image were much sharper and well defined than the ones on the Shroud. In addition and perhaps most importantly, the STURP team, using the three dimensional image analyzer, determined that the image has three dimensional characteristics which are not present in photographs. This one is a little complex, so I would refer you to one of the books on the subject for a more detailed explanation; *The Shroud Of Turin: An Adventure Of Discovery* by Mary Whanger, Alan Whagner, and Alan D. Whanger. It has to do with the fact that the intensity of the image is inversely proportional to the distance from the body. This phenomenon is consistent with a chemical reaction to substances being outgassed by a decaying body. It is also consistent with a field of some sort, perhaps an electromagnetic field such as light or heat radiation, however the distances one would expect between the body and the cloth are too small to completely explain radiation producing the image.

Some believe that the image is consistent with the cloth having "fallen through" the body as it dematerialized and emitted some sort of radiation that "aged" the surface threads of the cloth. No one has been able to reproduce anything like this

phenomenon as yet. There has been one documented instance of a dying cancer patient leaving an imprint of a hand and other parts of the body on a sheet in modern times, but this image did not exhibit the same three dimensional properties of the shroud even though it was possibly formed chemically.

Again we express our appreciation to Barrie Schwartz of STERA, Inc. for allowing us to use their enormous collection of photographs in sharing this story with you. STERA is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing information to the public about the Shroud of Turin, and their web site is www.shroud.com

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part VI

This month we will get into the most controversial scientific aspect of the shroud, the carbon 14 dating performed in 1988, but first, let's take a look at the "blood stains." I will simply say that several scientists have examined samples from the shroud taken from the blood stained areas and determined that it is male human blood of type AB. Opponents contend that the stains are not the right color of real blood, but others have demonstrated that if blood is brought into contact with a cloth after it clots but within a few hours thereafter, similar stains result including the "clear" staining that surrounds the blood stains thought to be blood serum.

The real contention is over the results of the carbon 14 dating that took place in 1988. After the results were announced that the shroud material dated only from 1260-1390 A.D., a storm of criticism broke out in the scientific world. Several books have been written on this subject and a number of wild accusations and theories have been proposed as to why these findings may have been in error.

After reading as much as I could get my hands on about the controversy, I have concluded that only three of the objections to the finding might be valid. One objection is that carbon 14 dating does not work very well on fabrics and especially on linen due to the distribution of carbon 14 in the various parts of the plant. Another is that the intense heat and scorching of the fabric during the fire of 1532 may have introduced more carbon into the cloth making it appear younger than it really is. The one that makes more sense to me is much simpler. The area of the shroud where the sample was taken was a poor choice indeed. It was near the spot where cloth had been removed before and the area repaired. This repair was not done by simply sewing a patch onto the cloth; it was done by "reweaving" a patch of similar material into the edge of the damaged area. This introduces new linen fibers into the area adjacent to the patch, and indeed, subsequent investigation revealed that the sample taken was a mixture of the original cloth and "new" cloth which has an "S" twist rather than the "Z" twist of the main cloth, indicating manufacture at a different time by a different weaver. A cloth thus contaminated would yield a much later date than the original cloth, so it seems to me that the cloth that was removed and destroyed in 1988 was a waste. The Vatican is

understandably reluctant to let these scientists clip away more of the cloth to run another test.

The carbon 14 dating seems to me to be inconclusive at this time, but many think that it proved the shroud to be a fake. Other explanations have been offered as to why the carbon 14 date might be in error. Some have suggested that a colony of microbes lived in and on the cloth and deposited a layer of "bio-plastic" on the fibers which is an organic substance quite possibly much younger than the actual fibers they cover and that the cleaning process used by the labs which did the carbon 14 dating would not have removed this coating. However, subsequent research has not substantiated this observation. A few others think that the miraculous resurrection of Christ emitted sub-atomic particles which enriched the carbon 14 content of the shroud at the very onset. How are you going to prove or disprove that?

Whether the shroud is a fake or the real McCoy, interestingly, has no bearing on the significance of the Templar connection.

This concludes the analysis of the scientific aspects of the shroud. I have not covered all the angles and have certainly not gotten into the detailed explanations of the science, but I would refer you to the many books on the subject or to www.shroud.com if you are interested in the science of it.

Next month we will look at what I consider to be the most compelling evidence against the carbon 14 date, and in May we will begin looking at the history, legend, and beliefs associated with this icon and see if we can find any circumstantial evidence for its authenticity. How are your sleuth skills holding up?

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part VII

What did Jesus look like? Any second grader who has regularly attended Sunday School can answer that question with the greatest confidence. After all, they have seen many pictures of him in Sunday School books, on posters, and even in their Bibles. That same second grader would pick the Shroud out of a lineup as Jesus in a New York minute.

Now we adults know that there were no cameras in Jesus' time and that there are no portraits that anyone claims to have painted of Him in person, but how come so many of the images we see today and down through the ages look the same? To be sure, you can find many examples of Christian art produced down through the ages that bear no resemblance whatever to that modern, familiar face with the sad eyes, the long flowing hair, and the full beard, but an amazing number of them actually do. Regardless of what Jesus actually looked like, it seems that these images must

have been copied from a single source, and the Shroud is one of them. The real question is, "Is the Shroud the original source of this familiar face?"

This is the line of thinking that might lead us to discredit the carbon 14 dating conclusion of the age of the Shroud, because if it is the source, some of the other images are much older than the scientist's oldest date of 1260 A.D. So if you have two images of the same face, then how do you determine which is the copy and which is the copied, particularly if you know the age of only one of them? We might be able to answer that question.

There are many works of art which are obviously copies of the image on the shroud. Some are depictions of the Shroud being displayed by Church officials or its owners and are documented as less than 600 years old. How do we know that these are images of the Shroud? Well, some show a double full body image front and back oriented head to head like the Shroud. These are obvious, but some are only facial images. If you observe the Shroud with the naked eye from a distance as many of the ancient artists would have, it is easy to mistake some of the unrelated markings and stains on the cloth as facial features. For instance, in the center of the forehead on the frontal image is a blood flow that some have said is in the shape of a "3." In much of the art that has been copied from the Shroud, you will find two stray locks of hair hanging down where this blood flow is on the original. It was obviously thought by the artist to have been a feature of the image of the man. Another dead giveaway is the presence on the copy of the "L" shaped so called "poker" holes on the painted copies. You can understand why an artist, in an attempt to be accurate, would paint these "L" shaped markings on his copy, but it is difficult to believe that someone copying a painting onto a "fake Shroud" would think to burn holes in the cloth rather than just place similar marks on it.

The problem is that there are many of these little features including the fork in the beard, the swelling of one eye, and the creases in the cloth that appear on objects known to be older than the carbon dating process indication of the age of the Shroud. In my mind, this is the most compelling evidence that the shroud is older than 600 years. Let me give you a few examples.

An example of a painting done after the Shroud is known to have been on display is one by Della Rovere in the 17th century named "iL VERISSIMO RITRATTO DEL SANTISSIMO SVDARIO DEL NOSTRO SALVATORE GIESV CHRISTO" showing the full length image and actually depicting how the Shroud would have been wrapped around the body to produce such an image. The artist added a "modesty" cloth covering the groin area, but the burn holes from the chapel fire in 1532 are clearly depicted. However, if you observe a work of art in the form of a mosaic known to date to the 11th century called the "Christ Pantocrator" on the dome of the Church of Daphni, you will find the same stray "locks of hair," the forked beard, and the elongated fingers shown on the shroud. The crossed hands with no thumbs feature of the shroud is shown on a depiction of Jesus in death from a Byzantine Piece of ivory now owned by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London dated at about 1100 A.D. A document dated around 1192 A.D. called the

Hungarian Pray Manuscript has an illustration of the entombment of Christ featuring the bloodstained forehead, the "no thumbs" position of the hands and even the L shaped "poker" holes in the cloth. One of the most striking examples of similarities is on a gold coin, a "solidus," coined during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian about 692 A.D., but this one does not show burn holes or anything else which would prove that the Shroud is older. Perhaps the oldest image thought by some to bear resemblance to the Shroud image is one found in the Domitilla Catacomb and dated around 60 A.D. Another convincing image is located in the Monastery of St. Catherine located on Mount Sinai. It is said to date from 550 A.D.

These do not prove by any means that the shroud was the burial cloth of Christ. It may even be an exact copy of a much older cloth right down to the creases and burn holes. To me, however; these "copies" which are dated prior to the date of 1260 A.D. given by the scientists, seem to be the most convincing argument against the accuracy of the carbon dating.

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part VIII

This month we will begin looking at the history and legends surrounding the history of the Shroud. Let's start with the present and work our way back. Last spring, the shroud was displayed in Turin for the first time since the year 2000. It was rescued from a fire in 1997 and opened up to verify that no damage had been done to the shroud by the fire. Samples from the Shroud were taken in 1988 in order to conduct the carbon 14 testing. The Shroud was examined extensively in 1978 by the STRUP team. The last time before the 1997 fire that the shroud was removed from Turin was during World War II when it was removed to southern Italy in order to protect it from the ravages of war. It is now the property of the Vatican to whom it was willed by King Umberto II on his death in 1983. King Umberto was a member of the Savoy dynasty, the monarchs of Italy, until they were deposed in 1946. The Savoy had the shroud moved to Turin (Torino) from Lirey, France in 1578. Before that, the shroud had been moved many times by the Savoy family either to protect it from wars and conflicts or to simply have it with them as they moved about Europe. It was damaged in a fire in 1532.

The Shroud was originally obtained by the Savoy family from a Margaret de Charny in 1453 who had inherited it from her father Geoffrey II de Charny. Geoffrey had inherited it from his father, Geoffrey I de Charny of Lirey, France, who had received it as a dowry from his wife, Jeanne de Vergy of Besancon, France.

It is thought to have been in Besancon between 1208 and 1329. There is no widespread agreement on its existence or whereabouts earlier than this, so we now revert to the legends associated with the Shroud.

In the Bible, Mark 15:46 states "And Joseph bought a linen sheet, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen sheet, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb." Luke 23:53 reads, "...this man (Joseph of Arimathea) went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain." Luke 24:12 says, "But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at that which had happened." John 19:40 states, "And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews." Finally in John 24:6-7, "Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself." From here the legend begins.

After Alexander the Great had conquered most of the known world, his kingdom was divided among his generals, and one of them, Seleucid, became the ruler over much of what is now called the Middle-East. As Seleucid's monarchy began to vanish, a kingdom, the Kingdom of Osroene, emerged and spanned the period from 132 B.C until 214 A.D., the time of Christ. The capital city of this kingdom was Edessa. These people spoke Aramaic, the same as the Jews in Israel at that time. The city of Edessa was located in Southeastern Turkey and is now called Şanlıurfa if you wish to look it up on a map. This city was ruled, at the time of Christ, by King Abgar V. A manuscript from the early 4th century recites one version of this legend. It seems that King Abgar was sick with an incurable sickness, and hearing of the miracle worker, Jesus, he sent a letter to him by messenger requesting that Jesus come to him and cure him. Jesus replied that he could not come, because He would be returning soon to His Father, but that he would send someone who would cure him and show him the way of everlasting life. As the legend goes, after the resurrection, Thomas, one of the twelve, sent another disciple, Thaddeus, to King Abgar with the shroud. Abgar was healed and converted to Christianity. Near the end of the 2nd century, Edessa fell under the control of the Byzantine Empire. In 525 A.D., a flood drowned one third of the population of Edessa, and during the recovery efforts, it is said that a secret chamber was found over the West gate of the city. In the chamber was a chest containing the image in excellent condition. It was thought to have been hidden there during a period of Christian persecution by Abgar V's second son, Manu VI. It was then known as the "Edessa Cloth."

After the Muslims had taken control of Edessa, the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, bartered with the controlling Emir and swapped the release of 200 Muslim prisoners, 12,000 pieces of silver, and the promise not to attack the city for the cloth. The cloth, soon to be known as the "Mandyllion" during its stay in Constantinople, arrived on August 5, 944 A.D. It is thought that the cloth was folded three times to form eight layers so that the top layer showed only the frontal head image. It remained in Constantinople until the city was sacked by the crusaders in 1204 A.D. There is some confusion about the various terms used to describe the object. Shroud, Sindone, Veronica, Mandyllion, and cloth of Edessa

have all been used, however; the Veronica cloth may instead refer to the face cloth mentioned in the gospels.

Two researchers seem to be prominent in studying the legends of the history of the shroud, Dan Scavone and Ian Wilson. These two differ greatly in their belief about the whereabouts of the shroud between the time it left Constantinople and became a part of a dowry. Mr. Wilson believes in a stronger association with the Templars, but whoever is right, the Templars had only to have had access to the shroud for a brief time and to believe that it was the burial cloth of Christ for the connection to exist.

Getting back to our story, it is believed that the Shroud was on display during its 260 year stay in Constantinople. It may have even been raised or "resurrected" vertically on holy days for the benefit of public viewing. In April of 1204, the Knights of the 4th Crusade overran and began to sack Constantinople. Huge amounts of treasure and artwork fell into the hands of individual crusaders, and chaos ensued. This is when the Shroud disappeared only to resurface in the 1300s. The Shroud was documented to have been in the Pharos Chapel of Boucoleon Palace in Constantinople. Two documents indicate that the Shroud was in Athens in 1205 A.D. at the time of their writing in the possession of the great-great-grandfather of Jeanne de Vergy of Besancon mentioned above. This, in a nutshell, is the provenance of the cloth according to Dr. Scavone and does not involve a period of possession by the Templars. The Templars would, however, have had ample access to the Shroud during its 135 year stay in Greece.

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part IX

As you already know, the Ancient Templars were founded around 1118 A.D., and the last Grand Master, Jacques DeMolay, was burned at the stake, signaling the end of the activity of the Ancient Templars on March 18th 1314, after years of torture and trial. This corresponds roughly to one of the two periods when the Shroud was missing from the public view if you believe the Cloth of Edessa, the Mandylion, and the Shroud of Turin to be the same object. During this time also, coinciding with the establishment of the Ancient Templars, the idea of Chivalry as defining a code of conduct: moral, religious, and social became popular. It is not improbable that the Templars helped to define chivalry as we know it today, which is a reason that we as Masonic Templars, should focus on that concept in our modern day fraternity.

During this time period, another phenomenon occurred, the publication of what is known as the "Grail Stories." These stories, including those of King Arthur and his round table, seem to link the concept of chivalry with a search for what is called the "Holy Grail." The Grail, always associated with Christ, is at different times said to be the cup used by Jesus during the last supper, some sort of cup or bowl in which

were caught drops of the Savior's blood as he hung on the cross, or the actual bloodline of Christ who is said to have fathered a child by his wife, Mary Magdalene. No matter which legend is proposed, it always has reference to something that contains the blood of Christ.

At some point during the Greek or Byzantine period, it is thought that the Shroud or Mandylion was stored for viewing folded in a container with only the face showing. The top or front of the container is said to have been covered with lattice work with an oval cut out to show the face. This folding is borne out by some of the ancient fold marks still visible on the cloth. One of the French words "greille" used to describe this type of latticework is very close to the English word "grill" and may have actually been spelled grail. One theory is that the Holy Grail was actually the box enclosing the burial Shroud of Christ containing stains of his blood. Joseph of Arimathea, mentioned in the gospels as closely associated with the burial of Christ, is associated in many of the Grail stories with having brought Christianity to Britain. You will need to read more of Dr. Scavone in order to understand how this could have resulted from two mistakes. We tried unsuccessfully to contact Dr. Scavone about this and get his comments. So is it possible that the Holy Grail is really the Shroud of Turin and that the Templars were the prototypes for Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table? You decide.

I should mention here the alternate theory offered in the book *The Second Messiah*. This theory is that the Shroud image was formed from the injured body of Jacques DeMolay after a torture session. The reason that I discount this theory is that the Inquisition that tortured DeMolay was expressly forbidden to shed blood. This prohibition accounts for their tortures normally involving fire as the fire would cauterize any wounds and technically prevent the spilling of blood during the torture session. Since one of the most compelling features of the Shroud is the presence of blood, I discount the DeMolay theory. I only mention it here because if I don't, several hundred of you will bring it to my attention thinking that I had not heard of it.

The solution to the second mystery presupposes that the Templars had access to the Shroud when it was folded only to show the head and that they believed that it was the burial shroud of Christ and that it was proof of his resurrection. As you can see from the previous articles, these suppositions are not farfetched. The Shroud does not have to be genuine for this theory to be true. The Templars only had to believe that it was genuine. Also, they did not have to possess it, only to have access to it.

The Templars had their own internal clergy, and their modes of worship may well have developed in ways somewhat independent of the main stream church. They also had initiation ceremonies known only to them and were questioned extensively about these ceremonies during their inquisition and suppression. In our series about the trials of the Ancient Templars, we published a synopsis of the transcript of these trials, and one of the questions put to these Templars concerned the worship of a "head" or an idol in the form of a head. This concept is still used in anti-Masonic propaganda where the head is now given the name "Bophamet" and drawn as the

head of a goat! Modern Freemasons are thoroughly confused by such accusations and completely mystified as to where something so bizarre may have originated.

At any rate, we know that the Ancient Templars had many different Pories in Europe and the Middle East. It is possible that they may have had copies painted of the Shroud in the lattice container showing the head only and may have prominently displayed them in their private chapels either all the time or on special occasions such as initiations in the same manner that crucifixes are displayed above and behind the altars of many Catholic churches. If it was a painting of a head rather than an actual three dimensional object, this might explain the inconsistency of the answers of the Templars during the trials. The Templars were asked if they worshiped the idol of a head. They probably didn't even relate their veneration for the image of Christ to an idol any more that a devout Catholic would view the presence of a crucifix over an altar as worshiping the statue of an idol.

About sixty years ago, a Mrs. Molly Drew from a place called Templecombe, Somerset, England, discovered, after plaster had fallen from the ceiling of what is believed to have been a Templar building, a painting on a panel constructed of wood which seems to be a copy of the facial image on the Shroud. The panel had hinge marks and a keyhole indicating that it had been the top of a wooden box, perhaps a box containing one of the copies of the Shroud possessed by the Ancient Templars. One author has identified forty-two copies of the Shroud painted on cloth in Europe, many of which are believed to have belonged to the Templars. Could these paintings have been the infamous "head" the Templars were accused of worshiping?

Last are the nagging questions I had after the first series about the Templar trials. Almost all of them indicated in testimony that they had been told to "deny this" referring to a crucifix held in the initiating Knight's hand. This worried me as all other evidence indicated that these ancient Templars were among the most devout Christians of their time. Why would they tell new initiates to "deny" a symbol of the Savior's sacrifice for their sins? I now believe that this rite was to point out to the candidate for Templary that on the Templar's altars, an image of the Shroud, the symbol of the resurrection of Christ, had been substituted for the crucifix, an emblem of the death of Christ. It was as if to say to the young Templar that anyone can die, but only Jesus, the Savior, can resurrect again to life. This would impress on the initiate that it was the resurrection of Christ, not the crucifixion that distinguishes Him as the One who has power over life and death and Him alone through whom salvation is obtained. The Shroud was used as a symbol of the resurrection, replacing the crucifix which was a symbol of His death. No doubt this symbolism was lost on many of the initiates, just as much of our Masonic symbolism is lost on most of our initiates.

So there you have the Templar connection to the Shroud, the mystery of the Holy Grail, the mystery of the "head worshiping" Templars, and the mystery of the rite of the "denial of the crucifix" all wrapped up in one neat, plausible package.

Some believe that the family of the Templar official Geoffrey de Charny who was burned at the stake with Jacques DeMolay passed the Shroud along secretly within the family where it finally arrived in the possession of Geoffrey I de Charny of Lirey, France rather than him having received it as part of a dowry. One thing seems very clear to me. The authenticity of the Shroud as the burial cloth of Christ is not likely to be proved or disproved to the satisfaction of everyone. It is largely a matter of faith.

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The Templars and the Shroud The Mystery Defined - Part X

This final article in the series about the Shroud of Turin, I fear, may be a bit anticlimactic, but I didn't want to finish without bringing you up to speed on what has happened to the Shroud in the last few years. An attempt has been made by the owners to restore the Shroud. Restoration is something that is normally done to a work of art so that viewers might see it in its original beauty. It generally involves a good cleaning and the removal or addition of material so that the object appears as it would have originally. This is frequently done to old paintings. Preservation, on the other hand, is something usually done by historians or archaeologists to objects in order to preserve them and their environment just as it is.

Preservation is done to objects that are still undergoing study. The theory of preservation is based on the fact that our forensic science is getting better each year. The longer we wait to perform tests on an object, the more likely that the science can yield better information based on the same materials. With preservation, not only the object itself is important, but its environment is almost equally so. The dirt, debris, and other materials attached to the object can tell the forensic scientist much about its history and origin.

The shroud was "restored" in 2002. First, its container was fumigated to remove any possible living organisms and the cloth was replaced in it shortly thereafter. This may have contaminated the cloth due to chemical reactions. Then the various materials such as the patches, borders, and backing were removed. A new backing cloth was sewn on to the Shroud but no chemical analysis was performed on it to determine if it could prove harmful over time. The cloth was vacuumed to remove the dirt and debris of the centuries which the scientists would call "evidence." Finally, much of the charred material of the shroud itself was removed. Although the material removed was retained, the information about its exact location on the Shroud has been forever lost. Most of the scientists who have been interested in the Shroud are furious about this, and a book has even been written about this entitled *The Rape of the Shroud of Turin*. In the end, however, what is done is done, and the "restoration" now becomes a part of the history of the Shroud.

I believe that there will never really be closure about the authenticity of the Shroud. Those who believe it is the burial shroud of Jesus Christ will continue to do so.

Even if carbon dating, at some time in the future, indicates that the entire cloth is only seven hundred years old, the argument can be made that since no living person has ever seen or studied an actual resurrection, who is to say that it does not involve the emission of sub-atomic particles which would have enriched the carbon 14 content of the shroud making it appear younger than it is? On the other hand, even if the shroud is dated to the first century Palestine, located to Jerusalem, and proven to have been the shroud of a crucified man, how can it be proved that the man was Jesus the Christ?

Luckily, the theory I proposed about the mysterious connection between the Shroud and the Templars did not depend on its authenticity; only that the Templars had brief access to the object and believed in its authenticity. I have enjoyed the research and the opportunity to share this mystery with you. I hope you have enjoyed it, too. I already have my sights on another alleged mystery concerning the Templars. If it pans out, maybe I'll bring you another series next year.

I know that I have taken some criticism for this, but I must one final time express my appreciation to Barrie Schwartz and his Shroud of Turin Education and Research Association, Inc. for the use of the photos and other images I have been able to publish along with my ramblings. We could not have afforded to run the images without his generosity. Their non-profit web site is <http://www.shroud.com>

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