



- TWO -
Constantinople, 1203 A.D.

MIRA and NICHOLAS

Nicholas grabbed his sister's arm. "Come on, Mira! They're doing it again!"

"I heard you," scolded Mira. She tugged her smock straight and trudged after the excited boy. Nicholas dashed up the path like a fox. Mira was not as agile. Her feet stumbled on the jagged rocks strewn over the steep hill.

Mira rubbed one eye and yawned. The sun was not yet high but she already felt exhausted. Sometimes Mira wished she weren't the eldest child in her large peasant family, but tradition was the rule, and Mira was obliged to follow rules. Every morning she awoke before dawn, fetched water from the well, and then set off to the grindstone for flour. Why couldn't she, just once, sit under the big oak tree and rest while Nicholas played? Of course, her curious little brother wanted to go to the secret spot on top of the hill—again. If she didn't follow him, he'd probably wander right into town and when Mama found out, she'd whip Mira sore. And worse, what if he became lost or even kidnapped?

Mira caught up to Nicholas who was now at the usual spot behind a big rock at the top of the hill. The two siblings stared at the crowd below. Hundreds, if not thousands of people had gathered, forming a sea of red and white. They were the Crusaders, the soldiers from the West.

Mira had heard the gossip. First the Emperor was dethroned. Then he was back. No wonder

her country folk had lost faith in such politics. Yet it was the fighting and restlessness of the Crusaders that bothered Mira. How could these soldiers call themselves Christians? Did they act like ones? No. They cursed peasants such as her. They did not pay for food or lodging. They drank too much wine and stank of filth. Mama warned her to stay out of their way.

"Here they go," giggled Nicholas. He pointed to the familiar casket that had now been placed in front of the crowd. As the Crusaders chanted, the plain cloth slowly rose up until a very faint figure could be seen above the ornate casket. Mira shook her head in anger. These Crusaders were hypocrites, weren't they?

"Do you think they believe in the magic?" asked Nicholas.

"It's not magic," retorted Mira.

"But how else could the Figure of Our Lord rise?"



That is why I am older than you," answered Mira. "It is a trick. They tie the long cloth to a pulley and tug until it goes up!"

"I cannot see the image very well," mumbled Nicholas. "Next time, I want to go closer."

Mira knew this was the safest place. Once, months ago, she had seen the cloth up close. When no one was paying attention, she crept down the hill and stole behind the cold stone walls of St. Mary's. She couldn't help but hear the pulley. It screeched like a sick bird. When she peeked around the corner, there was the cloth, held up by the half-hidden rope. Fortunately, the young man at the other end of the pulley couldn't see her. But she could see the cloth and its image, the one Mama said was the divine imprint of Jesus himself.

"Let's go back," said Mira. "I have work to do."

"Why can't we worship now too?" asked Nicholas, his eyes as round as saucers.

"Do you think God approves of these men? Have you forgotten how they treat us?" Mira responded. She took her brother's hand.

"But doesn't Mama say that God punishes those who don't worship?"

"Nicholas," Mira said firmly. "Why would God punish me but not the Crusaders? They treat us like slaves and kill men as if they were cattle? I've heard enough of wars and battles. Christians, infidels—they're all the same to me."

"Mama would scold you if she heard your talk," shouted Nicholas.

"And don't you tell her I did," rebuked Mira. "She has enough worries."

Mira dragged her brother back down the hill to the pasture. Once there, Nicholas freed himself from her grip and chased two straying sheep. Mira watched him, her mind still on the cloth. Was it real? Was it a sign from God? Mama had said it was, but Mira could not bring herself to believe. Why would God want her to have faith in a simple cloth, a funeral shroud, no less? All Mira knew was that she had so many tasks to perform from the moment the sun rose until its orange glow finally disappeared behind the pasture.

"If I am destined to hell's fire," Mira mumbled under her breath, "then so be it." She clenched her teeth and hands. A dull ache slowly crushed her chest. Mira's eyes watered as she tried to fix them on Nicholas. He darted across the pasture, unaware of his sister's pain.

Mira froze, unable to move a muscle. Tears suddenly streamed down her face. The question pounded through her mind. Would she ever know if that image were Jesus? Then, like a shooting star, the answer came. It was all up to her.

"Lord," she instinctively prayed, "I will believe. If only to spend eternity with the brother and mother I love, then I will believe. Please help me." Mira covered her face and wept, stifling her sobs so Nicholas would not hear. She did not have to wait long. The tears lasted only a moment. She wiped her eyes and breathed deeply; the burden in her heart miraculously lifted.



The Hagia Sophia
in Istanbul

Clues to the Shroud's Past

The Edessa Cloth arrived ceremoniously in Constantinople in 944 A.D. At that time, an archdeacon reported that it *'bore the drops of sweat from the agony in the garden as well as blood and water from his side'* - so it must have been a larger cloth than just a face image.

Other references exist indicating the Image of Edessa contained a full body imprint. These include an altar dedicated to a cloth bearing Christ's image (probably *The Veronica*) in 1101 A.D., and mention of Christ's crucifixion *'linens'* (including the cloth sent to King Abgar) listed among Constantinople's relics of 1190 A.D.

When Pope Urban II in 1095 A.D. urged Christians to reclaim the Holy Land from Islam, he set in motion a conflict that would span over four hundred years.

By 500 A.D., Constantinople was a bustling city with more than a million people.



Coins from the 7th century resemble
the face on the Shroud.
(image courtesy of Alan & Mary Whanger, CSST)

With the promise of paradise in heaven, young men took up swords and donned red crosses on their tunics. They became known as the Crusaders from the Latin word 'cru^x' which means 'cross'. In 1144 A.D. Muslims captured Edessa, a Crusader stronghold, and the Second Crusade began. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Constantinople had fallen to the Ottoman Turks.



Did a Crusader take the Shroud west? A letter to Pope Innocent III from 1205 A.D. describes the Crusaders' looting of treasures during the Sack of Constantinople including French Crusaders who took *'the most sacred of*

all, the linen in which our Lord Jesus was wrapped after his death and before his resurrection.'



Many of these Crusaders were involved with the Knights Templar, a military religious group originally founded to protect Christian pilgrims.

Rumour had it they worshipped a 'bearded head' and by the early fourteenth century, the King of France and the Pope put an end to the Order. Could this 'bearded head' have been a reference to the face on the Shroud? Interestingly, a Templar panel painting with a face of Christ similar to the one on the Shroud was discovered in Templecombe, England during World War II.



The Christ-like panel found in Templecombe, England.

Geoffrey II de Charny
(© Bibliothèque nationale de France)



One of the Knights Templar, Geoffrey de Charny, was burnt at the stake in Paris in 1314 A.D. He may have been a relative of Geoffrey I de Charny, who forty years later founded the Church at Lirey in France where the first historically documented European expositions of the Shroud were held.

"On this cloth,...the glorious features of [Jesus'] face and the majestic form of his whole body have been supernaturally transferred, that for those who never had the opportunity to see his earthly appearance, they can do so thanks to the way this has been imprinted onto the linen."—a sermon from around 1130 A.D. borrowed from words by Pope Stephen II in 769 A.D.

The D’Arcis Memorandum of 1389 A.D. indicates that Shroud expositions were held at this Church of Lirey.

Only months before the infamous Sack of Constantinople, a Crusader named Robert de Clari described the scene outside the Church of St. Mary at Blachernae:

“...the sydoine (or shroud) in which our Lord had been wrapped...on every Friday raised itself upright so that one could see the figure of Our Lord on it.” He later wrote that, *“...neither Greek nor Frenchman knew what became of this shroud when the city was taken.”*

The Shroud of Turin is quite large and measures 437 cm long by 111 cm wide. That’s about as long as two small cars and as wide as a large desk. The Edessa Cloth is said to be much smaller and shows only Christ’s head (although some texts still refer to it as a full body image).

Perhaps the Edessa Cloth was the Shroud ‘folded’. The Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus uses the word *tetradiplon*. Experiments on the Shroud in 1978 showed numerous folds in the Shroud. Could it have been ‘raised’, as this diagram shows, in a contraption typical of Byzantine interest in mechanical devices?

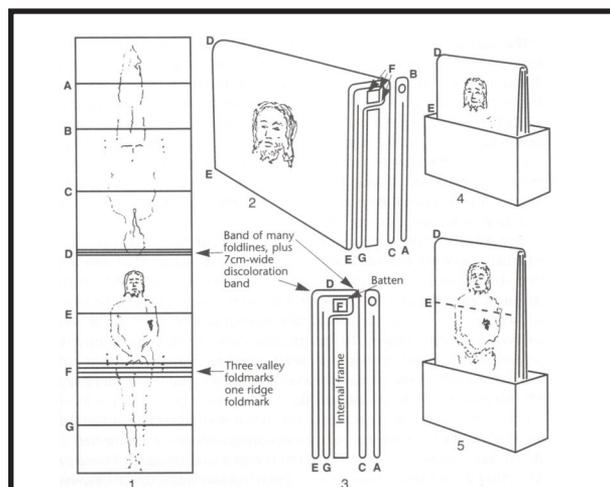
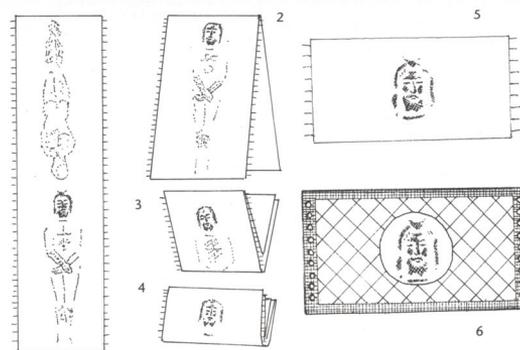


Diagram courtesy of Ian Wilson



The Shroud folded looks like artists’ copies of the Edessa Cloth. (diagram courtesy of Ian)

***Tetradiplon*: Greek meaning ‘doubled in four’, or folded four times, in reference to the Edessa Cloth.**



- THREE -
Lirey, France
October, 1355 A.D.



PILGRIMS

Thomas watched as a scruffy grey-haired man opened the door to the inn. Father spoke to him for a moment then turned to lead their donkey around the back. Mother glanced up from her spot in the cart, her narrow, tanned face surrounded by cloths, pots, bags of grain, candles and other provisions. Thomas's little sister, Mary, still slept peacefully in her arms.

"We shall stop here," said Father. He reached up and helped his wife off the cart. Mary opened her eyes, wiggled her chubby legs and smiled. Without the sleepy lull of a moving cart, she stayed awake. Thomas picked up his sister and gave her the small rattle he had fashioned out of a large twig while Mother shook out the long beige cloth she had purchased along the journey.

"Is that what the Shroud looks like, Mother?" asked Thomas.

"Perhaps," she replied. "Tomorrow we travel to the Church in Lirey where it is kept. Pray that we shall finally see it."

Thomas mumbled a Hail Mary under his breath. He wondered if the Shroud were smaller or bigger than Mother's cloth. He had heard other pilgrims say that it showed the face and body of the crucified Christ. Thomas yawned and stretched out on a rag blanket on the floor. After weeks of travel, he could wait one more day. Night would soon fall. Time for rest.

The family awoke refreshed. They ate a hearty meal of bread and cheese, and then set

out. It had been a little over a month since the Pope's declaration that indulgences would be granted to all who made pilgrimage to the Holy Shroud. Thomas remembered the exact day which, coincidentally, was his twelfth birthday. Now his family joined the countless other pilgrims crowding the narrow road to Lirey.

Troyes bustled with excitement, but the family did not linger in the village. They only stayed long enough for Thomas to fetch water for the donkey and ale for his parents. Shortly after midday, they finally reached their destination.

Thomas knelt with beside his father on the cold, stone floor of the Lirey Church. Outside, under the shade of towering oak tree, his mother nursed Mary.

Thomas wondered if the Shroud would be displayed today. Father had said this was the Feast of the Forty Martyrs—forty soldiers who were forced to stand naked on a frozen pond while enticing warm baths waited on shore; forty devout souls who refused to renounce the name of Our Lord. Surely this day was as worthy as any other.

Raising his head, Thomas watched the back of the priest's robe at the altar. Incense wafted through the Church and made Thomas's head spin. Where was the Shroud? How much longer must he wait?

His father nodded towards a large casket in front of the altar, softly illuminated by the flickering candlelight. Was the Shroud in there? Thomas wanted to ask but Mass had begun and he dared not speak. After Holy Communion and prayers, Thomas stepped outside with his

father. "Papa," he asked, "was the Shroud in that casket? Why did they not show it to us?"

His father nodded. "It shall be revealed in time. We must be patient."

While his father joined the others under the oak tree, Thomas strolled through the growing crowd until he noticed several pilgrims huddled around a peddler's cart.

"Souvenirs!" shouted the peddler. "Indulgences, keepsakes, blessed items for all!"

Thomas squeezed past horses and pilgrims and found a spot beside the peddler's wares. He gazed at the baskets full of medallions, wooden statues, even a few pieces of shiny jewellery. An unusual amulet caught his eye. He picked it up and gently ran a finger over the dark, carved metal. Like the spotted birds' eggs he used to find in the forest, he carefully studied the object.

"'Tis a badge for the pious," remarked a voice. Thomas turned to see a rather well-to-do

gentleman in a red cape smile. "I bought a smaller one five years ago when I saw *The Veronica*."

Thomas had heard of *The Veronica*. Some said it was the Face of Jesus imprinted on a veil. "May I see your badge?" asked Thomas.

"I wish you could," he replied. "I wore it on my brim, that was, 'till it fell into the Seine."

"You lost it in the river?"

The gentleman patted his chest. "'Tis still here. In my heart." He carefully unfurled Thomas's fingers and inspected the amulet. "A costly one. There, in the middle, that is the Charny coat of arms." Thomas stared at the spot where the gentleman pointed - a small, but distinct likeness of what must have been the Shroud - the back and front figures of a man lying head to head.

"Of all the souvenirs that commemorate this blessed event," said the gentleman, "I like that one best." He winked and smiled then strolled away.

Thomas held up the badge. "How much?" he asked the peddler.

"How much to do you have?" came the curt reply.

Thomas hesitated. "Not much." He placed the amulet back in the peddler's outstretched hand. "But if faith were gold coins, I would be the richest man in the country!"

The peddler roared in laughter. "At last, someone who does not believe the Bishop of Troyes!" Thomas stared quizzically at the grey-



This pilgrim's medallion from the 1350s shows the Shroud and the de Charny coat of arms. It is now in the Cluny Museum, France (© Art Resource)

haired man. "Henri de Poitiers," explained the peddler. "Haven't you heard? He declared the Shroud a forgery. Claims to have the confession from the artist himself."

A gruff voice echoed from the back of the crowd. "Let the Pope set that Bishop right!"

"I hear," added another pilgrim, "that presentations of the Shroud are to cease."

Thomas gasped. Cease? Surely it wasn't true. But what if it were? Had he missed his only chance at this indulgence?

"They cannot stop the showings!" he protested. "We came so far to see the Shroud!"

"Do not worry," reassured the peddler. He placed the medallion back in Thomas's trembling hand. "With faith as deep as yours, the Shroud will never fade from view."

The peddler was right. Thomas's faith was rewarded and the Shroud was displayed that very night.

On the journey back to Paris, the small family stopped briefly along the Seine. With the amulet in hand, Thomas gazed out at the flowing river, the experience of finally having seen the Shroud still fresh in his mind. Without thinking, he folded his hands in prayer. The amulet slipped from his grasp and fell like a rock into the murky river.

Thomas frantically fished his hands through the muddy bottom. Where was the medallion? It must be here,

somewhere, but he couldn't find it. Thomas searched for hours until he finally gave up. Like the rich gentleman who had lost his Veronica badge to the Seine, the only souvenir that remained of Thomas's pilgrimage was the Image of the Shroud, etched onto his heart.

The D'Arcis Memorandum:

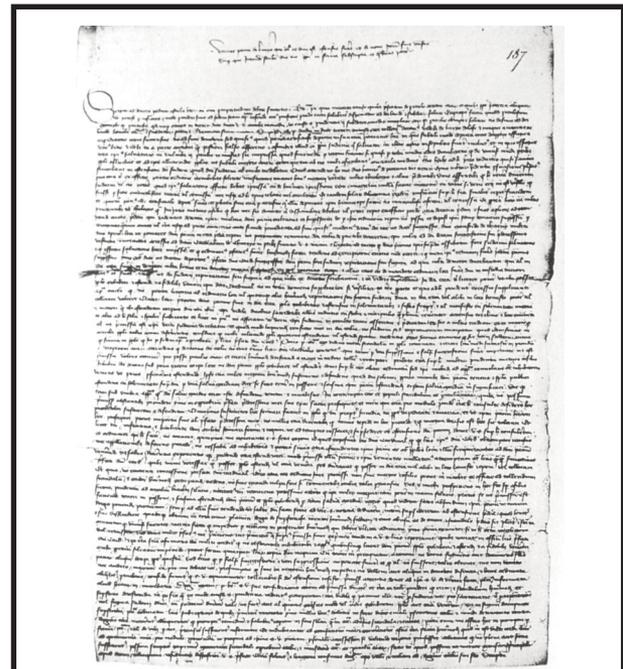


Fig. 1. "Memorandum" attributed to Pierre d'Arcis, Bishop of Troyes (1379-1395). Phot. Bib. nat., Paris (Champagne 154, 1^r 137).

The D'Arcis Memorandum
(© Bibliothèque nationale de France)

“...about 1355, the church at Lirey procured a cloth on which, in a subtle manner, was depicted a two-fold image which was falsely declared to be the actual burial shroud of Jesus.”

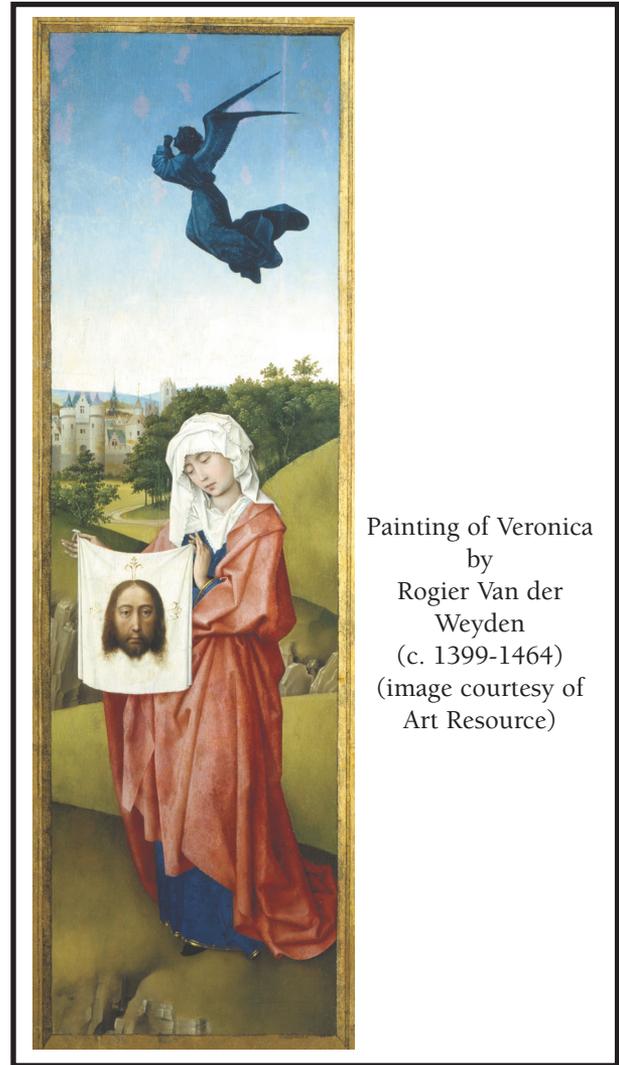
~ Excerpt from a letter, known as the D’Arcis Memorandum

On August 4, 1389, the Bishop of Troyes, Pierre D’Arcis, drafted a memo to the French Anti-Pope Clement VII. He refers to the Shroud expositions at Lirey and that his predecessor, Bishop Henri de Poitiers of Troyes, had declared it “...cunningly painted, the truth being attested by the artist who had painted it.” The D’Arcis Memorandum may have been the Bishop’s effort to acquire the Shroud. With the recent turmoil of the Black Death plague and the ongoing Hundred Years’ War, the Bishop’s diocese was near ruin. An important relic such as the Shroud would attract pilgrims and, more importantly, much needed funds.

The Legend of The Veronica:

When Jesus carried his cross up to Calvary, a woman took pity on him and wiped his face with her veil. It became miraculously imprinted with Jesus’ face and called *The Veronica* or ‘vera icon’, which means ‘true image’. While *The Veronica* revered today in Italy is definitely painted, its legend may have originated with the Shroud.

The Shroud was never formally handed over. The following year, Clement VII ordered Bishop D’Arcis to be silent on the Shroud and permitted its expositions as a ‘representation’ of Christ’s burial cloth.



Painting of Veronica
by
Rogier Van der
Weyden
(c. 1399-1464)
(image courtesy of
Art Resource)



FOUR
Geneva, 1453 A.D.



VERONIQUE'S STORY

March 1, 1453

A warm day. Has the bleak winter finally passed? M'Lady requested goose eggs for breakfast. I found three in the coop and none was broken!

March 2, 1453

Today is John's birthday. My handsome brother is now eighteen and will soon take his final vows. Although we live far apart, I believe our parents look down on us from heaven with pride. How pleased they must be to see a son take the habit and a daughter dressed in fine linen! Still, my heart is heavy. I am alone here. There are no others my age and I am rarely permitted to go into town.

March 3, 1453

I awoke before dawn to the sound of my name being called. I jumped off my straw mattress. "Veronique!" cried M'Lady between coughing fits. "Veronique are you there?"

I asked if M'Lady was in pain but she shook her head and bade me stoke the fire. She shivered and said she dreamt of her late husband, so I fetched a bitter tonic and soothed her chest.

"How I wish I had your youth," said M'Lady. "I am elderly and never know when I shall breathe my last."

March 4, 1453

I helped M'Lady dress as usual this morning.

Her humours seem much better today. I told her that the hems on her veil and wimple had begun to fray and perhaps she should commission a new one, but she complained of a lack of money.

"Did you practice your writing?" she asked. "You should keep a journal." She had quite forgotten of the writing instruments she had given me for Christmas. I assured her that I write in it every day.

M'Lady was quite pleased. "My grandfather, Geoffrey was a good man," she said. "He wrote the Book of Chivalry."

I smiled because she did not remember having told me this many times as well!

"He passed down the Holy Shroud to me," M'Lady continued, "to keep from those horrible men at Lirey who tried to sue me for the Shroud. You see, my ancestors are its guardians."

I nodded politely. M'Lady talks a great deal about the Shroud with me.

March 5, 1453

I oftentimes thank Our Lord for his goodness to me. I know I must be grateful for my employ in the household of Margaret de Charny. 'Tis better than to be married off to a ugly or cruel husband. Such happened to a maiden from my birth village, she being the same age as I. A rough, fat man—forty years of age, no less—took her as a bride. His two previous wives had both died in childbirth. I pray she does not meet the same fate.

March 9, 1453

Curses! Snow falls outside. Perhaps it is to remind us of our penance during this Lenten season. Ash Wednesday seems so far gone, but it was only on the fourteenth of February, less than one moon ago!

March 11, 1453

The sun is high in the sky but M'Lady sleeps in her chair. She must rest often, now. Perhaps I should write to my brother. How surprised he will be to learn that I, his twelve-year old sister, can read and write! I last set eyes on him on All Soul's Day. I was so forlorn, my little sister and our parents having succumbed to the pox and myself left with a face so horribly scarred. When my brother heard the news, he took leave right away and arranged for Madame de Charny (who thankfully, required the services of a girl such as myself) to take me into her household. I hoped she would take pity on me—and she did! M'Lady even insisted that I be taught as a noblewoman such as herself.

"I will groom you as my handmaiden," she told me. "My eyes are so frail; you must learn to read for me."

I am fortunate. My tasks are not burdensome and M'Lady is kind to me, as if I were a daughter (perhaps because she has no children of her own). She is lonely too. We are so unlike but yearn for happier times.

March 15, 1453

The letter to my brother must wait. This

morning I swept M'Lady's chambers and strew fragrant rose petals on the ground. As soon as I had finished drawing water for M'Lady's toilet, a messenger arrived—from the House of Savoy!

"The Duke will be arriving presently," said M'Lady. She explained that she would present him with the Shroud.

"Why must you part with your precious Shroud?" I asked, puzzled.

"My dear late husband, Humbert, was entrusted to care for it," spoke M'Lady. "When he died fifteen years ago, I continued this service."

"Yes, M'Lady," I replied. "Do you not remember when the Shroud was displayed at Germolles last September? I had only been in your employ a fortnight but marvelled at your devotion."

I took a deep breath and asked, "M'Lady, might I ask a question? You say in public that the Shroud is a likeness of Christ. Do you truly believe it wrapped Our Lord?"

M'Lady's eyes glowed with determination. "We have endured a difficult winter and my frailty has increased. The Shroud must pass to younger, stronger hands before I die."

I urged M'Lady not to speak of such things. Instead, she said that many in the Church, including the Dean and canons of Lirey, coveted the Shroud yet she had secretly promised on her grandfather's grave that such would not come to pass.

March 20, 1453

I have spent much of yesterday and the

evening preparing M’Lady for our guests. Her long, grey hair is fixed in the best plait my fingers could form. I even managed to mend the tiny holes on her special kirtle, the one I *try* to keep away from the moths.

March 21, 1453

The Duke and his wife have arrived. His messengers carried a large, ornate chest into the main hall. I had never seen such a magnificent thing! To my amazement, the messengers opened the chest and lifted out a large cloth which M’Lady later told me was the Holy Shroud, a relic from Our Lord. Everyone instantly fell to their knees. We prayed for several minutes then gazed on the magnificent cloth. I saw a face, solemn yet serene. M’Lady explained that this was the Face of Our Lord. How pitiful the stains of blood that remained on his forehead and body! Never before have I felt so in awe. Our Lord suffered so much for us; I almost wept before the Holy Shroud was placed back in the chest. Oh, how fortunate am I, a poor servant girl, to see the Most Holy of Relics!

March 22, 1453

I tire of eating cheese and old turnips—peasant’s food. The pigs are fat and rosy but a taste of meat must wait. I long for Lent to pass quickly. April 1, that is the day when we shall feast on roasted pig and fowl!

Evening

M’Lady bade me read out the document

handed to her by the Duke’s messengers. I told her it did not mention the Shroud. “It says you shall receive the Castle Varambon and revenues from Miribel in return for valuable services.”

“Those high in the Church think the Shroud *is* valuable,” she answered, “if you put a price on Our Lord!” M’Lady displayed her toothless but genuine smile and I immediately understood.

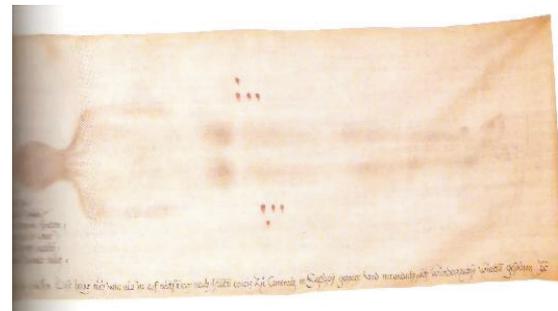
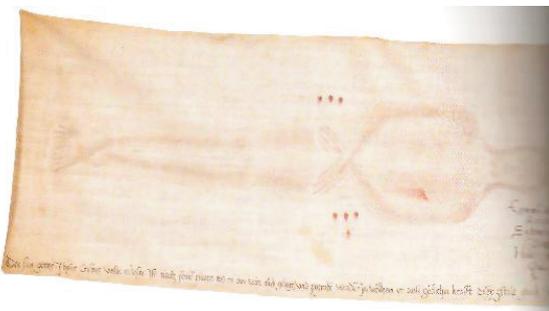
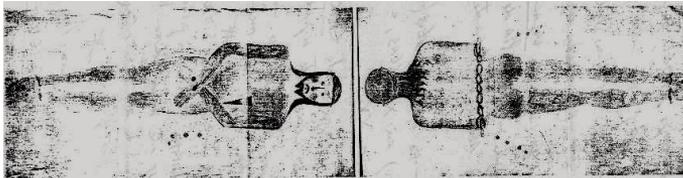
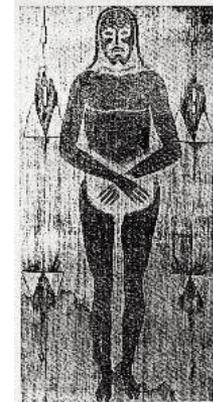
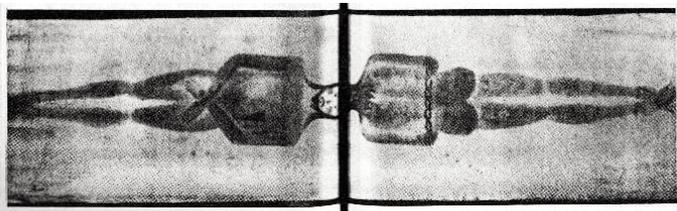
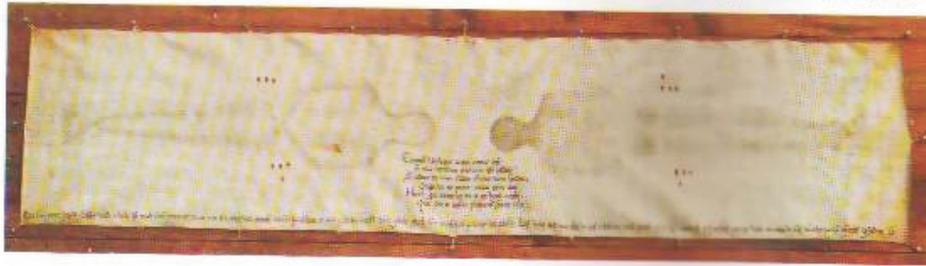
March 23, 1453

Today, M’Lady had only one simple request of the Duke. “May I set eyes on Our Lord one last time, before I meet Him again in heaven?” she asked.

The Duke agreed and M’Lady bade me stand near her so as to describe all that I saw. How strange to discover that, if we stood close to the cloth, the image disappeared. Too far and it was equally unseen, yet at several paces my eyes were gloriously rewarded. I took M’Lady’s outstretched arm and guided it along His Image. “This is where the Crown of Thorns pierced Our Lord’s Head. And here, on His Side, flowed the Precious Blood and Water.” When M’Lady tired, I stopped. The servants folded the Shroud and placed it back in the casket.

Evening

How I wish to write and tell my dear brother of this miraculous Shroud but I did not. I feared he might reply and forbid me to speak of the Holy Cloth. M’Lady has warned me of rumours that it is merely the work of a skilled forger! If so, that forger is a very good artist



Many artistic copies of the Shroud exist. (images courtesy of Daniel Duque Torres)

indeed. I have never seen a painting so true. The Devil loose my tongue! I will not believe the Shroud is a forgery. It *is* genuine; I know it in my heart. M'Lady fears her advancing age and I fear loneliness but we have The Lord to guide us—and He has given us His Cloth! I have seen the suffering on His Holy Face and I know He sees mine!

M'Lady wept as the Shroud departed with the Duke and his entourage today. Before they left, we celebrated Mass in the chapel. M'Lady then embraced Anne, the Duke's gracious wife, and spoke of how grateful she was that the Shroud was now under their pious protection instead of the greedy canons of Lirey. She said that she did not fear excommunication for she knew others would have sold it and the Duke's wife agreed.

In 1506, Pope Julius II declared May 4 to be the Feast of the Holy Shroud.

March 25 1453

Feast of the Ascension. Through the small chapel window I spied a bright yellow songbird perched on the chestnut tree. My heart leapt for joy. Spring has arrived!

After Mass, M'Lady brought me news. The Duke has consented for me to become a lady-in-waiting to his wife, Anne. Of course, that shall only occur after M'Lady goes to her eternal reward.

"You shall forever be near the Shroud," she told me.

I bowed my head and replied, "Et vous aussi—I shall always remember you, M'Lady, as well."

The Shroud of Turin officially belonged to the House of Savoy until the exiled King Umberto II died in 1983. In his will, he formally bequeathed the Shroud to the Pope.



Early engraving of a Shroud Exhibition.

(from Richard Orareo's Boston Collection of Shroud Art, © 2000 Barrie Schwartz)

The Jospice Imprint

It was late February 1981. A 44 year-old man named Les entered the St. Joseph's Hospice, a medical institution in Thornton, England commonly called "the Jospice".

Les was very ill. In fact, he was dying. He had terminal cancer of the pancreas and only days to live. Yet Les did not appear afraid. The Hospice priest, Father O'Leary, noticed his cheery attitude and learned that Les had a deep, inner faith.

Early on March 9, 1981, a nurse checked in on the sleeping Les. Sometime during the next half-hour, Les passed away. The undertakers came for his body at eleven o'clock that morning and another nurse took off his bedsheets and mattress cover for laundering.

The nurse noticed that one soiled area of the mattress cover wouldn't come clean. She scrubbed hard but the stain remained. On a closer look, the nurse saw that the stain on the cover was actually the imprint of a hand.

Father O'Leary wrapped the cover in a plastic bag and tucked it away in his closet. Five years later, he read an article about the Shroud and decided to show the mattress cover to scientists. For the next six months, several experts studied the cover but could not explain how the image had appeared.

Was the Jospice Imprint formed in the same way as the image on the Shroud? Both imprints happened around the person's death and both

did not 'soak through' their fabrics. In fact, Les was wearing pyjamas when he died but the imprint is that of a naked body. The imprint showed part of his face but he was lying on two pillows. Like the Shroud, the imprint is still unexplainable.

There are differences between the two images. For instance, the dark stains on the Jospice imprint are from shadows (like the spaces between Les' fingers). On the Shroud, they are not. Perhaps the Jospice imprint was formed in another mysterious way.



The Jospice Imprint remains unexplained.
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