

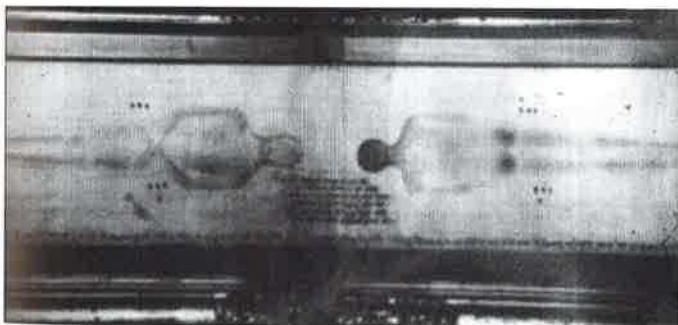
# The Documentary Value of the Lier Shroud

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**D**on Fossati requested me to read a summary in English of his paper written, of course, in Italian. The title is: The Documentary Value of the Shroud of Lier. A prolific writer on historical aspects of the Shroud, the Salesian scholar has made a special study of painted copies, as he mentions in his opening statement.

At the Paris Symposium of 1989, I presented a paper on the copies of the Holy Shroud in full size, painted in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. At this time I will examine the earliest known copy that carries the date written on the cloth.



*The Lier Shroud*

This is the copy conserved at Lier, Belgium, in the Church of St. Gommaire. The date of 1516 is written upon it. Neither the artist nor the patron is known with certainty. At the beginning of the 16th century, both Albrecht Durer and Bernard van Orley were in the service of the Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg, but no documentary evidence has yet been found indicating that Maximilian commissioned the copy, or identifying the artist.

A study of the Lier shroud involves an objective description of the figure and an explanation for the marks in symmetrical pattern that are noticed beside the figure. Of major interest are the inscriptions, one in Latin between the heads and the other in ancient Nuremburg dialect along the bottom margin of the copy.

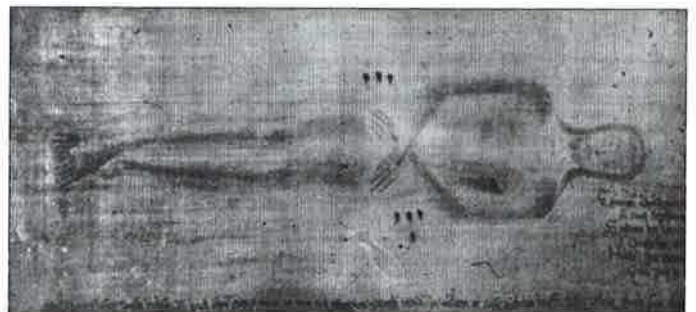
Descriptions of the copy were published by A. Thierry at the beginning of this century and by Remi Van Haelst in 1986 in an article published in *Shroud Spectrum Inter-*

*national*. Therefore we will examine the inscriptions and the four symmetrical groups of marks of reddish color that are depicted so distinctly on the white cloth.

The real nature of these marks was unknown to the artist, for he painted them red, the same as the bloodstains of the wounds of the hands, feet and the side.

On the Turin Shroud, the four symmetrical groups were first identified as signs of a fire by Prof. Porché and Don Antonio Tonelli. Don Tonelli writes that on the night of 22 May 1931, while the Shroud was displayed without glass for Enrie's photographic work, Prof. Porché called attention to the four groups of little holes, remarking that these were burn holes and that they were different from the burns of the Chambéry fire. They are devoid of a brown halo because the cloth burned rapidly, without the formation of abundant distillation gas. The edges of the larger holes are tacked to the backing cloth, leaving the loose ends of the burned threads completely free. Some of these were later remended around the margins.

It is evident that when the Shroud received these burns it was folded once lengthwise and once widthwise making a rectangle of four layers; quite different from the 1532 folding of 48 layers.



*Detail*

The nature of the burns escaped the notice of artists, pilgrims and historians of the Shroud. There is no record of a fire before 1532. The red spots on the Lier copy indicate that the burn marks were thought to be bloodstains. It was not until 1931 that the true nature of the black and symmetrical burn marks was recognised.

And finally we examine the inscriptions. In German dialect, the reader is told that by His divine power the Son of God left his Image on the Shroud conserved in Chambéry of Savoy where it is exhibited every year on the day after the Invention of the Cross (i.e., on September 18), and is beheld with devotion and wondrous signs.

The author of the Latin verse reports that the copy is one-third the size of the Original; and he expresses his hope that this figure might remind the observer of Christ's bitter death, freely accepted to save him, a sinner.

The sentiment is efficacious for us as well, who have the good fortune to admire and contemplate-not a simple painting, but the true Image of Jesus revealed to us in the photographic negative. ■



Detail

### La valeur du suaire conservée dans l'église de Saint-Gommaire de Lierre

*Des auteurs comme le comte de Lalaing et le père Zantfliet parlent de la présence, avant l'incendie de Chambéry en 1532, sur le Linceul de sang frais, donc rouge, « comme si la chose était faite d'aujourd'hui... ».*

*On remarque dans plusieurs copies du Linceul (Lierre, Lisbonne, Guadalupe, Alcoy, Navarette, Rome) quatre groupes de taches de couleur rouge. L'importance de ces taches rouges est confirmée par leur présence sur le manuscrit Pray et dans les livres de Dutch, Pignon et Paleotto. Il est remarquable que sur plusieurs copies exécutées après 1532, les réparations visibles de manière très frappante sur le Linceul, ne soient pas représentées. Après les réparations faites par les Pauvres Dames Clarisses en 1534, on ne parle plus du sang rouge... et on peut se demander pourquoi les soeurs n'ont pas couvert ces trous...*

*L'auteur a étudié l'histoire de la copie de Lierre, datée de 1516, conservée dans l'église Saint-Gommaire de Lierre (Belgique) et en particulier, les taches rouges sur la copie... Il les compare avec les taches autour des trous du Linceul.*

*Selon don Tonelli, don Fossati et le Professeur Jérôme Lejeune, le peintre a vu dans ces taches, non des brûlures, mais des taches de sang. La question est : pourquoi le peintre a-t-il cru que ces taches étaient des taches de sang ? Les photographies en « transparence » du Linceul, prises par Barrie Schwartz (STURP. 1978) montrent très clairement que certains trous sont en réalité des taches, avec le même aspect que les taches de sang sur le bras et le dos de la figure sur le Linceul. Une photographie, prise pendant les travaux de 1978, (M. Evans, V. Miller et aussi A. Ghia) montre le bord d'un de ces trous. A côté du bord foncé, on voit des taches rouges.*

*Selon le Professeur Raës, le cliché de M. Evans ne montre pas une brûlure, mais une tache provenant d'un liquide qui s'est propagé suivant une direction définie. Ce liquide est probablement du sang, versé pendant l'ensevelissement du Christ. Cette hypothèse, pour certains peut-être faible, est comparable aux hypothèses sur le sang, les monnaies et les caractères sur le Linceul.*

*Si d'autres examens scientifiques confirment l'hypothèse que ces taches sont réellement du sang, on pourrait y voir une confirmation de l'authenticité du Linceul.*