

# New evidence for the image on the Shroud

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**B**ecause of the importance of the image of Jesus on the Holy Shroud, it was folded in the early centuries so as to display a portrait, and thus the diagrams, (Fig. 1) show how the linen was folded so as to present the face; it was then recessed in the Edessa reliquary, diagram 'e'. More evidence of this Shroud portrait display in history is documented as follows.<sup>1</sup>

It is at the ancient Byzantine city of Chersonesus in the Crimea, while excavating a church in 1897, that a sil-

ver reliquary casket was found, which is now kept at the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.<sup>2</sup> In the centre of one side of the casket is a roundel, (Fig. 2) about 1.6 inches (4 cm) in diameter. This is a very early copy of the Shroud portrait and precisely dated by the control stamps to Justinian 1 (527-565) and to between A.D. 550-565. The reliquary was probably made in Constantinople, and shortly after the time that the chronicler Evagrius says that the Image of Edessa was responsible for saving Edessa from the Persians in A.D. 544.

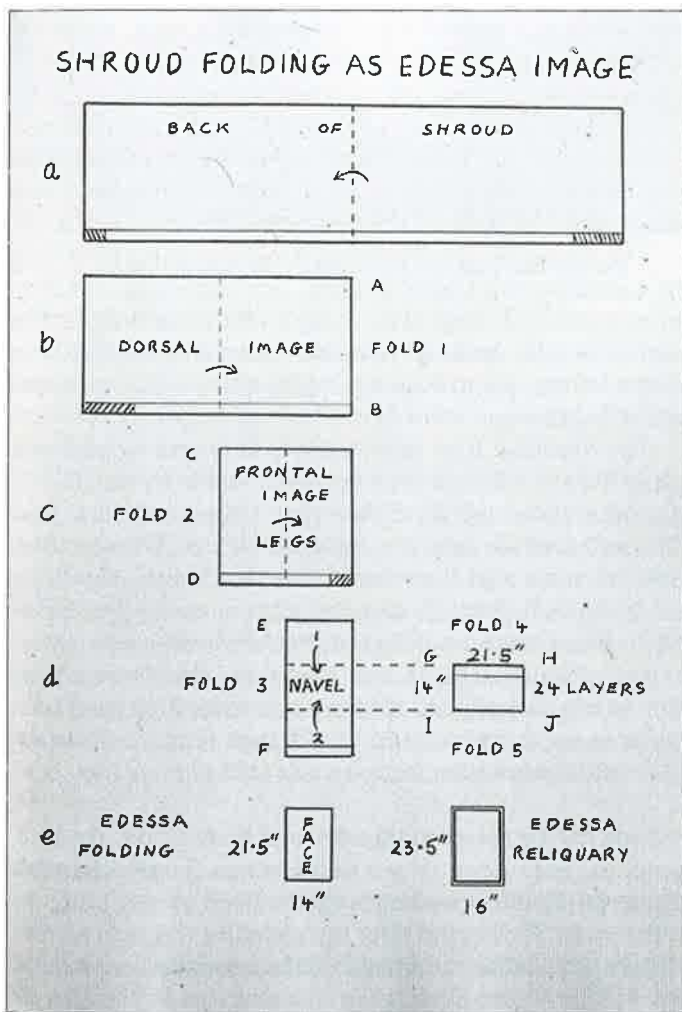


Fig. 2 : The Shroud Face on the Chersonesus Reliquary; AD 550, Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Inv. n.X-249 (Photo. Hermitage Museum)

Now a key point on this casket image copy, which is also found on the 6th century vase of Emesa in Syria, is the hairstyle. Note the flowing down to both shoulders, particularly the thicker set on the viewer's left. It is this particular hair configuration that has been taken from the control stamp of the Shroud, as will be shortly explained.

But antecedent to this portrait roundel, and the Evagrius account of the image, there is an important record

Fig. 1 : Edessa folding of the Shroud

of the Shroud in Edessa. It has been erroneously stated by historians that Jacob of Serugh does not mention the Edessa Image. Jacob died in A.D. 521, but in the early part of that century he wrote the life of Daniel of Galash, and here, (Fig. 3) is the record of Daniel's visit to see the Image of Christ in the early 400s. The literal translation of the Syriac is : "image of the Messiah", for the West it reads "image of Christ".



*Fig. 3 : Record of the Shroud Image at Edessa in the early 5th century. Syriac MS 235, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, folio 165a col. 2*

This means that the Shroud face was venerated and accessible to pilgrims at the beginning of the 5th century, and also after the latest date for the composition of the Syriac Doctrine of Addai, which was certainly extant before A.D. 400, and where it is recorded that Abgar placed the portrait, in the first instance, in one of the buildings of his palaces.

The record in the life of Daniel to the Shroud image in Edessa is a vital link and narrows the historical gap in the earliest centuries. There does not appear to be a published edition of the text or English translation at present, but there is a summary in French.<sup>3</sup>

Another relevant piece of evidence is a Greek MS that has been mistakenly placed in the 13th century, i.e. of John Skylitzes. I have always thought this MS must be earlier, and when investigated, I found that researchers had put the matter right.<sup>4</sup> It is mid-12th century; and this gives the miniatures in the MS the authority of being created when Constantinople was intact, and well before the relic dispersal of 1204.

It is one miniature on folio 115v, that a detail here depicts the Emperor Leo VI (886-912) in the metatorion, a royal chamber, of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople. This miniature is a part of Shroud history (as that of fol. 131 which records the unfolded Shroud from Edessa).

Here the emperor is seen reading the letter left for him to find; it contains an attack on icons and it was left deliberately by the very icon that is most sacred - the Holy Image of Christ of Edessa, which in Leo VI's day would still be in Edessa, but Leo has this copy hanging in the

royal chamber. When the miniature was painted the artist would have a good reference; the original Edessa Image had been in Constantinople for many a year. But what makes the miniature representation significant here, is the size of the icon's frame, shown clearly hanging up and reminiscent of Robert de Clari's description when he saw the original reliquary in 1203.

The Shroud reliquary of Edessa is known to measure, from the 1740 Paris Ste-Chapelle inventory and engraving, 23.5 x 16 x 3 inches (60 x 41 x 8 cm), and this is now witnessed by the 12th century Skylitzes miniature, which is proportionally almost identical to the reliquary in size; the face is taken to be life-size. Again, the hair flows down to the shoulders, predominantly on the anatomical right, with the gaze of the eyes to the viewer's right, an attempt to follow the image on the Shroud. This miniature clearly records how the Shroud was preserved as the Edessa portrait folded in its measured reliquary.

It is the documented history of the face of Jesus on the Shroud that takes me to the next icon - known as the Veronica, which is preserved in the Vatican Basilica of St Peter, Rome.

The most practical way to describe the Veronica is to refer to the replica made by Pietro Strozzi in 1617. The frame is very similar to this; in each corner of the Veronica there is a model bee, the emblem of the Barberini family. The overall dimensions are approx. 24.75 x 20.5 inches (63 x 52 cm). The width of the face at the widest point inside the aperture of the metal plate surrounds is 5 inches (12.7 cm), and from the top of the painted head to the bottom point of the beard, 10 inches (25.4 cm). This means that the portrait is life-sized.

The image of the Veronica is obscured because it is protected by two sheets of glass, one reinforced as Georgian wired polished plate, which can protect from fire and smoke for up to 30 minutes. Also, the centuries have darkened the paint, making it difficult to discern details at the moment.

The Veronica Icon is probably painted on wood,<sup>5</sup> judging from a patch of missing paint on the forehead; and over the top of the head black paint depicts the hairline. The traces of the face are obscured by a dark brown hue, and this must have increased since the Strozzi copy which is much lighter. Eventually, what is under the darkened surface may be detected, but obviously it is an attempt to imitate the Edessa Image i.e. the Shroud face; this is why it has been held in such veneration; and with some irony, as the original True Image is now also in the care of the Apostolic See.

Now to the image on the Shroud linen. First, the image of the umbilicus, (Fig. 4) This image clearly identifies the navel, and it is not made by the hand of man, it is not a drawing. The reason why the navel can be seen so distinctly is because the image contrast has been enhanced by a photocopier. So what is seen is there on the Shroud linen, it is not fabricated. The photocopy was made from a good quality Enrie photograph; and with this photograph,

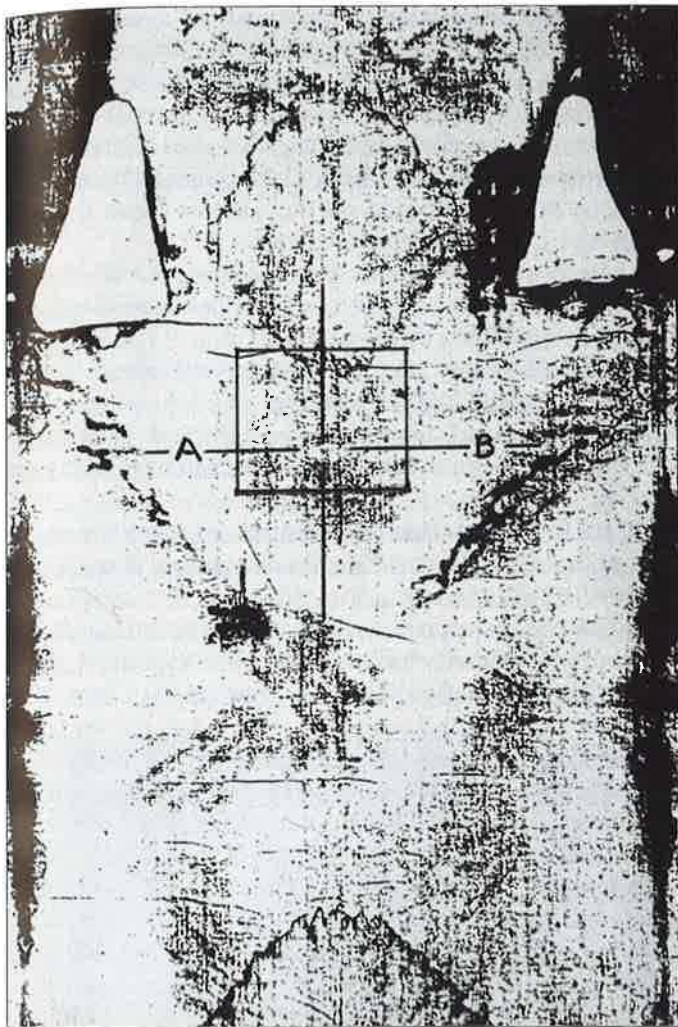


Fig. 4 : *The Umbilicus, photocopy of an Enrie print*

after some macrophotography using slide film, a good enlargement of the elliptical scar resulted, (Fig. 5) as you can see in the photographic positive. The umbilicus is definitely imaged on the Shroud linen and located where it would be expected to be.

The image of the umbilicus has raised the subject of the Virgin Birth; so what I say now is all that needs to be said without touching the natal and postnatal details of the Virgin Birth, in partu: - parturition would involve negotiating an intact hymenal membrane to reach the fossa navicularis, in this sense the delivery was not normal, the result of the conception being other than normal. In every other corporal aspect the birth was natural, as the image of the umbilical scar indicates: therefore there must have been an umbilical cord and placenta and a normal uterine gestation.

Next, the cause of some details recorded on the Shroud image from the head.

The flow of the hair has been depicted in paintings and mosaics as either long on the shoulders, or as some say in contradiction, shorter on other icons. But in fact one side of this hairdressing is nearly always longer and fuller than the other - and this is the important signature that is found on the Chersonesus and Emesa roundels

and on the Skylitzes icon etc. It is the anatomical left shoulder side because this is the side that the artist would be viewing on the Shroud, the photographic positive.

Now because the Shroud was folded under the chin and not removed during the image process, the underside of the bunched hair has registered, anatomical left side, (Fig. 6) just below the crease line that runs transversely under the chin. Because the hair is well forward here, the occipital image does not show so much hair on this side of the head; conversely the other side does, (Fig. 7) it flows down the back, but on the frontal image the hair has not registered on the shoulder because it has been swept back. There is a deliberate hairstyle arrangement of one side, the anatomical right, being swept back over the shoulder and down the back.<sup>6</sup>

Another trait is found on paintings of the eyes. The eyes are depicted in many instances as gazing to the viewer's right and down a few degrees. This is discerned on the Shroud, where the image imprint appears to stare to the viewer's right and downwards a few degrees, on the photographic positive; the eyes have been regarded as open. It is an unmistakable attempt to interpret the image by icon artists.

It can be noted that artists have sometimes reversed the direction of the eyes and the hair; one such copy

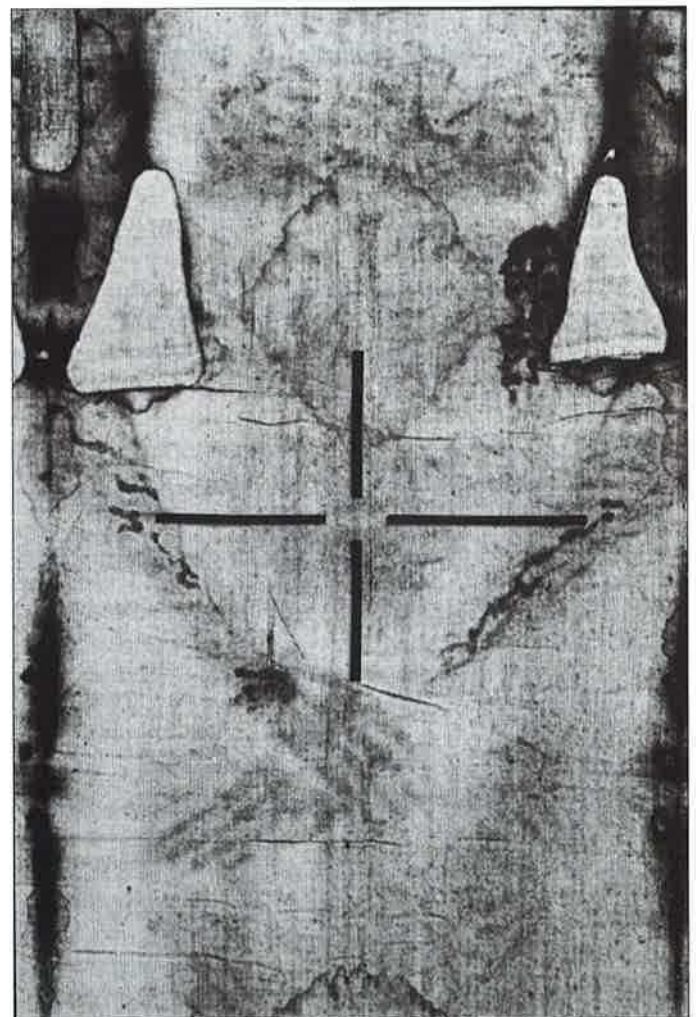
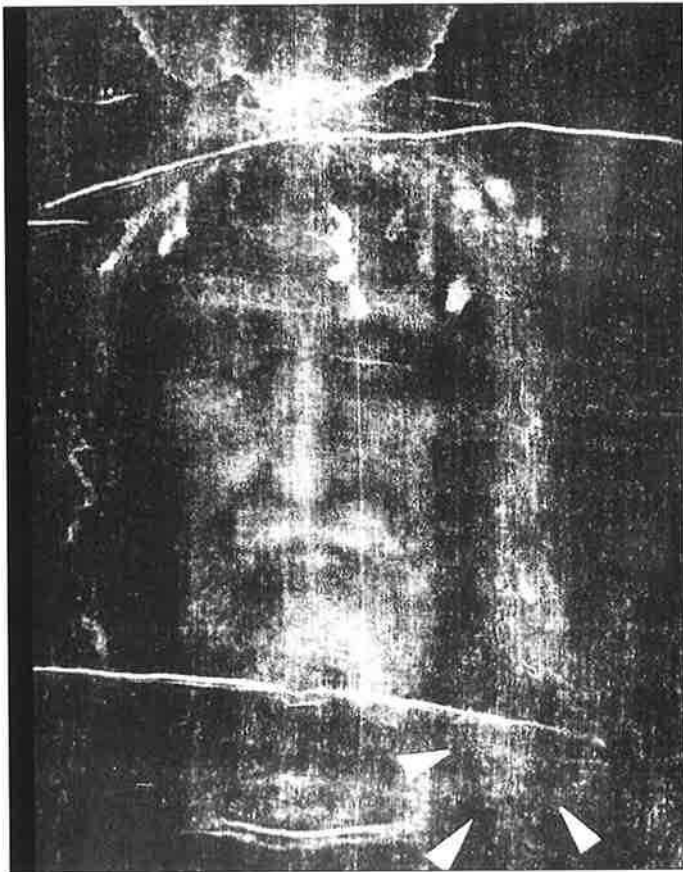


Fig. 5 : *The Umbilicus, from an Enrie print*



*Fig. 6 : Hair, imaged at right angle to the face*

would have generated more. It is probable that at least a few artists realised that if the tradition of the image being transferred to the sacred cloth from contact with the face was correct, it would in fact be a mirror image and thus reversed. And there is the Holy Tile, which presumably would have to be a reversed image. But the most natural response is to copy directly from what is seen on the Shroud face.

On the Image of the Body of Christ . Because the Holy Shroud was unwrapped at the sides of the body and draped and held at the correct elevation to receive the image, and to exclude the sides of the body from imaging the linen, extensions have been created when the cloth is viewed 2-dimensionally i.e. when perfectly flat. The extra material that followed the frontal contours extended the area used for registration, in the same way that the cloth folded under the chin captured the Adam's apple and thereby moved the head away by over 1.5 inches (3.8 cm). The same procedure has also caused the image of the arms to float laterally; giving the impression that they are abnormally long and displaced.

Also, as the sides of the linen were held out after being unwrapped from the sides of the body, bloodstains from the anatomical right elbow are seen alongside and not on the image of the body, and as physician Gilbert Lavoie et al. have correctly found, bloodstains from the sides of the face are now seen adjacent to the face in front of the image of the hair.

During the image process, the arms were in a natural position and held in place at the centre of the body by the anatomical left hand; the fingers on top and the thumb under the right wrist. This is the only position that conforms with the topographical relief around the hands and with practical posture, and consequently there is no image of a thumb.

These details recorded on the Shroud mean that the following speculations are incorrect:

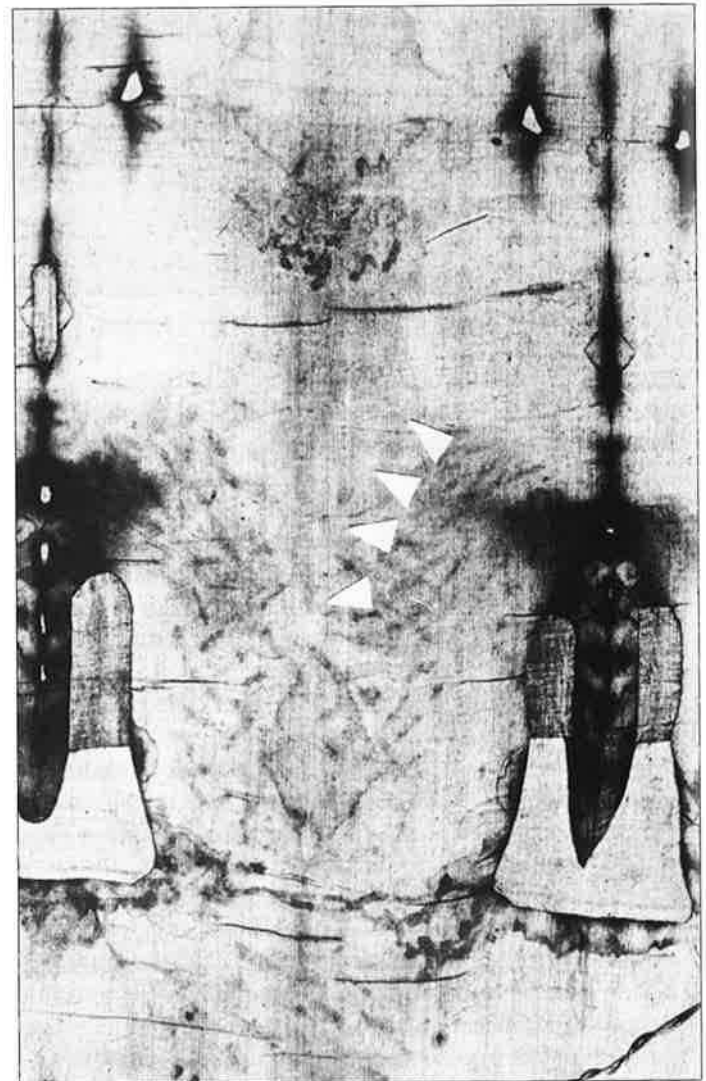
There is a theory that has persisted for several decades and more, that the body in the linen dematerialised and passed through the enwrapped cloth: this did not happen.

There is a theory that the enwrapped linen collapsed into the body: this did not happen.

There is a theory that the enshrouded body rose to the vertical position and then imaged the linen: this did not happen.

There is a theory that the body moved when the image was being created, causing a double image: this did not happen.

What did happen is definitively recorded on the Shroud; some details have already been explained, other details remain for the appropriate time.



*Fig. 7 : Hair, predominant on one side of occipital image*

So for now, the Holy Shroud bears witness to the truth; it is the imprimatur of the Father because it is imprinted with the Word made flesh. This is the evidence that has been preserved on the Shroud, to comfort believers and to confound unbelievers. Without the image the Shroud would still bear the bloodstains and it would still be the

1st century burial sheet of Jesus; but with the image of his whole body, it becomes a prearranged verification of all that is recorded in the Scriptures and of the Resurrection. Therefore, the image must have had its purpose then, in history, now, and for the time that is to come. ■

## Notes

- 1) See *Shroud News* (Ed. Rex Morgan, Runciman Press, Manly, Australia) No. 100, Feb. 1997, pp. 46-51, and No. 74, Dec. 1992, p. 12, Ian Dickinson, for details of the Edessa reliquary and Shroud folding.
- 2) For details of the reliquary, E. C. Dodd, "Byzantine Silver Stamps", *Dumbarton Oaks*, Washington, D. C., 1961, pp. 86-87. There is a résumé in French, N. Belaev, "Le reliquaire de Chersonese" in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, III, Prague, 1929, pp. 131-132, article in Russian, pp. 115-131, pls XVIII, XIX.
- 3) F. Nau, "Hagiographie Syriaque" in *Revue de l'orient chrétien*, Vol. 15, Paris, 1910, "Histoire de Daniel" pp. 60-62, introduction, pp. 53-55. I plan to make contact with Andrew Palmer of S.O.A.S., London University, to see if he is going to publish the Life of Daniel, indicated in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 12, 1988, P. 129 in his article "The inauguration anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: a new edition and translation with historical and architectural notes and a com-

parison with a contemporary Constantinopolitan kontakion", pp. 117-167. The Life of Daniel is in Syriac MS 235, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, fols 160v-175, and in MS 12/17, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Damascus, No. 27, fol. 99a col. 3 for the "image of Christ" (fol. 165a col. 2 in Paris MS). Daniel of Galash (Glosh) died 2nd May A.D. 439.

4) Ihor Sevcenko, "The Madrid Manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes in the Light of its New Dating", in "Byzanz und der Westen", ed. I. Hutter, Vienna, 1984, pp. 117-130.

5) Or has a wood backing.

6) Whether this was how the hair was normally worn is not the issue, this is how it was dressed by Joseph and Nicodemus under difficult circumstances; they would naturally try to return some order to the blood matted hair.

## References

For more details on some of the topics see *L'Identification Scientifique de l'Homme du Linceul Jésus de Nazareth*, Actes du Symposium Scientifique - CIELT - Rome 1993, Ed. F.X. de Guibert, Paris, 1995, pp. 169-172, 307-311.

## De nouvelles évidences concernant l'image du Linceul

Détails d'une cassette reliquaire datée avec certitude de l'époque 550 après Jésus-Christ et ciselée avec l'image du visage du Christ du Linceul d'Edesse.

Documents syriens (la vie de Daniel de Galash par Jacob de Serugh) d'où on déduit que des pèlerins vénéraient l'image du Linceul d'Edesse au début du Vème siècle.

Détails d'une miniature du XIIème siècle montrant l'image d'Edesse suspendue à Sainte Sophie à Constantinople. Cette miniature s'assortit aux dimensions qu'avait le reliquaire conservé jusqu'en 1791 à la Sainte Chapelle à Paris.

Autres détails ajoutés à l'étude publiée dans le n°1 de la RILT (juin 1996) au sujet de l'image de l'ombilic inscrite sur le Linceul. Le nombril est irréfutablement inscrit sur le tissu.

Explication de certaines interprétations faites par des artistes qui ont peint la tête inscrite sur le Linceul.

Commentaires de divers détails de l'image du corps du Christ inscrite sur le Linceul.

L'image du Linceul répond à une intention divine.