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THOMAS & THE CENACLE

RECONSIDERED

by

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ABSTRACT

We would do well to remember the storytelling technique often lying behind the biblical accounts so familiar to twentieth century Christians that the latter mistakenly take them as empirical reports of the events which they describe. In reality, as Donald Hagner so cogently reminds us, these documents:

are *theological* and *interpretive*, designed to elicit faith within readers...Through their retrospection we are enabled to comprehend the significance of Jesus' words and deeds in a way that the actual participants could not have...At the same time, however, they are recording history....In the gospels, then, we have both theology and history....**The gospels are like slow-action, analytical replays with expert commentary seen *after* the conclusion of the game...** One might add to the force of the analogy by pointing out that the true significance of certain plays can only be known after the game is over. Now they are often seen in a new light, their meaning dependent on what subsequently transpired.

The gospels are truer portraits of Jesus than they would have been had they only given us bare facts." **The irony is that to the extent the evangelists go beyond "the bare facts" they give us what in the last analysis is a more accurate portrait of Jesus and his significance.**¹ [Emphasis added.]

This paper is based on the conclusions of biblical scholars Gregory Riley and Eberhard Auer. Riley and others have shown that the account of Thomas in the Upper Room or Cenacle [**John 20:24-29**] is in reality a late first century addition by the editor(s) "to an already complete cycle of post-resurrection events" described in the Fourth Gospel.ⁱⁱ Auer's contribution consists of offering a fascinating alternative to the standard exegesis of the appearance to Thomas by including in his analysis of this account room for both the presence and influence of the Shroud in the development of this pericope.

THOMAS: THE CENACLE AND THE SHROUD RECONSIDERED

When it comes to manifestations of the Resurrected Jesus, biblical scholars long have wrestled with the problem of discovering an explanation which would account for the sheer variety and diversity of these “appearances.” Professor Willi Marxsen summarizes the problem as follows:

There is a certain amount of common ground. All the way through, **the concepts are highly ‘material’**...It is almost as if the dead Jesus had returned to life in his old body. It could probably be said with some degree of certainty that this was at least the way in which the evangelists conceived the resurrection; at all events they would so have answered if they had been asked.

Yet this impression is contradicted by other features. Although there is identity, **Jesus is not necessarily recognizable (cf. the Emmaus disciples, Mary Magdalene the fishermen on the Sea of Tiberias). Here the eyes of the witnesses have always to be opened first; and so we are bound to ask - why was this necessary if Jesus appeared in his old body?**

....The point that is brought out here is that the one whom the disciples saw is identical with the crucified. But again the question is - why does the identity have to be expressly demonstrated?

....Thus although the stories always have to do with the Jesus who returned from the grave his identity is not immediately ascertainable. It is recognizable after ‘their eyes were opened’; or it has to be expressly stressed; or the doubt has to be overcome.

.... The ‘body’ of Jesus is conceived of in different terms at the different appearances. On the one hand we have the ‘material’ features (the tomb was empty; ...he can be touched); on the other, Jesus can pass through closed doors. The two are not easily reconcilable. And in this connection we must ask ourselves where the evangelist thought the risen Jesus actually was.

....**If one is *interested* in the risen body of Jesus, if it is important to convey an accurate idea of it, then one surely cannot silently pass the problem by?ⁱⁱⁱ [Emphasis added.]**

Today most modern Christians believe that these encounters were literally with a flesh and blood physical “body”. Though pious and traditional, such a view fails to consider the historical development of this doctrine in the early Church. As described by Gregory Riley:

It has been less often noted how **late a development in early Christian history was the doctrine of the physical resurrection of Christ**, and how common the “heresy” of its rejection in the Church. The original Christian idea was, if not identical with, then far more in accord with “spiritual resurrection” and “Greek” ideas than with mundane restoration of corpses... Paul declared that Jesus had appeared to many irrefutable witnesses (1 Cor 15:3ff), but in a transformed **“spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:44)**. This body was a “dwelling, from heaven” made by God and given in exchange for the earthly body (2 Cor 5:1-4), for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50). Mark, the earliest canonical Gospel, contains no physical demonstration of Jesus’ postmortem body. All three Synoptic Gospels preserve the saying that the resurrected believers would become like the angels (Mark 12:25 and parallels)....

Opinion among Jews was similar, but ill-defined and among some groups mixed with ideas of a general resurrection of differing types. The contrasting and exclusive pair, often seen in secondary literature, of “the Jewish belief in physical resurrection” as opposed to “the Greek idea of immortality of the soul” is far too simplistic to substantiate.^v Greeks certainly did not believe in physical resurrection, but neither did many Jews; even among the Pharisees and Essenes...^{iv} **[Emphasis added.]**

This paper attempts to reconsider Thomas’s encounter in the Cenacle with the Risen Christ in light of the potential role of the Shroud in the creation of this legend. The basis for this approach stems from a paper on the subject by Eberhard Auer which Dr. John Jackson pointed out to me some years ago. Subsequent research has revealed certain other “spy clues” which I hope will buttress the case for such an hypothesis.

Before dealing with Auer’s theory, consider the following:

1. Western Christians may be surprised to learn that at one point Eusebius (early fourth century) attests to the significance of Thomas by listing his name first among the Savior’s “holy apostles and disciples” - ahead of Andrew, ahead of John and even ahead of Peter (*H.E.* III.1.11).^v In Eastern tradition, it is the *Doctrine of Addai* (ca. 400) which tells us that it was Thomas who dispatched Jude Thaddaeus (Syr. Addai) to King Abgar of Edessa with the sacred linen bearing a likeness of Jesus [*i.e.* the Shroud]. And it is in the fourth century that Edessa became known as “the City of Thomas” and the repository of his bones.^{vi} By the time of the tenth century’s Court of Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ “Story of the Image of Edessa” (ca. A.D. 945), In Chapter 6, Jesus Himself is alleged to have directed Thomas to approach the courier Ananais while the latter is attempting to draw His portrait and bring the “letter” which he is bearing from King Abgar of Edessa^{vii} Thus does the later document combine the legends of both the *portrait* and the *letter*. [Note that the subsequent

alleged “letter” or written reply by Jesus is often deemed an oral response put into writing by the messenger Ananias.]

2. Consider the following intriguing passage from the *Lament of the Virgin* [taken from the 5th c. *Gospel Of Gamaliel*]:

The Virgin uttered this affectionate wailing' in the house of John when -they brought to her the sad news of her Son. Then she began to look for one of His holy disciples to walk with her, but she did not find any, because all had fled and forsaken Him from fear of the Jews. She asked for Peter to accompany her, and she was informed that from his fear of the High Priest he had denied her Son, saying, " I do not know Him," and that he had gone and hidden himself from Him. She asked for James, the brother of the Lord, and she was informed that he had fled and left Him on the mount where He was seized. She asked for Andrew, and she was informed that he had never come with Him to town at all. **She asked for Thomas, and she was informed that he had thrown down his garments and fled...**^{viii} [Emphasis added.]

The value of the above citation is made all the more significant when one becomes aware of studies by John Knox and Albert Vanhoye who independently conclude that have long contended that the out-of-place incident in Mark (14:51-52) describing is in reality a proleptically placed reference to the **empty Shroud** and the **naked body** which it once contained. **The passage reads:** ⁵¹And a young, man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body; and they seized him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked. (RSV) [*Italic added.*] (Note: The *Scholars Version* translation renders it as “⁵¹ And a young man was following him, wearing a **shroud** over his nude body, and they grab him.⁵² But he dropped the **shroud** and ran away **naked.**”^{ix} More recently R. Alan Culpepper in his “Commentary” and “Reflections” on “The Gospel of Luke” takes an approach which considers a tri-fold interpretation of this “event” which allows for its being: 1. An actual event in the life of the earthly Jesus; 2. A proleptically placed post-resurrection “event”; or 3. “The creation of the early church to affirm the church’s confession of Jesus as the exalted Lord.”^x

3. In a previous paper, I have called attention to the significance of Thomas and the school bearing his name and their respective influence on the thought modes and writings from Edessa and attempted to make a case can be made to support the traditional view that despite the generally accepted position that Thaddaeus/Addai was the original apostle who evangelized Edessa, one can make a that it was really Thomas who did so. When later certain Docetic elements in the literature from the school associated with his name his name, they

may have caused Thomas' initial role to be remanded to the more obscure Jude Thaddaeus/Addai.

The second half of this paper explores the interrelationship of the biblical Thomas, that disciple's connection with the Shroud and the city of Edessa, the school in that region bearing his name, and a suggested interpretation of key passages in the *Hymn of the Soul/Pearl* which reveal both their potential dependence upon the Shroud and the latter's significance at an early date.^{xi}

All of the above cited factors point to both the significance of Thomas's role and his connection with the Shroud at an early point in the development of the fledgling Church.

Thomas and the Cenacle

By way of background, I believe the reader can profit by learning how modern biblical scholars – those with no concern and/or pro Shroud stance – are interpreting John 20: 24-29.

John 20:24-29

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and *stood* among them, and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put your hand and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God." ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have *seen* me? Blessed are those who have not *seen* and yet believe." [Note: Sindonologists will recall that in the alleged "letter" of Jesus to Abgar the initial sentence reads "Blessed art thou, who hast believed in me without having seen me."]^{xiii}

Let us begin our reconsideration by noting that the Fourth Gospel is the sole source for the "encounter" of - or "appearance" to - the Risen Christ with the "Doubting Thomas." True, both **Luke 24:13-43** and **I John 1:1** (by implication) make allusion to handling/touching the *hands* and *feet* of the Resurrected Jesus; but it is the Fourth Gospel alone which specifically names Thomas as part of such a meeting. Note further that it is only this source which mentions *the wound in the side* (cf. **19:34; 20:20**) - a significant dynamic of the crucifixion and a very prominent bloodstain on the Shroud.

Strangely enough in the Lucan account (**24:33-40**), there is not the slightest clue as to the Fourth Gospel's stress that Thomas was absent at the initial meeting. Here in his

parallel passage, Luke clearly states that when on the evening of the first day of the week "the **eleven** gathered together" - a number which surely included Thomas.- **all of the disciples were present except Judas who had committed suicide.**

Returning to the Johannine account, Gregory Riley astutely observes that:

This information comes not only as a surprise, but as an anticlimax. What is more unsettling is that it strikes one as an impossibility: Jesus has just commissioned the disciples, "sending" them as he himself was sent (**20:21**); he has fulfilled his Promise of the Paraclete, and granted them the spirit (**14:16; 20:22**); he has given them the authority to forgive and retain sins. Their training is complete. They have now been constituted as full representatives of Christ in the world. And all this Thomas has missed by his absence... [yet] the reader is not told of a subsequent, private commissioning, inspiration, and authorization of Thomas.^{xiii} **[Emphasis added.]**

Riley's observation seems to be confirmed by the *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle* (5th to 7th century) where the same contradictory sequence is repeated. Here on the occasion of Jesus' "ascension" to the seventh heaven from the Mount of Olives each of the apostles - including Thomas and Jude Thaddaeus - is individually blessed by the Risen Lord. But, having given this account, the Book goes on to relate:

Thomas was not with them, for he had departed for his city, hearing that his son Siophanes (Theophanes?) was dead; it was the seventh day since the death when he arrived. He went to the tomb and raised him in the name of Jesus. Siophanes told him of the taking of his soul by Michael: how it sprang from his body and lighted on the hand of Michael who *wrapped it in a fine linen cloth....* Then Thomas mounted on a cloud and it took him to the Mount of Olives and the apostles, who told him of the visit of Jesus; and he would not believe. Bartholomew admonished him. **Then Jesus appeared and made Thomas touch his wounds: and departed into heaven. This is the second time that he showed himself to his disciples after he had risen from the dead.**^{xiv} **[Emphasis and *Italic* added.]**

Here we encounter both the inconsistency of Thomas's refusal to believe in Christ's resurrection after he had raised his own son "in the name of Jesus" and a "special appearance to Thomas after the "ascension". So easy is it to become absorbed in the plethora of hymns, blessing, salutations and prayers stressed by the author that one may fail to note that once again *resurrection is associated with being wrapped in a **fine linen cloth.***

Together with other scholars like A. Jaubert^{xv}, Riley concludes that:

Thomas is an archetype, an example representing aspects of spirituality applicable beyond the time of Jesus. John makes use of Thomas, clearly to speak

to his own community in the later part of the first century.... Indeed, the very time of the appearance of Thomas, the eighth day after Easter, has been seen to signify "the time of the Church"^{xvi}the pericope of the Doubting Thomas is a redactional addition to an already complete cycle of post-resurrection events.^{xvii}

Barnabas Lindars would go so far as to postulate that what the Fourth Gospel has really done in this case is to dramatize a theme of doubt which originally was present in the account of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearance to all of the remaining disciples.^{xviii}

When one factors in a consideration of the Shroud's role in this story, he or she will soon discover in the section on the wounds why the late Raymond E. Brown concluded

...in the Thomas story there is **more explicit concentration on the nature of Jesus' body** than there is in the narrative of the *appearance to the disciples*. This fits **our theory that the Thomas story is a secondary elaboration**.

Perhaps the primary significance of the stress on the wounds of Jesus in vs. 20 is that they establish the continuity between the resurrection and the crucifixion.^{xix} [Emphases and *italic* added.]

Before describing Auer's hypothesis, we have now attempted to establish three key elements in our reconsideration of what may well lie behind Thomas' "encounter" in the Cenacle with the Risen Christ:

1. The nature of the "Body" was not necessarily one of "flesh and blood".
2. Modern biblical scholars like Riley, Jaubert, Lindars and R.E. Brown point to the fact that John 20:24–29 – though probably based on a kernel of some *bona fide* historical "event" – is in reality an embellished account created late in the 1st century to address those Christians who had not seen Jesus. One might even go so far as to speculate that the School of John, writing later in the 1st century - not having been an actual eyewitness of the Shroud - creates the "Thomas-in-the-Cenacle" story to refute charges against Thomas' belief in solely a "spiritual resurrection" while making their own case for a literal "physical resurrection". What they may have failed to realize is that the image(s) on the linen Shroud is (are) "physical" and can be "touched".
3. The significance and impact of Thomas and the school bearing his name and their respective influence on the thought modes and writings in the early church. As late as the 5th to the 7th century apocryphal books like the *Lament of the Virgin* and the *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle* testify to Thomas' prominence

and either by alluding to his connection with the Shroud or by verifying Christ's Resurrection by "touching" His wounds.

Eberhard Auer's Thesis

Eberhard Auer offers a fascinating alternative to the standard exegesis of the appearance to Thomas by including room in his analysis for both the presence and influence of the Shroud in the development of this account. In his *The Ignored Witness of the Third Day*, Auer makes a case for the Shroud's being shown initially only under very special and protected circumstances - "hidden from all enemies... shown only in the most intimate circle of close friends of the Lord."^{xx}

C.H. Dodd unknowingly helps set the stage for Auer's hypothesis by noting that this scene in which Thomas figures so prominently

is different from most post-resurrection appearances in the gospels, in that a specific individual is cited as a witness to the facts... and **his evidence is enhanced in value by his initial skepticism...** [**One of the scene's three main motives is**] **the relation of faith and sight...** In affirming the **quasi-physical character of the appearances**, John goes beyond Matthew, but not so far as Luke, who says that Jesus ate with His disciples after the Resurrection (xxiv.42, Acts x.41)^{xxi} [**Emphasis added.**]

In John as in Luke, there is an obvious interest in the evidential value of the post-resurrection appearances (**John xx.16, 27,29**, and so in the appendix, **xxi.12-13**; cf. **Luke xxiv.30-1, 34-35,43**)... **Why does the author of the "spiritual gospel" ...insist so strongly on the quasi-physical character of His resurrection?** (I say quasi-physical, since in spite of xx.20,27, the resurrection body of Christ passes through *closed doors*, and He is not immediately recognizable even by his most intimate friends, **xx.19,14-15**; and so in the appendix, **xxi.4**)^{xxii} [**Emphasis added.**]

Willi Marxsen rightly observes that:

The 'body' of Jesus is conceived of in different terms at the different appearances. On the one hand we have the 'material' features (the tomb was empty, Jesus eats, he can be touched), on the other, Jesus passes through *closed doors*. The two are not easily reconcilable.^{xxiii} [**Emphasis added.**]

At this point one should consider carefully the insight by Raymond Brown who argues that:

Despite the reason John gives for locking the doors (*i.e.* for fear of the Jews [**Jn 20:19**]), many scholars see another motive behind the description, namely **John wants us to think that Jesus' body could pass through **closed doors**...** Some would find a parallel for such a spiritual

attribute of Jesus' risen body in Luke's description of his sudden appearance in front of the Eleven in Jerusalem (**Luke xxiv 31,36**), although Luke does not mention that the disciples were closed in. The story of the empty tomb may reflect an attitude toward the properties of Jesus' body; for **the insistence that the stone was rolled or moved away seems to imply that the body emerged through an open entrance.**^{xxiv} [Emphasis added.]

But is Brown's analysis the only - or even the most salient explanation - behind this description of closed doors? Thorough exegesis of scripture requires not only an examination of the actual words of the passage being studied; but also - when possible - a consideration of the *intent* of the author when writing same. Once the presence of the Shroud is allowed as an underlying and significant factor, then the phrases "for fear of the Jews" and "closed doors" may well be indicative of an entirely different intent on the author's part. As early as 1936 in an unpublished manuscript entitled "Reconciliation of the Shroud with the Gospels", Theodora Bates Cogswell asked:

Can we wonder that the Apostles and their companions anxiously hid away from the world at large this record of their Lord? Is it strange that they made no open mention of it in the widely circulated Gospels and Epistles which were sure to fall under hostile eyes? ...Had the Shroud been openly mentioned in the Acts or Epistles as if it were still existing, undoubtedly the Roman authorities would have instituted a determined hunt for it...[whereas] the Shroud..., if not widely heralded and officially labeled, could pass through changes and hazards that probably would have engulfed an elaborate portrait or relic of any intrinsic value... [Through the years] references to the Shroud have been overlooked by translators who were not on the alert for such material.^{xxv}

Now in addition to the Apostles' for their own personal safety, the "fear of the Jews" may also reveal their trepidation that this precious and unique "textile testimony to the Resurrection" may be seized and destroyed. As is so often the case in the Fourth Gospel, seemingly straight forward phrases may have more than one intended meaning. Yes, the doors are closed for "fear of the Jews", but that fear is both for personal safety and to insure the survival of the Shroud.

And there is one more possible "spy clue" arguing for the presence of the Shroud in the Cenacle. It is found in *The History of the Likeness of Christ.*^{xxvi} According to E.A. Wallis Budge,

It illustrates the curious belief in the power of pictures or figures to **transform** themselves, under certain conditions, into the living bodies of the beings whom they represented, which was current in Egypt some thousands of years before Christ and which probably passed from that country into Syria in the early history of Christianity, and it reveals the existence of an unusual superstition among the Syrian Christians.^{xxvii}

Though styled a “History” it “manifestly belong[s] to the very large section of Syriac literature which contains the Apocrypha of the New Testament.”^{xxviii} Possibly “current in Syria and Palestine [and may date] as early as the end of the IVth century of our era...”^{xxix} What is so intriguing about this work which blatantly borrows and weaves elements from the New Testament into its text is the following section dealing with the healing of a paralytic:

And it came to pass as they made an end (p. 199) of their prayers, **the doors were shut fast** [See Jn. 20:19] as afore time, and the seals stood in their places. And they "heard a voice which said unto them, “Depart in peace, O blessed men, and confirm yourselves in your faith, and fear not; everything that ye shall ask shall be [given] unto you, and I will be with you, and many people shall believe on Me through you.” [See Jn. 20:21] And it came to pass that, whilst they were standing and marvelling concerning the voice which was heard by them, suddenly the Angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and went **into the place where the likeness was**; and a **great earthquake** [Related only in Matt. 27:51 at the moment of Jesus’ death] took place. And the Angel took the **likeness** from where it was standing, **and he removed it, and no man hath ever seen it since.** [ARD: Strangely similar to the Shroud’s disappearance from the Empty Tomb on which this reconstruction may well be based.] And we wrote upon the door of that chamber, “Enter in, O priests, and people of the Jews, and look upon your shame; **for the likeness which ye placed here to make a mock of hath been lifted up into heaven, notwithstanding that the doors were shut fast.** [ARD: **Again, strangely similar to John’s account in 20:19-29 of the “appearance” to the Doubting Thomas.**] and that the seals remained in their places. For ye do not believe in Christ, even as your fathers did not believe in Him, when He rose from the grave and the seals stood unbroken upon it. And now, open ye, and come, and enter in, and see that He hath not allowed you to work your will upon **His glorious Form.**”^{xxx}

Auer's thesis that it is the Shroud which underlies the unique construction of this Thomas narrative found in **only Jn. 20:24-29** is based on his reading of the difference between the use of *túpon* (JbB@<) for *print* in **25a** and *topon* (J@B@<) for *mark* in **25b**. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* informs us that J@B@< “is read by Tish.[ner] instead of JbB@< in its second occurrence on the authority of **A** only, some old Lat. and Syr. Versions.”^{xxxi} However, Goppelt takes this to be the original version and even points to Ignatius' *Letter to the Magnesians 6,1* in support of such usage having been "a common slip.”^{xxxii} Given the nature and reality of the Shroud's Image(s) plus the Fourth Gospeller's mastery of language and its subtleties, let us re-explore this pericope for the possibility of a meaning conscientiously obscured to insure the Shroud's survival; but based on the very marks with which it was stained.

Goppelt defines JbB@ as follows:

- a. "What is stamped," "mark," ... "impress" ... which a seal leaves in wax...
 F64 , <J JbB@ , "image in a mirror";... (D BJI H .. JÜB@H "painted image"...
- b. "Mould," "hollow form" which leaves an impress... "model," ... and transf. ethical "example." But these senses are comparatively rare instead of the customary B D *, $\text{4}(\mu)$.
- c. If the stamp or impress is seen in and for itself as a form, we get the meaning "outline," "figure" ... also "basic features" ...^{xxxiii} [*Italic added.*] Goppelt even goes on to note that:

Whereas the etym. derivation from JÜBJT "to smite" is far less prominent in the meaning of JÜB@H than the idea of what is shaped, the reverse is true in respect of •<J4JLB@H .^{xxxiv}
[Emphasis added.]

Lastly, Arndt & Gingrich add one final clue in their definition of this key word. According to them, JÜB@ may also be defined as the ***form, figure or pattern*** "of the type given by God as an indication of the future, in the form of persons or things."^{xxxv}
[Emphasis added.]

Remember that at the beginning of this section Goppelt with Tischner reads **20:25b** as J@B@ (*mark*) rather than J-B@ (*print*). In later usage, J@B@H is a general term for *place*.

Auer contends that though the disciples are willing to accept the print (JLB@) or trace of the nails as sufficient proof of Jesus' resurrection, Thomas adamantly requires even more physical "proof" to convince himself of this truth. He must see the mark (J@B@) of the actual wounds. In Auer's own words:

No substitute like the Shroud with its J-B@ would suffice for Thomas. For this best-known doubter of all time, the source of belief must be "the Risen-Living Lord 'Himself' in full reality - only Him alone."^{xxxvi}

The Nature of the Encounter

Consider for a moment the details of the "encounter" as related in this passage. K. Kastner would even go so far as to cite **Jn. 20:27b**:

"...reach out your hand and place it in my **side**" as proof for his contention that the **risen Jesus** was **naked**... others judge that his side was covered with a loose garment beneath which one could reach... Loisy qualifies as naive the idea that there was still a gaping hole in the side of the body, but

one wonders if he would have also judged it naive had the risen body appeared with the wounds healed.^{xxxvii} **[Emphasis added.]**

It would seem that at the very least we have a Jesus who is either 1) naked at least to the waist or 2) clad in a robe whose sleeve has an armpit which extends to the hip in order to permit Thomas to “put ...[his] hand and place it in ...[Jesus’] side” as suggested in vs. 27.

For those not familiar with all of the findings of forensic pathology regarding the Shroud, it would do well at this point to recall that one of the most amazing discoveries from this field is that the blood clots on the Shroud are neither *smear*ed nor *broken*. N. Cinquemani, M.D. is quick to point out that this means that if the body had been removed or separated from the cloth,

breakage of the clots would emerge and the threads would be torn in many areas which is not the case. It would be impossible to explain the separation of the clots without any signs of breakage.^{xxxviii}

If one continues to pursue a literal interpretation of the Doubting Thomas' encounter with a real, physical "resurrected" Jesus (*i.e.* in the sense of flesh and blood), then that Jesus is either: **1.)** wearing a garment other than the Shroud which remained in the Empty Tomb after the Resurrection or **2.)** Having “physically” separated from the linen burial sheet, the latter should evidence signs of smearing or breaking. In other words, one can not have both a post-Resurrection “physical” body and a Shroud with undisturbed blood clots. Thus one cannot simultaneously proclaim both pathological empiricism and biblical literalism. However, one can so affirm both the results of the laboratory sciences and the presence and significance of the Shroud if he or she is willing to accept Riley's analysis stated above that the Doubting Thomas narrative was specifically written to deal with problems emerging in the fledgling Church towards the later part of the first century.

Yet again an unintended insight may point to the Shroud. While academic hubris and puritanical bias judge Kastner's hypothesis to be of little value, other scholars will recall that Nicholas Mesarites (A.D. 1201), keeper of the relic collection in Byzantium's Pharos Chapel, describes "the sindon with the burial linens...[as] defying decay because it wrapped *the mysterious naked dead body* [of Christ] after the Passion"^{xxxix} **[Italic added.]** Recall that the *Acts of John* (2nd -3rd c.) depict John's description of Jesus at the "transfiguration" as follows:

I saw him **not dressed in clothes at all** [*i.e.* nude], **but stripped** of those <that> we (usually) saw (upon him), and **not like a man at all...** and I never saw his eyes closing, but **always open** **[Emphasis added.]**^{xl}

Here one can begin to discern the emergence of a pattern: **1)** The risen Jesus is naked; **2)** He continues to bear the wounds associated with the Crucifixion and may even

exhibit the "oversized eyes" of the Shroud which were misread by the iconographers as being "open"; 3) If the actual basis for the pericope of vss. 24-28 is Thomas' encounter with the Image(s) on the Shroud as proposed by Eberhard Auer later in this section, then the apparent disparity of a "spiritual" body known to Paul and the "physical" one which came to be stressed by the early church are not in conflict at all. Rather, what initially appears to be two diametrically opposed concepts of the "resurrected body" is in reality an attempt to describe the nature of the bodily image(s) which simultaneously is(are) both *physical* and *spiritual* (i.e. "ghostly", like a shade, etc.).

How well titled is Riley's *Resurrection Reconsidered*, though I am quite certain that he never "considered" it to be re-evaluated in terms of real Shroud in a purposefully composed narrative of the Doubting Thomas. I will quote a significant portion of his "Summary and Conclusions" precisely because it makes a strong case for just such a possible interpretation.

Finally, the picture of the Doubting Thomas in John is shown to correspond well with the Thomas literature as a whole. All three of the major Thomas documents preserved, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Book of Thomas* and the *Acts of Thomas* are consistent in their denigration of the body, and their denial of physical resurrection... The *Gospel of Thomas* declares that no one will be able to raise his body. The *Book of Thomas* pronounces woe upon, and assigns to eternal punishment, those who hold future hope for the body. The *Acts of Thomas*, while containing many "orthodox" interpolations and revisions, nevertheless presents a like picture, and closes with a similar scene similar to that in the Gospel Easter stories; yet in the scene in *the Acts* the body of the twin brother of Jesus remains in the grave, while his soul ascends to heaven. This is supported, among other passages, by one of the most famous poems in Gnostic Christian literature, the *Hymn of the Pearl*, which describes the archetypical journey of the soul for the Thomas disciple: the soul descends into a body, and abandons it upon return to the heavenly realms.^{xlii}

Some like Marcus Dods would even go so far as to argue that:

The test proposed by Thomas shows that he had witnessed the crucifixion and that the death and its circumstances had deeply impressed him... Nothing would satisfy him but the testimony of his own senses.^{xliii}

Conclusion

While one may well choose to dismiss all of the above as fanciful speculation - speculation which could just as easily apply to a resurrected "body" which at will would miraculously materialize as a flesh and blood corpus - one final piece of evidence from the sixth century *Mozarabic Rite* carries us back to the initial discovery of the empty tomb as related in **Jn. 20:3-10**. In the *illatio* (i.e. preface) for Saturday of Holy Week, we find an intriguing clue as to what was *seen* on that initial Easter morning that prompted *belief*:

Peter ran with John to the tomb and saw the recent imprints (*vestigia*) of the dead and risen man on the linens.^{xliii} [Emphasis and double underlining added.]

Granted that no single one of the above "spy clues" can make a definitive case for the presence and/or influence of the Shroud *vis a vis* its role in the Doubting Thomas narrative, the sum total of all the individual bits of data linking Thomas with the Shroud and its prominence in Edessa cannot be so easily dismissed. Once again we may well be encountering another instance wherein failure by the scholars to consider the potential impact of the Shroud has led them to come up with alternative hypotheses which are far more complex and far less plausible.

In its most basic form, what we have here is Thomas' attempt to confirm the Image(s) on the Shroud as that [those] of the historical, crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. The method of confirmation is via the identifying *marks* of the wounds in the hands (*i.e.* wrists) and side to prove that the *body* imaged on the burial linen was simultaneously that of the crucified Jesus and a depiction of his new status as the Risen and glorified Messiah. What we may well be encountering in **John 20** is a transitional stage in the description of the Resurrection where *appearance/vision* is giving way to the need for stressing the *physical* dimensions of the risen "body." As time went by, possibly this verse was used by later Christian apologists to counter Docetists who denied an actual physical incarnation.

Could it be that the Shroud - "The" only surviving link between these two events - not only is the "outward and visible sign" which moves Thomas beyond doubt to unswerving rededication; but is also the hidden "spy clue" upon which the Thomas story is based? And should it come as any surprise that subsequent legend assigns Thomas the role of dispatching Jude with the sacred linen to King Abgar of Edessa?

Granted that the late Alfred O'Rahilly was an unabashed advocate of the Shroud's authenticity, he poses food for thought in the following conjecture: "Did it (*i.e.* the linen) suggest to them - to use material phraseology - that the body passed through the shroud as later through closed doors?"^{xliiv} Does O'Rahilly here provide us with yet another link in the chain testifying to the Shroud's role both at the Empty Tomb and in the Upper Room? It is not that the body overcame both the sepulchre's rolling stone or "passed" through the closed doors, but rather that the image(s) on it was (were) present both at the Empty Tomb and later at the Cenacle? If this be the case, could the tradition of the appearance to the "twelve" by St. Paul in **I Cor. 15:5** somehow be a vestige of a similar appearance of the Shroud in the Cenacle - the very Shroud brought by Peter, John and the newly converted James the Just to share with others who still "doubted the Resurrection?"

ⁱ Hagner, Donald A. *JETS*.24, 1981, pp . 32-35. Quoted by Leland Ryken, ed. *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1984, pp. 99-100).

ⁱⁱ Riley, 1995. p. 91.

ⁱⁱⁱ Marxen, Willi. 1979, Fifth printing. *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth*. (Trans. Margaret Kohl) Philadelphia: Fortress Press, pgs. 66-68.)

^{iv} Riley, 1995. p. 117. (**Note:** That the ancients could easily interpret the very resurrection texts themselves in non-physical terms is missed by some modern interpreters. According to Craig for example, "The notion of resurrection is unintelligible with regard to the spirit or soul alone. The ver words imply resurrection of the body." [W. L.Craig, "The Historicity of the Empty Tomb of Jesus," in *NTS* 31 (1985) 39-67 (the quote is from p. 41).] Such a contention is shown to be false by the very controversy itself: to many Christians of the first and later centuries, not only was the idea of physical resurrection odious, but the "very words" used to assert it were understood to teach otherwise. The counterargument of the Church took the form of a virtual justification of the flesh, which required no small amount of creative thought given the negative view of the flesh in both the culture and the Scriptures. The argument grew especially sharp in the later second century. Irenaeus argues that the fleshly body, once raised by the Spirit's instrumentality, becomes the "spiritual body" (*Adv. Haer.* 5.7.2). So it is for him "the flesh possessed by the Spirit" which inherits the Kingdom of God (5.9.3). Athenagoras clearly feels embarrassment at this Christian claim, and attempts to have it both ways: he declares that "even if we have flesh, it will not seem so; we shall be heavenly spirits" (*Legatio* 31). Tertullian argues that, since all humanity will be resurrected to face judgment, the flesh by itself is not denied resurrection but only the Kingdom of God, if it is without the Spirit (*De Res. Mort.* 50). Accordingly, the phrase "Resurrection of the Flesh" was added to the Old Roman Creed as part of the catechism and baptismal liturgy. Such argumentation laid the foundation for the views of the later Church, in which Paul was understood to mean by the "spiritual body" the same fleshly body of earthly life raised from the grave and controlled by the Spirit. Thus "resurrection of the flesh" could be said of a "spiritual body." [Cf. H. Clavier, "Breves remarques sur la notion de Fä µ" B<, Λµ" J46` <" in W. D. Davies and D. Daube, eds., *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964) 342-362; and J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (third ed.; New York: Longman, 1972) 163-165.] *Ibid.* pgs. 63-64.)]

^v Cruse, C. F. 1979. p. 82.

^{vi} Riley, G. 1995. p. 80. Cf. Walter Bauer. 1971. *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 11, n. 24.

^{vii} Wilson, I. 1979. p. 276.

^{viii} (Mingana, A. 1928. *Christian documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni with two introductions by Rendel Harris. Woodbrooke Studies, Vol. 2. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons (Reprinted from the "Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 5 Vol. 12, 1928), p. 185.*

^{ix} (Quoted in Funk, Robert W., Hoover, Roy W. and The Jesus Seminar. *The Five Gospels*. 1993. New York: Macmillan. Cf. Dreisbach, Albert R. "Mark 14;51-52: Historical"Fact Or Sindonological 'Spy-Clue'". *History, Science, Theology And The Shroud*. 1991. (Ed. Aram Berard). Privately published, pgs. 113-123)

^x Culpepper. 1995. *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. IX*, p. 205.

^{xi} Dreisbach, "Thomas and the Hymn of the Pearl." 2001. CD of *the Proceedings of the 2000 Orvieto Conference*.

^{xii} *NTA, Vol. 1*. 1963. p. 442.

^{xiii} Riley, Gregory J.. *Resurrection Reconsidered*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, pp. 107-108).

^{xiv} *ANT*, 1989, p. 185.

^{xv} Jaubert, A. "The Calendar of Qumran and the Pasion Narrative in John." James H. Charlesworth, ed. *John and Qumran*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972, pp. 64-65.

^{xvi} Riley, op cit., 1995, 102.

^{xvii} *Ibid.*, p. 91.

^{xviii} Lindars, B. "The Composition of John XX," *NTS* 7 (1960-61) pp. 142-47.

^{xix} Brown, Raymond E. 1970. *AB, Vol 29A*, p. 1033.

^{xx} Auer, Eberhard. N.d. (Trans. Helmut Gollwitzer), p. 40.

^{xxi} Dodd, C.H. 1968, p. 430 & f.n. 3.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*, p. 441.

^{xxiii} Marxsen. 1979, p.67.

^{xxiv} Brown, R.E.. 1970, p. 1046.

^{xxv} Cogswell. 1936, pgs. 3-5.

^{xxvi} Budge, E.A. Wallis. 1899.

^{xxvii} *Ibid.*, p. XII.

^{xxviii} *Ibid.*, p. VII.

^{xxix} *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

^{xxx} *Ibid.*, pgs. 199-200.

^{xxxii} *The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 2.* n.d., p. 865. **Note:** Interestingly enough, Theodore of Mopsuestia when describing the earthly liturgy of the New Covenant “will not call it a mere shadow or copy; he prefers to call it a ‘symbol’ (or anticipation, *tupos**) (section 18), a ‘recalling’ (section 15), and ‘image’ (section 20). [See Edward Yarnold, S.J. 1994. *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*. Second Edition. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, p. 209, fn 20.]

^{xxxiii} Friedrich, Gerhard. 1972, p. 249, fn. 9.

^{xxxiv} *Ibid.*, p. 247.

^{xxxv} *Ibid.*

^{xxxvi} Arndt & Gingrich. 1960, p. 837.

^{xxxvii} Auer. n.d., p. 41.

^{xxxviii} R.E. Brown, 1970, *AB Vol. 2*, p. 1026. Cf. Kastner, K. 1915, pgs. 344-354.

^{xxxix} Cinquemani, N. 1995, p. 14.

^{xl} Wilson, I. 1978, p. 257. See A. Heisenberg. *Nicholas Mesarites - Die Palasrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*. Wurzburg, 1907, p. 30

^{xli} *NTA, Vol. 2*, p. 225.

^{xlii} Charlesworth, 1995, pp. 178-179.

^{xliii} *Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 865.

^{xliiii} Green, Maurus. 1969, p. 329.

^{xliiii} O'Rahilly, Alfred. *IER*, p. 160.

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