



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**Hugh Farey**

*Le Saint Suaire de Besançon et  
 le Chevalier Othon de la Roche*  
**Andrea Nicolotti**  
**Franche-Bourgogne**

This is the first book I have been sent for review while I have been editor of this newsletter, so I am delighted to be able to do so.

Two of Andrea Nicolotti's previous books, *I Templari e la Sindone; Storia di un Falso*, and *Dal Mandylion di Edessa alla Sindone de Torino; Metamorfosi di una Leggenda* (which appeared in English as *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin; the Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend*), were reviewed in Issues 74 and 75 of the newsletter, by Emanuela Marinelli, who, although impressed by the depth of his research, was puzzled by the vehemence of his opposition to those who held different views. Nicolotti is indeed a straight talker, and this book is no exception to his normal style. There is no doubt, however, that he assembles a formidable armoury of references to, and examinations of, medieval documents from a number of sources to justify his opinions.

In this book Nicolotti explores the alleged connection between the Crusader Otto de la Roche and the Shroud of Besançon, largely based on a document called Ms. 826, in the Besançon archives, describing how de la Roche took possession of the Shroud during the siege of Constantinople in 1204 and brought it to Europe. Nicolotti convincingly demonstrates that this document is a forgery, and speculates that the forger was Jesuit Pierre-Joseph Wiley. He transcribes Ms. 826 and several related documents, and explains his views clearly and persuasively. The last part is devoted to a fairly terse dismissal of those who still support the de la Roche connection, to my mind convincingly, although I've no doubt they would put up a fight given the chance, and perhaps will, if Emanuela Marinelli will be their spokesman.