

THE IDENTIFICATION AND THE DISPOSITION
OF THE FUNERARY LINENS OF JESUS' BURIAL
ACCORDING TO THE DATA OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL*

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A correct explanation of the Johannine passages relating to the funeral cloths used in Jesus' burial is of the highest concern in the problem of the Turin Shroud. In fact, many times the Fourth Gospel account has been called to witness against the authenticity of the famous Sheet.

One must absolutely not violate the Gospel texts in an effort to achieve concordance with the Turin Shroud. For my part, I have never had any intention to proceed in that way. In the study which I published in *Esprit et Vie*¹, a study largely inspired by the diligent research of A. Vaccari² and of C. Lavergne³, whose works I corrected on several points, I was moved by a single desire: to reach an exegesis of John 20:5-8 which would be more satisfying than the interpretation usually given. The problem of the Turin Shroud remained outside my perspective. I propose now to take up this exegetical study in its philological aspect, making some additions and modifications.

Exegetes must be modest. Certainly they cannot demonstrate the authenticity of the Shroud from Scripture. But history is not made exclusively from written documents; it makes use of every witness from the past. And if so many and such a variety of scientific tests demonstrate that the Turin Shroud, far from being a pious fraud, really enveloped a corpse on which the details correspond to those of the Christ of the Gospels, how can serious, objective exegetes fail to take such evidence into account?

In this conference, I will consider, first: the identification of the funerary cloths that John mentions in his account of Jesus' burial; and second, their disposition in the tomb. In my conclusion, I would like to state why the authenticity of the Shroud—if authenticity is indeed demonstrated, or at least rendered highly probable on a scientific level—cannot leave Gospel interpreters indifferent.

The Identification of the Burial Cloths

In the Fourth Gospel, the cloths used for the burial of Jesus are designated by two Greek words whose meaning I must determine: *othonia* and *soudarion*. The first, *othonia*, is also found in a parallel text of Lk 24:12, which I will examine. The second, *soudarion*, is met again in the account of the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11:44) and in Lk 19:40

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and Acts 19:12, but as these two texts are not in a funerary context, they do not interest us here.

I begin with *soudarion*, the easier to identify. This Greek term is derived from the Latin *sudarium* whose primary meaning is indicated by etymology (*sudor*, sweat): it concerns a cloth of variable dimensions which one carried in the hand or wore around the neck. Its principle purpose was to wipe away perspiration (cf. Quintillien, *Institutio Oratoria*: 6:3, 11:3). It could also be used for other purposes.

As for the *soudarion* found by Peter and "the other disciple", what purpose did it serve in the burial of Jesus? From the text of Jn 20:7, "the *soudarion* which was on his head", we might imagine a veil entirely covering the head of Christ. But comparing its use in the case of Lazarus (11:44), we are likely to understand things in a different way. When Lazarus comes forth from the tomb, his face is not hidden by a cloth, but is rather encircled by a *soudarion*. In fact, the Greek verb used here, *peridein*, properly means "tie around, attach around, encircle". In all probability it was a sort of headband or chinband passing under the chin and over the top of the head, closing the mouth of the deceased.

I come now to the identification of the *othonia*. A diminutive of *othonè*, which can mean a fine fabric, or a boatsail, a sheet, a drapery ... the diminutive form *othonion* signifies first of all a small piece of cloth, a narrow band. Thus a number of modern interpreters have understood it, in Jn 19:40 and 20:5,6,7, as a narrow band and it is so translated in some Bibles. However, it should be noticed that, more and more, this translation is being replaced by "funerary linens", as seen in the New Jerusalem Bible, as well as in the recent commentaries of R. E. Brown (1970), L. Morris (1971), P. Linars (1972), R. Schnackenburg (1975).

The arguments put forth in favor of 'narrow bands' are in no way decisive. The word *othonion* does seem to be a diminutive form but one must not forget that, during the Hellenistic era, diminutives easily lose their value, as can be ascertained here and there in the New Testament (Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:51; Jn 18:10; Mt 10:29,31; Lk 12:6,7). Secondly, the termination *ion*, far from being exclusively a diminutive form, can be used several other ways, especially in the *koinè*.

W. Bauer⁴ errs in his dictionary when he bases his argument for 'narrow bands' on papyri. If, in the Giessen papyrus (68, lines 11 & 25), the *othonia* rightly indicate cloths intended for a burial, nothing allows us to determine their nature. As for the papyrus 53 (line 8) of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, it gives a list of expenses for the purchase of various articles among which an *othonion*, but the purpose of this item is qualified by the adjective *egkolmeterion*, i.e., a cloth "for sleeping". Now one does not sleep in narrow bands, but between sheets.

In a recent article based on very incomplete documentation⁵, E. Delebecque claims that the term *othonia* in Jn 20:5-7 can only mean bands or bandages: "This meaning", he says, "is current in medical vocabulary where the word designates fine light bands, supple but strong, which the doctor uses in cases of fracture or dislocation." And

the author cites several texts of Hippocrates and Dioscoride.

One needs only to open the Greek dictionaries to realize that, contrary to what Delebecque maintains, the word *othonion* can take on several meanings. F.M. Braun himself recognized, quite objectively, that the word *othonia* can designate "cloths of all sizes and shapes"⁶. Bailly and Liddell-Scott indicated four possible meanings, with supporting references; small piece of cloth, band of lint, boatsail, light tunic. Moreover, Liddell-Scott attests that even Hippocrates uses the term *othonion* in two notably different senses: in several passages of the treatise *Of the Doctor's Dispensary* (*Off.* 8,9,11,22,24, etc.) he designates, without a shadow of a doubt, the bands for wounds of which he describes the nature and characteristics; whereas in the treatise *Of Acute Illnesses* (*Acut.* VII,2), he uses the same word to indicate cloths in general. He speaks of doctors anxious "that the patients taking barley decoctions for their acute illness, do not absorb any grain of the barley"; therefore one should not administer the infusion "until after having filtered it through a cloth (*di'othoniou ton chulon dietheontes didoasin*)".

In a text too rarely noticed, and to which I must return later on, Dioscoride (V, 72,2 ff.) is not satisfied to give *othonion* the meaning of "sheet"; he associates it further with the verb *eneilein* (envelop in a sheet, *eneilesas othoniô*), that is to say, the same verb that Mark, in 15:46, uses to express the burial of Jesus in a shroud (*eneilesente sindoni*).

The usage in the Septuagint must also be mentioned. In the two passages where *othonion* is found, the 'narrow band' meaning is excluded. In Hosea 2:9, this term designates linen fabric, distinct from wool fabric, in which the Spouse of Yahweh is dressed. Because of her infidelities, Yahweh threatens to take away "her wool and her linen" with which she covers her nakedness. In the Book of Judges (14:12,13) thirty *othonia*, together with thirty garments of honor are at stake in Samson's wager. While several interpreters see in these *othonia* "pieces of fine linen or fine cloth" (cf. for ex. the Jerusalem Bible), others on the contrary (cf. for ex. the Dhormi Bible) see them as tunics or undergarments, distinct from outer garments or *himatia* (cf. Mt 5:40).

Here now are the principle positive arguments for attributing the general sense of "cloths" to the word *othonia* in Jn 19:40 and 20:5-7:

1) The translation 'narrow bands' easily leads us to think that the body of Jesus had been mummified, which contradicts Jn 19:40. Jesus was buried "according to the manner of preparation for burial in use among the Jews"⁷. Now the Jews did not mummify corpses; they did not wrap them around with narrow bands in the fashion of the Egyptian mummies. Certainly in Jn 11:44, Lazarus comes forth from the tomb with hands and feet tied by bands. But the difference is precisely there: these bands are not called *othonia*; they are called *keiriai*. Furthermore they were not wound around the whole body, but only the hands and feet.

2) The translation of *othonia* by 'narrow bands' presents the inconvenience of putting John in contradiction with the Synoptics. In

fact, according to them, the body of Jesus was enveloped in a *sindôn* brought by Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:46; Mt 17:59; Lk 23:53). *Sindôn* is a Greek term which translators usually render by shroud (Bibles of Jerusalem and others). While in Mk 14:51 the same word *sindôn* designates a drapery or an undergarment (episode of the young man whose *sindôn* is snatched from him in the Garden of Gethsemane), there is no valid motive to follow the example of some authors who go farther, explaining the word, not as a piece of cloth, but as the material of the fabrics.

Surely, if John's *othonia* were only narrow bands, it would be impossible to identify these with the Synoptics' *sindôn*. On the other hand, it is easy to compare—at least partially—the *sindôn* with the *othonia*, if these are understood in the general sense of funerary linens. I do want to emphasize: at least partially. The similarity is total if, as Lavergne believes, *othonia* is an emphatic plural, of the kind which poets employ from time to time to give their words a bit more weights. Or perhaps the similarity is not total: if the hands and feet of Christ were tied, as were Lazarus'—a conjecture which could correspond to reality, as I will explain later—then the general term *othonia* used in the Fourth Gospel would include the shroud of the Synoptics as well as the *keiriai*, or bindings for hands and feet.

3) It must be noticed that, in the Vulgate, the word *othonia* has been understood in the sense of "linen"; it is rendered by *lintea* in Jn 19:40 and by *linteamina* in John 20; 5-7. Furthermore it is interesting to notice that the translation of *othonia* by 'narrow bands' is recent; it is unknown to the early German interpreters (cf. for ex. Luther) or French (cf. for ex. Calvin) or English (cf. for ex. Tyndale). It would seem that it was not introduced until the 19th century by the two French exegetes Edouard Reuss and Louis Segond.

4) A final argument in favor of the translation of *othonia* by "linens" is furnished by the parallel text of Lk 24:12, where it is said that after the women discovered the empty tomb, Peter "ran to the tomb" and, stooping down, "he sees the linen cloths lying there"; in the Greek, *blepei ta othonia mona*. In the Vulgate, *procumbens vidit linteamina sola*. Some preliminary observations of literary criticism need be made here.

Unlike those authors who have supposed this text to be an interpolation, there is every reason to consider it authentic, because it is attested by the great majority of manuscripts. Besides, there are several indications that Luke depends here on the Johannine tradition, as Rev. Benoit¹⁰ maintained. First of all, there is the historical present: "stooping down, he sees". In fact, Luke usually avoids the historical present, while Mark and John, on the contrary, use it frequently. The tense Luke uses here corresponds to the historical present in Jn 20:5,6. A similar phenomenon is observed in Lk 24:36, where the phrase is in the historical present: "and he says to them, Peace be with you", which is found again word for word, in Jn 20:19. This too must be noticed: while in Jn 20:5, 11, the action of "stooping" can very well apply to those

persons who remain outside the burial chamber, it is hard to explain the use of the same word in Lk 24:12, where Peter must have entered the chamber (cf. Jn 20:6). One suspects that there is some literary reminiscence here. Lagrange translates Lk 24:12 by "to look by stretching his head forward".

Now I must interpret Lk 24:12. Is it possible that the Third Evangelist who, like the two other Synoptics, had previously mentioned the burial shroud (*sindôn*), would here mean to say that Peter only sees the narrow bands? This hypothesis is so unlikely that, to avoid it, Lagrange is not afraid to be inconsistent with himself: while in the Fourth Gospel he renders *othonia* by narrow bands, here in Luke he translates: "Peter sees only the linens". Does not the only defensible position consist in putting the word "linens" everywhere in the Fourth Gospel as well as in the Third?

In concluding, I want to call attention to the strange exegesis of E. Delebecque¹². Without taking into account the special problems posed by Lk 24:12, he completely disassociates the *othonia* and the shroud. According to him, the *othonia* are exclusively "the bands which had served to bind the hands and feet". Consequently, he interprets the passage thus: Peter "stretching his head inside, notices the bands alone, that is, without the *sindôn*, of which he knows the existence". In the Fourth Gospel, he surmises, it was not the disposition of the linens, but the disappearance of the shroud which would have been the revealing factor for John, inducing him to believe. This explanation is so bizarre that one can dispense with lengthy refutation. Whatever the sense attributed to *othonia* in Lk 24:12, everyone understands that the Evangelist wants to tell us: Peter notices the *othonia* alone without the body of Jesus, and not alone without the shroud!

The Disposition of the Burial Cloths

Two passages in the Fourth Gospel are to be considered now: 19:40 and 20:6,7.

One reads in 19:40: *edèsan auto othoniois*. In the Vulgate: *ligaverunt illud linteis*, which, literally translated, reads: they tied the body of Jesus with *othonia*.

This passage is the best argument for those who claim that the word *othonia* here signifies 'narrow bands'. But it presents a serious difficulty for the numerous interpreters who, like ourselves, deem that, in this case, the only plausible meaning for *othonia* is "funerary linens", comprising principally or even exclusively the shroud. For one envelops a body in a sheet or a shroud, but does not use that to tie the body. How do we overcome this difficulty?

Following Lavergne and the complementary studies of B. Prete¹³, one can very well suppose that, though it might seem hardly appropriate, the Evangelist chose this very strong word (*edèsan*) in order to suggest that the corpse of Jesus being, so to speak, imprisoned in the shroud, the Risen Lord escaped from this prison and at the same

time broke the bonds of death: the word "to tie" would therefore carry symbolic overtones.

Another solution, suggested by A. Vaccari¹⁴, seems possible: one could imagine here a zeugma, a rhetorical figure of speech which links two or several substantives to a verb or an adjective which logically refers to only one of them. For ex., this literal translation of Lk 1:64; "his mouth and his tongue opened", though the verb "open" is applicable only to the mouth, not to the tongue. And I Cor. 3:2; "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food". Granted that, as I said, the othonia could include, besides the shroud, also the narrow bands of the hands and feet, when John used the term *dein*, "tie", which in reality refers only to the bands, his reason may very well be found in the zeugma.

This suggests the comparison of Jn 19:40 with Mk 15:46. Mark describes the action of Joseph of Arimathea enveloping Jesus in a shroud with these words: *eneilesen to sindoni*.

Here I take my cue from J. Blinzler¹⁵. He points out that Dioscoride (V, 72,2 ff.) alternates the two verbs *dein* and *eneilein* to describe the same operation, that is, envelopment in a sheet: on the one hand *en othoniô dêsas*, on the other *eneilêsas othoniô*.

In fact the use of the verb *eneilein* in Mk 15:46 is almost as surprising and unexpected as the *dein* in Jn 19:40. Indeed *eneilein* properly means to introduce forcibly, compress, solidly pack. When it applies to the human body, it is used in the sense of rolling a baby in swaddling cloths: cf. Dion Chrysostom 73:23,3. Blinzler gives also the following references; Letter of Polycarp: "men shackled by venerable bonds (*tous suneilmenous tous hagioprepesin desmois*), which are the diadems of the true elect of God and of Our Lord"; Clement of Alexandria, *Pedagogics* II 81,1: "the difficulty to breathe when one is tightly wrapped in blankets"; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 11: "Cyrus who was wedged in by enemies, was torn away from their grasp by his horse"; Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 6,2 par. 160: "The Jews were solidly held as in a net". Therefore Mark does not mean to say merely that the corpse of Jesus was covered over with a cloth; without any doubt, he is thinking of "a tight and solid wrapping", which brings his text remarkably close to that of Jn 19:40. Therefore in Mk 15:46, the shroud alone would scarcely justify the choice of the verb *eneilein*; this verb would be much more suitable if the shroud is held by bands which, to use Blinzler's term, would assure "a tight and solid wrapping".

And that's not all. While the early Jerusalem Bible carried this criticizable version of Jn 19:40: "they wrapped him in narrow bands", the New Jerusalem Bible proposes another translation, very literal, but at first quite astonishing: "they tied him in linens".

Would not such an assertion—and in the text of Mark as well—lead one to think that the shroud itself was, in some way, secured to the body by ties; which would have been the, case if, for ex., the bands, instead of being applied directly to the hands and feet, passed above the shroud and thus bound the body of Jesus? We do not at all pretend that that explanation is inevitable; we present it only by way of an

hypothesis in order to try to find a better explanation of the texts of Jn 19:40 and Mk 15:46. In any case, one thing seems certain, and it is very important: Jn 19:40 must be considered in connection with Mk 15:46.

It remains to consider the disposition of the funerary linens as described in Jn 20:5-7, that is, how Peter and John saw them when they discovered the tomb was vacant. As I treated this subject at length in my article in *Esprit et Vie*, I will confine myself here to a summary of the results of my inquiry, introducing, however, some rectifications and precisions here and there.

I begin by giving as faithful a translation as possible of the very difficult and much discussed Greek text of v. 7: Peter "sees the linens sunk down, and the sudarium which was on Jesus' head, not sunk down with the linens, but distinctly coiled exactly in its place". I must now comment briefly on each element of this passage.

The Linens Sunk Down: *Ta Othonia Keimena*

As I have already mentioned, the linens in question must be the shroud, but perhaps also the ties of the hands and feet which, in the account of the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11:44) are called *keiriai*. It seems that John does not specify that only the linens are still there while the body of Jesus had disappeared. Since John does not use the verb *menein*, but the verb *keisthai*, I prefer to translate, not "*lying on the ground*", which is an unnecessary addition to the text, but rather "*spread out flat, sunk down*", a sense perfectly attested by *keisthai*. The verb *entulissein* used by Matthew (27:59) and by Luke (23:53) in connection with *sindôn* suggests a big sheet which completely enveloped the body of Christ. John wants to suggest that, the body of Jesus having disappeared, the two parts of the shroud (upper and lower) have come together. A very spiritual conception of the corporal resurrection and the only acceptable conception. It does not say, as sometimes people do, that the body of Jesus had passed through the linens, but rather that, while remaining the body of Jesus, it was as if dematerialised and had become a new being, according to the teaching so insistently given by St Paul in I Cor. 15.

The Sudarium Which Was On Jesus' Head

In *Esprit et Vie*, I had opted for this version: "the sudarium which was adjusted on Jesus' head". But is it not better to translate the Greek text literally, even though it is not perfectly clear? The most suitable sense we can assign to it arises from the comparison with Jn 11:44; the *soudarion* was not simply placed on the head of Jesus but neither did it hide his head; it encircled the head, passing from beneath the chin to the top of the head, according to the very precise meaning of the Greek verb *peridein* used in the account of the resurrection of Lazarus.

The Sudarium Was Not Sunk Down With The Linens

How this must be understood results clearly from what I have said; after the resurrection, the two parts of the shroud came together, the upper part falling onto the under part. The sudarium which went around Jesus' face in the manner of a circle was not sunk down in the same way as the shroud.

The Sudarium Was Rolled

As I showed in *Esprit et Vie*, citing all the known texts where the verb *entulissein* is found, this rare verb could have the double significance of "to envelop" and "to roll". At first I thought that this double sense could be admitted in Jn 20:7; the Evangelist wanted to say that the sudarium remained enveloped in the shroud, and at the same time remained "rolled", having retained the form of a circle, as when it encircled Jesus' head. But now I think that only the second sense is suitable to the context: it is the antithesis between the *othonia*, which are sunk down, and the *soudarion* which is not sunk down, which retains its original configuration. That it also remained inside the shroud, enveloped by it, is quite obvious; there was no need to emphasize the fact. I see with pleasure that several commentators adopt, or in any event regard as plausible, this interpretation of the participle *entetuligmenon* =rolled. Notably R.E. Brown¹⁶ and S.M. Hunter¹⁷.

As for the adverb *choris*, used all through the Bible as a preposition governing the genitive and employed without a complement in Jn 20:7, therefore as an adverb, several possible translations have been proposed: Lavergne suggests "above all", which does not at all adapt to the context; I proposed "on the contrary", or perhaps "separately"; which did not completely satisfy me. Now I prefer to keep to the more normal meaning of *choris* = "apart from", understood in the modal sense rather than the local sense = "separately" (Vulg. *separatim*). This word would simply indicate that the *soudarion*, not being sunk down, flattened out, is therefore distinguishable from the other funerary linens.

It remains to take into account the final assertion: *the soudarion remained exactly in its place*. That is how I translate the Greek formula *eis ena topon* (Vulg. in *unum locum*) which causes difficulty. It is a mistranslation to render it, as often happens, "in another place". Never does the adjective *heis* signify "another". It has been rendered "in the same place", which is attractive but the word *heis* does not mean the same except in a context where it is opposed to a plurality; which is not the case here. Even though *heis* sometimes has the value of an indefinite article, one cannot accept "in a *certain* place", which is a distressing banality; assuredly the *soudarion* had to occupy some place! "At the first place" would be better, for it happens that the numeral adjective *heis* is equivalent to its ordinal *prôtos* (or *proteros*), i.e., first. Cf. Tt. 3:10, Apo 9:12, Mk 16:2. I prefer to interpret it: the *soudarion* remained in its own unique and specific place. L. Morris, citing

Berkeley¹⁸, says "in its particular place". Certainly that means the same thing as "the original place" or "the same place", but with much greater insistence, an insistence we dare not neglect in a rigorous translation; and I propose to render it by the adjunction of an adverb: "exactly at its place".

In short, in Jn 20:7, the Evangelist tells us why the disposition of the funerary linens was, for him, certainly not a proof, properly speaking, but at least a sign of the resurrection of Christ: "he saw and he believed". For one thing, the shroud was simply settled down, remaining in its place. But the *soudarion* retained its oval form, as if it still encircled the Savior's face; and what is more, it still occupied the exact same place where the head of Christ had rested. Nothing had budged, but the material body of Jesus had disappeared, in the sense that it had become totally spiritual.

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I have confined my conference almost exclusively to the philological questions, without lengthy doctrinal reflections, even without any reference to the Shroud of Turin. Indeed it behooves the savants who have made the Shroud the object of their research to use as they see fit these exegetical indications which, in all objectivity, I have just offered. And I propose to continue to improve and complete these indications.

In conclusion, I would like to say, with all the prudence imposed upon me in a domain which is in large part outside my competence, that I am favorable to the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. I know quite well that there are still some divergences in the details of scientific expertise, but these divergences, it seems to me, should not make us forget the agreement on many capital points which plead in favor of authenticity. In the past, the great majority of exegetes took a very negative attitude toward the Shroud, not to mention the declared hostility of some of them.

Up to certain point, there could have been some justification for these reticences and these negations. Today, as Rev. A.M. Dubarle has shown so well, and to whose courage I render homage¹⁹, there is no longer any reason for them, in view of the incontestable scientific value of every kind of research that the Shroud has aroused.

Formed in a critical spirit, exegetes certainly are not bound to accept historicity with eyes closed. At least they might take note of two things: one, that when they understand the evangelical data, such as the data I have briefly explained, they will see that no valid objection could be raised; and two, quoting J.A.T. Robinson, that no forger, starting as he inevitably would, from the details of the Gospels and especially that of the Fourth, would have created the Shroud we have²⁰.

But I think we could say much more. The historicity of the Shroud has already been duly demonstrated by every means available to science and modern technology. May I remark in passing that the

adversaries who, in good faith, have resisted the Turin Shroud have nonetheless rendered service to the cause by exacting rigorous scientific investigation. This fact should be a singular boon to the exegetes themselves, provided, of course, that they are not prisoners of preconceived ideas. Indeed, examination of the Shroud would confirm a number of details of the Gospel accounts of the Passion; it would bestir them to take all these details very seriously.

I will give only one example. If the Shroud really shows evidence that a wound was opened in Christ's side, and that the wound was inflicted not before his death but shortly after his death, one ought no longer consider himself authorized to regard the Johannine scene of the transfixion of the Savior as a purely doctrinal symbol, even though this scene is offered to us highly charged with the most profound theology; for John attributes to this mysterious fact an immense significance, amply expounded by commentators.

NOTES:

- 1) *La découverte du tombeau vide en Jean 20, 3-10 et la foi au Christ ressuscité*, in *Esprit et Vie*, May 1977.
- 2) *Edesan auto othoniois (In 19,40) Lessicografia ed Esegesei*, in *Miscellanea Biblica* - B. Ubach, Montserrat, 1953.
- 3) *La preuve de la resurrection de Jésus d'après In 20, 7*. in *SINDON* 5 & 6, 1961.
- 4) *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 4th edition, under *othonion*.
- 5) *Le tombeau vide (Jean 20, 6-7)* in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, July-December 1977.
- 6) *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, 1939; also C. SPICQ, *Notes de Lexicographie Néo-Testamentaire*, Göttingen, 1978, tome II.
- 7) In 19:40 uses the verb *entaphiazein*, which properly means "prepare for burial". It is regrettable that translators generally take no notice of this fact, and confer on *entaphiazein* the sense of "to bury". In Matthew's account of the anointing at Bethany (26:12), is not Jesus' response better understood in the sense of "prepare for burial"? In any case, one thing is certain and has been underscored by several interpreters: for the burial of Jesus, one did not observe all the rites in use among the Jews; in particular, the body of Jesus would not have been washed since no evangelist speaks of the accomplishment of this rite (cf. on the contrary, the burial of Tabitha in Acts 9:37). This omission is easily understood, since, when Jesus was put in the tomb, the Sabbath was near; Lk 23:54 tells us that it was "breaking" or even "shining" (*epephosken*), which could be an allusion to the Jewish custom of lighting lamps at the commencement of the Sabbath (cf. note in the Jerusalem Bible). The other evangelists attest, each in his own way, the provisory character of Jesus' burial.
- 8) JOSEPH BLINZLER, *Der Prozess Jesu*, Regensburg, 1960, and French edition, *Le procès de Jésus*, Paris, 1961.
- 9) Cf. J. HUMBERT, *Syntaxe Grecque*, Paris, 1960.
- 10) *Marie-Madeleine et les disciples au tombeau selon Jn 20, 1-5*, in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für J. Jeremias*, Berlin, 1960. It is quite true that the IVth Gospel must have been definitely drafted a long time after the IIIrd. But this does not oppose the borrowing which we postulate. The Rev. Benoit says very well: "In explanation, it suffices to admit that the Fourth Gospel has a long literary history, in which the first stages could have preceded Luke and have been used by him."
- 11) One remembers here other remarkable points of contact between Luke and John in the Resurrection narratives; for ex., the sudden apparition before the Twelve, Lk 24:39 & Jn 20:27; invitation to touch the wounds, Lk 24:39 & In 20:27. On the text of Lk 24:12, one could consult the long article by F. NEIRYNK. in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 1977. Also J. JEREMIAS, *La dernière Cène*, Paris, 1972.
- 12) In the article indicated in note 6, *Revue des Etudes Grecques*.
- 13) *"E lo legarono con bende" (Giov. 19:40)*, in *Bibbia e Oriente* 10, 1968.
- 14) See note 3.
- 15) *Der Prozess Jesu*. The text from Dion Chrysostom *Oratio XXIII*, 3) which I cite further on, is correctly rendered in the German text.
- 16) *The Gospel according to John*, New York, 1970.
- 17) *The Gospel according to John*, Cambridge, 1965.
- 18) L. MORRIS; *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids, 1971.
- 19) *Pourquoi les biblistes négligent-ils le Linceul de Turin?* in *SINDON*, April 1977.
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