

REVIEWS

Michael Taylor 'A Critical Edition of Geoffroy de Charny's 'Livre Charny' and the 'Demandes pour la Joute, les Tournois et la Guerre', 166 page dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, 1977. Microfilm and bound xerox reprints available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA, ref. no. 78-10,515.

Dr. Taylor's, thesis is based on manuscript no. 11124-26 in the Belgian Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. After some brief biographical details of Geoffrey de Charny (not including mention of the Shroud), he outlines the conceptions of chivalry prevailing in the fourteenth century, noting how Geoffrey regarded the clerical and the knightly as the two most noble professions. Of these he considered the knightly the more noble and elevated, but the knight's prevailing motive was to be one of honour, not vainglory, consistent with Geoffrey's known personal motto 'Honour conquers all'. Taylor stresses how Geoffrey regarded religion as of the utmost importance to the knight's vocation, on the grounds that if the knight had not confessed and made peace with God before a battle 'he could not possibly hope to be valiant in adverse circumstances for fear that he might be slain and thus suffer eternal damnation'. Yet according to one school of thought this same pious Geoffrey was the prime mover behind the faking of the Shroud...

Noel Curren-Briggs, who has independently read a copy of Dr. Taylor's thesis at Cambridge (where it is available on microfilm, catalogue no. 2048 in the University Library), writes:

'What I found significant from the Shroud point of view was the brief biography Taylor gives in his introduction, which when combined with what I have found out, makes it almost proof-positive that Geoffrey could not have faked the Shroud. Look at these dates:

1337. Geoffrey participated with five squires in the war of Languedoc and Guyenne under Raoul de Brienne, Count of Eu, High Constable of France.

1338. Geoffrey was at Lille.

1340. He was at Tournai.

1341. He was at Angers with three squires.

1345 (May). He set sail from Marseilles for Smyrna.

1346 (2 Aug) He had returned to France and was taking part in the siege of Aiguillon (there are 3 places of this name, one in Lot-et-Garonne and the other two in Vendée, all three in SW or W. France.

1349 (10 April) He wrote to the Pope on behalf of his brother-in-law, Guillaume de Toucy de Bazarnes, and his chaplain, Jean Nichole, for certain dispensations.

1350 (1 Jan) He was at Calais, was captured, and taken to England.

1351 (31 July) He returned to France having been ransomed for 12,000 ecus d'or and went to Picardy, Flanders and Artois.

1352 (6 Jan) He was created one of the first knights of the newly founded Order of the Star.

1355. He was sent by King John on certain 'affaires secrètes' to Normandy.

1355 (25 June) He was appointed Porte Oriflamme (bearer of the sacred banner of France) and described as 'le plus preudomme et le plus vaillant de tous les aultres' knights.

1356 (Sept). He was killed at Poitiers.

There has been some debate about Geoffrey's birth. His mother was born in 1262; his elder brother Dreux was married in Greece in 1316 and his father died in 1323, which means he is unlikely to have been born before 1295 or later than 1302, by which time his mother was forty.

The median date suggested by the carbon-dating is 1325, and no-one is going to persuade me that a young man of between twenty and thirty could or would have done it. The Shroud was at Lirey for certain by 1356, so that places a firm date after which it could not have been faked. If it was faked between 1325 and 1355, Geoffrey was actively engaged in warfare and writing his books from 1337 to the end of his life, and the only period he was out of France for long was while he was in England and when he went to the Levant. Could he have got the Shroud there? If he did it must have been made before 1345, unless it was 'done to order', which really is beyond the bounds of all possibility under the circumstances, don't you think? So if it wasn't made to measure, then it must have been made by someone else before 1345, but we know that it was in existence in 1238, because it was in that year that Baldwin II sent the Crown of Thorns and a bit of the Shroud to St.-Louis, and St. Louis cut a bit off and sent it to Pamplona, where it is to this day. So much for carbon dating ...'

Thaddeus J. Trenn, 'Why Science cannot cope with the Shroud of Turin', text of lecture presented to the Pascal Centre, Ancaster, Ontario, 6 April, 1992

Hitherto not a name familiar to Shroud researchers, Dr. Thaddeus Trenn of the University of Toronto's Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology is unlikely to remain unknown for much longer. On 6 April this year he gave a remarkable lecture to the Pascal Centre, Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. He began 'My friends! We are about to embark upon a journey through time and space exploring realms as diverse as art history and particle physics embraced only by the single framing canopy of the One from which all springs in search of what may be true about this cloth, in order to find just why science cannot cope with the Shroud of Turin.'

Unusually, Dr. Trenn combines the poetic turn of phrase (no accident, he has published three booklets of excellent poetry), with the most far-sighted scientific approach. For this reason no bald summary can do his paper Justice. He has accordingly very kindly provided free of charge to the BSTS a quantity of 34 page booklets containing the full text of his talk. Copies of this can be obtained from BSTS General Secretary, Dr. Michael Clift. A voluntary contribution of £2 or more is suggested to cover postage and as a help to Society funds.