

# Shroud Copies

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## Introduction

Since the 1980's, when I first came across a study carried out in 1952 by Doménico Leone about copies of the Shroud (especially copies in Spain) I have been very interested in the meaning and message of the copies.

Other excellent studies by L. Fossati and other writers kept this interest alive in these "works of art", which most of the time contained a message of faith and hope although on other occasions they are simply copies of the original sent to convents, monasteries, churches and families (usually nobles) as a gift. My interest grew to cover Shroud copies all over the world, and publications in Shroud magazines, together with the above-mentioned works by Leone and Fossati, led me to carry out this project which has taken me over three years – a collection of articles, publications and other information about Shroud copies. Together with my own observation and investigation I have had the continuous and priceless help of Salesian Giuseppe Terzuolo.

This is of course nothing more than a summary of the copies, sometimes just numbers with no description, as this would take hundreds of pages. I have not yet finished, but this is probably the most up-to-date and complete study of Shroud copies in existence.

## SHROUD COPIES – Centuries of Tradition

Some authors have established an order to try and create a certain coherence among copies (by size, type of painting, type of image, processional or not, date of copy, painter etc). Given the number of copies and the characteristics of each, this could seem logical and even essential when speaking about them. There are copies the same size as the original, some very small ones (just 10 cm long), others with the spear and nail wounds in different positions, some with a crown of thorns and others without it, some from the same workshop and others absolutely anonymous. Some have texts written on (in Latin, French, Spanish and Italian) etc, all of which leads us to the conclusion that the tradition grew over the years and at some times even got out of

control. There is a well-known anecdote from the beginning of the eighteenth century, when a copy was made without permission of the House of Savoy, painted from another copy that had been given to Charles II, king of Spain. Another copy was made from the second one. The Savoy family encouraged the tradition to such an extent that Princess Francisca Maria Apollonia spent long periods of her leisure time painting copies of the Shroud that were then distributed according to specific requests or simple friendship.

Let us now look at some of the problems when we try to classify Shroud copies according to some possible standard criteria.

### **Criteria for Classification**

Trying to put together definitive criteria for Shroud copies is a difficult task due to the great number of different features on each one. Above all, there is no clear rule apart from the date when they were copied. If the dates of all the copies were known there would be no problem, but this is not always the case. Historical investigation then comes into play, together with direct observation and comparison with other dated copies to try and at least place a copy in a particular century. After establishing such a classification we can start to reach certain interesting conclusions, such as for example that many copies made in the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth were given to the royal family and nobility of Spain, as at that time the owners of the Shroud (the Savoy family) enjoyed good relations with Spain. Many of the copies from this time were produced in Chambéry, where the original was kept until 1578. However, in the second half of the seventeenth century and all through the eighteenth, most copies stayed in Italy, and the nearer we look to Turin the more copies we find.

We can therefore see that the tradition went from a great expansion defined by the borders of the Spanish Empire at its height (under Philip II and his son Philip III), when copies were made for the other side of the Atlantic (Argentina and Mexico), to a much more localised region around the Shroud's present home - Turin and the north of Italy.

There are earlier copies in France, although most probably based on the Besançon shroud. There are in fact in Spain documents about permission granted to certain religious groups to raise funds to conserve the cloth of Besançon.

When we know the date of a copy we can sometimes attribute it to a specific painter or even relate it to another copy which has since been lost. Such is the case of the copy kept in Pamplona, Spain, painted in 1571. This copy was only discovered

recently and we can confidently state that it is the “twin” of the copy in Alcoy (Alicante), Spain, also painted in 1571. We know that both were made at the same time by request of Pius V to the House of Savoy, and they were defined as "twins" after delivery.

A similar relationship can be established for the famous Lierre (Belgium) copy, painted in 1516, once attributed to Durero but more probably the work of Bernard van Orley, and the copy held today by the National Museum of Ancient Art in Xábregas, Lisbon (Portugal), painted in the early sixteenth century. The Emperor Maximilian of Austria had requested both. There are documents which suggest that the Lierre copy was ordered by Margarita of Austria, Duchess of Savoy, when she moved the court from Malinas to Brussels, although the dates of the court transfer (1523) and the Shroud copy (1516) do not coincide.

With no intention of making an artistic judgement, it can be stated that the copies show a hope of faith in the memory of the risen one, and an added value that is not often recognised – they are a memento of the most significant relic in the Catholic world taken in this way all over the known world. They are much more than pieces of painted cloth, they are in fact “souvenirs” that on many occasions tell us of European family and nobility ties, and other times remind us of historical events such as weddings or battles (the copies were given as gifts to the spouses and the victorious armies). The above-mentioned copy kept today in Alcoy (Spain) was actually made to be worn as a sash by Juan of Austria, half-brother of Philip II of Spain, in the naval battle of Lepanto against the Turks.

### **What we can see on the cloths - the texts**

There are two things that can be seen on Shroud copies – the texts, informing us of where and when it was made or reminding us of what the original is, and the image painted onto the cloth. We will now look first at the texts and then briefly analyse the different images found on the copies.

Given that Shroud copies were generally gifts for a convent, monastery or parish church, it is quite logical that on the cloth there should be an explanation of what was being given and its intrinsic value, especially if it was going to be used in processions on special days such as Easter Sunday. There are various ways that this is explained on the copies, either telling people what it is or simply confirming the authenticity of the copy. Sentences such as “EXTRACTVM EX ORIGINALI TAVRINI” (Fabriano,

Ancona, Italy, 1646), “ESTE ES EL VERDADERO RETRAT° DEL SANctISSIMO SVDARIO SACADO DAL ORIGINAL' EN TVRIN “ (Torres de la Alameda, Madrid, Spain, 1620), “SACADO DEL ORIGINAL EN TVRIN” (Logroño, Spain, 1623), “EXTRACTVM AB ORIGINALI “ (Gallarate, Varese, Italy, 1710), “SACROSANTA SINDONIS VERE ESPRESSA / IMAGO” (Inzago, Milan, Italy, 1578-81), “AB ORIGINALI NVPER ABSTRACTUM TAURINI ANNO DOMINI 1650” (privately owned copy, Turin, Italy, 1650), “CAVATO DAL ORIGINALE” (Summit, New Jersey, USA, 1624) and the most common “Extractum ex originali”, on numerous copies dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when more copies were made than in any other century.

Most copies were touched to the original, excepting of course those made fraudulently from other copies without the owner's permission. In this way a secondary relic “ad tactum” was created. This is evident from the cloth of many copies, on which a sentence to the effect of "touched to the original" was written in different languages (according to either where the copy was made or to the nationality of who it was made for). We can find sentences such as “...ESTATA DISOPRA...” (Navarrete, Logroño, Spain, 1568), “...Y TOCADO A EL...” (Torres de la Alameda, Madrid, Spain, 1620) and “...ESTATA DISSOPRA ...” (Guadalupe, Cáceres, Spain, 1568). Bearing in mind that the paint on the copy could still be wet, it seems logical that particles of paint found their way onto the original Shroud, as has in fact been found.

If a date is given on the copy, it is usually just the year, although sometimes we can find the day and month, even the date when the copy was touched to the original. Sometimes there are even documents in a parish or inscriptions on the box in which the copy came, signed by the ecclesiastical or political dignitary who authorised the copy and confirms its authenticity. These documents provide interesting information about when the copy was made and the date it was touched to the Shroud, is this was done. In most cases however, this document has not survived the passing of the centuries.

### **What we can see on the cloths - the images**

Given that the painters in question tried unsuccessfully to recreate the “impossible” Shroud image as realistically as they could, the result has never really been valued from an artistic point of view over the centuries. This is quite logical as the aim was not so much to paint a beautiful image as to recall the original with pious

intentions. One notable exception to this is the copy in the Descalzas Reales (Madrid, Spain, unknown date), painted with clearly artistic intentions.

As a result of the painter's own observation or misunderstanding, the side wound is sometimes on the left and others on the right, some copies have a crown of thorns and still others do not show the patches (this is a very interesting detail as it proves a date of before 1532, when the patches were sewn on after the fire in Chambéry). Some try to reproduce the light and shade of the face, some manage it better than others. The copies seem to be strange images copied by people who did not really know what they were looking at, for people who knew even less as the original was for the most part only known through these copies, some etchings drawn from memory or from other people's comments and descriptions. There was no way people could enjoy faithful images of the Shroud like we do today with photographs.

In spite of the absurdity of many copies, making them at times absolutely nonsensical and at others beautiful copies with a definite historical interest, there have been cases in which the town or city where the copy is found is (or was) absolutely convinced that their copy was in fact the original and the Turin Shroud is (or was) a copy. Devotion and popular tradition often lead to these erroneous conclusions when a simple look at the cloths in question would be enough to see that they are paintings of better or worse quality.

## **PAINTERS** Signed and anonymous copies

Fantino, Conti, Bocciardo, Princess Francisca María Apollonia and a priest at the church of Chambéry were all painters who at one time or another decided to copy the object that had caught their attention and yet which turned out to be so difficult to copy exactly. This is what we know about them.

### **Painters**

? We know of four copies signed by Giovanni Battista **Fantino**, 1 in Spain (Badolatosa, Seville, 1674) and another three in Italy (Gallarate, Varese, 1710, Aglie, Turin, 1708 and Savona, 1697). Due to the features of the image there are another seven that could have been made by this painter, although there are doubts as far as chronology and some details are concerned.

- ? There is one known copy by **Conti**, made in 1692 and kept in the parish church of Saint Judas Thaddaeus in Rome (Italy).
  
- ? Domenico **Bocciardo** was a well known painter in Finalmarina (Italy) who was paid for the Shroud copy he made in 1728 (very possible copied from the Gallarete de Fantino copy). It is kept today in Finale Ligure, Savona. It is possible that the same painter is responsible for the copy in Nuestra Señora de la Soledad de Puebla de los Ángeles (Mexico), of unknown date, due to the similarity in the image style. But how did it come to Mexico and how can we link it to the same painter? There is another copy taken from the original in the same city, dated in 1594. It was probably given by a relative of the painter, Benneditto Bocciardo, who could also have donated this other copy.
  
- ? In the case of **Francisca Maria** Apollonia (1594 - 1656), daughter of Charles Manuel I of Savoy, hardly any surviving copies can be attributed to her. There is only one that was possibly painted by her, namely the copy in Bologna, Italy, 1646, although there are records of various other copies painted by her but now lost or destroyed, or maybe at the bottom of a drawer somewhere. We know of seven such cases. It would be a very complicated task to find them as nothing is known of them after they were handed over to people just after being painted. When copies were given to people or families, they are much more difficult to follow than if they were handed over to a church, monastery or convent.
  
- ? The parish priest of Chambéry painted the copies now in Guadalupe (1568), Navarrete (1568), San Lorenzo de El Escorial (1567), Pamplona (1571) and Alcoy (1571), all in Spain. The latter two are twins in all their features, as has already been commented. The authentication document of the copy at San Lorenzo de El Escorial, the artist was both priest and painter and over those five years he painted all the above-mentioned copies. Most of them were painted “A LA RIQVESTA...” (by request of ...) a noble. The letters on the Escorial copy are written in gold leaf.

Not all copies, however, detail their origin, although we do have documents showing their historical route. Some copies have details that speak for themselves, details that are not always noticed. None of the above copies show the patches applied after the fire in 1532, although they were copied after this date. Could the painter have copied them before 1532 and then written the texts when they were later handed over to their owners? This idea is supported by the fact that the artist did copy the L-shaped holes from a previous burning. However, it is also possible that the painter has deliberately ignored the patches, in the knowledge that they were not there originally, in order to avoid comments about the carelessness which led to the fire in 1532. The painter was a priest at Chambéry and could thus have "protected" his fellow-priests when copying the Shroud.

### **Symbols and signatures**

There are also small clues, signatures or other identity stamps on some copies.

- ? The knot of the House of Savoy can be found on some Italian copies by Gallarate (Varese, 1710), Bitonto (Bari, 1646) and Margarita (Cuneo, 1643) but a different style in each case. In the first copy, dated 1710, we can see the same decoration on each side of the text on the cloth, whereas on the other two copies the knot is only visible at the end of the text. Rather than a signature, it could be a sign showing the explicit authorisation of the House of Savoy, owners of the Shroud.
  
- ? Exactly the same flowers at the end of the text can be seen on the copies at Cuneo (Cuneo, Italy, 1653), Acireale (Catania, Italy, 1644), Turin (Italy, 1644), Savona (Italy, 1653), Summit (New Jersey, USA, 1624) and La Cuesta (Soria, Spain, 1654). Could this be a signature? Maybe not, as other painters put their names directly to many copies and the author of these copies could just as easily have done so. The flowers do at least allow us to group these copies together, the work of one anonymous painter.
  
- ? Omega. We can also see incongruencies or data that confuses more than helps us, such as the Greek letter omega as a signature (without an alpha to accompany it), visible on the copy at San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Madrid, Spain, 1567), but which

is not to be found on any of the above-mentioned "twin copies", painted by the same artist (the priest from Chambéry).

As we have seen, it is common to find copies whose images and identical texts make it possible to attribute them to the same painter or workshop. But it is not always so. Some copies with the same features (e.g. those by Giovanni Battista Fantino) show differences in the texts, as has been mentioned in reference to the knot of Savoy. Could the artist have been the same but the texts be by a different person in each case? We will never know.

One thing is clear from all these observations – not only one copy was made when an order was placed, as could be supposed. Various "reserve" copies were made until people ordered copies at another date. Copies were also made from previous copies. When they were ordered, a text was added with comments and a date. The copy was sometimes touched to the original and solemnly handed over to its owner. These details can be observed on many 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century copies, e.g. similar copies with different dates in Finale Ligure (Savona, Italy, 1728), kept at the parish church of San Giovanni Battista and the copy at the Carmelite Monastery in the same town, dated 1697.

As I hope to have shown, not even the copies made in Chambéry in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century theoretically one by one for individual orders, and which are today to be found in Spain, can escape the suspicion of having been previously created all together at the same time.

### **Copies by country**

In order to put together the following list of known Shroud copies, I have preferred to focus on those created in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries or earlier. I have not included later copies as their implicit historical interest is much less.

? **31 in Spain.** Two of these copies, in Navarrete (Logroño, 1568) and La Cuesta (Soria, 1654), have always been described as under control, but recent investigations have shown that they have either been destroyed, lost or taken to an unknown destination.

- ? **43 in Italy.** The copy that was kept in the Basilica of the Madonna della Guardia (Tortona, Alessandria in Piamonte, date unknown) was destroyed in a flood.
- ? **9 in France.** Many were lost or destroyed during the French Revolution, although some of these could have been copies of the Besançon Shroud.
- ? **5 in Portugal**
- ? **2 in Mexico**
- ? **1 each in Argentina, Germany** (Aachen / Aix-la-Chapelle, although it has probably been lost or destroyed), **Belgium, Canada, USA** and the **Czech Republic.**

Not taking into account the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and bearing in mind that there are another 40 copies known to have been made but never found (among which we could highlight the one made by order of the Duke of Savoy in 1452 and another, copied in Chambéry and given by the princess of Savoy to Laura Mignani in 1502, and which was possibly at the monastery of the Santa Croce, in Brescia, for some time), we can state that 130 copies are known to have been produced. This number will no doubt keep growing as new copies come to light.

The biggest concern is not those copies waiting to be discovered or even those that never will be discovered, but rather those which will be lost through lack of attention, care or financial means to maintain, restore or correctly store them. These problems are all too common in many places where copies are kept, copies which are artistic memories of a time when the Shroud of Turin lived its epoch of greatest glory and popular devotion.