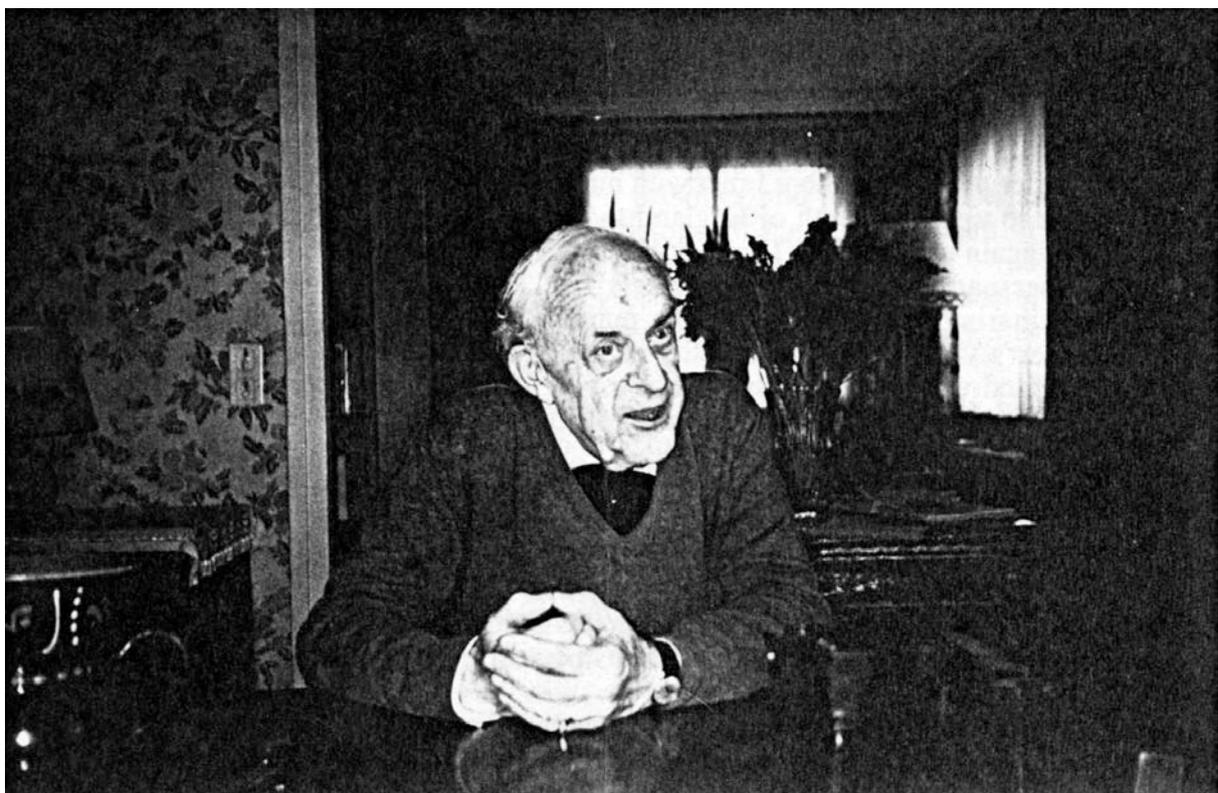


A NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN
edited by REX MORGAN, Author of several books on the Shroud
Issue Number 66 AUGUST 1991



Dr JEAN VOLCKRINGER OF PARIS WHO FIRST PRESENTED THE
CELLULOSE DEGRADATION IMAGE FORMATION THEORY IN 1942
DIED ON 6 JUNE 1991 AGED 85 A FEW WEEKS AFTER HIS WORK WAS
FIRST PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH

[Pic: Rex Morgan 1988]

EDITORIAL

Since the last issue of *Shroud News* I have had the privilege of giving an address at the prestigious St Louis, Missouri, Shroud Conference. This was one of the best organised conferences I have attended and the wide range of papers given by experts from several countries provided a great deal of new research information and an enormous exchange of ideas. The very fact that only about 100 delegates attended meant that everyone could talk to everyone else in those vital breaks, before and after and everything was brilliantly organised in one building with accommodation hard by. I am preparing a complete report of the conference and all its papers for our October issue.

I was, unfortunately, the one able to announce the death of Dr Jean Volckringer to the conference, news of which I had received only the day before in Sydney. My memorial to him is in this issue.

After the USA, where I met with numerous members of the Shroud circle, I was able to visit the south of England to pursue some Shroud researches and there I met again with Audrey Dymock Herdsman of Templecombe. This time I managed to persuade her to write her article *The Templars' Journey to Somerset*. This fascinating essay comprises the major work in this issue and gives us a local expert's view on the probability of the Knights Templar bringing the Shroud to England which was the subject of my St Louis paper. I was also able to attend a very interesting Shroud exhibition in Bournemouth. I have many photographs of it and will make some comments on it shortly. Suffice it to say that it was very well and professionally presented even to the point of acknowledging all the contributors in the "team", that is to say, a list of all those whose work had been plagiarised. I was also able to visit several Templar sites and add to my dossiers on this subject.

In France I met again with Claude de Cointet to collect the English version (as yet unpublished) of Brother Bruno's latest excellent paper which I expect to review soon.

I was also very pleased to receive Ian Wilson's splendid new book *Holy Faces, Secret Places* and am preparing a comprehensive review of it. There are numerous other items on my editorial desk from all over the world which should ensure some good and useful reading for *Shroud News* subscribers over the coming months.

REX MORGAN

Dr JEAN VOLCKRINGER: IN MEMORIAM - REX MORGAN

Dr Jean Volckringer, pharmacist, biologist, botanist, sindonologist, died in Paris on 6 June 1991, just ten weeks after he saw his legendary book on the imprints of the Holy Shroud translated and published in English.

He was born in Paris in 1906 and after gaining his baccalaureate in Latin, sciences, philosophy and mathematics he pursued advanced studies at the Paris Faculty of Pharmacy whence he graduated as a Diplome. He subsequently gained his Doctorate from the University of Paris.

He was a lecturer in physics, chemistry and natural history from 1930 and professor of biological chemistry from 1942, pharmacist in chief and director of the chemical biological laboratory of St Joseph's Hospital, Paris, from 1934 until 1946. During the war he was made prisoner and worked in charge of the Department of Health. He became divisional Inspector of Health in 1950 and Chief of the Central Pharmacy Service to the Ministry of Health. He was made a member of the Academy of Pharmacy in 1964 and Inspector General of Public Health in 1965. He was an expert serving on the World Health Organisation from 1963.

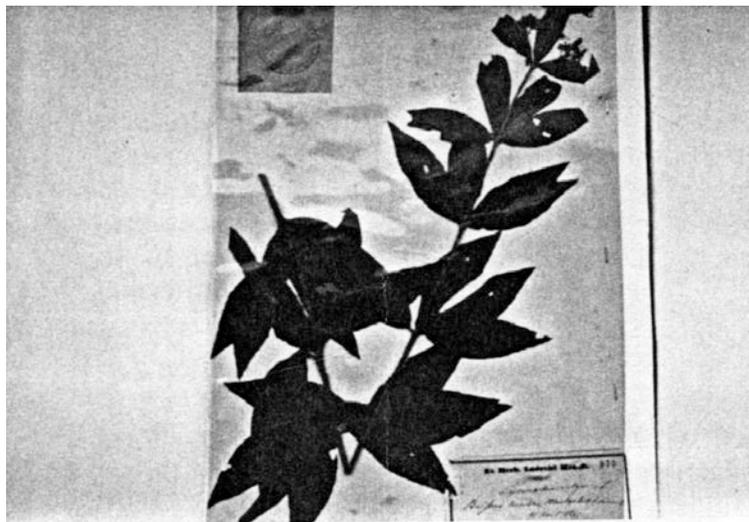
He was responsible for preventing the drama of thalidomide in France by withdrawing authorisation for its manufacture in that country. He was a promoter of Pharmacy for the European Community in eight countries and wrote many papers on the history of Pharmacology, the control of medicines and the unification of Pharmacies.

Dr Volckringer was appointed an Officer of the Legion d'Honneur; Commander of the National Order of Merit; Chevalier des Palmes Academiques; Officer of the Order de l'Etoile noire; Commandeur of the Sainte Publique; he was awarded the Medal of Honour for services to Military Health; was a laureate of the Academy of Medicine and the Academy of Pharmacy. He was a member of the French Society of Therapy and Pharmacodynamics, the Society of Biological Chemists, the Society of Pharmaceutical Historians and the International Federation of Pharmacy.

His name appears in almost all the Shroud literature since his work *Le Saint Suaire de Turin: Le probleme des empreintes devant la Science* was published in 1942 as a result of his experiments and assessments relating to image formation in the thirties. The bottom line was always that he said that the Shroud image was formed by cellulose degradation of the cloth in the same way that pressed plants form images on the paper by that means. His work was always mentioned but



1986 Dr Volckringer assists Rex Morgan to photograph the original images of *Lysimachia vulgaris* formed in 1847



1986 The original plant *Lysimachia vulgaris* photographed at Dr Volckringer's home in Paris. He later gave this specimen to SEARCH (South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud)

Dr JEAN VOLCKRINGER: IN MEMORIAM (cont'd)

without much enthusiasm. We were not to hear about cellulose degradation again until well after the 1978 scientific investigation of the Shroud and the results of the highly advanced Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) group who came to the same conclusion, much to Volckringer's amusement, more than forty years later.

In the early eighties I had set out to meet as many Shroud people as I could as background for my books and had the privilege of meeting Volckringer in his home in Paris in 1983. This was followed by several further meetings over the years at which we would chat for hours in French about the Shroud and the latest developments in research. He was fascinated by the modern technological approach and was especially glad of the work done by Pellicori and Dr John de Salvo. The latter demonstrated through the VP8 Image Analyser that the Volckringer patterns produced the same result as the Shroud image.

Over the years Volckringer and I developed a warm friendship and amongst the characteristics which endeared one to him were his exceptional old-world charm and courtesy. He spoke and wrote in the language of a long-past era with absolute correctness and his mind worked under the influence of a set of moral standards rare in the world of his seventies and eighties. He was a perfect gentleman.

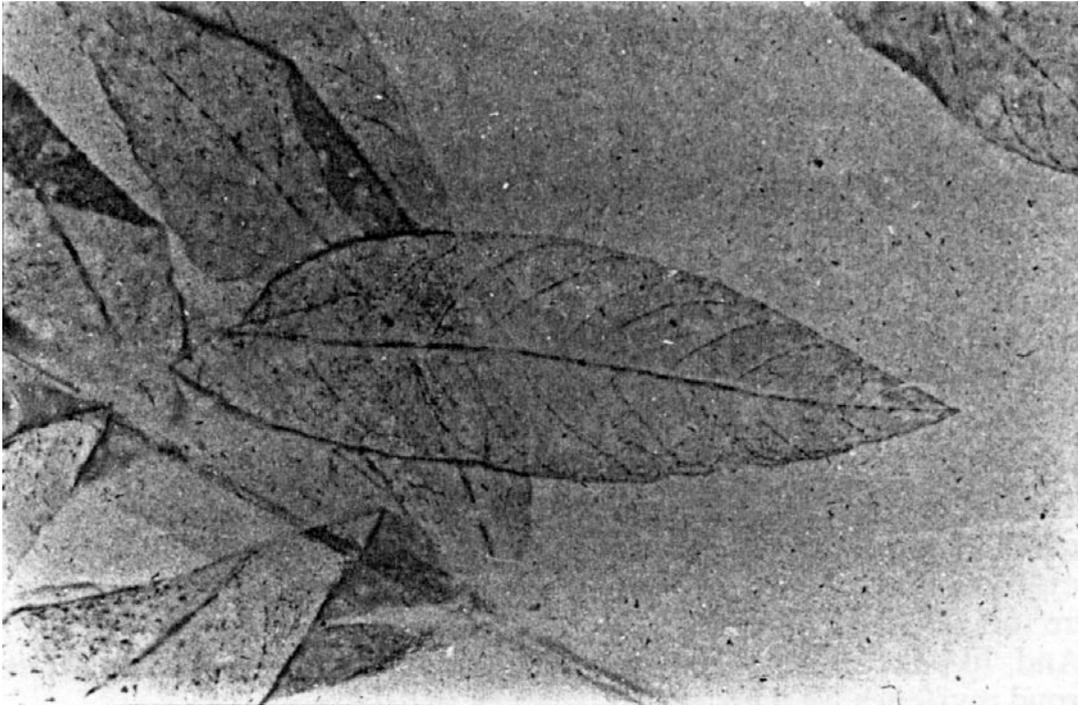
In 1987 I proposed to him that his work should be published in English, something which, to the best of his and my knowledge, had never happened. He was delighted with this idea but I did not press on with the project immediately.

In 1988 after the South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud (SEARCH) had been formally set up in Australia he generously donated to it one of his few remaining original pressed plants, about 150 years old, still in his possession. This was given along with the original papers bearing the cellulose degraded images and early photographs of them. At that time only three of the plants had survived and the specimen *Lysimachia vulgaris* was one of the best preserved. As a result of having this material in Australia we were able to publish for the first time, coloured reproductions of the images and these are splendidly printed in the Runciman Press English Edition of Volckringer's book. (*The Holy Shroud: Science Confronts the Imprints*, 1991)

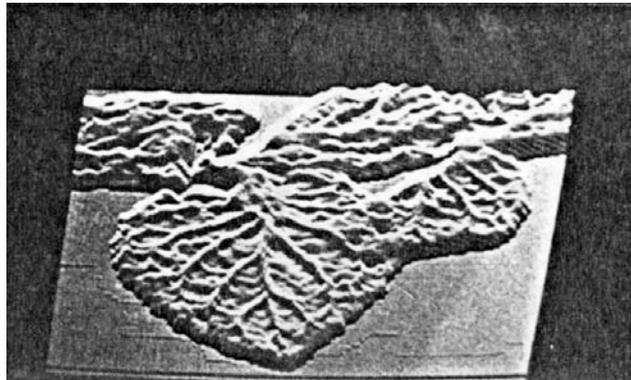
The task of translating had been delayed until I finally decided in early 1990 that it must be done. Volckringer had written to me politely enquiring about the state of play of the translation and I said there and then that since he was 84 years of age the chances of his ever seeing it in English were diminishing. Accordingly Mrs Victoria Harper and I spent an intensive period working on the manuscript and it was almost ready in mid 1990 when I had my own setback through serious illness. Once again the project was shelved but fortunately we were able to bring it to fruition early this year. I am extremely glad that Volckringer saw the English



1986 Original plant *Scrofularia* photographed in Paris. This one had been loaned to Dr John de Salvo for VP8 Image analysis in the USA



Enlargement of the degraded cellulose image from the colour photographs made by Chris Morgan in Australia for the English edition of Volckringer's book



Dr John de Salvo's 3-D computerised image of *Scrofularia*

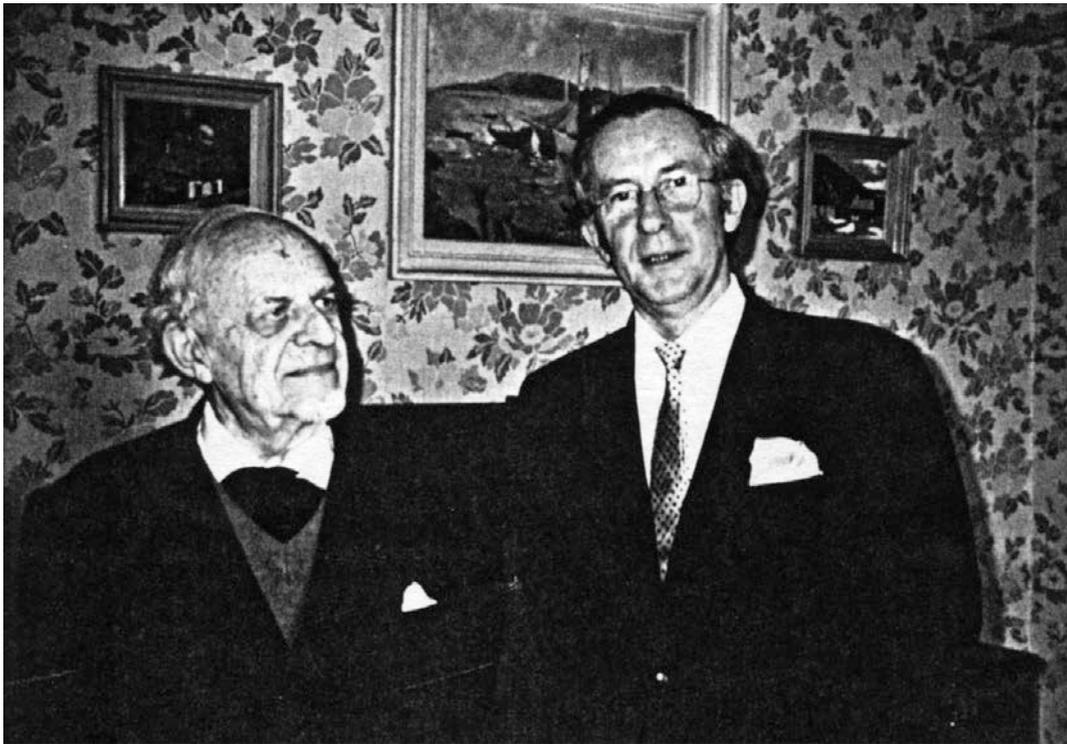
Dr JEAN VOLCKRINGER : IN MEMORIAM (cont'd)

edition before his death and his last letter to me indicates his delight. He had been in declining health over the past two years and I was advised of his death on the very day I was leaving Australia to attend the St Louis Shroud Conference. Almost no one at the Conference knew of his death until I was able to announce it prior to presenting my paper.

I hope, as I believe Volckringer himself did, that the English translation of his Shroud classic, the contents of which are unlikely to be disputed even today, will enable it to be read by a far wider audience than it otherwise would have and that it will take its place on the shelves of every Shroud devotee, researcher and library throughout the English-speaking world.

The death of Volckringer marks the passing of yet another of the original twentieth-century generation of Shroud researchers. He worked with Vignon and knew most of those who had been active around the turn of the century and who were still alive in the thirties.

And, like them, this deeply religious scientist now knows the answers to the Shroud mysteries we who are left continue to try to solve.



1988 Dr Jean Volckringer with Rex Morgan

M. Jean VOLCKRINGER
 3 Rue Louis Rolland
 92120 MONTROUGE

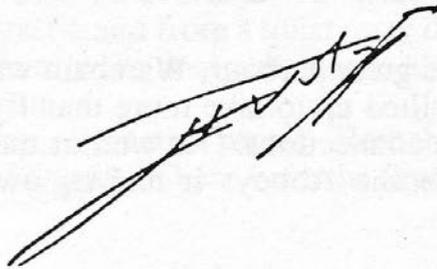
le 27 Mars 1991
 Montrouge

Bien cher Ami,

Je reçois ce matin un
 colis d'exemplaires de
 la belle publication que
 vous venez de Paris
 paraître et vous en remercie
 de tout cœur.

Je vous demande de
 vouloir bien exprimer
 à Madame HARPER mes
 plus sincères félicitations
 pour le travail accompli
 et de lui présenter mes
 respectueux hommages.

Avec ma très vive amitié
 pour vous même et
 tous les vôtres



THE TEMPLARS' JOURNEY TO SOMERSET

- AUDREY DYMOCK HERDSMAN, TEMPLECOMBE

AUDREY DYMOCK HERDSMAN, artist and historian, lives in Templecombe, Somerset, England, where, in the local parish church, may be found the famous panel painting first claimed by Ian Wilson as being a medieval Templar copy from the Shroud. In recent years discussions between Audrey Dymock and Rex Morgan and subsequent research have led to the theory that the panel was not just a painting but the lid of a box which may have housed the Shroud itself in England somewhere between the years 1307 and 1356. Since the publication of this theory by Morgan (*Shroud News* 42, August 1987) no-one has refuted it and he gave a recent up-date on this work at the St Louis Shroud Conference in July 1991. Audrey Dymock is an expert on Templar history, church history and the local history of Somerset and Dorset. She has at last written this article which is but the tip of the iceberg about the Templar routes to England from France and their possible transportation of the Shroud to Templecombe via Poole Harbour. She also includes some of her recently discovered and startling new historical evidence which serves to support her contention.

* * * * *

Poole Harbour lies about halfway along the South Coast of England between Kent and Cornwall.

It is huge, island-studded and a labyrinth of hidden bays and inlets. Its contours are so intricate that in length of contour the harbour has rivalled that of Sydney in Australia.

It is situated almost directly opposite the most northerly point of Normandy in France. It is also just thirty-five miles south of Shaftesbury, Templecombe and Sherborne.

Within these geographical features, and the personalities linked with them, may lie the answers to the often asked questions: "Why did the Templars choose to settle here in Templecombe and make it their West Country headquarters?" and, "Which route was taken by the Knights if and when they brought the Holy Shroud to England?"

In the recesses of the great harbour, Wareham was an important trading port though nowadays too silted up to take more than light craft. It was a port with monastic and religious connections. As well as quayside properties owned by Shaftesbury and Sherborne Abbeys it had its own Priory. An ancient and

THE TEMPLARS' JOURNEY TO SOMERSET (cont'd)

splendid nunnery, it had been raided by the Danes too often and, taken over by the monks, had been given after the Norman conquest as a cell to the Abbey of Lira or Lyra in Normandy. This abbey was associated with that of Corneilles, near Paris. These links made a kind of chain of communication running from Paris to the Templecombe area.

Though now built up into the towns and suburbs of Poole and Bournemouth to the northeast of the harbour, the hinterlands were, at the time of the Templars, wild heathland north and east and, to the south, the remote and isolated semi-island known as the "Isle of Purbeck". Temporary refuge would have been easy to find here. This "island" had been a holy place since the time of the 7th century Saint Aldhelm who was recorded as waiting here for "a fair wind to France" and whose chapel still stands four-square on St Aldhelm's Head. He is also said to have founded St Martin's Church in Wareham. Here can be seen remnants of 12th century wall paintings depicting the life of St Martin. The earthy colours and the star-studded background of these remind us of the colours on our panel painting at Templecombe. The oxide-type colouring is as the painting remains but the stars on our panel have since disappeared.

When, and if, the Templars brought their most treasured relic to England, it would have been in deep secrecy. It has been said that if they possessed the Shroud they would have boasted of it. But 1187, after their defeat by the Saracens at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, a relic which was priceless to the Order was captured and trailed at the tail of Saladin's horse. This was a fragment of the True Cross encased in gold. After such a disaster no Templar would flaunt a treasured relic of Jesus.

From Paris to Rome the River Seine passed within a reach of about twelve houses of Templar associates. River transport was both quiet and fast. Some way to the east of the Seine, Gisors, a massive fortress once occupied by Templars, may have housed the Shroud through many years. It seems to me a likely stronghold to have been chosen, having a reputation for invulnerability. It was said to have underground chapel and chambers and to have been in the hands of the secretive Priory of Sion after the Templar occupation.

When the time came to take the Shroud to England I imagine the busy ports of Rouen and Rochelle would be avoided. To strike out westwards to Normandy would avoid the main traffic and from a quiet quay on the coast it was a short sail across the Channel. There were then abbeylands along the coast of Purbeck and shelter within the harbour.

Every strategist requires alternative routes. Here there were several. Two rivers ran into the heartland of Dorset. These were the Frome, perhaps too far west for a

THE TEMPLARS' JOURNEY TO SOMERSET (cont'd)

run to Templecombe, but often used by Sherborne monks.

The Piddle followed a quiet way past mills and churches in its quaintly named villages - Puddletown, Piddlehinton and Piddletrenthide, to a manageable ride to our district.

On the other hand another well used route ran over the heath to Morden joining the River Stour below Blandford, near the Cistercian nunnery at Tarrant Crawford. This river came within two miles from Templecombe and not very far from Shaftesbury.

Lands at Combe were given to the Knights by Serlo Fitz-Odo in 1185. This estate was adjoining lands owned by Shaftesbury Abbey. To distinguish abbey land from Temple land the northern village was known as Abbas Combe. St Mary's Church was a daughter house to the Abbey and the Abbess of Shaftesbury was patron and landlady here until the Reformation in the mid-1500s.

The most significant personality in this story is the lady who was abbess at the time in the early 13th century when the Templars established themselves here, building their preceptory, farms and hostelry. A preceptory for their chaplains would also have been part of their domains.

This abbess was one Marie of Anjou. She was half-sister to King Henry II and aunt to King Richard the Lionheart. King John of the Magna Carta was also her nephew.

The Anjou dynasty was intricately involved with the Kings of England and France, and with the Templars. Abbess Marie was a clever woman who would have had enormous influence. If anyone influenced the gift of land and the choice of situation it would have been, I think, Marie. A scholar and linguist, she translated and wrote lays and tales of chivalry.

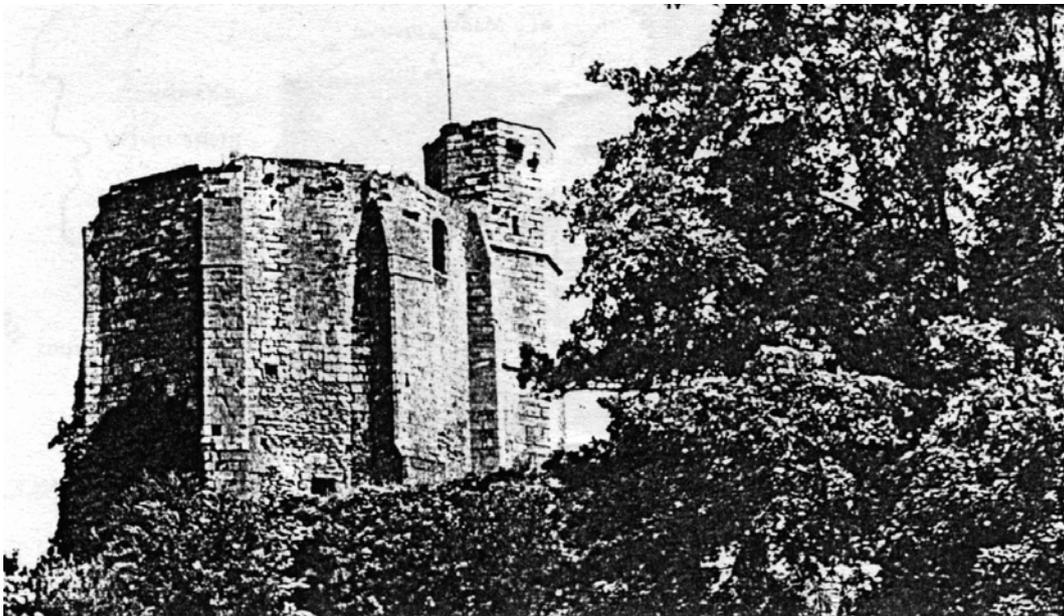
One translation of Aesop's Fables was made especially for another half-nephew, Count William, Earl of Salisbury, who was the natural son of King Henry II.

He, with his Countess Ela, owned most of the land around the landward side of Poole Harbour and much more stretching into Dorset. The Count was an ardent Crusader and a romantic poem tells how the Countess watched Poole Harbour for many years awaiting his return from the Holy Land.

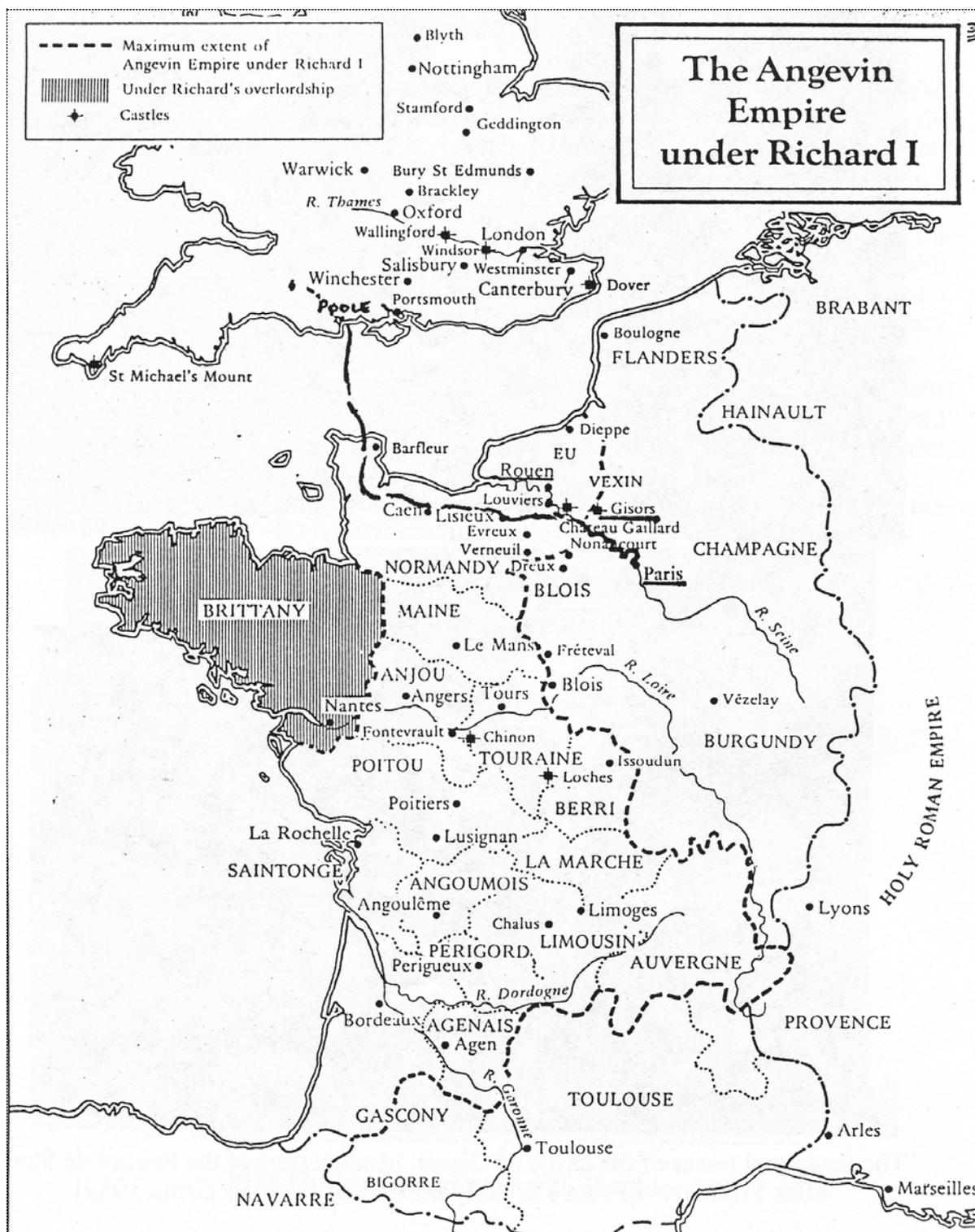
Sherborne and its Abbey were also linked with Templar traditions. St Stephen Harding founded the Cistercian order in France, having come originally from the Benedictine Abbey at Sherborne. The Cistercians and Templars were brother monks sharing a spiritual father in St Bernard who drew up the Templar rule of life. Templars were always welcome in Cistercian houses and there were at least two of these in our area, at Bindon Abbey, near Wareham, and at Tarrant



The Templecombe Panel Painting [Pic: Rex Morgan]



The octagonal tower of the castle of Gisors, headquarters of the Priore de Sion after 1188 [From Baigent, M., et al., *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, 1982]







The Templar Priory at Wareham, now a high-class hotel [Pic: Rex Morgan]



View from Wareham Priory garden showing the river travelled by the Templars
(and the Shroud?) [Pic: Rex Morgan]

THE TEMPLARS' JOURNEY TO SOMERSET (cont'd)

Crawford near Blandford.

It is interesting that the Cistercian House in Wales, Strata Florida, held the ancient wooden cup which was thought by many to be the Grail.

At Sherborne there are other signs of a shared secret within the Templars. The Sherborne Missal (or Mass Book) is beautifully decorated with figures and animal forms. One small face resembles the Shroud face with forked beard and hairline similar to that on our Templecombe panel painting. This missal was moved to Northumberland at the Reformation but was fortunate to survive it. The British Museum now keeps it.

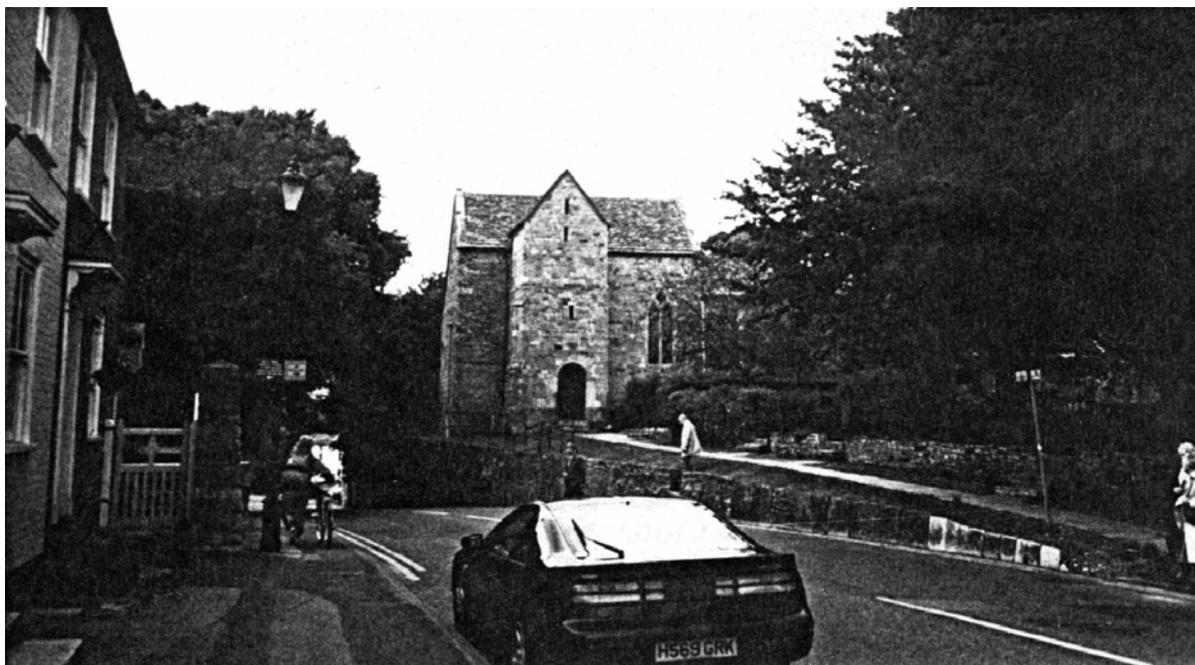
Another much later picture is that engraving on silk owned by the Wingfield Digby family of Sherborne Castle which shows the Exposition of the Shroud in the 17th century. This was reproduced in Wilson's book *The Turin Shroud*.

Finally there is the Arthurian legend. In 1982 I wrote in an article on the Templars of Templecombe: "an aspect which has not really been explored is their connection with the Arthurian legend. Only six miles away, as a horse could canter, stands the hill which holds the greatest claim to be Camelot."

Since then, as the Shroud story has developed and the Templar connection has been confirmed, I have been confronted by a version of the legend which brings the Shroud most definitely here to Britain. It reads: "Percival and his sister rode on together and she told the knight that no one could gain victory over the King of the Moors (Mahomet) without having kissed the Holy Shroud; she hoped to bring him a piece of the blessed relic which, said she, could only be brought from the Haunted Ossuary, a place of very evil origin."

"Half fainting with terror of this hell fray of the damned, Elaine made her way to a small and ancient chapel, lighted by altar candles, though no hand was there to light them. Above the altar, held invisibly, hung the Holy Shroud."

The Arthurian legends, if first enacted in the 5th century, have been worked over like a fine tapestry in the ensuing centuries. Can this story of Elaine be a medieval way of telling us that the priceless relic was here, and could the writer perhaps have been Marie of Anjou?



St Martin's Templar Church, Wareham [Pic: Rex Morgan]

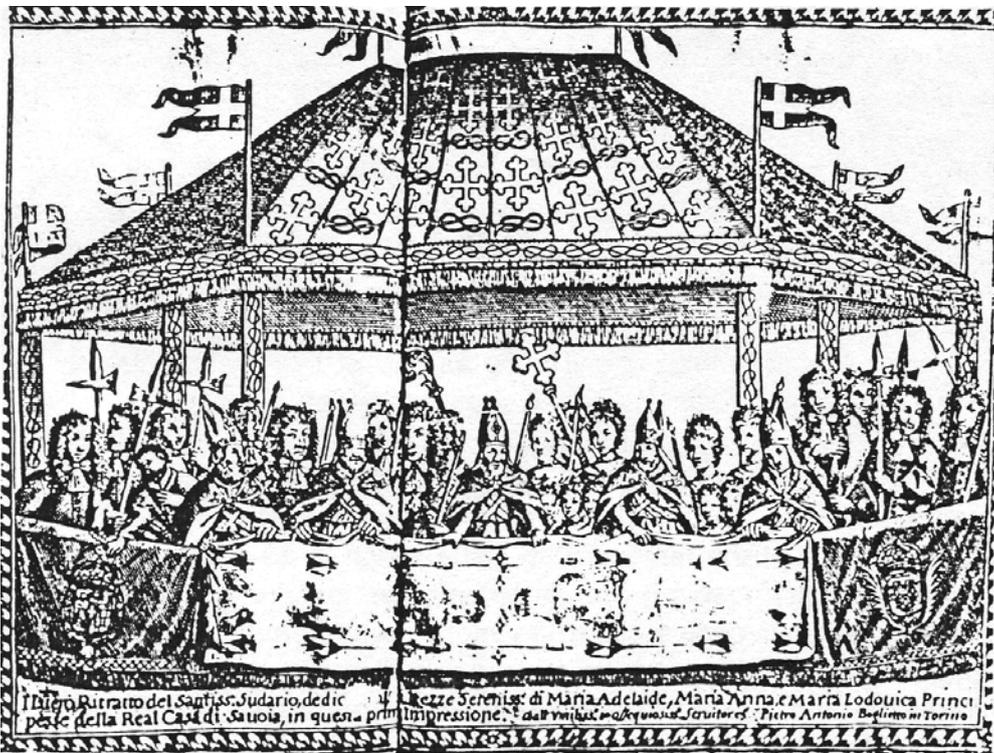


Medieval wall painting, St Martin's Church, Wareham [Pic: Rex Morgan]



Abbey Church of St Mary the Virgin, Sherborne

[J. R. Browne]



Painting on silk of Shroud Exposition 17th century. From the collection of Simon Wingfield Digby, Sherborne Castle [reprod. from Ian Wilson: *The Turin Shroud*]

Shroud News began in 1980 when Rex Morgan, author of three books on the subject of the Holy Shroud (*Perpetual Miracle*, *Shroud Guide*, and *The Holy Shroud and the Earliest Paintings of Christ*) started putting together a few notes about current developments in Sindonology (the study of the Shroud of Turin) for a small circle of interested people in his home country of Australia. He didn't expect it to go beyond a few issues.

The bulletin now reaches subscribers all over the world and it is written and produced and the information disseminated more quickly than most news-sheets of a similar kind or the more prestigious Shroud publications. It contains information, news, articles and illustrations gathered from sources of Shroud study worldwide through Rex Morgan's extensive network of personal connections with what has been described as the "Shroud Crowd".

Rex Morgan is a frequent traveller overseas and this has given him the opportunity to keep abreast of latest developments in Shroud study and research at first hand. He was present at the world media preview of the Shroud itself in August 1978 in Turin, Italy and has met with numerous Shroud researchers in many countries. His quest for Shroud information became, as he described it, "a passionate hobby". He brought the world-famous Photographic Exhibition created by Brooks Institute, California, to Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Macau and Canada and during those tours it attracted more than 600,000 visitors. The exhibition was subsequently donated by Brooks Institute to the non-profit making organisation, The South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud (SEARCH) of which Morgan is President. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the USA based Association of Scientists and Scholars International for the Shroud of Turin (ASSIST) and was a member of the scientific team which conducted environmental experiments in a Jerusalem tomb in 1986 (The Environmental Study of the Shroud in Jerusalem). He has made several original contributions to the research of the Shroud, has presented papers at international conferences, has written many articles and given numerous broadcasts and telecasts on the subject in many countries.

The list of *Shroud News* subscribers continues to increase internationally and the publication has been described many times as one of the best available. Its production is obviously privately subsidised as we still request a subscription in Australia of only \$6 for six issues posted. *Shroud News* comes out six times per year. The USA subscription is \$US 6 (posted surface mail) or \$US 12 (posted airmail). Postage to other countries varies. ALL back issues are available at \$1 (US or Aust) each plus postage charges except the famous 50th issue which is \$3 plus post.

Please encourage those of your acquaintance to take out their own subscription rather than borrow your copies since the more genuine subscribers we have the more we can improve the bulletin and the longer it is likely to survive.

All information and opinion in this newsletter is published in good faith. It is edited (and mainly written) by Rex Morgan and published by:

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