

## THE LIER SHROUD: A PROBLEM IN ATTRIBUTION

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### **The Problem**

Many copies of the Turin Shroud carry a date upon them. The earliest of these, dated 1516, is rolled in a cylinder kept in the vestry of the St. Gommaire church of Lier,\* Belgium (Fig.1b). It is rarely displayed. In August 1985, on the occasion of the visit of Rex Morgan, Australian writer and Shroud enthusiast, it was privately shown to a small group including myself. The last public showing was in April 1986, during the exhibition celebrating the 750th Anniversary of Nazareth, a Cistercian convent not far from Lier. All the original documents concerning the copy were also exhibited, and I was able to gather new information from them.

While the Lier copy is generally attributed to Albrecht Dürer, some authors suggest that it could be the work of the Flemish painter Bernard van Orley, from 1518 to 1529 court painter to Marguerite of Austria, regent of the Netherlands.

This study presents the information that I was able to gather about the attributions to these two artists.

### **Description of the Lier copy**

A Latin text on the copy describes it as "the third part of the [Turin] Shroud"; the dimensions are 1.47m x 0.33m. The Turin Shroud measures 4.36m x 1.10m ( $1.47 \times 3 = 4.41$ ;  $0.33 \times 3 = 0.99$ ). The fabric was described as "catoen bruijnagtig", brownish cotton, in a notice by Richardus van Graezen, whose texts will be examined farther on. The cloth is a one-to-one weave, technically a taffeta.

The image on the Lier copy is 0.63m long, and its proportions follow the "golden rule of the art of portraiture"; the head, 0.08m, is 1/8 of the total body length. The image is painted in a monotone of reddish brown, in tempera; that is, pigment diluted in water mixed with the yolk of a fresh egg. Differences in tone are due to repeated applications of the quick-drying paint; several layers on high points, such as the nose, the knees, shoulders, etc., therefore appear in a darker tone. The wounds are a saturated red, in disharmony with the lightly sketched image.

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\* While we are accustomed to the French spelling of this Belgian town, *Lierre*; in this article we will adopt the Flemish spelling. Ed.

Whereas on the Turin Shroud the smallest wounds and bloodstains can be seen with an almost painful accuracy, the Lier copy does not portray many scourge wounds. There are more on the dorsal image than on the frontal, but far fewer than we see on the Original. The wounds of the many thorns are represented by a simple red line. The distinctive epsilon bloodstain on the forehead is absent.

The large bloodstream from the lance wound is painted straight down without any detail. No thumbs are shown on the hands. There is a nail wound in what appears to be the palm of each hand, though on the Shroud we see a wound only in the left wrist.

The long hair is separated in the back into five small braids. Although the hair on the dorsal image of the Shroud is often described as a pigtail or a braid, it is not so visible that a style can be definitely ascribed.

The eyes are represented by simple dots, like a child's drawing; the blank spaces around the dots make the eyes appear wide open. Indeed, the eyes do appear to be open on the Shroud itself; it was only the photographic negative which revealed the eyes to be closed.

It is more than likely that the artist who painted the Lier shroud was copying from a master-copy rather than directly from the Turin Shroud. Whoever the painter was, he copied what he saw on the Shroud, or at least what he saw on a master-copy. He has depicted the lance wound on the viewer's right, and put the left hand over the right, as on the Shroud. He also put the left foot over the right, although practically all medieval crucifixes show the right foot over the left. The image is copied as it is seen on the Shroud, but with a confusion of positive and negative, particularly in the face. On any portrait or icon, the nose, temples, etc., would be highlighted; the Lier copy—as all copies of the Shroud—make these areas dark because they are dark on the Shroud. However, unlike most copies, on this one the body is not outlined but shaded, in *sfumata*, rather accurately.

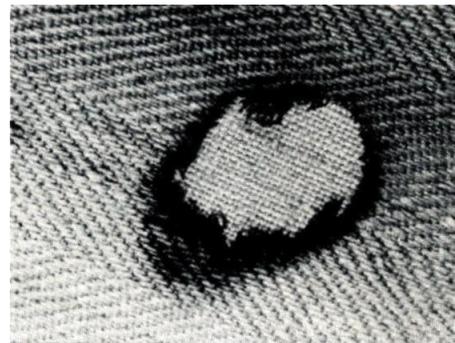


Fig.2: A burn hole. Photo by Aurelio Ghio, 1978.

The four sets of round spots to the right and left of both the frontal and dorsal images are shown in red in the belief that they were bloodstains. We know now that they are burn holes. After examining the Turin Shroud in 1933, Don Antonio Tonelli reported that these were "holes probably made by a hot poker" (*Sindon* 8:26) while the Shroud was folded, once lengthwise, once widthwise.

The scientific exams of 1978 confirmed this observation, adding that the edges of the burns are different from the large burns of the 1532 fire in the Sainte-Chapelle of Chambéry. Some of the smaller holes were not mended by the Poor Clare nuns in 1534 (Fig.2); others were repaired in a way different from the patching over the large burns.

It is interesting that the copy shows the dorsal image on the right, a position which must already have been traditional, as it is thus on the XIV<sup>th</sup> century medallion in the Cluny Museum. The fact is manifest on the Lier copy by the orientation of two texts, one in Latin, the other in Nuremberger dialect, and the date-1516—written at the top. The Latin text, placed between the two heads, reads as follows:

Exanimu Christi pius in qua corpus Jesu  
 A cruce depositum inuoluerat ipse Joseph  
 Sindonis hoc vere: saltem est pars tercia Sindon  
 (Quippe hoc ter maior corpore Jesus erat)  
 Huius que mortis lector te instigat acerbe  
 Qua pro te misero plasmate sponte tulit.

(This shroud is only one-third [the size] of the Shroud in which the pious Joseph himself wrapped the dead body of Christ taken down from the Cross. (In fact the body of Jesus was three times larger.) May this shroud, reader, remind you of his bitter death which for you, O miserable creature, he freely accepted.)

The text in Nuremberger dialect runs along the bottom of the painting:

Der sun gottes Jhesus Christus vnser erloser jst nach seine pitern tod in ain rain tüch  
 gelegt vnd pegrave worde in wölchem er aufs götlicher krafft diser gstat gleich sein  
 menschliche pildung hat gelassen. Diss hailig tüch wirt alle jar auf nächste tag nach  
 Inüerõ crucis zu Camerach in Saphoy gezaigt vnd mit andacht auch wunderzeiche  
 wurcke gesechen\* [monogram].

(The Son of God, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, after his bitter death was wrapped and buried in a clean cloth on which, through his divine power, he left this picture of his human figure. Every year, the day after the holy day of the Invention of the Cross, this holy cloth is exhibited in Chambéry in Savoy, where it is beheld with devotion and miraculous signs.)

At the end is what seems to be a monogram (Fig.3) but is as yet unidentified. It could be the monogram, not of the artist, but of the

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\* The text given in *Spectrum* 14, p. 31, was copied from another author. We have tried above to be more exact. An absolutely literal-translation into English of this archaic text is not possible. Ed.

person who inscribed the text; or even of a person to whom the copy belonged. Canon A. Thiéry surmised that it was a symbol for *et cetera*.

On both texts, the calligraphy is especially good; but it seems that they were not written by the same hand.

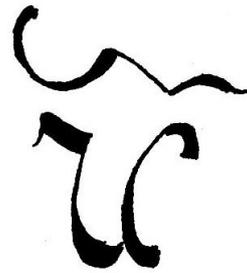


Fig.3: Monogram. Author's drawing.

### **The Xabregas Copy**

The Lier copy has often been compared to the copy once kept in the Poor Clare Convent of the Mother of God in Xabregas, Portugal, and now preserved in Lisbon (Fig. 1c; also *Spectrum* 13, p. 31). Both paintings could have been made by the same artist or in the same workshop; or the smaller one could have been copied from the larger one.

There are many stylistic similarities: on both copies, the eyes are little dots, giving the face a somewhat startled expression; on both, the corners of the mouth turn down woefully, as the artist mistook the mustache for the mouth. There are no thumbs on the hands of either copy; the nail wound on the left hand of the Xabregas figure is through the carpus, but as this hand lies over the right wrist, the artist had to put that nail wound near the palm. A close comparison will show other similarities.

There are also some very important differences: the Xabregas copy is the same length as the Turin Shroud; it is on linen; and it was put in contact with the Turin Shroud (a claim never made for the shroud of Lier). Consequently it must have been copied directly from the Shroud.

The figure is softly outlined. There are nine or ten strands of hair at the back, instead of five as on the Lier copy. Across the loins of the Xabregas figure there is a chain, the artist's interpretation of what today is referred to as the "bloody belt"; there is a chain around each ankle, front and back, and the crown of thorns is also represented as a chain.

The four "bloodmarks" (poker holes) to right and left of the figure are in an erratic pattern whereas those on the Lier copy closely resemble the pattern on the Turin Shroud.

In 1579, the patriarch of Jerusalem, on a visit to the Poor Clare nuns of Xabregas, was touched by the similarity of their copy to the Original, by that time in Turin. In his book, *Historia Serafica* (1709), Fernando da Soledad tells this legend: "By order of the Emperor Maximilian, two famous painters were to make copies of the

Shroud...but afraid that they were incompetent to reproduce the beauty of the image of the Redeemer, they did not know how to begin, so went away leaving their canvasses untouched. When they returned they found their paintings already done...and it was impossible to distinguish the two miraculous copies from the real Shroud."

According to this legend, and considering the similarity of the Lier shroud to the Xabregas shroud, it is possible that the Emperor did order two copies of the Original; the full-size copy being sent to his cousin, Eleonora,\* abbess and founder of the Monastery of the Mother of God, and the second, as has been suggested, to his daughter, Marguerite of Austria. The difficulty here is that the date for the arrival of the copy to the Monastery was believed to be 1507, though there are no documents to that effect. If this were so, then nine years passed before the Lier copy was dated. However, a chronicle of 1639 in the Monastery archives and quoted in part by Don Domenico Leone (*El Santo Sudario en España*, 1959), follows the tradition that the copy was a gift from Maximilian, who had commissioned two painters to copy the Turin Shroud.

### **Documents on the Lier Copy**

In the archives of St. Gommaire church is a notice referring to the period when the copy was at the Nazareth convent. Numbered KA 132/48, under the heading *Reliquien* and dated 1651, it says:

From the Holy Tomb of Our Lord, one cloth which has always been kept in the greatest honor, and we hold by tradition that when the furious soldiers meant to molest the convent, a nun, taking the holy gravecloth with her, went to the soldiers asking them what they desired. The soldiers, defeated, told her, "We meant to do much evil, but now we cannot do it for we do not know what is the matter with us", and they went away.

Another time, the Lord Confessor, taking the gravecloth, went to Lier in the Groote Kercke [the Big Church, popular name for St. Gommaire] where there was a person possessed. The Lord Confessor touched the gravecloth against the back of the possessed, who instantly started to cry out, "The gravecloth of the Lord", making a great clamor like a person tortured. (App. A)

However, an earlier account is found in *Gedenckwaerdighe Memorie van 1425 to ende met het jaer 1532*, compiled by Sir Richardus van Graezen, mayor of Lier († 1621). Four copies of this manuscript exist: the original in Brussels' Royal Library; a XVII<sup>th</sup> century copy

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\* Leonora de Lancaster (1458-1525), Queen of Portugal, wife of Juan II (1455-1495), King of Portugal. She was a cousin of Maximilian, whose mother was Eleanor of Portugal. Ed.

Het Convent heeft se nuut zedig is noch te  
 beouding zude rwek te Mersvets / In  
 welen tafwel gesegiedwt id / soe Oub magge  
 sijn livinge mid wad soovende / in soe die  
 priester ons zingt sijn wad op saterda / Dat  
 de pualen het de goetie / sijnen op sijn  
 Aensinge van Oub sijnlicht magge bestride

In Oub Adria wout bebbant die beouding  
 sijn / Dat id te welen sijn Oudendoe van  
 Oure oft zene Oure die zofus van Avia  
 metten fulbont sijn ziggade and sillingmak  
 Ouy 32 vanden Crizig sudaen wad / sijn id  
 in zingde Oure metten sijn / in soe te  
 welen van Cetero in id wite sijn zing  
 sijn tiberde sijn wout bebbant tot Carnage  
 in sijn sijn / man in sijn sijn wad dat  
 sijn dade bebbant wout / sijn sijn id  
 sijn soe in te Mersvets zude Adria sijn  
 welen sijn gnost / in welen die beouding  
 sijn Oubte sijn door in groot present  
 sijn gesegond /

Het in sijn ondt sijn sijn sijn sijn  
 twee diep beouding / sijn sijn  
 vande fundatie van Mersvets  
 Convent in nazareth quora ziva fundata  
 sijn An Dom M sijn sijn sijn sijn  
 van sijn / sijn sijn sijn sijn sijn  
 prima prioviffa sijn sijn sijn sijn

Fig.4: Text from Richardus van Graezen, MS 11.757, fol. 43 recto; in Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussels. © Copyright Koninklijke Bibliotheek, All rights reserved.

in the State Archives at Antwerp; a short version of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century in the Municipal Archives of Lier; and two (identical) copies made in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. The Lier MS gives this version in the section concerning the Nazareth convent:

In this abbey is preserved a valuable jewel, to wit, the third part of the cloth in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of our Redeemer when it was taken down from the Cross. Given by a count in the year 1516. It appears to be of brownish cotton (catoen bruijnagtig).

The original text, written before 1532 and preserved in the Royal Library, has never before been published. Special permission was granted to reproduce this page (Fig.4) to document this article. Mr. Marc Mees, of the Geschiedkundig Genootschap van Lier (Historical Society of Lier) transcribed the difficult script. It translates thus:

In this abbey is kept a valuable piece, to wit, the third part of the cloth in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of the Redeemer when it was taken down from the Cross. It is a long cloth but narrow and it seems to be of cotton and is somewhat brownish. The second part is kept in Cameryc in Saphoyen [Chambéry in Savoy] but it is not told where the third part is kept. In the year 1516 a count came to the abbey of Nazareth

who gave this worthy piece as a valuable present. (App. B) The mayor (or his source) did not know his Latin well, because he misunderstood the Latin phrase on the Lier painting, "saltem est pars tertia Sindon", concluding that "en seyt niet waer het derde bewaert wordt" (and does not tell where the third part is kept).

Still another version was published by Thiéry, who seems to be the first author to introduce the Lier copy into Shroud literature: Nazareth (near Lier), Cistercian sisters

In this abbey is kept a precious piece, that is, a third of a sheet or shroud in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Our Savior when he was taken down from the Cross. It is a long cloth but narrow and one would say of cotton; it is a bit brownish. The second piece is kept at Chambéry in Savoy but it is not known where the third piece could be. In 1516 a count came to Nazareth where he gave this precious relic as a special gift.

Postscript: I remember having read that—I believe during the time of the Beggars,\* 1580 to 1582—when the bands threatened the convent, a nun hid this shroud under her scapular and went to meet the enemy, who turned on their heels and left her in peace.

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\* The "Beggars" were marauding bands-led by Dutch Calvinist noblemen in revolt against Spanish rule. Ed.

Thiéry remarks (as pointed out above) that the author mistranslated the Latin inscription, which says that the shroud of Lier is the third part of the Chambéry Shroud, not that there are three shrouds.

Thiéry gives the passage in Flemish with a French translation in a footnote. But his quotation is disconcerting because he claims the passage was "composed by the notary Berckmans, around 1700, from XV<sup>th</sup> century archives now in the Municipal Archives of Lier."

One is immediately suspicious of some error on Thiéry's part, as XV<sup>th</sup> century archives could not have mentioned the shroud of 1516. The Berckmans writings—in eight large volumes, hand-written in old Flemish—are kept in the Lier archives. Mr. Mees tried to locate the above passage in the Berckmans books, but without success. All eight volumes were also searched by Mr. J. De Keyzer; at the place indicated by Thiéry, there was only an item about the sale of a house. During the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Nazareth, the Berckmans books were not on exhibit; I asked why and was told that there was nothing in them which related to the convent or to the Lier copy.

But to conclude the story of the convent: Nazareth did not survive the French Revolution. In 1797 the abbey and all its goods were confiscated and sold to the public. The shroud-copy, somehow, was saved and hidden. After the departure of the French, it was transferred to the treasury of St. Gommaire church, where it remains.

### **Marguerite of Austria**

The name of Marguerite of Austria (1480-1530) recurs often in the story of the Lier copy. The daughter of Maximilian I of Hapsburg and Mary of Burgundy, in 1497 she was married to Don Juan of Aragon, who died six months later. In 1501, the young widow became the bride of Philibert the Handsome, Duke of Savoy. As all members of the House of Savoy, Philibert was passionately devoted to the Shroud; like the dukes before him—and after him—he took the relic with him wherever he went in his travels and frequent moves from one ducal palace to another; until Marguerite, no less devoted to the precious relic and concerned about its preservation, persuaded him that it should be permanently deposited in the Royal Chapel. The transfer was accomplished a year after their marriage, and in 1509 the Shroud was folded into the silver reliquary, costing 12,000 gold crowns, commanded by Marguerite of the Flemish artisan Liévin van Latham. This reliquary was destroyed in the fire of 1532.

In 1503, the archduke Philip the Handsome, grand-master of Flanders and Marguerite's brother, returning from a voyage to Spain, passed through Bourg-en-Bresse. The Duke and Duchess of

Item un bagantou d'ours en papier ou l'yeux  
 foudroyez en son l'ya 'une beste d'ours  
 de noir et blanc avec d'ours d'ours de  
 en...

Item un La potence du saint faine de  
 nre J. f. en folle

Item un bag plat coffre de bois d'ours  
 Loque l'ya plusieurs pameures faine  
 en...

Fig.5: Item from the 1523 inventory of Marguerite of Austria; in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France.

Savoy, with great ceremony, carried the Shroud to that city in honor of Philip's visit.

The event is important in that an eye-witness, Antoine de Lalaing, Lord of Montigny, left a description of the exhibition which took place that Good Friday, April 14: "[The Shroud] is, I believe, the most devotional and contemplative thing on the earth. It is the rich "sydoine" and noble Shroud bought by Joseph of Arimathea. One sees it clearly bloody with the most precious blood of Jesus our Redeemer.... One sees imprinted all of his most sacred body...." He adds that authenticity has been confirmed by its having been tried by fire (hot pokers?), boiled in oil, laundered many times, "but it was not possible to efface or remove the imprint and image."

In 1504, Marguerite was again left a widow, and a few months later she relinquished custody of the Shroud to the dowager-duchess, Claude de Bresse de Bretagne, widow of Duke Philip II of Savoy. For three years, Claude de Bresse kept the Shroud with her in her castle in the Ain, but in 1506 the relic was returned to the chapel in Chambéry.

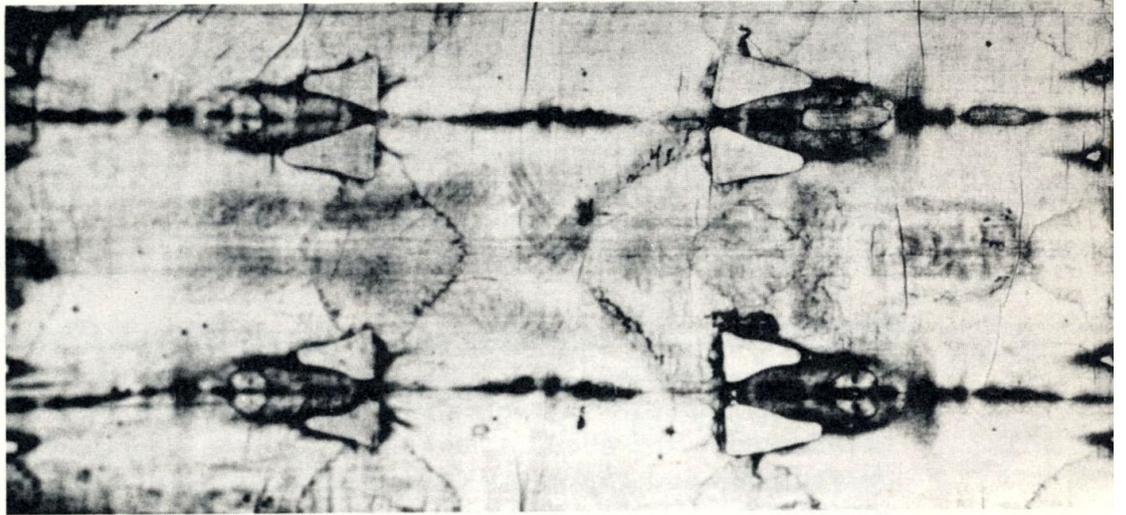


Fig. 1a: The Shroud of Turin; 4.36m x 1.10m; linen.

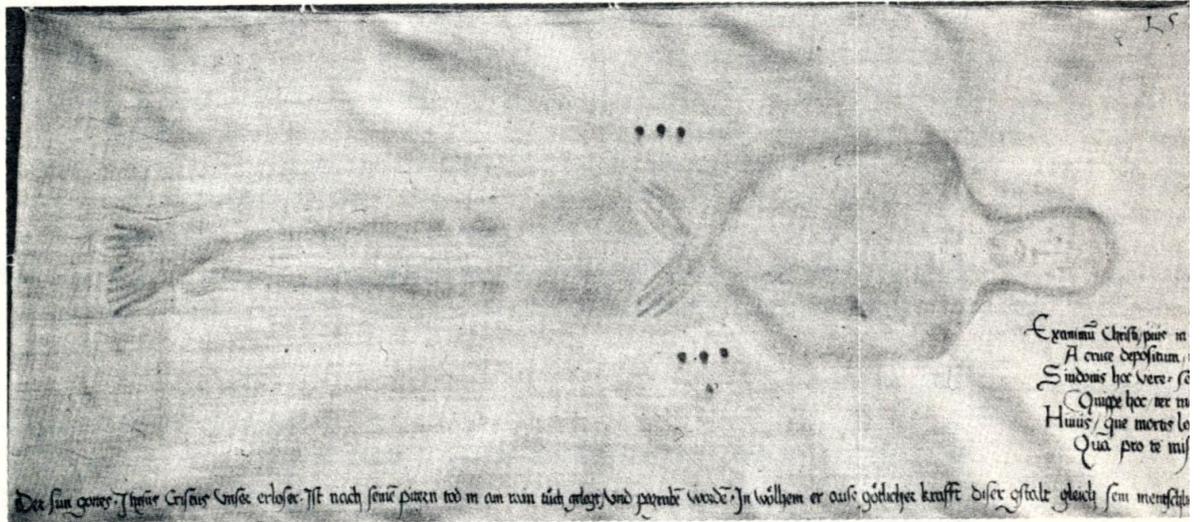


Fig. 1b: The Lier copy; 1.47m x 0.33m; cotton.

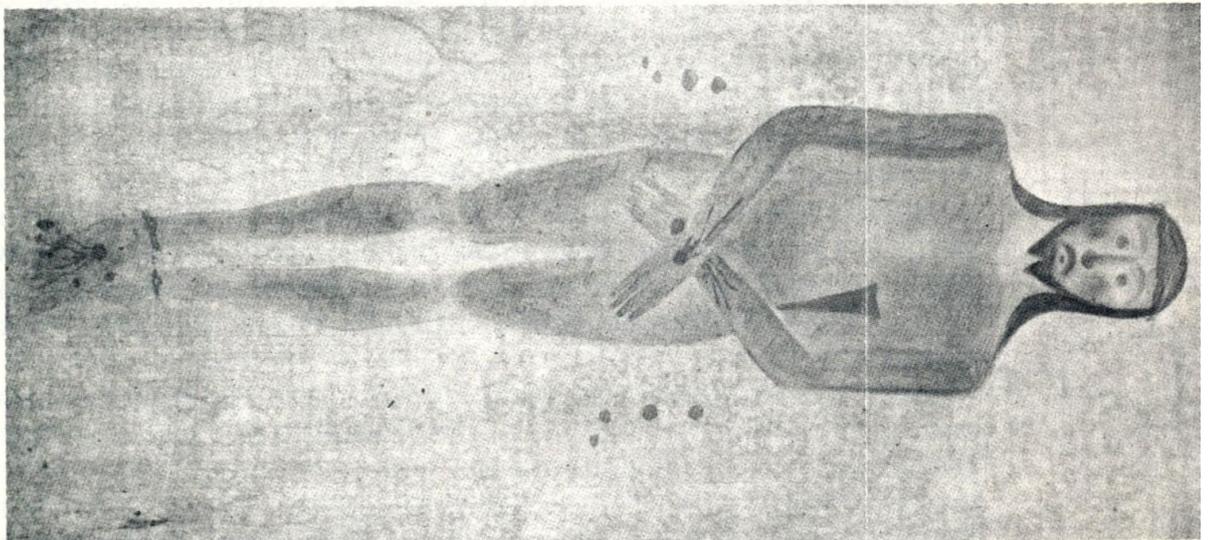
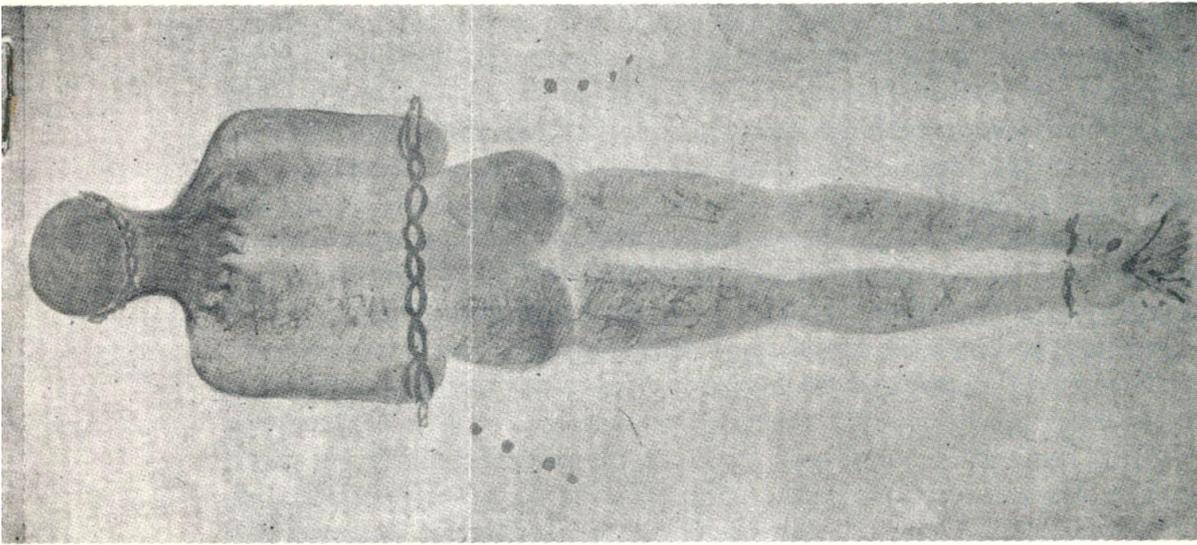
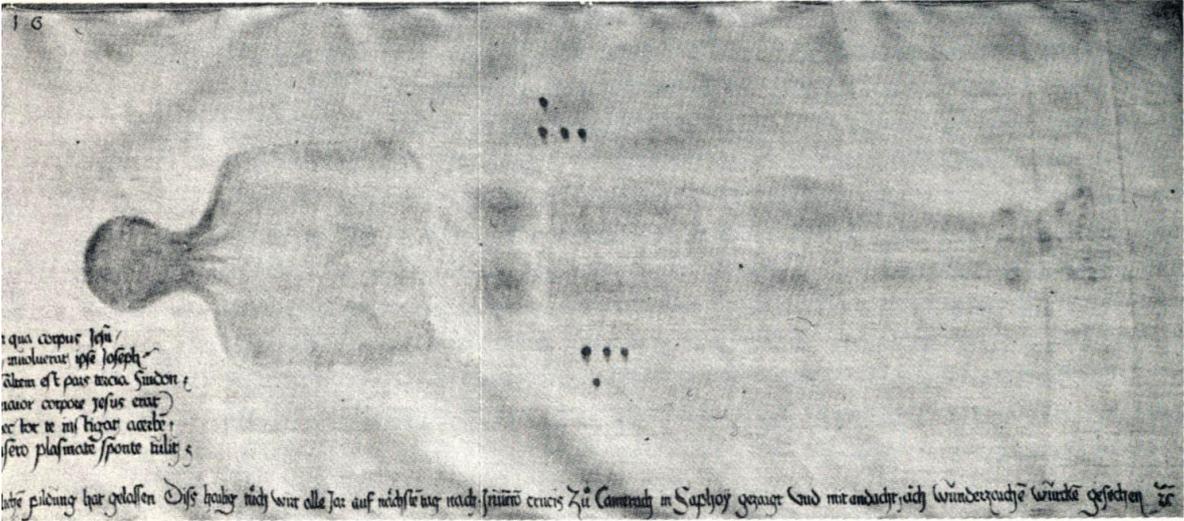
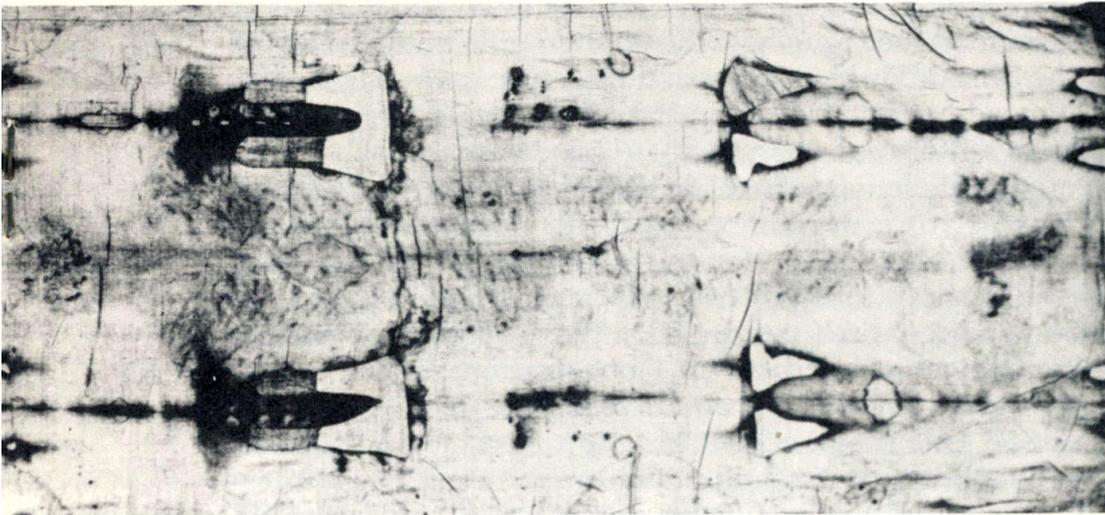


Fig. 1c: The Xabregas copy; same size as Turin Shroud; linen.



From the foregoing, it is clear that from the time that Marguerite of Austria assumed the regency of the Netherlands in 1507, she did not have the Shroud in her possession. She did, however, have a copy, as attested by a document in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France: an inventory of Marguerite's goods, made when she moved from Mechelen (Malines) to Brussels in 1523. The item reads: "La portraiture du Saint Suaire de nostre Sg. faite sur toile" (Fig.5).

Antoine de Lalaing, formerly in the retinue of Philip the Handsome, became Marguerite's counselor in the Netherlands; and the Regent often stayed at his castle in Hoogstraeten. In her private rooms there was a copy of the Shroud. When she died in 1530, it is possible that de Lalaing inherited this copy. Because of his devotion to the Holy Shroud, it would not be surprising if his Duchess had left him a "saint suaire". If the painting that was in the Regent's private apartments in de Lalaing's castle is the Lier copy, I cannot be certain, for I could not find any proof of it. Following Thiéry, some authors conjecture that de Lalaing was the unnamed "count" who gave, or at least delivered, the Lier copy to the convent of Nazareth in 1516, as attested by the documents. But Thiéry himself notes that de Lalaing was not made a count until 1518. The conjecture that the copy was given to the nuns after Marguerite's death (1530) is also in contradiction to the documents. But again, the earliest document we have, that of van Graezen, whether based on oral tradition or a document now lost, gives the date as 1516, and the very latest that this item could have been included in the *Memorie* would have been two years after the death of the Regent: "van 1425 to ende met het jaer 1532", from 1425 to the end of this year 1532.

### **The Attribution to Albrecht Dürer**

As we have seen, the early documents do not refer to the Lier relic as a copy or a painting, but say that it was the cloth bought by Joseph of Arimathea and that it came from the Holy Tomb, even though both inscriptions clearly state that the Shroud in which the pious Joseph wrapped the body of the Lord is in Chambéry in Savoy.

Our research has not discovered any documents or any author previous to Thiéry to attribute the painting to Dürer. The principal argument in his favor rests upon the inscription in the old Nuremberger dialect; even though the symbol at the end of the inscription is presumably a monogram, and is not Dürer's familiar A straddling D.

Dürer, born in Nuremberg, wrote in his native dialect. He often put a p for a b; for example, *pegraben* for *begraben* (buried). He wrote a p instead of a b on the portrait he painted of Bernard van Orley; the sitter is holding a letter whereon the first five letters of

his Christian name are visible. Bernard is clearly written Pernh... (Dresden Art Gallery). Another example is the portrait of Dürer's wife, Agnes Frey, made in Boppard, on the Rhine. The name of the lovely town is written *Poppard*.

Still another example of the language of the German master is found on his portrait of Michael Wolgemut, his teacher. The text is difficult to understand: "Das hat albrecht durer abconterfet nach seine Lermeister michel wolgemut im jor 1516 und er was 82 jor und hat gelebt pis das man zelet 1519 jor. Do is ferschieden an sant endres Dag fru ee dy sun auff gyng."\* Here again, *pis* instead of *bis*.

If the inscription is a clue to the obscure history of the copy, it almost certainly excludes some previous conjectures. That the copy was intended for a "German-speaking person" should immediately eliminate Marguerite of Austria, who from the age of three lived at the French castle of Amboise with other royal children, one of whom was her future husband, Philibert of Savoy. The explanation that the Holy Shroud was exhibited "every year the day after the Invention of the Cross" (the day established by Pope Julius II in 1506) would hardly be necessary information for anyone with close ties to the Savoy family, including Maximilian of Hapsburg.

Mr. Marc Mees has suggested that the Lier copy was a pilgrimage souvenir. Souvenirs were plentiful for visitors to Chambéry; and in this case one might easily imagine that some pilgrim from Nuremberg acquired this shroud at the time of the annual May 4 exposition, and had the inscription and the date added, a not unusual custom. Another possibility is that it was acquired in Chambéry in 1516 on the occasion of the solemn exposition of June 15 in honor of Francis I and his wife, Claude de France, who came as pilgrims to venerate the Shroud. If a souvenir copy was painted on that occasion, the artist was not Dürer, for he was never in France.

Dürer had received many commissions from Maximilian, but this support was cut off when the emperor died (12 January 1519) and a difficult period began for the artist. With a large collection of art works—both his own and those of other artists, including Hans Baldung of his own workshop—and with a supplication to Maximilian's daughter for continuation of support, on the Thursday after St. Kilian's (July 8) 1520, Dürer left Nuremberg for the Netherlands. There he took lodgings at an inn in Antwerp. His visit to the North lasted a year, until a day or so before St. Margaret's (20 July), 1521. During that time, he presented art works to countless people and made a great number of portraits. Everywhere he went, he

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\* Dürer writes that he made the portrait of his teacher in 1516, when Wolgemut was 82 years old; and he lived until 1519, dying on St. Andrew's before sundown. Ed.

was received with great honor; but he was not always recompensed for his art. He complains that of the six people whose portraits he made in Brussels on one visit there, not one paid him.

On one of his first visits to Brussels—which in his diary he writes *Prüssel*—the Regent, Marguerite of Austria, sent for him; at that time he gave her an engraving of his *Hieronymous*. He mentions other works which he gave her later, without specifying the occasions.

Eight days after Corpus Christi, 1521, Dürer went to Mechelen, taking many of his art works to show to Marguerite. And she showed him her collection: "Friday, Lady Marguerite showed me all her beautiful things...forty little oil paintings of great beauty....I asked her a favor; a book of Jacopo [de Barbari], but she had promised this already to her painter." Dürer does not give the name of "her painter", but Bernard van Orley was probably meant.

It was on this occasion that Dürer offered the Regent a portrait of her father, made from life.\* He reports that "she was so displeased with it that I took it back with me." That same day, however, he had better luck with Marguerite's treasurer, a member of the well-known Ziegler family, to whom he sold a *Dead Christ*, "ein toden, liegenden XQ µ," worth 3 florins (private communication from Jef Leysen and *Tagebuch*).

Just before his departure from the Netherlands, Dürer wrote in his diary that, all in all, the trip had been a disappointment. Lady Marguerite did not take him into her service. She did not even recompense him for all the art works he had given her and had made for her at her own request.

One must admit that had Marguerite known Dürer to be the painter of the Lier shroud, or any other copy of the Shroud she prized so highly, she could not have treated him so shabbily.

### **The Attribution to Bernard van Orley**

Bernard van Orley was born (ca. 1492; other dates given, 1488, 1498) and died (1542) at Brussels. In 1518 he was appointed court painter to Marguerite of Austria. That he painted a shroud for her is attested by a document listing her expenses, wherein one reads that in the year 1521 van Orley received four payments of 10 philippus each for the following:

- a painting of Mary-Martha for the convent of the Annonciades
- a painting for the emperor
- a painting of a Holy Shroud made upon cotton
- several other agreeable services.

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\* This painting remains in Nuremberg. It was worked up from a charcoal sketch, from life, in 1518. On this sketch, Dürer wrote: Das ist keiser maximilian den habe ich albrechte dürer zw awgspurg hoch obn awff er pfalitz in seim kleinem stele künterfett do man czalt 1518 am mondag noch Johannis tawffer.

This inventory was published by Alphonse Wauters, who gives credit to M. Altmeyer for the information, and gives Altmeyer's source to be records kept by Jean de Marnix, Marguerite's treasurer, preserved in the archives of Lille, France.

The second item reads "destiné à l'empereur". That in 1521 a painting should be "destined for the emperor", who died in 1519, does not a priori invalidate the document; neither the date of the commission nor of delivery is given, and royal personages were notorious for late payments on works received. Also in 1521, Jan Mostaert received 20 philippus for a portrait of Philibert of Savoy; "One painting, presented to Madame, a painting of the late Lord of Savoy made from life".\* It is true that the date of presentation is not mentioned, but would the artist have waited seventeen years before presenting Philibert's portrait to his widow?

The third item reads: "Un Saint Suaire peint sur du taffetas blanc". White, no doubt, when it was new, although after several decades van Graezen could describe it as brownish.

Mr. Claude Lannette, Director of the Lille archives, at my request, very kindly searched the records of Marguerite's expenses from 1515 to 1530. Several of van Orley's works are mentioned, but those cited by Wauters are not. Mr. Lannette also pointed out that Jean de Marnix, Seigneur de Toulouse, was Marguerite's treasurer for only one year, from January to December, 1527. Pursuing the matter further, I requested the resumé of Altmeyer; this search also proved fruitless.

### **Conclusion**

The most telling argument against van Orley as the artist who painted the Lier shroud is precisely the one on which attribution to Dürer mainly rests: i.e., the inscription in Nuremberger dialect, for the Flemish painter a foreign tongue. But even were we to accept the list given by Wauters, it would be a mistake to conclude without further ado that the copy for which van Orley was paid must of necessity be the Lier shroud. By the XVI<sup>th</sup> century there were countless copies of the Shroud. Every Savoy princess had her own copy; Blanche de Montferrat, widow of Duke Charles I, even had a copy painted in gold, listed in an inventory of 1519. A copy of the Shroud was regularly a gift to princes and prelates, to monasteries and distinguished visitors from afar. There is no record of Chambéry's souvenir copies carried home by pilgrims, but they must have numbered in the thousands. Perhaps the shroud for which van Orley was paid ten philippus eventually found its way to the convent in Lier; perhaps not. How can we know?

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\* Mentioned by Max Friedlander, *From Van Eyck to Bruegel*, Cornell University Press, 1981 p.114. Ed.

From the standpoint of artistic style, there is no more reason to ascribe this timidly executed copy to van Orley than there is to Dürer. If anyone in the early XVI century would have understood right/left reversal, it would have been Dürer, who first broached the problem in making his own portrait from a mirror-image when he was thirteen years old, and whose mastery of woodblocks and engraving has never been surpassed. Yet it must be firmly kept in mind that copies of the Shroud are precisely that: copies of what is seen on the Shroud, copies made of the visible image. In veneration of that Image, patrons and pilgrims required a "faithful" copy and artists strove to achieve an exact likeness.

This study is the result of more than two years of assiduous research involving the devoted cooperation of many people, to all of whom I am profoundly grateful. Readers will be aware that in many places there is still much searching and verifying to be done. It is my sincere hope that what I have been able to present will be accepted for what it is: a beginning in solving the mysterious origin of the shroud of Lier.

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## APPENDIX A

Transcript of the authentic document on the copy of the Turin Shroud, in archives of St. Gommaire Church, Lier: Kerkarchief 132/48: "Reliquien", *Relieken en Memorie* 1651.

Van het heylich graf ons heeren een dock die in grooter Eeren altoos gehouden is geweest en wy hebben by traditie, dat soo waneer de verwoede soldaten het Clooster meynden te hinderen, een Religieuse den heylich grafdoeck by haer Nemende is de soldaten te gemoet gegaen hun vraegende wat sy begerden, de soldaten verslagen seyden, wy meynden veel quaets te doen, en nu en connen wy niet, wy en weten niet wat ons gebreckt en gingen wech.

Op een ander mael den heer Confessor nemende den begraefdock is tot lier gegaen in de groote kerck daer eenen beseten wirt wt gemaent den heer Confessor rurden met den begraf doeck tegen den Ruge van beseten die terstont begonst te roepen den begraf doeck des heeren, Maekende groot getier als een die gepynicht wort. (Transcription by Mr. Marc Mees).

## APPENDIX B

In dees Abbye wort bewaert een weerdich stuc, dat is te weeten het derdendeel vande doeck oft cleet daer [aen] Joseph van Ariamatyen inwont het lighaem ons salichmakers doen by vanden cruysen ghedaen was, het is eenen langhen doeck maer smal, ende schynt te weten van catoen, ende is wat bruynachtich, het tweede stuck wort bewaert tot Cameryc in saphoyen maer en seyt niet waer dat het derde bewaert wordt, int jaer xv<sup>c</sup> en xvj soe isser tot Nasaret inde abbye gheweest eenen graeff, den welcken dit weerdich stuck daerter tyt eeren voor groot present heeft geschoncken.