# The Shroud of Turin: From Medieval Relic to Scientific Enigma

Otangelo Grasso, *written with AI assistance*
10 September 2025

**Documentarian's Prologue**

This document is an expedition traversing the battlefields of medieval France, the scholarly chambers of the 14th century, the papal courts of the Avignon Schism, and the sterile laboratories of modern science. We will follow the cloth's clandestine journey from obscurity to global fame, scrutinize the accusations of forgery leveled against it, and grapple with empirical data that stubbornly resists conventional understanding. This is not an argument for authenticity or fraud, but a meticulous narrative reconstruction of the Shroud's documented life starting in the mid 14th century, a biography of an object that exists at the volatile intersection of faith, history, and science. The Shroud's story also reflects a broader medieval struggle to verify dubious claims amid a flood of false relics and rumors. As historian Nicolas Sarzeaud notes, 14th-century scholars like Nicole Oresme played a key role in interrogating such phenomena, drawing on rational methods to challenge ecclesiastical assertions. This intellectual context, recently illuminated through new manuscript evidence, adds a layer of scholarly depth to the cloth's enigmatic rise, inviting us to consider how it was both a product and a mirror of its time. Additionally, recent scholarship highlights the literary contributions of Geoffroi de Charny, whose authentic *Livre Charny*—a newly published poem from an overlooked Oxford manuscript - offers a candid glimpse into the knightly life, enriching our understanding of the period's cultural milieu [11].

# Part I: Emergence in Champagne (c. 1353–1390)

### Chapter 1: The Knight and His Relic

Our story begins not with the cloth itself, but with a man: **Geoffroi de Charny** (c. 1306–1356)[1]. A paragon of 14th-century chivalry, Geoffroi was a celebrated tournament star, trusted counselor to King Jean II of France, and author of works on knighthood. His life was one of martial honor and deep, albeit conventional, piety. Sometime around 1353, this formidable knight founded a collegiate church in the modest village of **Lirey**, within the diocese of Troyes in Champagne. The founding charter, dated 20 June 1353, is a painstakingly detailed document that micro-manages the church's operations and the lives of its six canons. Crucially, and in direct contrast to later claims that the church was built to house the Shroud, it contains not a single mention of a burial cloth of Christ.

The historical record is silent on how or when this cloth entered Geoffroi's possession. Later family tradition, recorded only in the 19th century from now-lost local archives, claimed that Geoffroi had ‘conquered it in the war against the infidels’ and ‘received it from Hugh IV, king of Cyprus...’ This account is not contemporary and should be treated with caution, though it fits plausibly with Geoffroi’s crusading career. [2] Geoffroi did indeed fight in the "war against the infidels," participating in the Smyrna Crusade (1344–1345) in the Eastern Mediterranean. Hugh IV of Cyprus, of the Lusignan dynasty, was a custodian of countless relics and artifacts from the crumbling Crusader states. The story synthesizes two ideas: the cloth could have been ancient "spoil of war" residing in the Cypriot royal treasury, which Hugh then bestowed upon

Geoffroi as a reward for his service. This provided a credible, prestigious provenance, connecting the object directly to the Holy Land.



From a 14th Century book called 'Demandes de la Chevalerie' held on the Spanish National Library's website. [1] The image is painted by artist Jean de Noir and is also the cover image of a new book written by Ian Wilson and published by Boydell and Brewer. [2].

Sometime between the church's foundation in 1353 and his death in 1356, Geoffroi de Charny deposited the linen at Lirey. The evidence strongly suggests this was a late, perhaps even posthumous, development. Bishop Henri de Poitiers of Troyes[3], issued a glowing and fulsome ratification of the Lirey church's foundation on **28 May 1356**—an act difficult to reconcile with the presence of a major, unapproved Passion relic. Furthermore, from June to September 1356, Geoffroi was relentlessly engaged in military campaigns against the English, culminating in his heroic death at the Battle of Poitiers on 19 September 1356, defending the French royal standard. It seems highly improbable that he could have personally overseen the first public exhibitions of the Shroud during this period of constant warfare.

A knight like Charny would have been clad in a long surcoat emblazoned with his coat of arms over his armor. His familial arms were *gules, three escutcheons argent* (a red field with three small silver shields). Upon the left arm he would have borne a heater-shaped shield painted with these same colors and charges, proclaiming his lineage and valor. His head would have been enclosed within a steel helm, and his body well protected beneath by the layered strength of mail and plate.

Charny's crusading experiences are vividly echoed in his *Livre Charny*, a poem evoking the perils faced at Smyrna (1344–45)[2]. Charny's literary legacy includes this newly published

work, a candid poem revealing the gritty realities of knighthood. The authorship of the *Livre de Chevalerie* is debated. Traditionally attributed to Geoffroi I, recent scholarship argues it may have been composed in the 1380s, perhaps by his son, Geoffroi II, or within his circle, as a memorial to the father's virtues. Recent scholarship revises his career: born c. 1306, he excelled as a tournament star (1330s–1340s), crusader (Smyrna 1344–45, earning papal praise), and soldier (Black Prince's chevauchées 1355–56), and royal counselor to Jean II [11].

The 1353 founding omits any relic, and Poitiers' 1356 ratification suggests no public Shroud was yet present [3].



A 14th-century knight's effigy, showing the typical armor and heraldic display of the period. The arms on this effigy, often associated with the Charny family, are a subject of heraldic debate, highlighting the complexities of identifying medieval tombs with certainty.

**Chapter 2: The Widow's Gambit and the Bishop's Wrath**

Geoffroi's death created a crisis. He left behind an infant son (the future Geoffroi II de Charny) and a young widow, **Jeanne de Vergy** [4]. She now bore the responsibility for the newly founded church, its canons, and its controversial new attraction. France, reeling from the catastrophic defeat at Poitiers and the capture of its king, plunged into economic and social chaos, soon to erupt in the Jacquerie peasant revolts of 1358. The Lirey church, like all institutions, faced desperate financial straits. It was in this context, likely in **1357**, that the canons of Lirey, probably under the leadership of Dean Robert de Caillac, made a fateful decision. They would publicly exhibit the linen cloth. But they would not present it with cautious ambiguity; they would proclaim it to be the authentic burial shroud of Christ, the *suaire* in which his body was wrapped, now miraculously imprinted with his image. To advertise the event and provide

souvenirs for pilgrims, they commissioned a local craftsman to create a mold for casting **pilgrim badges**.

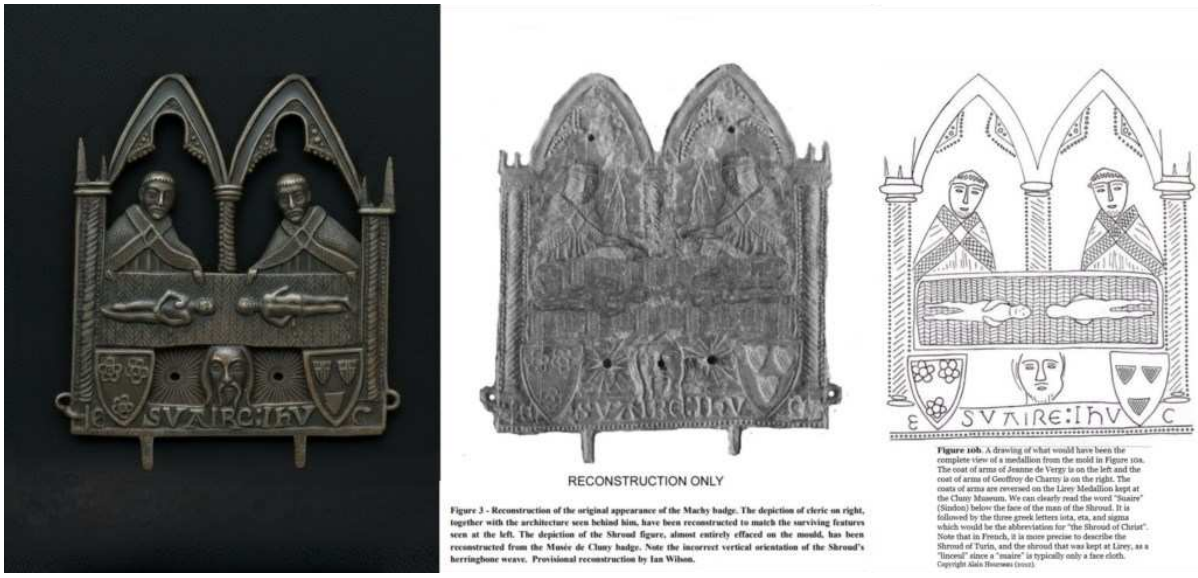



Figure 3 - Reconstruction of the original appearance of the Machy badge. The depiction of cleric on right, together with the architecture seen behind him, have been reconstructed to match the surviving features seen at the left. The depiction of the Shroud figure, almost entirely effaced on the mould, has been reconstructed from the Musée de Cluny badge. Note the incorrect vertical orientation of the Shroud's herringbone weave. Provisional reconstruction by Ian Wilson.

Figure 10b. A drawing of what would have been the complete view of a medallion from the mold in Figure 10a. The coat of arms of Jeanne de Vergy is on the left and the coat of arms of Geoffroy de Charny is on the right. The coats of arms are reversed on the Lirey Medallion kept at the Cluny Museum. We can clearly read the word "Suaire" (Sindon) below the face of the man of the Shroud. It is followed by the three greek letters iota, eta, and sigma which would be the abbreviation for "the Shroud of Christ". Note that in French, it is more precise to describe the Shroud of Turin, and the shroud that was kept at Lirey, as a "linceul" since a "suaire" is typically only a face cloth.
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The reconstruction on the left vividly restores the famous Lirey pilgrim badge, once linked to the first public display of the Shroud of Turin in the 14th century. This mold, discovered centuries later in a field in the neighboring village of Machy, is a critical piece of evidence. It depicts two clerics holding up the cloth, with Christ's front and back body shown in herringbone weave, flanked by coats of arms symbolizing Geoffroy de Charny and Jeanne de Vergy. Below, a bearded face evokes the holy image. The reconstruction highlights medieval devotion and the Shroud's early veneration.

This mold, discovered centuries later in a field in the neighboring village of **Machy**[5], is a critical piece of evidence. Carved from **slate-colored schist**, it had sustained **considerable damage, likely from a farmer's plough**, but still bore **traces of metal in its vent holes, indicating actual badge production**[5]. The design is telling: two clerics hold up a cloth bearing the faint images of a front and back body. Most significantly, the **heraldry is reversed** from what would be expected if Geoffroi were still alive. The coat of arms of **Jeanne de Vergy** (three five-petaled flowers) occupies the primary left-hand (dexter) position, while the Charny arms (three inescutcheons) are relegated to the right. In heraldic terms, this signifies that Jeanne was the prime mover, acting on behalf of her deceased husband. The inscription on the badge leaves no room for doubt: "**SVAIRE IhV**"—"the Sudarium of Jesus." The **"IhV" inscription, a rare genitive form, combines the Greek letters Iota (I) and Eta (h) for the first two letters of Jesus' name, followed by a Latin case ending 'V' (u), unequivocally signifying "of Jesus"**[5]. This was a direct, unequivocal claim of authenticity.

Furthermore, the Machy mold reveals unique iconographic details. Unlike the later Cluny badge, it does not feature the Arma Christi or the empty tomb. Instead, it displays a **solo, disembodied face of Christ without a halo, set against a landscape background**. Intriguingly, this face is flanked by two vent holes in the mold, which, with their **radiating striations, were likely intended by the artist to double as stars**[5]. This potential star imagery holds significant historical context, as Geoffroi de Charny was a leading initiator of the short-lived French chivalric order, the **Company of the Star**[5]. Another crucial detail for chronology is the **incorrect vertical orientation of the Shroud's herringbone weave on the Machy badge**, a pioneering mistake that suggests it predates the Cluny badge, where the weave is correctly oriented horizontally[5]. The architectural settings depicted on the badges also differ,

with the Machy version suggesting twisted rope columns and trefoil tracery, while the Cluny version features more conventional Gothic church pillars[5].



The first recorded public ostensions of the Shroud took place in Lirey, France, around the 1350s under the patronage of Geoffroy de Charny and his family. These expositions drew pilgrims from across the region to view the mysterious cloth believed to bear the image of Christ. Pilgrims were often given small lead or pewter badges depicting the Shroud, showing two clerics holding it open for display. These badges, which survive today, provide vital evidence of how the Shroud was presented: stretched out horizontally, suspended between clerics or displayed on a platform so the gathered faithful could see. The imagery suggests a theatrical and devotional atmosphere, combining liturgical ritual with public spectacle. The badges not only served as devotional souvenirs but also acted as tokens of authenticity, linking the wearer to the sacred event. Through them, historians gain a rare glimpse into the choreography and reverence of Lirey's medieval ostensions.

The exhibition was a success, attracting pilgrims "from all parts of the world," according to a later account. But it also attracted the furious attention of **Bishop Henri de Poitiers**[3]. Already burdened with the costs of fortifying Troyes against English brigands and completing his cathedral, the bishop saw the Lirey exhibitions as a direct financial threat, siphoning off donations from his own coffers. More importantly, he was scandalized. The Gospels mentioned no such imprinted shroud. He "diligently initiated enquiries," later claiming to have uncovered the artist who had "cunningly painted" it. Declaring the cloth a *fraudem* (fraud), *artificialiter depictus* (artificially painted), he ordered the exhibitions stopped. The canons, fearing his wrath, reportedly hid the Shroud away. Historian Ian Wilson argues that Geoffroi de Charny held the Shroud privately, with his widow Jeanne initiating the 1357 showings amid the Jacquerie turmoil, a scenario that perfectly explains the Machy badge's prominent Vergy heraldry [5]. Later family attestations confirm paternal ownership, but always in a private context (e.g., Marguerite's 1418 inventory lists it above fragments of the True Cross), suggesting the initial secrecy was due to its dubious origin or a sense of wartime caution [11].

**Chapter 3: The Scholar's Skepticism**

The controversy at Lirey did not go unnoticed in learned circles. **Nicole Oresme** (c. 1320–1382)[6], a brilliant philosopher, theologian, and scientific thinker who served as a trusted advisor to King Charles V of France, included a pointed critique in his work *Problemata*. Born around 1320 in Normandy from modest origins, Oresme rose through academic ranks: he was Master of Arts for the Norman nation at the University of Paris by 1341 or 1342, received a grant at the College of Navarre in 1348 (dedicated to students from humble backgrounds), became a Master in Theology, and headed the college from 1356 to 1361. He later pursued a clerical career in Normandy, culminating in his election as Bishop of Lisieux in 1377. A commentator on Aristotle and Peter Lombard, Oresme's works spanned mathematics, physics, politics, iconographic programs, currency valuation, and critiques of divination practices

prevalent in power circles. Described as a "committed spectator" in Parisian political life during the tumultuous 1350s, he allied with the royal faction, and Charles V even exempted him from residence requirements at Rouen Cathedral despite complaints about his absenteeism.

Oresme's reference to the Shroud appears in one of his texts on *mirabilia*—unexplained phenomena encompassing prodigies, extraordinary manifestations, and commonplace occurrences like sleepwalking or hair loss. This is part of a set of four texts: a *Question Against Astrology*, a treatise *On Singular Effects*, a *Table of Problems* with 172 questions, and the *Problemata* with 44 problems (previously unpublished, now edited by Alain Boureau and Béatrice Delaurenti). Scholars debate the dating, with the majority favoring 1370–1382 for the set, and the *Problemata* likely composed around 1380 due to its dialectical style and possible interruption by Oresme's death. This dating is crucial, as it means Oresme was commenting on the *first* exhibition (c. 1357), not the 1389 revival. Oresme's originality lies in his naturalist approach, stemming from 13th-century Scholastic transformations, providing rational explanations for so-called magical phenomena rather than attributing them to divine, demonic, or unknown influences—challenging the rising demonological interpretations of the mid-14th century that justified repression.

In the first of the *Problemata*, Oresme questions whether demonic forces can cause unexplained phenomena, noting that neither Aristotle nor major philosophers mentioned such forces. Supernatural effects, he argues, originate only from God "to make us good," not evil. Rumors (*fama*) about such phenomena are unreliable: common people (*vulgo*) affirm many things without witnessing them, and even "learned clerics" respond "no better than a simple woman." To the objection that "good people" testifying to miracles should be believed, Oresme replies that God may permit them for scriptural reasons, but claims from clergy aren't inherently true. He illustrates with a striking example: "I do not need to believe anyone who claims: 'Someone performed such miracle for me', because many clergymen thus deceive others, in order to elicit offerings for their churches. This is clearly the case for a church in Champagne, where it was said that there was the Shroud of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the almost infinite number of those who have forged such things, and others." [6] (Latin original: "non est michi necesse credere cuilibet dicenti: 'talis fecit michi tale miraculum', quia sic multi viri ecclesiastici deciperent alios ut oblationes suis ecclesiis affererent. Patet hoc ad sensum de ecclesia in Campania udi dicebatur quod esset sudarium domini Ihesu Christi, et de quasi infinitis qui finxerunt talia et cetera." Variants from manuscripts include Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashb. 210, fol. 45v; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, XI C 84, fol. 79r; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. lat. 15126, fol. 97r; and ms. lat. 15173, fol. 117r, with "Campania" or "Campana" depending on the copy.) This passage marks the earliest known scholarly denunciation of a sudarium in Champagne - the region containing Lirey - which strongly suggests he was referring to the Lirey Shroud. While Oresme did not name Lirey directly, the geographical reference makes the identification highly probable.

**Chapter 4: The Son's Return and the Papal Compromise**

For over three decades, the Shroud remained hidden. Geoffroi II de Charny grew up in the court of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, becoming a respected knight and counselor. It was he, not his father, who was the "committed spectator" in the political turmoil of the 1350s and who allied with reformers during the Jacquerie of 1358. In **1389**, in a bold move, he decided to revive the exhibitions, a move that likely echoed his father's own unfulfilled ambitions. But he learned from the past. He did not seek permission from his local bishop, Pierre d'Arcis of Troyes. Instead, he went over the bishop's head, directly petitioning the papal legate, Cardinal

Pierre de Thury, for approval from the Avignon Pope **Clement VII**[7] (the French claimant during the Western Schism). Crucially, Charny II employed a different nomenclature. He did not claim it was "the actual sudarium." Instead, he described it cautiously as a "*representacionem seu figuram*" (a representation or figure) of the sudarium, which had previously been venerated and which he wished to display again. This semantic sleight of hand, a strategic shift possibly influenced by his courtly upbringing in Burgundy, worked. Clement VII granted permission in a letter dated 28 July 1389, allowing the display of this "figure or representation of the Shroud of our Lord Jesus Christ (figura sive representatio sudarii)." The exhibitions resumed with great solemnity. Bishop d'Arcis was apoplectic. In a furious **1390 memorandum**[7] to Clement VII, he railed against the displays, invoking the scandal of thirty-four years prior—a round figure that points squarely to the period of the first exhibition around 1356—and accusing the clergy of using elaborate, misleading ceremonies that implied the cloth's authenticity, even while technically calling it a "*sanctuarium*" (which to common ears sounded like *sainct suaire*—holy shroud). He referenced royal documents, such as Charles VI's order on 4 August 1389 to seize the "manufactured cloth, artificially painted to resemble and commemorate the precious sacred Shroud," and the bailiff's report on 15 August detailing resistance from the canons. Clement VII's response was a masterclass in papal politics. In a series of bulls issued between January and June 1390, he navigated the dispute. The initial language, which had called the object a "painting or tablet," was softened. The final ruling was a compromise: the exhibitions could continue, but the clergy had to minimize the ceremonial and **publicly announce that it was merely a representation, not the true shroud**. This pastoral solution allowed devotion to continue while paying lip service to episcopal authority. It was a victory for Charny II.




A new, more sophisticated pilgrim badge was created for these exhibitions. This is the famous **Cluny badge**[8] (now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris), discovered in the Seine in 1855. Its workmanship is far superior to the crude Machy-type badge. It shows two clerics in albs and stoles holding the Shroud, its herringbone weave and body images clearly discernible. The blood trickles, the pose of the hands—everything identifies it as the Turin Shroud. Below, the empty tomb with a cross and the Crown of Thorns is depicted. Flanking this are the *Arma Christi* (Instruments of the Passion): the column, the whip, the nails with pincers, and the lance. Most importantly, the heraldry has been **reverted to its original order**: the Charny arms (*gules, three escutcheons argent*) are back on the privileged left, with the Vergy arms on the right. This signifies a restoration of the family's honor under Charny II. A fragment of a banner at the bottom suggests the inscription was simply "SVAIRE," aligning with the new policy of cautious nomenclature. Other examples of Shroud pilgrimage badges, such as those cataloged

on the Kunera website (objects 10980 and 11140), also feature banners with similar inscriptions like "S. SVAIRE" and "SVAIRE," further supporting the reconstruction of the damaged banner on the Cluny badge[5].




Why did Charny II revive the Shroud? The answer may lie in his subsequent actions. After 1390, he embarked on a series of expensive crusading ventures, culminating in the disastrous Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, where he died. A full suit of plate armor was exceedingly costly. The revenue from the Shroud exhibitions, including the sale of exquisite badges, likely helped fund his pious, if fatal, military ambitions. The emphasis on the *Arma Christi* on the Cluny badge aligns perfectly with the devotional prayers of Philippe de Mézières, a contemporary crusade advocate who urged knights to meditate on these very instruments of the Passion.

# Part II: From Lirey to Savoy (1390–1578)

### Chapter 5: The Heiress and the Duke

Charny II died without a male heir. The guardianship of the Shroud passed to his formidable daughter, **Marguerite de Charny**. In 1418, amid the turmoil of the Hundred Years' War following the French defeat at Agincourt, she and her husband, Humbert de Villersexel, seized the Shroud from the Lirey canons for safekeeping, moving it to Humbert's castles in eastern France. In the receipt they gave, they dutifully called it a "*figura ac repræsentatio*," yet they listed it above fragments of the True Cross and a hair of the Virgin Mary, revealing their true reverence for it. When the Lirey canons sued for its return, Marguerite dropped the pretense. She defiantly declared it was the true "*sainct suaire*," far too precious to be returned to their inadequate security. By **1453**, elderly, childless, and weary of legal battles, she quietly ceded the Shroud to the powerful **Duke Louis of Savoy** and his wife, Anne de Lusignan (of the Cypriot royal family). This transfer was not a simple sale but was likely prompted by the seismic fall of Constantinople that same year, an event that linked powerfully to the Charny family's Lusignan/Cyprus provenance story. The transfer was a masterstroke. The Savoys were a rising European dynasty. Furthermore, their teenage son, Pierre, was the Bishop of Geneva, where the first Savoy-sponsored exhibitions were held. For the first time, there was **no episcopal opposition**. A new badge was struck for these exhibitions, now preserved in Brussels. It shows *three* clerics, all in mitres (bishops), holding the Shroud. The Charny heraldry is gone, replaced by the authority of the Church itself. The inscription on a simple banner reads "SVAIRE." The Shroud had shed its controversial past and was on its way to becoming a dynastic relic of the House of Savoy.



The Brussels badge provides, besided the earlier badges, invaluable insights into both the artistry and the evolving history of the Shroud's veneration. Inscriptions such as "SVAIRE" reflect the delicate balance between faith and official decree, offering us a tangible connection to 14th- and 15th-century pilgrims and their enduring expressions of belief. 12

**Chapter 6: Turin and the Fire**

The Shroud was moved to the Savoyard capital of **Chambéry** and housed in the Sainte-Chapelle. Tragedy struck on the night of **4 December 1532**. A devastating fire broke out. The reliquary's metal fittings, likely a silver-copper alloy with gilding, partially melted. Drops of molten metal burned through the folded layers, creating the series of identical, symmetrical holes that still mark the cloth today. The Poor Clare nuns who repaired it patched the holes and backed the entire cloth with a reinforcing cloth known as the Holland Cloth. This near-destruction only enhanced the Shroud's aura of sanctity and survival. In **1578**, the Shroud was permanently transferred to **Turin**. The move was made to shorten the pilgrimage journey for Saint Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), the Archbishop of Milan, who had vowed to venerate the relic. Borromeo, then 40 years old, was not the owner of the Shroud but a devout pilgrim. It has resided in the **Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist** in Turin ever since, becoming known globally as the Shroud of Turin.

# Part III: The Modern Era: Science and Scrutiny (1898–Present)

**Chapter 7: The Photograph That Shook the World**

For centuries, the Shroud was an object of devotion. Its scientific life began on **28 May 1898**, when amateur photographer **Secondo Pia**[9] was allowed to take the first photographs during a public exhibition. As he developed the glass-plate negatives in his darkroom, he experienced a shock that would echo through history. The negative on his plate revealed a stunning, lifelike **positive image**. The faint, vague markings on the cloth were, in fact, a perfect photographic negative centuries before the invention of photography. This revelation transformed the Shroud from a curious relic into a profound scientific mystery.

**Chapter 8: The STURP Investigation**

The modern scientific investigation culminated in October 1978 with the **Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP)**[10]. A team of over 30 American scientists, granted five days of direct, 24-hour access, subjected the cloth to a battery of non-destructive tests using tons of

equipment. Their findings, published in 1981, created a set of empirical anomalies that define the mystery to this day:
1. **Superficiality:** The image resides only on the topmost **200-600 nanometers** of the linen fibers' cellulose. It does not penetrate between fibers. There is no capillary flow.
2. **No Directionality:** The coloration shows no evidence of brush strokes, directional flow, or any artistic technique known to medieval or modern painters.
3. **Chemical Composition:** The image appears to be composed of oxidized and dehydrated cellulose, similar to what occurs during thermal aging or brief exposure to high temperatures.
4. **Three-Dimensional Information:** Unlike any painting or photograph, the image intensity correlates with the distance that would have existed between a three-dimensional body and the cloth, creating a unique topographical map.
5. **Blood Evidence:** The reddish-brown stains tested positive for human blood and showed characteristics consistent with trauma and post-mortem flow patterns.

The STURP team concluded that while they could not explain how the image was formed, they found no evidence of paint, dye, or any other foreign material that would indicate artistic creation. The mystery deepened rather than resolved.

Finally, the current whereabouts of the Machy mold remain a mystery, adding a "sting in the tail" to its discovery. After being found by a jogger, it was briefly put up for sale on eBay for 500 Euros before disappearing, its current location unknown[5].

**Chapter 9: Historiographical Debates: Apologetics and Denials**

The Shroud's problematic origins have long challenged its historians. In *Sindon Evangelica* (1581), Emmanuel-Philibert de Pingon, a Savoyard official unaware of the Lirey case, claimed Marguerite de Charny brought it from Constantinople after the city's fall to the Ottomans. In 1624, physician Jean-Jacques Chifflet unearthed Clement VII's 1390 bull and disputed Pingon's narrative but, convinced of authenticity, deemed the ruling illegitimate as issued by an antipope. By 1833, Giuseppe Lazzaro Piano, a Savoyard courtier, declared the bull "full of falsehoods and absurdities" and thus a forgery.

In the 20th century, "sindonologists"—practitioners of a discipline dedicated to the Shroud—continued this trend. Luigi Fossati questioned Pierre d'Arcis' memorandum's authenticity, while Emmanuel Poulle dismissed it as "gossip," arguing the recap of Henri de Poitiers' investigation was too vague and likely invented. Such arguments, far from critical studies of the documents, aimed to dismiss inconvenient evidence, as critiqued by historians like Nicolas Sarzeaud, who defends the documents' legitimacy and highlights the flawed reasoning employed to undermine them. Wilson (2021) revisits these apologetics, debunking myths like Pingon's Constantinople story and firmly affirming the Lirey origins through the evidence of the badges and d'Arcis's memorandum, while also noting the '34 years' mentioned by d'Arcis is best understood as a rounded approximation [6,11].

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