

The Resurrection is Just Too Mysterious to Be Described & A Response to Dr. Colin Berry

This is an “open letter” response to both an email and a blog posting from Dr. Colin Berry. I thought it out in a stream of consciousness way (with a lot of topic drift) over several mornings as I walked the dog. I mostly dictated to Siri on my iPhone as my dog tried to figure out what I was telling her. I cleaned it up, filled in details, links and even some pictures with a lot of help from Google. In the world of blogging this is sometimes known as a rambling wreck posting. When I realized it was too long to be a reasonable blog posting or email, I turned it into a PDF file.

Hi Colin.

It's good to hear from you after three years. Your email and a [link to your end-of-year blog posting](#) is by no means an intrusion. It is most welcomed. Are you onto something provocative? Seems so. If you're right then definitely provocative. You always do the skeptic well.

Since I gave up blogging three years ago, I've been thinking a lot about three things: **1)** the physical and spiritual nature of Christ's Resurrection, **2)** some interesting history of a/the purported burial shroud that may or may not be the Turin Shroud, and **3)** the meaning of the Turin Shroud for me for which authenticity has little or no meaning anymore.

You wrote:

I don't suppose Dan [meaning me] is reading this but if he is, then here's a belated reply, given I chose not to respond to his posting [of May 30, 2015].

Belated? Almost four years. It's a reply to my “Rambling Wreck” posting entitled [Colin Berry on STURP](#):

Yes, Colin, you supposed correctly. I was not reading what you were writing. I wasn't reading any of the Shroud websites or the British Society for the Turin Shroud newsletters or any of the conference papers or other papers coming out of Padua, Frascati and Colorado Springs; that is, I wasn't reading anything until I got your email and I read what you wrote -- page after page after long page of what you wrote; this, amongst those pages:

I stand by every word I wrote in 2015 regarding STURP – a hopelessly mismanaged project if ever there was, lacking direction and focus ... [including?] STURP-leader Dr. John Jackson's would have us believe, a 1st century internally-body-generated supernatural radiation-generated Resurrectional 'selfie'.

Shame the Gospels provide no hint of such an event having occurred! (So why did the Risen Christ bother to re-make contact with his disciples “on the road to Emmaus

etc.” to show he was still of this world, displaying wounds on hands etc. to the Doubting Thomas etc. prior to the final Ascension ...

I can't say I disagree with you. But South Carolina weather and food has a mellowing way about it. These days I might say it differently: STURP was a long time ago and John Jackson's attempt to pseudo-scientifically model the Resurrection so to create the image on the Shroud is unfortunate. Southern living even makes me want to apologize for calling your blog a "Rambling Wreck." I apologize.

For me, personally, certainty in the Resurrection, both creedal and historical, is not something I struggle with at this stage in my life. My always evolving faith over many of my 76 years served me well. Except, troubled by some of the unfortunate modern-day alchemy coming out of Colorado Springs, I have been spending time rethinking how best to define the Resurrection.

It's been fun, chasing down material from much better thinkers than I could ever hope to be, thinkers like the medieval Thomas Aquinas and modern-day N. T. Wright.

Okay, okay; bear with me and I think you will see some connection to your posting.

Wow! Your suggestion that the image on the Shroud might not be superficial but resides in an inner network of capillary channels within the linen fibers themselves could very well be a full-blown challenge to years of hypothesizing about how the image was formed. It should be welcomed in the shroud crowd as a new possibility. It won't be easy, I'm afraid. That's too bad.

And I see you are still trying to determine how the image of the man on the Turin Shroud was (your thinking) or *could have been* (my thinking) manmade in medieval times.

Having said that, let me add: Just as no one has been able to convince me that the Shroud is authentic, your latest fire-in-the-hole hypothesis is also unlikely to convince me that it is fake. That requires some explanation on my part so keep reading.

As I quit blogging three years ago, I realized how discouraged I was about the lack of substantive development in real science and objective history behind the Shroud in recent years. For me, having to rely on STURP's 1976 findings, was like walking around with an old analog cell phone the size and heft of a clay brick, trying to hear the fading voices. Only Mark Guscini's 400 page Ph.D. thesis, "[The Tradition of the Image of Edessa](#)" has kept me interested in a/the purported shroud. And now, your email has as well.

Yes, Marianne and I are enjoying retirement. I'm glad the same is true for you and your wife. By-the-way, don't you owe me a Peroni? I don't remember what the bet was about but if it was an Italian beer, might it have been about some crazy idea coming from one of the professors of this or that at the University of Padua? So when you are on this side of the Atlantic, drop in and buy me that beer.

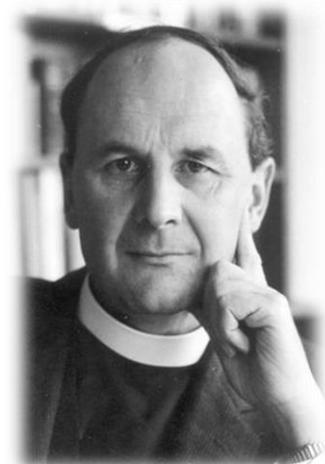
As I said, you do the work of a skeptic well. I'm quite convinced that Ray Rogers, were he still alive, would have enjoyed engaging with you. More than anything, as a chemist and scientist, he appreciated new hypotheses and experimentation. Unlike many in the world of Shroud research, he understood and practiced the principles of non-overlapping magisteria. An Episcopalian, I'm told, he appeared to leave his religious views at the laboratory door. Don't take the criticisms of others for your criticisms of him too seriously. Like you, he could dish it out. He never needed defenders.

And now for some thoughts about three topics, in reverse order:

1. Meaning of the Shroud: John A.T. Robinson, author of *Honest to God*
2. Icons, Painting and Shrouds in the First Millennium
3. The Physical and Spiritual Nature of Christ's Resurrection

Meaning: John A.T. Robinson, author of *Honest to God*

For some perspective, I have come to rely on a most unlikely believer in the Shroud's authenticity, the late Anglican Bishop of Woolwich, John A.T. Robinson. He is best known as the author of a very controversial book, *Honest to God*. I had read his book back when it was first published in the early 1960s and I could not imagine him thinking that the Shroud was real. Initially a skeptic, he became a convert to its authenticity in the 1970s. In fairness, that was before the now-questionable carbon-14 dating results in 1988. Had he lived until then -- he died in 1983 -- he might have changed his mind. But in 1977, he wrote in a paper entitled, "The Shroud of Turin and the Grave Cloths of the Gospels":



If in the recognition of the face and hands and feet and all the other wounds (on the Holy Shroud), we, like those who knew Him best, are led to say, "It is the Lord!", then perhaps we may have to learn to count ourselves also among those who have "seen and believed." But that, as St. John makes clear, brings with it no special blessing (John 20:29)--rather special responsibility (John 17:18-21). That "special responsibility" is to get beyond the linen to the Lord - to see Him in the faces of the dispossessed, the victims of injustice, the poor, the neglected and all the others for whom He died.

-- The Rt. Rev. John A.T. Robinson. Proceedings of the 1977 U.S. Conference of Research on the Shroud of Turin.

The late Rev. Albert (Kim) Dreisbach, an Episcopal priest in Atlanta and a good friend, had introduced me to Robinson's views on the Shroud. Robinson had become convinced that the

Shroud did not make sense as a medieval creation. "[N]o forger," Robinson wrote, "starting, as he inevitably would, from the Gospel narratives, and especially that of the fourth, would have created the Shroud we have."

The theory was that a medieval forger would have assumed two cloths, one for the body and one for the face or head.

An interesting idea, but I disagree. We only need to look at modern America where, according to the Pew Research Center, 62% of the population believes in evolution and 34% do not. In this statistic we readily see that consistent views among people in a society cannot be expected based on scripture, or for that matter, science. Consider, too, political America where two-thirds of all adults believe one set of *facts* while the other one-third believes contradictory *facts*. And among American Christians, despite what it says in the gospels, we find that a large number of people think that Jesus was wrapped for burial in thin bandage-like strips of linen, like an Egyptian mummy. In seven years of blogging, I can't begin to count the emails and comments from church pastors writing to me to set me straight.

Now, having considered present-day America, consider the mostly illiterate, language-constrained, Bible-starved population of the medieval era. Can we expect every potential forger to anticipate two burial cloths? Could not one have gotten it wrong, hence right. Robinson's theory doesn't hold up.

None of that, however, diminishes Robinson's suggestion of a special responsibility "to get beyond the linen to the Lord - to see Him in the faces of the dispossessed, the victims of injustice, the poor, the neglected and all the others for whom He died." For me, getting beyond the linen was to stop blogging about the Shroud as a retirement hobby and do what I could in some small way to help alleviate hunger -- what here, in the low country is the consequence of widespread poverty and neglect. To have stopped blogging was a blessing for me. Your email to me, in a wonderful way, reminded me why.

It wasn't all 'seeing the light', so to speak. As I said, I had become thoroughly discouraged with the lack of progress in shroud science. Ray Rogers had passed away, and there was no enthusiastic chemist willing to consider a natural phenomenon as the explanation for the image. I was also discouraged by a growing realization that Turin might never allow new carbon-14 dating. It wasn't enough to merely keep piling on arguments about why the 1988 testing was invalid. I was particularly discouraged, also, by the ceaseless pseudoscience from certain quarters. You know about that, Colin.

Since I stopped blogging, I've taken to using the word *seemingly* a lot when it comes to the Shroud. I must now say -- because of you -- the Shroud has an image with a *seemingly* superficial coloring. That is just as I have long said the image is only *seemingly* three-dimensionally encoded (it may not be) and *seemingly* a negative (it is probably not a true negative). I must even say that the Shroud has an image of a *seemingly* crucified man (or one we are intended to believe was crucified).

I am now very much of the mind to question every image characteristic that is not visible to the naked eye. It's not that the scientists of STURP didn't do a good job. I know you disagree. I also know that unlike you I'm not qualified to judge. But I do know that in science, like in every endeavor to learn the truth, critical questioning, examination, and reexamination are essential. Such disciplines should always be welcomed. Sadly that isn't happening.

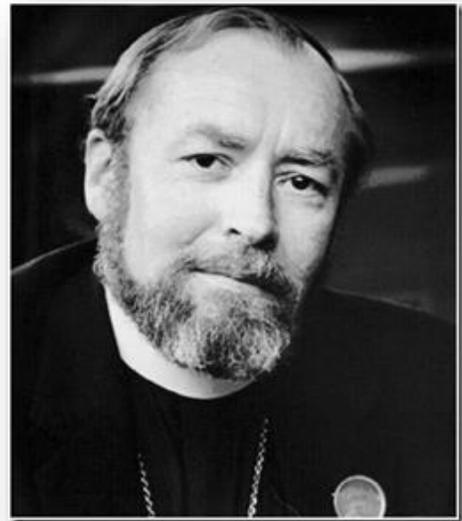
Richard Dawkins' seminal book, *The Selfish Gene*, comes to mind as a useful analogy. In his book, Dawkins challenges conventional thinking about natural selection in evolution: "[T]he fundamental unit of selection," he writes, "and therefore of self-interest, is not the species, nor the group, nor even strictly the individual. It is the gene, the unit of heredity." He may not be right, and many evolutionary biologists doubt he is, but he advances the quest for understanding and truth. Colin, you must see that you do so, as well.

Icons, Paintings and Shrouds in the First Millennium

I must address this topic because this is the main reason you will not easily convince me that the Shroud is medieval. Let me ask you, Colin, could your suggestion of how the image might have been manmade apply to the first two or three centuries of Christianity, probably somewhere in Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa or even Kerala? Have you given this any thought?

Fr. Dreisbach had introduced me to many other aspects of Shroud history. I would never have thought I would be saying that non-scientific observations and historical interpretations might trump scientific findings. But these bits of knowledge, which Dreisbach called spy-clues, are indeed significant. They challenge the carbon-14 dating, perhaps even more than the hypothesis of contamination from a medieval mending. So too, these clues cast doubt on the idea that the Shroud is a medieval forgery. Here is my top ten:

1) **Image of Edessa:** Beneath the fog of sensational legendary tales of a king named Abgar and his written correspondence with Jesus of Nazareth, there are reasonable historical indications of a cloth believed to have an *acheiropoieta* image of Jesus. It is known as the Image of Edessa. Provenance and why it was believed *acheiropoieta* (a picture not made with human hands) is what the legends are all about. That these stories come to us from the highly regarded 4th-century church historian Eusebius only means that the stories existed. It does not mean they should be taken seriously. Fortunately, there are other documented utterances indicating that the Image of Edessa did indeed exist.



2) **Hymn of the Pearl:** A few puzzling words, a mere four lines of poetry, taken from an epic poem known as the “Hymn of the Pearl,” found within the *Acts of Thomas*, are powerfully telling. Some scholars think the poem is older than the *Acts of Thomas*. It is often attributed to Bardesane of Edessa, a Gnostic poet, writing as early as 216 CE. The words, found in different places in different Greek and Syriac versions of the *Acts*, are spoken in the first person by the risen Christ:

Suddenly, I saw my image on my garment like in a mirror
Myself and myself through myself [or myself facing outward and inward]
As though divided, yet one likeness
Two images: but one likeness of the King [or King of kings in some translations]

Keith Witherup, a blogger over at ReligionForum.org explains:

If you look at a photograph of the Shroud you see two full-size images of a man, one in which the image is facing outward and one inward. In more modern terms we describe these as front-side and back-side images, or ventral and dorsal images. They are, indeed, as in a mirror as they are full size and seemingly perpendicular to the surface. Those words, “as though divided, yet one likeness,” resonate with the two separate images that meet at the top of the head.

It is hard to imagine what else these lines of poetry could refer to. Saying that, however, doesn't make for logically sound, objective history. It goes to your point, Colin, about how so many Shroud researchers, in not being able to explain some observation, declared it a mystery and elevated the observation to a fact.

3) **Image of Edessa transferred to Constantinople:** On August 15, 944, forces of the Emperor Romanus after laying siege to Edessa, took the cloth bearing the image of Jesus to the Church of St. Mary of Blachernae in Constantinople where it seems to have remained until French and Venetian Crusaders looted Constantinople in April of 1204. Historian Mark Guscini explains that Gregory Referendarius, the archdeacon of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, preached a sermon about the relic upon its arrival in the city in which he described it as a full-length image of Jesus with a facial image and bloodstains from a wound in the side.

There is much more to consider in Mark Guscini's doctoral thesis. It is a treasure trove of excellent historical information. But a cautionary note is also warranted. Guscini's thesis is not about the Shroud of Turin. The idea that the Image of Edessa may, in fact, be the Turin relic is controversial. He writes (page 193):

However, this controversy only arises if it is assumed that the burial shroud of Christ (and there definitely seems to have been a burial shroud) is indeed one and the same as the cloth now known as the Shroud of Turin: this argument lies beyond the scope of this thesis ...

4) **Nicholas Mesarites:** In 1201, the sacristan of the Pharos Chapel in Constantinople, Nicholas Mesarites, described an interesting ceremony.

Here He rises again and the sindon [=shroud] is the clear proof still smelling fragrant of perfumes, defying corruption because they wrapped the mysterious naked dead body from head to feet.

5) **A burial cloth was transferred to Athens:** There is evidence that suggests that the Edessa Cloth, or if not that, a purported burial cloth of Christ, was taken to Athens after the plundering of Constantinople. Theodore Ducas Anglelos wrote in a letter to Pope Innocent III:

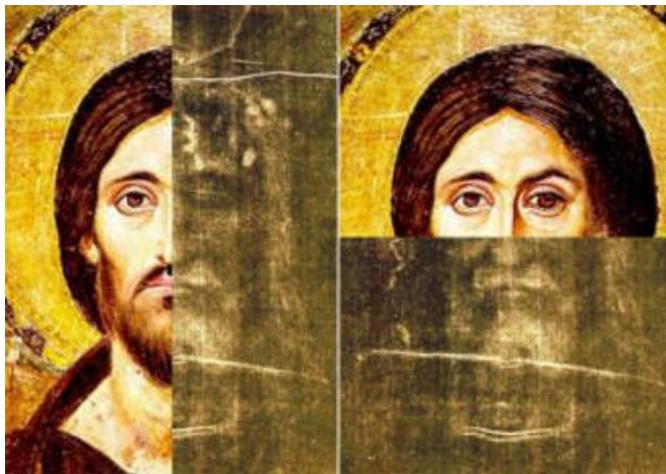
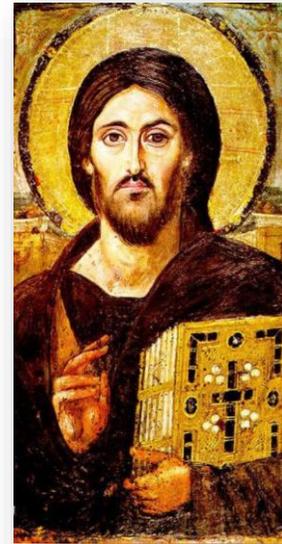
The Venetians partitioned the treasure of gold, silver and ivory, while the French did the same with the relics of saints and the most sacred of all, the linen in which our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped after His death and before the resurrection. We know that the sacred objects are preserved by their predators in Venice and France and in other places.

Nicholas d'Orrante, the Papal Legate in Athens, in 1207, wrote about relics taken from Constantinople by French knights. Referring specifically to burial cloths, he mentions seeing them "with our own eyes" in Athens.

6) **A burial cloth arrives in Lirey:** From somewhere, an image bearing cloth, presumably or possibly the same cloth that had been in Athens, made its way to a small church in Lirey, France, and then, ultimately, to Turin. The problem is that there is a significant gap of about 150 years between Athens and Lirey.

There are competing theories and competing cloths, as well. For instance, we must consider a full-body image of Jesus on a cloth discovered in Camuliana in 544 CE and carried about and displayed throughout much of Asia Minor. In 574, Justin II brought this cloth with an image claimed to have been *acheiropoieta* to Constantinople, where it became known as the Image of God Incarnate. Historian Jack Markwardt contends that this is what eventually made it to Lirey and ultimately Turin.

7) **Pantocrator icon at St. Catherine's:** There is a 6th century Pantocrator icon at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai. It is important to realize that there are no descriptions of Jesus' appearance in the New Testament. Nor are there any meaningful descriptions in any known early Church sources. St. Augustine of Hippo made a point of this in the fifth century. Then, quite suddenly, starting in the sixth century, a new common appearance for Jesus began emerging. We see it today in many pictures of Jesus, particularly in icons produced within the Eastern Orthodox traditions. This common picture quality seems to have started in the Middle East about the same time that the Image of Edessa was reportedly found hidden in the walls of Edessa in 544 CE. Up until then, pictures of Jesus were mostly of a young, beardless man, often with short hair, often in story-like settings in which he is depicted as a shepherd.

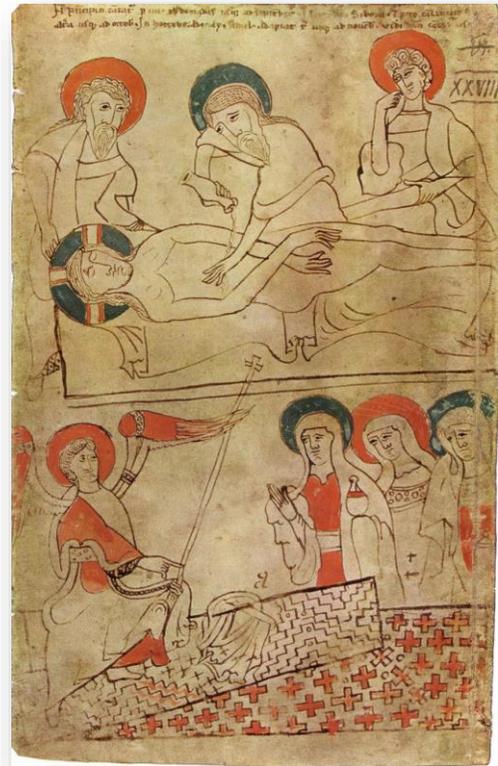


Suddenly, throughout the Middle East, and eventually throughout Mediterranean Europe, pictures of Jesus became frontal portraits with distinctive facial characteristics. Jesus most often had shoulder-length hair, an elongated thin nose, and a forked beard. Numerous other characteristics appeared in these pictures, and some of them were seemingly strange and of no particular artistic merit. Many portraits had two wisps of hair that dropped at an angle from a central parting

of the hair. Many pictures showed Jesus with large "owlish" eyes. Paul Vignon, a French art scholar, who first categorized these facial attributes in 1930, also described a square cornered U shape between the eyebrows, a downward pointing triangle on the bridge of the nose, a raised right eyebrow, accents on both cheeks with the accent on the right cheek being somewhat lower, an enlarged left nostril, an accent line below the nose, a gap in the beard below the lower lip, and hair on one side of the head that was shorter than on the other side.

The St. Catherine's icon is undoubtedly one of the first depictions of Christ in the new style. It doesn't have all of the Vignon characteristics, but it does have most. What it does have that makes it unique is an uncanny resemblance to the face of the Turin Shroud. One can easily think that the icon was copied from the Shroud. Perhaps, some say, it was the other way around, but that strains historical credulity. Either way, if we can trust the similarities, this clue argues for a pre-European period in the Shroud's history.

8) **Hungarian Pray Manuscript:** A drawing within the Hungarian Pray Manuscript, written about 1192 CE, one of five in the manuscript, shows Jesus being prepared for burial and then being discovered to have “disappeared.” The artist seems to have drawn the highly unusual herringbone weave pattern of the Shroud’s fabric along with a series of holes in an L-shaped pattern just like a pattern of prominent burn holes on the Turin Shroud. In the upper panel, there is also a clear mark on Jesus’ forehead where the most prominent epsilon-shaped bloodstain is found on the forehead of the man of the Shroud. Seemingly, the illustrator of the codex, working at a time before the sacking of Constantinople, knew about the Shroud.



9) **Mozarabic Rite:** There are other clues that an image-bearing cloth existed. The preface (illatio) of the 7th century Mozarabic Rite used in Spain on Saturday after Easter reads: "Peter ran with John to the tomb and saw the recent imprints (vestigia) of the dead and risen man on the linens."

10) **Sudarium of Oviedo:** In the Cathedral of Oviedo, Spain, there is a bloodstained piece of ordinary linen cloth measuring about 34 by 21 inches. Tradition is that the Sudarium of Oviedo, as it is known, is the face cloth mentioned in John 20:7 (NRSV), "and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself."

The Sudarium’s provenance seems impressive. In 614 CE, a cloth believed to be Jesus’ face cloth, maintained by monks in a cave near Jerusalem, was moved in an ark or chest to Alexandria when the armies of the Sasanian King of Persia, Khusru II, conquered Jerusalem. Then, taken along the coast of North Africa it arrived in Spain. Travels of the ark with the cloth throughout Spain is well documented. It was in Toledo in 674 and in Oviedo in 840. Unfortunately, we don’t know if the chest was opened and if the cloth was identified before 1075.

Mark Gusin, who has also studied the Sudarium, wrote in a 1998 paper, "The Oviedo Cloth," (Lutterworth Press: Cambridge UK, p.17): "The most striking thing about all the stains [on the Sudarium of Oviedo] is that they coincide exactly with the face of the image on the Turin Shroud."

These ten spy clues seem quite confirming. But are they? As with scientific evidence, historical records must also be questioned, examined and reexamined for accuracy and relevance. For example, consider the *Hymn of the Pearl*. There are a number of versions in Syriac and Greek.

How similar or dissimilar are they? There are a number of translations, as well. How accurate are they? More precisely, how well do these translations and versions represent the original author's intended meaning? Robin Waterfield, a classical scholar and translator of ancient texts, writes in the Oxford University Press's blog, *Academic Insights for the Thinking World*:

How exactly should one echo the phraseology, word order, sentence structure, metaphors, and so on of the original? Though one can think of a number of supposed translations of ancient texts where the translators have imagined that they knew better than the original author what he was trying to say, it is the other extreme which is all too common in this field: over-literal translation – translation that reads like the first draft of a schoolchild's exercise, or a 1950s' phrasebook for Eastern European tourists.

It is a potential problem, not only with the *Hymn of the Pearl* but with every letter, speech, and quotation that becomes part of the popular lines of reasoning arguing for and against authenticity.

Then, too, there is the problem of how ancient texts get corrupted by scribes and copyists. Pope Stephen III, in 769 CE supposedly had said of the Image of Edessa,

[Christ] spread out his entire body on a linen cloth that was white as snow. On this cloth, marvelous as it is to see . . . the glorious image of the Lord's face, and the length of his entire and most noble body has been divinely transferred.

Some scholars now think the reference to *his entire ... body* was added by a copyist in the twelfth century. Even so, that is telling, telling in the original and telling as a twelfth-century nugget of knowledge about a full body image.

On balance, there is enough first millennium evidence to suggest that there was something out there that seems like the Turin Shroud. If not that, then at least, there is enough historical evidence to doubt the carbon-14 dating and the notion that the Shroud is a medieval creation.

The Nature of Christ's Resurrection

A recent email from a student brought to mind what should be a serious concern to anyone researching or studying the Shroud. The student's question was simply: "Can we use the Shroud of Turin to prove that the Resurrection happened?"

Consider this, too. During a break in the proceedings of an international Shroud conference in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2014, a physicist, a young postdoc doing university research, if I remember correctly, was opining away near the coffee service. It was obvious, he said, radiation produced by the quantum turbulence of the resurrection not only created the image on the cloth but altered the Shroud's apparent age by changing the carbon-14 content. Mankind would soon have scientific proof that the Resurrection happened.

A few years earlier, perhaps anticipating such thinking, representatives of the Archdiocese of Turin at a 2005 conference in Dallas told the Associated Press and NBC that the question before the conference was, "Is the Shroud proof of a resurrection or is it a medieval fake?"

The either/or choice in that statement was mind boggling, coming from supposedly responsible Church authorities. It would have been so much better if the Turin contingent had only quoted a message to the conference from Cardinal Severino Poletto, the Archbishop of Turin who was also the Papal Custodian of the Shroud:

As a human being I too feel passionately involved in the adventure of this scientific investigation. But I also know that this research is not directly the task of the Church but instead it is that of science. "As it is not a matter of faith", Pope John Paul II said during his pilgrimage to the Shroud on 24 May 1998, "the Church does not have specific competence to pronounce on these questions. It entrusts to scientists the task of continuing to investigate to find suitable answers to the questions regarding the Shroud.

Most Shroud researchers are Catholic. As would be expected, there is a smattering of Anglicans, Mainline Protestants, a few Evangelical Christians and a small number of atheists and agnostics. And there is my good friend, Barrie Schwartz, a Jew. He knows more about the Shroud than anyone in the world. He travels all over the world giving lectures on the Shroud. He has given a TEDx talk about it at the Via Della Conciliazione conference in Vatican City. He has taught courses on the Shroud to seminarians at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome and he has taught a masters course on the Shroud at the University of Rome.



The last time I heard Schwartz lecture was in Savannah, Georgia, in late 2013, to a large crowd at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist.

Bronwyn Sell, writing in the *New Zealand Herald* in 2005 described Schwartz' involvement with the Shroud this way:

In 1978 he was invited to photograph the investigations of a non-partisan group of scientists embarking on an unprecedented five-day study of the shroud, in its home in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Turin, Italy.

"I was convinced that I was going to get to Turin and take a close look and see the paint and the brushstrokes and come home," Schwartz says.

Still, it took about 18 years before Schwartz became convinced that this piece of cloth "could well be" a relic of Jesus.

"Now that's not a religious comment, but more an archaeological one, if you will, or just one of common sense.

"And yet, the irony of my life is how much time I spend, as a Jew, trying to educate Christians that this could well be a relic of Jesus."

Most, if not all students of the Shroud, come to the study of it with some preconceived ideas or beliefs about its authenticity. I was a skeptic. Schwartz was a skeptic. We both arrived at about the same place, each of us thinking it could well be authentic in some sense of the word.

Most, if not all students of the Shroud, also come to the study of the Shroud with well-formed beliefs about the reality and the nature of the Resurrection of Christ. For my entire adult life, I've always believed in the Resurrection but in different ways. How I defined it and how I imagined it had changed dramatically throughout the years. So when I hear someone say they want to prove the Resurrection, my first impulse is to wonder what they mean. Prove what? Since most students of the Shroud are Catholics, I thought a good place to begin was a contemporary *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I chose the English translation of the "official" catechism published on the Vatican website. Of all the catechisms that I looked at, among many traditions, some called catechisms and others called other things, this modern Catholic version is the most thoroughly apologetic. It clearly defines resurrection as physical and argues the point with both logic and scriptural references. Therein we read:

Given all these testimonies, Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. It is clear from the facts that the disciples' faith was drastically put to the test ... some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection....

... the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the apostles' faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.

By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills...

Such a comprehensive explanation and defense of a physical nature to the Resurrection is clear. It admits that belief in a physical, bodily resurrection is difficult. Accepting it in our current

scientific era is hard. Was it not just as hard to believe nearly 2000 years ago? Probably. New Testament scripture certainly says so.

In a survey, just a few years ago, about a third of American Catholics made it clear that it was hard for them. Asked to respond to the statement, “Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead” only 68% said they strongly agreed. The percentage of Mainline Protestants was statistically the same, 67%. Evangelical Christians scored higher in this regard at 84%. The survey, [Portraits of American Life Study \(PALS\)](#) was conducted in 2006 by Michael O. Emerson of Rice University and David H. Sikkink of the University of Notre Dame with funding from their respective schools and the Lilly Endowment Fund.

In quoting above from the Catholic Church catechism, I had started with the statement “Given all these testimonies.” Leading up to those words, the Vatican document speaks of the witnessing of the Resurrection by Mary Magdalen, the Apostles and the 500. That is how we think of it, as witnessing the Resurrection. The words in the catechism are carefully chosen. These are “witnesses of the Risen One.” And the New Testament narratives speak only about witnessing the post-resurrection results: the empty tomb, the burial cloths in the tomb and several post-resurrection appearances. No one witnessed and nothing is suggested about what transpired inside the tomb.

You were right, Colin, when you asked, “why did the Risen Christ bother to re-make contact with his disciples?” The distinction is important if you are a student of the Shroud.

In a Lenten lecture in 2008, Rowan Williams, then the 104th and current Archbishop of Canterbury (pictured here with Pope Benedict XVI at Lambeth Palace in 2010), added his own perspective. Significantly, he refers to the post-resurrection encounters as *apparitions*. The Oxford Dictionary gives two meanings for the word: 1) A ghost or ghostlike image of a person. 2) A remarkable or unexpected appearance of someone or something. Williams doesn't make it clear what he means. We can guess:

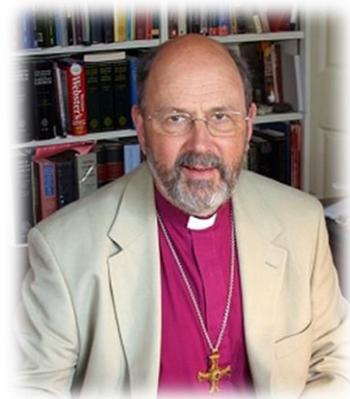


There is, I have sometimes said, a quality of rawness about these stories of the resurrection, a quality of mysteriousness: the strange but very persistent theme that people do not at first recognize the risen Jesus – the story of the encounter with Mary Magdalene, the story of Emmaus. That is a significant factor once again that no one has ever fully made sense of, and again doesn't fit easily into literary stereotypes. There are cases in the Old Testament when people realize belatedly that they have been talking to

an angel, when the angel suddenly reveals his glory; but that's not quite how it works in the encounter with Mary Magdalene or the Emmaus story. And so, in thinking about the historical basis of the resurrection stories, about the empty tomb and the 'apparitions', I would say, look for the way the story is told and begin to see how much of a shock it actually was – and, of course, still is. The story is told in a new way because nothing like this has ever happened before, and we are still finding it difficult because nothing like that has ever happened again. But (to go right back to where I began) that is what you might expect in retrospect, what you might expect if what you're dealing with is an event that inaugurates a new phase in human history, not just another episode in the ongoing story, but something that reshapes the whole way in which we talk about God, and about God's world. Now there are many points of detail about the resurrection stories—about the way in which the empty tomb is spoken of, about the content and the direction of some of the apparition stories (not least the apparition to Thomas or the apparition to Peter and the Beloved Disciple by the Sea of Galilee at the end of John's Gospel)—on which it would be fascinating to spend more time. But I hope that the main point is clear. There is something about the way in which these stories are told that continues to stand out: a change of gear between the passion and the resurrection story – a sense of the new.

I like William's use of the word apparition in this context. But clarity needs more. N. T. Wright (pictured in his study) speaks of a strange transformation into a new mode of physicality. That is closer to my way of thinking and believing. But I must add that I see physicality, as Wright uses the word, beyond the matter that makes up our universe, beyond the purview of science. Others think of the "appearances" as spiritual encounters or symbolic stories.

Wright, a renowned biblical scholar and historian, and formerly the Church of England Bishop of Durham has written an extraordinary 850+ page comprehensive survey, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. It carefully and thoroughly explores what people believe and have believed about the Resurrection throughout history. It took me seven weeks of recovering from a broken ankle to sit still enough to get through it. I can now say I'm glad for the fractured ankle. It is that good of a book.



Five years after first publishing that book, Wright hooked up with his good friend, the late Marcus Borg, then the Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University. Together, they wrote a smaller book targeted more at a popular audience. The book, *The Meaning of Jesus*, was really more of a polite debate between the two friends. Discussion of the Resurrection was pretty much reduced to two chapters, one by each of these scholars.

With a book to sell, the two embarked on a tour and series of debates at universities, churches and television studios across the United States. One stop included an interview on Public

Television (PBS) in March of 1999. At the beginning of the television broadcast, the show's moderator, Chris Roberts, introduced the discussion:

Englishman N. T. Wright and American Marcus Borg disagree about Jesus and the resurrection. They are historians — both Christians, both Oxford graduates — and friends for many years. Together they've written a new book, *The Meaning of Jesus*.

Wright then neatly summarized for the viewers the discussion that would follow:

Was Jesus bodily raised from the dead or not? And I say yes, and Marcus says no. Those are the big things.

Shortly, after that, Borg stated:

I do believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I'm just skeptical that it involved anything happening to his corpse....

... I wouldn't see these stories as fictions in a modern sense of the word. I would see them as characteristic of the ancient mind, and of ancient storytelling techniques where you do use a story to express a truth of something that has happened. I think the Easter stories are true in the sense that the followers of Jesus really did have experiences of Jesus as a living reality after his death. I don't think those stories are simply saying his memory lives on. I think they had visionary experiences. I think they had experiences of him as a presence within the life of the community.

Wright on the other hand said:

All the early sources from quite different angles, they all describe as best they can something very strange involving the transformation into a new mode of physicality—I actually can't understand what the historian—why the early Church got going and took the shape it did, unless I say that sometime reasonably soon after his death, Jesus of Nazareth was alive again in a new mode of physicality, which transforms, not just resuscitating or abandoning his physical body.

Roberts tried to clarify. Maybe it was for television:

According to Dr. Wright, the first Christians believed God acts in the real world of flesh and blood, in real time. So that if a TV camera had been in the tomb, it would have recorded the transformation of Jesus' body.

Borg would have none of it:

I think of the great Easter hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," with all its soaring hallelujahs. And I see that hymn as profoundly true even though I don't think its truth depends upon the tomb having been empty or something happening to the corpse of Jesus.

Christ indeed has risen, but to confuse that with an event that you could have photographed, I think is to trivialize the story.

The notion of a camera in the tomb intrigued me. Roberts didn't come up with the idea. It is in their book. Nonetheless, it shaped my thinking from that point forward.

Wright, I thought, came up short in the PBS session. I agreed more with Wright at this stage in my life but in hoping for more of an explanation, perhaps to help me better justify my belief, I was disappointed. I turned back to my bookcase and went back to *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Wright adds an important point about the burial cloths and the body:

Their positioning, carefully described in [John 20] verse 7, suggest that they had not been unwrapped, but that the body had somehow passed through them, much as, later on, it would appear and disappear through locked doors (verse 19).

“[S]omehow passed through them?” That bothered me. I would have said the body *seemingly* passed through them. As for appearing and disappearing through locked doors, could we not instead say *despite* locked doors? The distinctions are important. Passing through resonates with so much belief and pseudoscience about the Shroud from which emanate such notions as the body dematerializing or the body becoming mechanically transparent.

“Simples,” wrote Hugh Farey, when he was editor of the British Society for the Turin Shroud. (Colin, you Brits do have a way with simple words). Farey was commenting on a paper, [Charge Separation as the Mechanism for Image Formation on the Shroud of Turin](#) by Dr. Daniel Spicer, a former physics professor at Drexel and now Emeritus Scientist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and Dr. Edward Toton, the president of a physics consulting firm. [Farey wrote in my blog](#):

All we need is for a “body wrapped in the Shroud to become volumetrically radiant [...] and simultaneously mechanically transparent, thus offering time-decreasing resistance to the cloth as it collapsed through the body space.” *Simples*. Made-up physics can explain anything.

Yes, the Oxford Dictionary defines *simples*.

Dreisbach had educated me well on the subject of resurrection. I remember talking with him in the backyard of his Atlanta home, or if it was particularly early or late, at his favorite 24/7 restaurant, Waffle House. A paper he wrote in 2001, [“Thomas: The Cenacle and the Shroud Reconsidered”](#) nicely summarizes some of the things we discussed. In it, Dreisbach quotes Claremont School of Theology’s Gregory J. Riley from his book, *Resurrection Reconsidered, Thomas and John in Controversy*.

It has been less often noted how late a development in early Christian history was the doctrine of the physical resurrection of Christ, and how common the “heresy” of its

rejection in the Church. The original Christian idea was, if not identical with, then far more in accord with "spiritual resurrection" and "Greek" ideas than with mundane restoration of corpses... Paul declared that Jesus had appeared to many irrefutable witnesses (1 Cor 15:3ff), but in a transformed "spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:44). This body was a "dwelling, from heaven" made by God and given in exchange for the earthly body (2 Cor 5:1-4), for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 15:50). Mark, the earliest canonical Gospel, contains no physical demonstration of Jesus' postmortem body. All three Synoptic Gospels preserve the saying that the resurrected believers would become like the angels (Mark 12:25 and parallels)....

Is it as simple as a choice between a spiritual resurrection and a physical one, as argued by Borg or Wright?

Some of the many people in the world of Shroud research who religiously believe in a physical resurrection, simultaneously think that the image must be a miraculous *acheiropoieton* created during and by the Resurrection. Some, even in a chicken-or-the-egg-first fashion, will argue that scriptural descriptions of the scourging and crucifixion argue for the authenticity of the Shroud while the Shroud's authenticity argues that the Resurrection happened physically. The image of a crucified Jesus, they will tell us, was created from an energetic byproduct of what transpired in the tomb after the stone was rolled into place and before it was *seemingly* rolled away. It need not be that way, of course. There are many images believed to be *acheiropoieta*, among them: the *Veil of Veronica*, the *Manoppello Image*, and the *image of our Our Lady of Guadalupe*.

Physically, was the operative word in the PALS study that showed that only 3 in 4 American Christians strongly agreed with the statement, "Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead."

Do we mean by that what happened behind closed doors was physical? How so? Do we mean the empty tomb was a physical reality? Do we suggest that the post-resurrection appearances were of Jesus's physical body? Transformed, somehow maybe, but still able to eat fish? Transformed but still showing wounds? Transformed but seemingly able to defy basic laws of nature?

What if, as I wrote in a blog posting I called [The Process of Resurrection](#), the Resurrection was simply a change of state without of any process, occurring in zero time, without so much of a disturbance as that caused by the seed of a dandelion landing on the ground?

We are all familiar, at least in principle, with the way a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. That is a process. We can make a time-lapsed movie of it and see each and every step. Some will say they see a miracle unfolding. Others will say it is nothing of the kind; it is a perfectly explainable biological process.

If you were to take the first frame and the last frame from the movie of the process, splice them together and pretend that nothing happened in between then you could demonstrate with a very short, two-frame movie a miraculous transformation without a process.

The Resurrection, if we are to believe it was in some way physical, was by definition, a miracle. If we are to take our knowledge from scripture alone, there was a before and after, a first frame, so to speak, and a last frame. There was nothing in between that we know about. So, why do we think there was a process? Why do we think, for instance, the body dematerialized such that a cloth might fall through it or that the body might release some form of energetic byproduct during the Resurrection? Why do we think, as Mark Antonacci, a well-known Shroud researcher, suggests that Jesus might have passed through a traversable Lorentzian wormhole in space-time or as Tulane professor Frank Tipler suggests that the process of resurrection might have been a form of electroweak quantum tunneling and the images on the Shroud the consequence of a Sphaleron field?

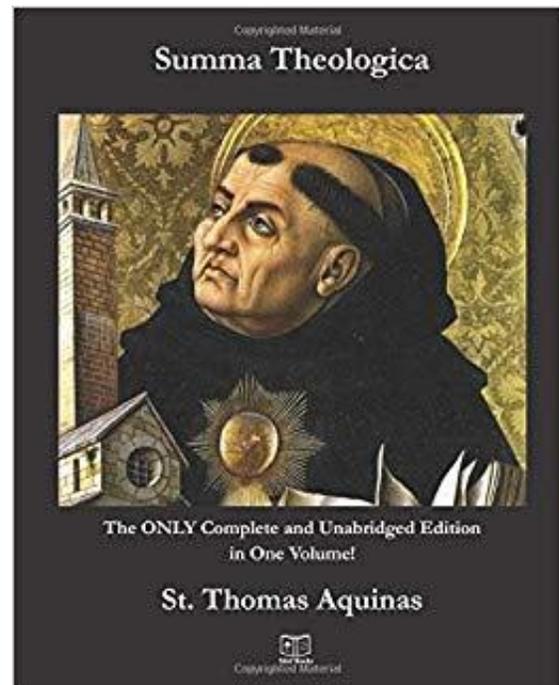
***Simples.* Made-up physics can explain anything.**

Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologica* tried to explain that angels in going from one place to another did not pass through the place in between. Nor did they consume time doing so.

By this sort of local movement an angel may, at will, be present successively in several places and thus may be said to pass through the space between the first and the last place of the series. Or an angel may cease to apply its powers in the first place and begin to apply them in the last, not passing through the space between.

Since there is succession, that is, before-and-after, in the application of an angel's powers, now here and now there, it must be said that an angel's local movement occurs in time, and is not instantaneous. This time, however, is not measurable in our minutes or seconds; these units of time are applicable only to bodily movement.

Okay, so now we know how angels travel. Humor me, Colin. I'm just trying to make a point. For angels, at least for Thomas Aquinas' angels, in how they traveled, there is only a first frame and a last frame, so to speak. Thomas Aquinas was much into angels and was brilliant at logical speculation. We can leave it at that. Nonetheless, this notion of his provides a useful metaphor for pondering any and all supernatural action. There is in his imaginings a change of state and no measure of time. There is nothing like that in classical physics and perhaps nothing like that in quantum mechanics, as well.



And to be clear, we are talking about miracles in a classic sense of the word. We are not talking about the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. We are talking, here, about:

- “The highest degree in miracles comprises those works wherein something is done by God, that nature can never do.” -- *The Summa Contra Gentiles* by St. Thomas Aquinas
- "A miracle is a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." -- “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding” by David Hume

Might miracles be like Thomas Aquinas’ angels, who avoid the in-between and use no time?” Not concerning ourselves, here, with questions about Biblical literalism, when Jesus healed the blind man was there a moment in time when the man’s eyesight was partially restored? When Jesus turned water into wine were there moments in time, no matter how brief, when the wine was still mostly water and when, perhaps picoseconds later, the water was mostly wine? Or was it that the man’s eyesight was suddenly restored? Was it that the water was suddenly wine?

There was, when I was growing up, a book that could be found gathering dust here and there about our house. It was sometimes in its place on the bookshelf but more often it was on the corner of a desk, a coffee table in the living room or on top of the television set where it was used to prop up the rabbit ears antenna at just the right angle for getting the best television reception from a broadcasting tower five miles away. The theory was that my grandmother, on purpose, would leave the book around the house in hopes that someone would read it. The book was *Who Moved the Stone?* by Frank Morrison (real name Albert Henry Ross; Faber and Faber, 1930). Promoted by such luminaries as T. S. Elliot and G. K. Chesterton, the book was a big success when it was first published in 1930. It is now a classic.

Now, in “thumbing” through the Kindle version I came across this thought:

In each case the women arrive to find the stone already rolled away, yet with no hint from the writers as to how this came about. It is only when we turn to St. Matthew’s Gospel that we read of a great angel descending and removing the stone.

Now the peculiar and significant thing is this. We can search the apocryphal writings through and through, and we shall nowhere find even the remotest suggestion that the Lord Himself broke the barriers of His own prison. We are told that the stone ‘rolled away of itself’, or that supernatural beings descended and moved it. But nowhere is the obvious miracle recorded that Jesus Himself threw down the physical defences of the grave.

From all that we have discussed, we find that we are invited to consider at least four resurrection scenarios and one no-scenario. The no-scenario first.

- 1) **No-scenario, no resurrection at all.** By this I mean not even a symbolic representation of an idea. This is a perfectly acceptable, non-Christian perspective. People of other faiths and people of no religious faith might hold this view.
- 2) **A spiritual, not physical Resurrection?** This means a Resurrection along the lines of what Marcus Borg suggests, its truth not depending on an empty tomb or something happening to the corpse of Jesus?

The post-resurrection experiences would also be as Marcus Borg would have us believe:

I wouldn't see these stories as fictions in a modern sense of the word. I would see them as characteristic of the ancient mind, and of ancient storytelling techniques where you do use a story to express a truth of something that has happened. I think the Easter stories are true in the sense that the followers of Jesus really did have experiences of Jesus as a living reality after his death.

Fr. Dreisbach, in his *Cenacle Reconsidered* paper, one-ups Borg's "characteristic of the ancient mind" with "a fascinating alternative to the standard exegesis of the appearance to Thomas":

This Photoshop adaptation of *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* by Caravaggio says it all.



In its most basic form, what we have here is Thomas' attempt to confirm the Image(s) on the Shroud as that [those] of the historical, crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. The method of confirmation is via the identifying marks of the wounds in the hands (i.e. wrists) and side to prove that the body imaged on the burial linen was simultaneously that of the crucified Jesus and a depiction of his new status as the Risen and glorified Messiah. What we may well be encountering in John 20 is a transitional stage in the description of the Resurrection where appearance/vision is giving way to the need for stressing the physical dimensions of the risen "body." As time went by, possibly this verse was used by later Christian apologists to counter Docetists who denied an actual physical incarnation.

Could it be that the Shroud - "The" only surviving link between these two events - not only is the "outward and visible sign" which moves Thomas beyond doubt to unswerving rededication; but is also the hidden "spy clue" upon which the Thomas story is based? And should it come as any surprise that subsequent legend assigns Thomas the role of dispatching Jude with the sacred linen to King Abgar of Edessa?

- 3) **A process free, two frame Resurrection?** I wondered, could it be that the angel (or a metaphorical angel), removed the stone as Thomas Aquinas might have imagined his angels doing? Could it be that in an imperceptible, immeasurable instant, absent any sound or disturbance of any kind, the stone was found to be in a new position?

Might the Resurrection “moment” in the tomb have been that way: a miracle with a before and after and no in between process? In other words, might the Resurrection have been a miracle in which Jesus neither removed his shroud nor passed through it, a miracle in which he went from point A to point B without passing through the in-between, a miracle in which the stone was not rolled away but found to be in a new place nonetheless, a miracle in which an image was left on the cloth?

And in that sense, did Jesus suddenly appear by the Magdalen's side? And did He just appear to the disciples on the road to Emmaus? Had they looked back down the road before, would they have seen him approaching from afar or not? Had Jesus just suddenly appeared in the Cenacle, not passing through doors or walls at all? Did Jesus travel to a place on the Road to Damascus for his encounter with Saul of Tarsus? Or was the Christ just there.

- 4) **A process of resurrection having no basis in scripture or logic, useful only as a model for creating an image on the Shroud.** Colin, I know your views. We agree. Maybe I could put it this way: I'm not saying I believe it didn't happen this way. If you will forgive a subtle distinction, I'm saying I don't believe it.

Colin and everyone, I recommend reading and studying “[The Shroud of Turin: A Critical Summary of Observations, Data and Hypotheses – Version 4, 2017](#)”. It is a 138 page PDF file. The first 46 pages summarize a lot of potential history of the Shroud. The chapter on the various image hypotheses is a good reference. The appendices are useful.

Some of the image characteristics in the paper, however, are in serious need of reappraisal. For instance:

- a) **3D.** As you know. Colin, I find the 3D characteristics flawed. By your comments in my posting, [It is really, really time to rethink what we think about 3D](#) I know you agree. I don't think anyone has ever really demonstrated that “lights and darks on the image correlate to cloth to body distance.” From all the literature I've read, I think it's probably true that this is “an unfortunate example of an assumption masquerading as a fact.”
- b) **Superficiality.** And now, Colin, you are similarly challenging the superficiality of the image. What took you so long?

What bothers me most in this scenario is the defense of the “Fall-Through” hypothesis:

Some might contend that the philosophy of methodological naturalism, which has generally served science well, makes the “Fall-Through” hypothesis itself “impossible”. The philosophy of methodological naturalism that guides scientific research holds that reason is limited to acquiring epistemic certainty only on the basis of naturalism. Thus, scientific research chooses not to consider supernatural causes – even as a remote possibility. Nevertheless, the Shroud that is arguably the most unique object in existence, must be allowed to speak for itself. The “Fall-Through” hypothesis is strictly data driven and is not intended to offer a scientific “proof” of the Resurrection. To the contrary, the Resurrection can never be scientifically “proven.” This is because the philosophy of science includes the stipulation to work to “disprove” rather than to “prove”. Science rests on hypotheses, many of the most sublime of which, particularly in physics, can never be said to be proven but can only be made stronger through a continuing accumulation of empirical evidence.

And the Shroud? Very unique claims have obviously been made for centuries about the Shroud. In the face of these claims no hypothesis can be dismissed if it offers the best working “fit” to the evidence of the image characteristics. As physicist John Jackson has stated, for the purpose of explaining the Shroud image based on the best “fit”, there can be “no reason to disqualify radiation, specifically vacuum ultraviolet, as a possible mechanism of image formation”. It must also be noted that the best and latest proposed naturalistic hypotheses offered to explain the mechanism of image formation, such as a corona discharge phenomena, are all extreme “forcing” hypotheses that also severely stress the boundary of what can be considered “natural”. They, too, are a challenge to the “believable” and border on the “impossible”. Acheiropoieta.

I’m glad that the philosophical problem is recognized. My problem with arguing for an exception to the most basic principles in the philosophy of science is that for there to be any peer acceptance – and there must be -- there must be a reason other than the problem at hand. To say that the “Fall-Through” hypothesis is data driven is put lipstick on a pig, a futile attempt to justify absurdity. I agree that no one can offer scientific “proof” of the Resurrection. But fall-through requires belief in the Resurrection (or maybe futuristic teleporting of humans) to even consider it. Ask, yourself, would a well-educated non-believer even consider this a possibility.

The best-fit statement, that there can be “no reason to disqualify radiation, specifically vacuum ultraviolet, as a possible mechanism of image formation” is an old courtroom antic. It sounds reasonable until you realize that there are many good reasons to disqualify radiation. It’s a black swan fallacy, too, a best fit until there is a better fit.

I don't want to revisit my concerns about criteria and data suitability. You have championed this in the past. If you want to explore this more I have "packaged" about two dozen blog postings into [A Single Rambling Wreck Scrollable Stream](#).

I'm glad to read the statement that "the Resurrection can never be scientifically proven." The reason given is correct, philosophically. But then doesn't it seem weird – I mean really totally weird -- to argue that the image on the Shroud is likely produced by radiation, which originates from what can only be a miraculous physical resurrection of a body.

- 5) **The Resurrection is just too mysterious to be described.** This next paragraph, just for what it is worth, is what I consider to be something of a personal "catechism."

Believing, as I do, that with God all things are possible, I believe that any resurrection scenario is possible. And believing, as I also do, that God is a loving God, and in realizing that a resurrection of (a) God incarnate would be extraordinarily good news and good effect for all of mankind, it seems reasonable. Then, and only then, throw in some St. Paul and some Gospel narratives and it is then reasonable to conclude that it really did happen. And it was probably pretty much as the "witnesses" described it. The most powerful testimony then and for all of history looking ahead would be a resurrection event that was physical. By faith, then I can imagine it. But it is not like Tom Wright or John Jackson see it. I imagine the physical aspect as something beyond the purview of science, the physical and the the physics of it, more than merely the matter, energy and time that makes up our universe. The tomb was certainly empty and the Risen One able to be wherever He needs to be when He wants to be. There are nonetheless many appealing qualities in the spiritual and symbolic nature of the Resurrection stories that should not be ignored. They need not be competing scenarios and should be combined.

Honestly, whatever anyone thinks or believes or does not believe about the Resurrection is fine with me. In the Episcopal tradition we often use the phrase, "wherever you are on your spiritual journey." If I had to guess, I'd think it would be fine with Christ.

As for the Shroud? I don't see where it fits in. That doesn't mean I don't think it's real. I just don't buy into any explanation that I have seen or heard or read so far. Colin, if you can convince me that it is a medieval fake, then I'll be convinced. You will also need to explain away a lot of historical information from the first one-thousand years of Christianity.

The Most Profound Mystery in all of Science?

Smithsonian Magazine (May 13, 2010) quotes University of Chicago cosmologist Michael S. Turner:

[Dark energy is] the most profound mystery in all of science. ... The effort to solve it has mobilized a generation of astronomers in a rethinking of physics and cosmology to rival and perhaps surpass the revolution Galileo inaugurated on an autumn evening in Padua.

I'm sure, many students of the Shroud would instead call the image on the Shroud, "the most profound mystery in all of science." I'm sure you don't think so, Colin. Neither do I. But the analogy should not be lost on you. If, indeed, you have found that the image on the Shroud is not superficial, you might force a generation of researchers to rethink how the image might have been formed.

Let's see how it plays out. I'm guessing (for now) you are right, on this one.

Thanks for writing, Colin. BTW: What a great picture and caption.



Left: the arrow points to a **THREAD** that is displaying a cut edge, i.e. much needed *transverse section*. Why the speckled appearance? **Right:** enlargement, showing that it's the SCW cores of some but not all individual **FIBRES** that contain the dense pigment, probably Maillard-derived melanoidin, the latter possibly having penetrated via this investigator's proposed *reticular network of capillary channels* existing between the **MICROFIBRILS**.

Warm regards.

Dan Porter

PS: For now ...

Only this much is certain: The Shroud of Turin is either the most awesome and instructive relic of Jesus Christ in existence - showing us in its dark simplicity how He appeared to men - or it is one of the most ingenious, most unbelievably clever,

products of the human mind and hand on record. It is one or the other; there is no middle ground."

— Walsh, J.E., *The Shroud*, Random House: New York NY, 1963.