

The copies of the Shroud

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Abstract

The existence of copies of the Shroud, at least about fifty, does not constitute a problem of “rivalry”. Also the most beautiful ones are of modest making and clearly appear like drawings. Under analysis they reveal their composition: painting pigments. The aim of making a copy was not to cheat the simple-minded faithful, pretending it was the authentic funeral sheet of Jesus; so much so that it is often written on the copy itself when it had been made and that it had touched the original relic. The existence of the copies reveals, instead, only a devotional aim.

Keyword: Shroud image, blood stains, painting pigments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Shroud body image, faint yellow, has characteristics [1] completely different from those of the copies [2]. The analyses prove that the Shroud image is not the result of an applied material, as a painting or a printing. Moreover it was not obtained projecting a manikin on a sensitized cloth, singeing a cloth by a hot bas-relief or pressing it on a model treated by acid substances [3]. The characteristics of the Shroud image suggest that the best explanation for its formation is a short and intense burst of directional ultraviolet radiation [4].

The reddish stains are human blood not transposed by a brush but by contact with a wounded body that was wrapped already dead. No image is present under the blood stains. The deduction is that the image formation followed the blood transposition on the cloth [5].

The existence of copies of the Shroud, at least about fifty, does not constitute a problem of “rivalry” like someone, hastily and superficially, wants to make us believe. Also the most beautiful ones are of modest making and clearly appear like drawings. Under analysis they reveal their composition: painting pigments.

Also the modern copies, realized by N.P.L. Allen [6], E.A. Craig [7], L. Garlaschelli [8], J. Nickell [9], V. Pesce Delfino [10], have characteristics completely different from those of the Shroud.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COPIES

At the beginning of the 16th century the custom to expose the Shroud to the veneration of the faithful spread. In that period also the tradition of reproducing the sacred sheet in full or reduced size began. The copies thus obtained, after touching the original, were considered relics by contact and exposed in permanence or in certain circumstances.

The 17th century was the period of the solemn exhibitions and also of the production of a great number of copies. The Dukes of Savoy, owners of the Shroud, had them made on request for those who wished to have a particular memory of the relic.

The copies that can boast an artistic value for their being of a refined workmanship are few, even if the good will and the devotion never lacked. Rarely was all the reality reproduced with perfect objectivity. The devotional value has a remarkable importance in reference to the historical and religious context that in some way produced them. The documentary value is what deserves most consideration, in relation to the people and the facts that fostered and favored them.

The copies hardly ever reproduce the exact dimensions of the original Shroud and their manual origin is patent. Never do they show a totally negative character, such as the Shroud displays; they are a mélange of positive and negative, in which the positive obviously predominates. One can see the difficulty that the artists encountered. In fact, in trying to reproduce a reality which was not exactly what they were accustomed to, they represented the figure in ways and means which did not correspond to that reality.

Not every copy has the burn marks and the darns. Trickle of blood are very rarely reproduced faithfully. In some copies the eyes are shut, in others they are open; in still other examples, it is difficult to determine whether the eyes are open, closed or half-closed. Most of the copies have the side wound in the correct position, that is, on the right, but in some of them it is reproduced on the left.

The lack of imprint in the pubic area was interpreted as a loincloth which is more or less evident in almost all the copies. The trickle of blood on the back is not always depicted. When it is, the interpretations vary widely, from a chain to a continuation of the loincloth.

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Regarding the hands, in some copies the left hand is positioned over the right one, in others the right hand is over the left one, but there are also copies with the hands not crossed. In some of the copies the thumb is not visible, in others, instead, it is visible. The hand wound in some cases is in the wrist, in others it is in the palm, in others it is not depicted. The feet are depicted crossed, diverging or parallel.

A great Shroud scholar, don Luigi Fossati, compiled a list in chronological order of the copies with the date written on the cloth [11] and a list in alphabetical order of the localities where copies without the date and without any writing are kept [12], even if sometimes the relative pieces of information are found in covering documents or in other writings [13]. This paper is a summary of those sources.

3. COPIES WITH THE DATE WRITTEN ON THE CLOTH

1516 – St. Gommaire church, Lierre, Belgium.

This copy, attributed to Albrecht Dürer, measures 1.47m x 0.33m and carries the date, a Latin inscription in the center and an inscription in the Old Nuremberg dialect along the lower border. Four groups of red stains are clearly shown on this copy. The artist assumed they were bloodstains but they are, instead, burn holes.



Figure 1. Copy of St. Gommaire church, Lierre.

1568 – Monastery of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Guadalupe, Archdiocese of Toledo, province of Caceres, Extremadura, Spain.

This copy measures 4.40m x 1.00m and carries the date written at each end.

1568 – Parish church, Navarrete, Diocese of Calahorra-Calzada-Logroño, province of Logroño, Spain.

This copy measures 4.54m x 0.93m and carries the date written at each end.

1571 – Holy Sepulcher convent, Augustinian nuns, Alcoy, Archdiocese of Valencia, province of Alicante, Spain.

This copy measures 4.38m x 0.93m and carries the date written at each end. On the back of the reliquary, in which this copy has been kept since early in the 17th century, an inscription explains how the copy came to Spain: it was given to don Juan of Austria by pope Pius V. A document in the Municipal Archives gives a bit more detail, saying that this was one of two copies commissioned by Pius V and that when don Juan of Austria went to Rome for the

Pope's blessing before leaving for Lepanto, Pius V gave him this copy. In 1574 don Juan of Austria sent the copy to the Holy Sepulchre Convent in Alcoy.

1594 – Cathedral, Puebla de Los Angeles, Mexico.

This copy measures 4.80m x 2.90m and is an oil painting on cloth.

1620 – Private property of José Falcao, Lisbon, Portugal.

This copy has approximately the size of the original. There are no documents concerning the provenance of this copy. Oral tradition relates that it was brought from Rome by an ancestor of the family, a friar, about 1634.

1620 – Parish church, Torres de la Alameda, Diocese of Madrid, Spain.

This copy measures 4.47m x 1.43m and has the inscription, along the lower border, which tells us that it touched the Shroud on May 3, 1620.

1623 – Cathedral St. Mary of Redonda, Logroño, Diocese of Calahorra-Calzada-Logroño, province of Logroño, Spain.

This copy measures 4.50m x 1.58m and is kept in a chest. The documents in the archives of the Cathedral of Logroño, written in Latin on May 4, 5 and 12, 1623, tell us that the prelates present at the exposition put the copy in contact with the original. Although the characters of the inscriptions on the Alameda and Logroño copies are quite different, other details common to them lead us to think that they could be the work of the same artist.

1624 – Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, Dominican nuns, Summit, New Jersey, USA.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and was given to the Monastery as a gift from the Dominican nuns of the Monastery of SS. Dominic and Sistus, Rome, on April 6, 1924.

1634 – Monastery of St. Joseph, Moncalieri, province of Turin, Italy.

This copy measures 4.36m x 0.98m and had been in contact with the Shroud during the exposition of 1931, as it appears from the inscription in Italian embroidered in azure on the red silk support and from an archival document written by Canon Michele Grasso, Chaplain of the Holy Shroud Chapel.

1640 – Church of the hospital, Castillo de Garcimuñoz, Diocese of Cuenca, Spain.

This copy measures 4.34m in length. The document of authentication was drawn up at Cuenca under the date of April 14, 1642.

1643 – Private collection, Countess Alessandra Ruà Lovera di Maria, Turin, Italy.

This copy measures 4.21m x 0.95m and after the date appears the Savoy Knot.

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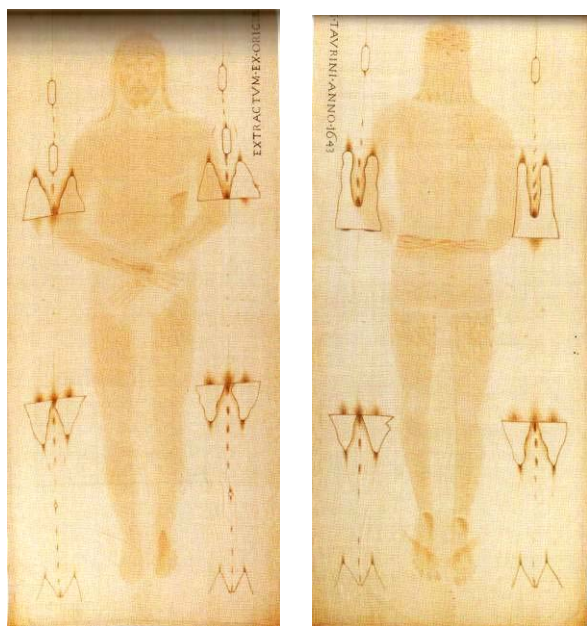


Figure 2. Copy of St. Hilary church, Casale Monferrato.

1643 – St. Hilary parish church, Casale Monferrato, province of Alessandria, Italy.

This copy measures 4.20m x 0.96m and was realized for the Irish faithful, but it was never sent to Ireland.

1644 – San Sebastian church, Acireale, province of Catania, Italy.

This copy measures 3.90m x 0.96m and very probably was given to the church by Fr. Innocenzo Marcinò of Caltagirone, General of the Capuchin fathers.

1644 – Monastery Our Lady of the Suffrage, Capuchin nuns, Turin, Italy.

This copy measures 4.47m x 1.05m and the date is followed by a little ornament. The Princesses Francesca Maria and Francesca Caterina of Savoy, Franciscan tertiaryaries, were frequent visitors to the convent. Without any doubt, the copy was a gift from them.

1646 – Cathedral of Bitonto, province of Bari, Italy.

This copy measures one third of the original. A document of the capitulary archives reads: “On May 25, 1659, the Illustrious Monsignor Alessandro Crescenzo, Bishop of Bitonto, gave to the Most Reverend Chapter the Holy Shroud. It touched the Original which is conserved in Turin, where he [Bishop Crescenzo] was Apostolic Nuncio for twelve years”.

1646 – Cathedral of St. Peter, Bologna, Italy.

This copy measures 4.42m x 0.87m and the inscription is along the upper border. This copy, executed in tempera on a linen cloth, is attributed to the Princess Francesca Maria Apollonia of Savoy, daughter of Carlo Emanuele I.

1646 – St. Catherine church, Fabriano, province of Ancona, Italy.

This copy measures 3.97m x 0.83m and was given by brother Ippolito Righi. The drawing is very carefully done, however it is badly stained.

1646 – Monastery of the Ursuline nuns, Quebec, Canada.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and is in very precarious conditions.

1650 – Private collection, Countess Camilla Roggeri Mermet Gay di Quarti, Turin, Italy.

This copy measures 4.50m x 0.95m and in 1898 was photographed by Secondo Pia for Paul Vignon.

1652 – Monastery of SS. Joseph and Theresa, Mounts of Ponti Rossi, Naples, Italy.

This copy measures 4.37m x 0.95m and would seem to be by the same artist who made the copy of Caltagirone, of which we will speak later.

1653 – St. Mary parish church, Cuneo, Italy.

This copy measures 4.15m x 0.97m and the date is followed by a little ornament. The imprints are heavily outlined, resembling a rough charcoal sketch. On the back, a red silk lining prevents transparency. Entwined ribbons, red and white, run all around the border.

1653 – Oratory of SS. Peter and Catherine, Savona, Italy.

This copy measures 4.50m x 1.03m and is provided with an authentication by the Protonotary Apostolic Michele Beggiano, General Vicar of the Archdiocese of Turin.

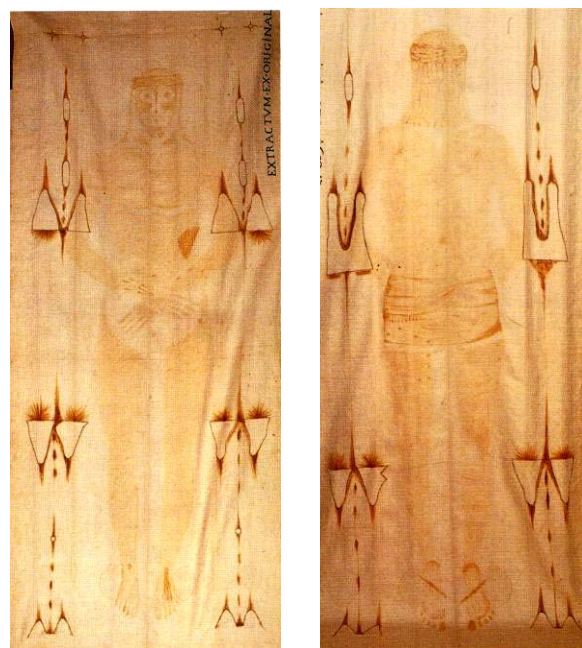


Figure 3. Copy of SS. Peter and Catherine Oratory, Savona.

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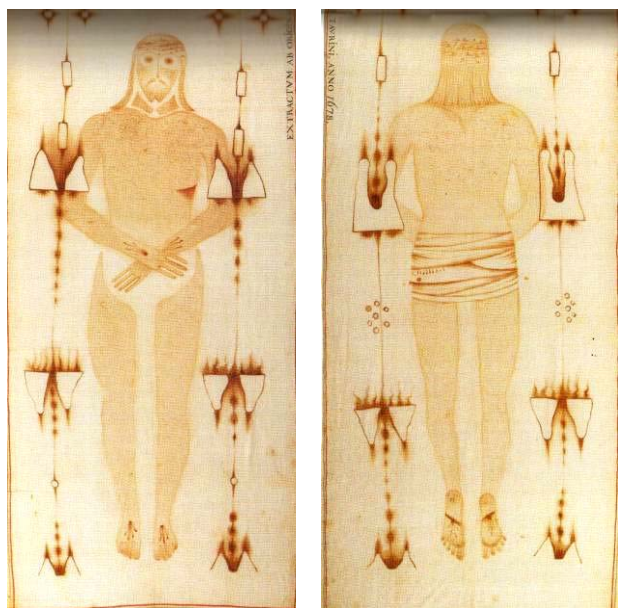


Figure 4. Copy of St. Maurice Basilica, Imperia.

1654 – *Our Lady of Los Valles parish church, La Cuesta, Diocese of Osma-Soria, Spain.*

This copy measures 4.16m x 0.93m and is provided with an authentication preserved in the parish archives.

1665 – *Museum of the Cathedral, Salerno, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.16m x 1.03m and comes from the Monastery of St. Michael Archangel of the Poor Clare nuns.

1678 – *Basilica of St. Maurice, Imperia, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.32m x 1.03m and is very well preserved. It is attributed to Giovanni Battista Fantino.

1697 – *Monastery St. Therese, Carmelite nuns, Savona, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.50m x 1.10m and is longer than others because the symbols of the Passion are represented at the ends. In the inscription is written that the author is Giovanni Battista Fantino.

1708 – *St. Martha church, Agliè, province of Turin, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.40m x 0.98m and was painted by Giovanni Battista Fantino.

1710 – *St. Mary of the Assumption church, Gallarate, province of Varese, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.47m x 1.09m and was painted by Giovanni Battista Fantino.

1933 – *St. John the Baptist church, Verrua Savoia, province of Turin, Italy.*

This copy measures 4.01m x 1.04m and was painted by Oreste Visone.

4. COPIES WITHOUT THE DATE WRITTEN ON THE CLOTH

Agliè, province of Turin, Italy, Sacristy of the Chapel of the Castle, 1822.

This copy measures 4.40m x 0.90m and is sewn onto a cloth of violet silk, which forms a border all around the sheet.

Arquata del Tronto, province of Ascoli Piceno, Italy, St. Francis church, 1653.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and touched it on May 4, 1653.

Badolatosa, province of Seville, Spain, parish church, 1674.

The exact measures of his copy are not known, but the size is less than the original. The copy is signed, like others, by the artist: Giovanni Battista Fantino.

Bologna, Italy, Monastery of Corpus Domini, 1645-1653.

This copy measures 1.41m x 0.42m and is an oil painting on linen attributed to the Princess Maria Apollonia of Savoy, who gave it to the Poor Clare nuns Monastery during one of her sojourns in Bologna.

Caltagirone, province of Catania, Italy, Sacristy of the Convent of the Capuchin Fathers, 1649.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and was given to the Convent by Fr. Innocenzo Marcinò of Caltagirone, General of the Capuchin fathers.

Dronero, province of Cuneo, Italy, Confraternity of the Cross.

This copy was given to the Confraternity by the Duke Carlo Emanuele of Savoy.

Campillo de Aragon, Diocese of Tarazona, province of Zaragoza, Spain, parish church, 1650.

This copy measures 4.38m x 1.03m and arrived to the parish church after various travels. It is the copy that Francisco Lucas Bueno, Bishop of Malta, received from the Duke of Savoy.

Escalona del Prado, province of Segovia, Spain, parish church, 1657.

This copy measures 4.50m x 0.96m and comes from Rome, where it was property of Fr. Sebastiano da Gaeta, Commissary General of the Minor Observants and Reformed.

Escamilla, diocese of Cuenca, province of Guadalajara, Spain, parish church, 1640.

There are two copies. One measures only 0.53m x 0.32m while the other shows the frontal and dorsal imprints separately in natural size, 2.00m x 0.70m, that are mounted side by side on frames.

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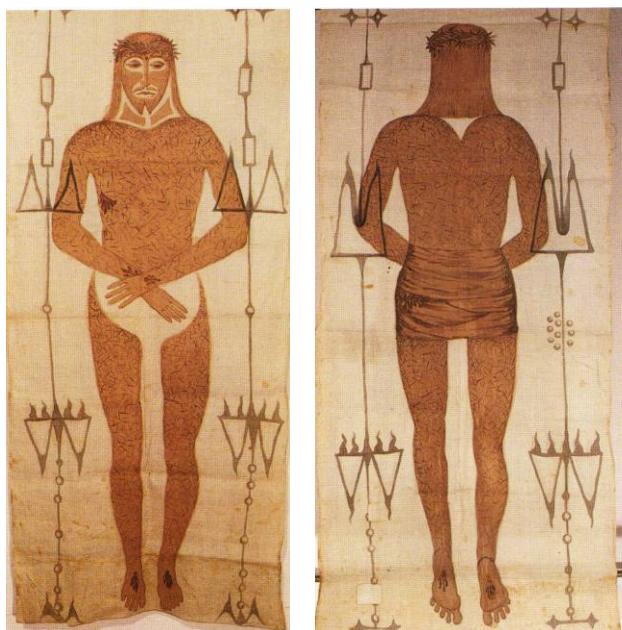


Figure 5. Copy of St. John the Baptist church, Finale Ligure.

Finale Ligure, province of Savona, Italy, St. John the Baptist parish church, 1728.

This copy measures 3.74m x 0.89m and was painted by Domenico Bocciardo.

Gallipoli, province of Lecce, Italy, Cathedral, 1585.

The somatic imprints on this copy measure 4.01m x 0.75m and it was taken to Gallipoli by the Bishop Quintero Ortis. Along one lengthwise side, another cloth has been sewn on for fixing it to a long staff.

Guadalupe, Archdiocese of Toledo, province of Caceres, Extremadura, Spain, Monastery of the Virgin of Guadalupe, 1588.

This copy measures 3.00m x 0.97m and has two figures of angels that hold up the Shroud. The manner of presentation, the noticeable stylistic differences from other copies of that period, and the delicacy of the work, induce one to think that the painting was retouched in later centuries.

Inzago, province of Milan, Italy, Provostship of St. Mary of the Assumption, 1581.

This copy measures 5.12m x 1.00m and was given by Carlo Francesco Bonomi, bishop of Vercelli, to St. Carlo Borromeo. It is in poor state of preservation. The fabric is rumpled and is it not possible to determine the artistic style. The frontal and dorsal imprints are not well defined.

Laguna de Cameros, Diocese of Calahorra-Calzada-Logroño, province of Logroño, Spain, St. Dominic church, 1790.

This copy measured 4.60m x 0.86m but it was cut in half so that now each half is 2.30m high and 1.72m wide. The

two parts are set vertically side by side.

Lisbon, Portugal, National Museum, about 1500.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and comes from the Monastery of the Mother of God in Xabregas, Lisbon.

Madrid, Spain, Escorial Monastery.

There are two copies. One measures only 0.45m x 0.12m while the other one has approximately the size of the original.

Mondovì, province of Cuneo, Italy, Cathedral.

The preservation conditions of this copy let us argue that in the past it was often exhibited.

Naples, Basilica of St. Paul the Greater, Theatine fathers, 1608-1626.

This copy measures 4.10m x 0.85m but it was cut in half.

Rabat, Malta, St. Paul Collegiate church, about 1663.

This copy measures 2.93m x 1.01m and touched the Shroud on May 15, 1663.

Ripalimosani, province of Campobasso, Italy, Assumption parish church, 1595-1601.

This copy measures 3.86m x 0.79m and is associated with Giulio Cesare Riccardi, a prelate native of Ripalimosani.

Rome, Italy, St. Judas Thaddeus parish church, 1692.

This copy measures 4.30m x 1.04m and is in good state of preservation. In a letter it is written that it touched the Shroud twice.

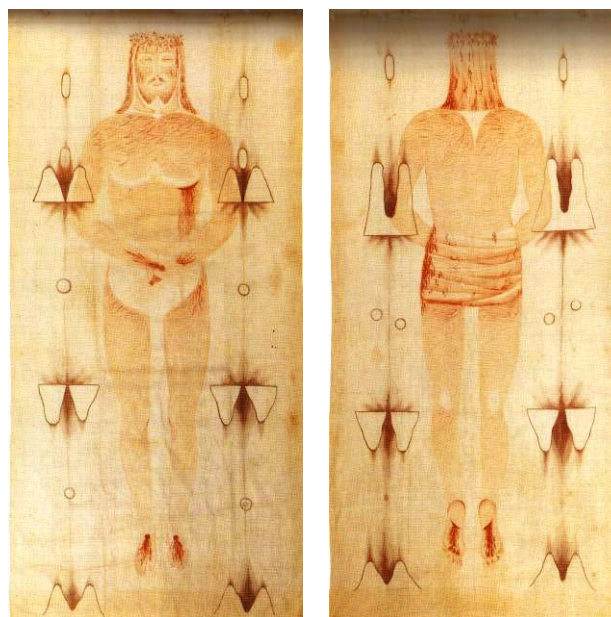


Figure 6. Copy of St. Judas Thaddeus church, Rome.

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Rome, Italy, Holy Shroud church, 1605.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and was given by Clement VIII on the occasion of the consecration of the church. Some retouching was done in 1870-1871 when the church was reopened to the public after a period of abandon. On this copy the frontal image is at the right, whereas traditionally it appears at the left of the observer.

Salamanca, Spain, Monastery of Augustinian nuns, 1665.

This copy has approximately the size of the original and is well preserved.

Santiago del Estero, Argentina, Convent of St. Dominic, 1585

This copy folded in half measures 2.17m x 0.81m and is very faithful to the original, even in small details.

Silos, province of Burgos, Monastery of the Benedictine fathers, 1640.

In this copy the frontal imprint measures 1.59m, the dorsal imprint measures 1.63m and the figures are heavily delineated. The Monastery received this copy while father Nicolas Mélenz was abbot (1637-1641). Archival documents describe it as being entirely similar to the original.

Toledo, Spain, Monastery Mothers Commendadores de Santiago, 1587.

This copy measures 4.50m x 0.87m and is similar to that of Silos. Two other copies are mentioned in the document of donation, but of these there is no further information.

Turin, Italy, Piccola Casa della Divina Provvidenza (Cottolengo), 1750.

This copy touched the Shroud on May 27, 1898.

Turin, Italy, Monastery St. Mary Magdalen.

This copy measures 1.64m x 0.43m and is faithful to the original in the various colour shades.

Turin, Italy, Sacristy of the Holy Shroud Chapel, 1898.

There were two copies, one painted by Cav. Carlo Cussetti and another painted by Enrico Reffo.

Valladolid, Spain, Monastery of Our Lady of the Laura, Dominican nuns, 1567.

This copy measures 4.36m in length but it was cut in half and the two parts set vertically side by side.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of making a copy was not to cheat the simple-minded faithful, pretending it was the authentic funeral

sheet of Jesus; so much so that it is often written on the copy when it had been made and that it had touched the original relic.

The existence of the copies reveals, instead, only a devotional aim: the desire of being able to pray in front of that sacred image in an age in which the photography did not exist.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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