

Purported Cloths of Jesus Apart from the Turin Shroud

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Introduction

Many people are familiar with the Turin Shroud, believed by many to be the *sindon* mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and part of the *othonia* mentioned by John. (Relatively few people know that Luke, after using *sindon* in 23:53 to describe what Joseph of Arimathea had used to bury Jesus, uses *othonia* to describe what Peter found when he went to the tomb.) Some people are also fairly familiar with “Sudarium of Oviedo, which many researchers believe to be the face cloth mentioned in Jn 20:7. See my article, [“The Greek Words Used in the Gospel Accounts of Jesus’ Burial – Can They be Reconciled with the Turin Shroud?”](#)”

But there have been other cloths in history that have been purported to be what Jesus wore in life or part of the burial linens. *Othonia* is thought by many scholars to be generic plural for grave-cloths of unspecified material, though presumably linen. Jews were buried in multiple cloths. However, while numerous researchers believe in the authenticity of both the Shroud and Sudarium, is there any compelling evidence that some of the other cloths could be authentic as well?

This article will look at other purported burial linens (as well as the “Tunic of Argenteuil,” believed to have been a seamless robe, the garment worn by Jesus during his passion and gambled over by Roman soldiers).

There are, of course, some intrinsic hurdles when looking at any items supposedly associated with Jesus: 1) the fact that some Christian believers uncritically accept many claims of authentic relics and concomitantly, 2) the fact that there have always been many fake relics in circulation, especially in the Middle Ages. Does either of these factors automatically mean that the Shroud, the Sudarium, and any other purported cloths are forgeries? Of course, they do not. Each cloth should be judged solely on the internal evidence.

I will list each cloth in alphabetical order with some significant details, comments, and additional sources. I will not list the Shroud separately here, since that is not the focus of this article, and its literature is abundant. I will also not discuss the “Image of Edessa” and the “Mandylicon,” as those are well covered in the Shroud literature. This article will be updated as needed.

[CAP OF CAHORS](#)

DETAILS: The Jews used a special sort of hood, called a *pathil* in Hebrew, that was placed on the head of the corpse and tied under the chin to stop the jaw from opening and to keep the tongue from protruding. The Holy Cap of Cahors is believed by some to be this *pathil*.

COMMENTS: Very little is known about this cloth. Some believe it was part of Charlemagne’s Passion relics collection, but it’s not known who would have donated it to him. Another hypothesis is that it was brought back from the Holy Land by a bishop of Cahors named Gérard de Cardaillac, who built the Cathedral of St. Etienne. It has never been subjected to

rigorous tests, although one test in the 19th century supposedly found blood and a researcher named Robert Babinet published a study in 2001 claiming that the pattern of wounds on the cap's interior corresponds to wounds found on the Shroud.

Author Paul Badde, in his book The Face of God (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 2010, pp. 248-249, quotes Sr. Blandina Schlomer, "In Cahors, in southern France, for example, a kind of cap is still venerated as a relic and, according to tradition there, was likewise supposed to have been used for Jesus' funeral-and it shows traces of blood on the inside, so I have read; in the weave of the material, aloes have been detected. At Jewish funerals, such caps were called *pathil*. They were used to keep the lower jaw closed. There is evidence of this cap being in Cahors since 1239 and in Constantinople before that--where of course it was called a *soudarion*. There is no contradiction at all for me in all this. On the contrary, I can see more and more clearly how all these items seem to complement each other and build up a picture, like in a jigsaw puzzle. Someone would have fastened the Oviedo cloth around the head with the cap from Cahors, before the whole body was wrapped in cloths soaked with aloes and myrrh. After that, it was probably made secure with some kind of string. That is what we can deduce, at any rate, for the cloths that lay over the face: they all show various criss-cross lines, with a little vertical creasing-the kind that appears when you tie up some material. The traces are very delicate, but they can certainly be made out. And that is why, on the Turin Shroud, in which the body was wrapped from below and which was then brought over the head and wrapped round the front of the body, the bloodied hair on the head cannot even be seen at all, but simply the forehead and the back of the head. This point has often been made, very much as a criticism. There is no imprint at all from the scalp itself on the Turin Shroud. Yet this was the part covered by cap!"

I am neutral on the question.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: Górný, Gazegorz and Janusz Rosikon. Witnesses to Mystery. Investigations into Christ's relics. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 2013, pp. 304-307.

["Rohault de Flury Book 2 Chapter 4 The Holy Linens."](#) (Reprint of 1870 work by Charles Rohault de Flury.

CLOTH OF CADOUIN

DETAILS: This cloth, 2.81m. long, 1.24m. wide, with the selvage edge on both sides, sewn onto a backing of red velvet held in the Abbey of Cadouin, in Dordogne, France, was long considered as either the cloth believed to have covered the face of Jesus--or enveloped his body--in the tomb. The article cited below states (pp. 13-14), "A pious tradition holds that the Holy Virgin herself wove this cloth in view of the burial of Jesus. In the Temple, the young virgins were employed in the confection of priestly vestments. Knowing by special privilege what would

happen to her Divine Son, it is quite natural that the Virgin Mary herself would have prepared in advance this precious linen which would serve as the *sudarium capitis*, the *suaire* for the head, which in oriental burials were often prepared in advance and richly embroidered. The Saint-Suaire of Cadouin could not have been made except by extremely skillful hands; it is a work of exquisite and unheard-of delicacy."

COMMENTS: The description disclosed an uncertainty about whether this was the Shroud or the face cloth does not inspire confidence in its authenticity.

Additional information supplied by the late Dorothy Crispino (editor of the journal) in the article cited below, solved the problem. She wrote, "In 1935, in the decorative border on the Cadouin Cloth, an inscription was identified. Written in Kufic characters, a form of Arabic script used from the VII to the XI centuries, the inscription names the Egyptian Caliph Ali, who reigned from 1094 to 1100. Thus are established both a terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem for the manufacture of the Cloth. Of course, this discovery was not known to Don Noguier when he wrote in 1928." This does reinforce the notion that Christians all too easily accepted inauthentic items as authentic.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

De Malijay, Natale Noguier. "[The Cloth of Cadouin.](#)" *Shroud Spectrum International*, March 1986, No. 18, pp. 12-17.

[HOLY COAT OF TRIER](#)

DETAILS: The Holy Coat of Trier (or Treves), Germany, is a plain brown piece of cloth that is housed in the Roman Catholic cathedral at Trier. In tradition, it has been identified as the coat that Jesus wore in the last days of his life and that he wore when he was arrested.

COMMENTS: The first mention of this cloth is the twelfth century, and unlike the Shroud, which has numerous possible mentions of it in its pre-history, there is no solid evidence of it in the early centuries. This cloth is likely not authentic.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

Górny, Gazegorz and Janusz Rosikon. [Witnesses to Mystery. Investigations into Christ's relics.](#) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 2013, pp. 194-216.

SHROUD OF BESANCON

DETAILS: This shroud was a large cloth that was considered as a precious relic with an imprint left on Jesus' burial linen, experienced a period of intense veneration and public debate from the early 16th century to the end of the 18th century. It was destroyed during the French revolution in 1794.

COMMENTS: The cloth that had been destroyed in 1794 clearly was a copy of the Shroud of Turin. But some researchers believe that the Shroud of Turin was in Besançon during the Shroud of Turin's so-called "missing years" of post-1204-mid-1350s and that a copy had been made after 1349 and before 1375. See my article, "[Was the "Painted" Cloth Mentioned in the d'Arcis Memorandum of c. 1389 the So-Called Shroud of Besançon?](#)"

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

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Latendresse, Mario. "There is no Evidence that Othon de la Roche Acquired the Shroud of Turin. (2017) **Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bgJlwrGHgw>. **PowerPoint:** https://www.academia.edu/35676743/Did_Othon_de_la_Roche_Acquired_the_Shroud_S12.

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Scavone, Daniel. "Besancon and Other Hypotheses for the Missing Years: The Shroud from 1200-1400." (2008) <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/ohioscavone.pdf>.

von Wyss-Giacosa, Paola. "[Between Erudition and Faith: Jean-Jacques Chifflet's Tract on the Shroud of Besançon \(1624\).](#)" *Journal for Religion, Film and Media*, 5(1):47-68.

SUDARIUM OF OVIEDO

DETAILS: [One source I used](#) described this 84cm. by 53cm. cloth with the following: It is crumpled piece of cheap linen with bloodstains but no image and is kept in the Cathedral of Oviedo, in north-west Spain. It is believed to have been wrapped around Jesus' head after he died, before [Pontius Pilate](#) gave permission for his body to be taken down after the crucifixion. The Sudarium — Latin for sweat cloth — would therefore be "the cloth that had been on Jesus' head . . . rolled up in a place by itself" that was found in the empty tomb after the Resurrection, as described in John 20:7. Tests on the Sudarium and the Shroud of Turin indicate that the blood on both relics is of the same AB type. Radiocarbon dating has placed the cloth at around AD 700. As it was first mentioned 130 years earlier by Antoninus of Piacenza, the radiocarbon result emphasizes the difficulty of dating woven fabrics.

Antoninus in AD 570 wrote that the Sudarium was being cared for in a cave near the monastery of St Mark at Jerusalem. Later manuscripts trace its movements from Jerusalem to Alexandria, Cartagena, Seville and Toledo. It has been in Oviedo since the 11th century. According to Dr Alfonso Sánchez Herмосilla, medical examiner for the Spanish Sindonology Research Centre Team: "From the forensic anthropology and forensic medicine point of view, all the information discovered by the scientific research is compatible with the hypothesis that the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo covered the corpse of the same person." The most detailed research was carried out by a Valencia-based group, including specialists in criminology and haematology, in 1989. It concluded that the cloth covered the head of a body that had "died in conditions totally compatible with those of crucifixion", and that stains caused by sharp objects on the nape of the neck were consistent with the head being crowned with thorns.

In Jewish custom such a cloth would have been wrapped around the head after Jesus' death to absorb blood from his nose and mouth. Then it would have been placed in the tomb with the body. X-ray fluorescence testing has found dirt on the Sudarium similar to samples from the site of Calvary. Pollen grains endemic to the Mediterranean region were identified, three of them found only in [Palestine](#). Traces of myrrh and aloe, used in anointing corpses, were also noted.

COMMENTS: As mentioned in the Introduction, I believe there is enough evidence to conclude that this cloth is authentic.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_Lg6BRI2Gw.

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TUNIC OF ARGENTEUIL

DETAILS: A tattered and bloodstained seamless woolen garment, woven without seams, is preserved in the Basilica of St. Denis in Argenteuil, a northwestern suburb of Paris. Some identify it with the “seamless tunic” of Jesus referred to in the Gospel of John (19:23), for which the Roman soldiers cast lots at the Crucifixion.

COMMENTS: Although the cloth was carbon-dated in 2004 (to 530-650) and 2005 (to 670-880), I don’t trust C-14 dating for various reasons. (See for example, “[Inaccuracies in radiocarbon dating](#).”) Interestingly, the blood-type is AB, which matches both the Shroud and

the Sudarium, and there are some of the same pollen grains found on it that match both the Shroud and the Sudarium. I believe this cloth may be authentic.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Górny, Gazegorz and Janusz Rosikon. Witnesses to Mystery. Investigations into Christ's relics. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 2013, pp. 164-193.

VEIL OF MANOPELLO

DETAILS: This cloth shows the face of a living man, with open eyes engaging the viewer with a steady gaze. [One source I consulted claimed the following:](#) Sixth-century sources mention such a similar cloth in the town of Camulia, near Edessa. In 574, the emperor Justin II moved it to Constantinople. Around 700 Patriarch Kallinikos I of Constantinople took the cloth to Rome. It was displayed in the old St Peter's Basilica and became the most popular pilgrimage attraction in medieval Rome. It became known as the "Veronica, after a woman's name in the devotional [Stations of the Cross](#). On the way to Calvary, she reputedly wiped the face of Jesus and had his image imprinted on her cloth — an incident not recorded in the Gospels. The name given the woman derives from the Latin adjective *vera* (true) and Greek noun *eikon* (image). In the 16th century, the cloth mysteriously disappeared. An empty frame, with broken glass, remained in the Vatican treasury and an indistinct replica was displayed once a year in the new St Peter's. By 1638 the cloth had reappeared in Manoppello, where it is kept in a glass monstrance above the main altar in the Capuchin church and may be viewed from both sides. Believed to be one of the burial cloths of Jesus, it was adopted as the imperial standard and even taken into battle. Its image became the model for Christ's face on [Byzantine](#) coins. The lifesize image is of a bruised face, curled sideburns, wisps of hair in the middle of a high forehead, and a thin beard forked in two. Every change of angle or lighting gives a different appearance.

The journalist Górny wrote, "In person, it changes like a rainbow and seems to combine traits of holograms, photographs, paintings, and drawings," The 17cm. by 24cm. cloth is of very thin byssus, a rare and expensive fibre known in ancient times as "silk from the sea" and obtained from mother-of-pearl. Scientists have found there are no traces of paint, rather the image results from modification of the fabric's fibres and has a three-dimensional character. Experts say intrusive scientific examination of the Veil is not possible because it would probably fall apart if it were removed from the two panes of lead glass where it has been stuck for centuries — and contamination from lead oxide in the glass could distort results. While the Shroud of Turin is a photographic negative, the image on the Veil of Manoppello is positive. But scientists who have compared the two images have remarked on their similarity. When Professor Andreas Resch, of the Institute for the Field Limits of Science in Innsbruck, overlaid high-definition prints of both images he concluded they showed "a 100 percent match".

COMMENTS: My initial and current response is that the facial image looks man-made to me. What's puzzling, though, are the strange features on it asserted by various researchers, that would point to an unnatural origin of the cloth. So, I maintain a neutral stance toward it.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

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"'Holy Face of Manoppello' Hoax [The]."
http://www.holyfacedevotion.com/manoppello_hoax.htm.

Jaworski, J.S. [Properties of byssal threads and the chemical nature of colors of the Veil of Manoppello](#)." 2010.

Kramarz, Andreas. "[Christ on Mussel Silk](#)." *National Catholic Register*, November 12-18, 2006.

Resch, Andreas. "[The face on the Shroud and on the Veil of Manoppello](#)." 2010.

VEIL OF VERONICA (OR VERONICA'S VEIL)

DETAILS: The Veil of Veronica, known in Italian as the *Volto Santo* or *Holy Face*, is a cloth that, according to legend, bears the likeness of the Face of Jesus that was imprinted on it before his crucifixion. According to Roman Catholicism tradition, Saint Veronica encountered Jesus in Jerusalem on the way to Calvary. When she paused to wipe the sweat (Latin, *suda*) off his face with her veil, his image was allegedly imprinted on the cloth. (In Latin, it is known as the *Sudarium* meaning "sweat-cloth"). Supposedly Veronica later traveled to Rome to present the cloth to the Roman Emperor Tiberius and miracles were attributed to it.

COMMENTS: Not all researchers connect the Veil of Veronica with the Veil of Manoppello. Wilson (see cited source below) believes that the Veronica Veil as an object came into being around the year 1000, and is likely a copy of the Image of Edessa. Given that, the fact that the story is not in the Bible and the fact the woman's name in the story is made up of the two words that mean "true" and "image," it seems likely that the legend is etiological, designed to explain a known authentic image of Jesus' face. It should be noted that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is a devotee of this cloth.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

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CONCLUSION

I believe that both the Shroud and the Sudarium are authentic, based on abundant evidence. The latter does not contain an image and has not been studied as much as the Shroud, but many scientists and researchers have studied both cloths and believe them to have covered the same man. We have a history of the Sudarium going back at least to 614. If it is authentic, that would make the putative C-14 date of the Shroud, 1260-1390, at least over seven-hundred years off. There are already numerous issues with the Shroud C-14 dating. See my article, "[The Radiocarbon Dating of the Turin Shroud in 1988 and its Aftermath -- an English language Bibliography.](#)" Summarily, I consider the evidence for the Shroud to be so strong that it is in a class by itself.

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