

# The seam and missing corners of the Turin Shroud as characteristics of John Mark's temple garment

A.A.M. van der Hoeven, [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info), updated June 6, 2013

In this article I identify the garment left by the young man who "ran away naked" (Mark 14,51-52) with the burial shroud of Jesus (John 19-20) and that young man with the secret disciple John Mark, co-author of the Gospel of John. I explain that it is possible and probable that Joseph of Arimathea bought the garment to give Jesus a burial "as is the burial custom of the Jews" (John 19,40), namely: in a garment. I also identify John Mark as having a high office in the temple, for which he wore a white *sindōn* with a Pharisaic margin, at the corners of which a blue cord could be fastened or loosened, in order to fulfill both the commandment of Num 15,38 for all garments and the conflicting commandment of Ex 28,5-6 for temple garments. This may account for the seam and margin in the Turin Shroud. I also account for the two missing corners of the Turin Shroud margin as an effort by John Mark to hide the fact that the burial shroud was his unique temple garment. The image of an oval plate with three Hebrew letters on it, which can be seen under the chin of the body on the Turin Shroud, may be the image of John Mark's *petalon*, the Jewish ornament which distinguished him as a ruler.

## Introduction

In this article I will use some known and new facts about the anonymous author of the Fourth Gospel, the so-called 'beloved disciple', and about John Mark, and I will compare and link these facts to each other in order to show how the temple garment lost by 'Mark' became the burial shroud kept by 'John'. This is illustrated in the figure below. These, and more, facts and links are discussed in more detail and with more sources and arguments in my long article "John Mark – Author of the Gospel of John with Jesus' mother" on my site [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info).

## Temple garment with enlarged border and removable blue cords

According to the Acts of the Apostles John Mark lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12,12) and was an attendant, in Greek: *hypēretēs* (Acts 13,5). This word is the title for a sacristan of a synagogue, a secretary of a judge, and for four kinds of temple attendants: a secretary, an under-secretary, a herald and a lower (prison) officer. As the rich young man (*neaniskos*) who kneeled before Jesus, Mark is described as a ruler, in Greek: *archōn* (Mt 19,20 Lu 18,18). This title is used for a ruler of a synagogue and for the members of the Great Sanhedrin. The combination of these titles – e.g. a ruler of a temple synagogue could not also be the secretary of the judges of the temple – and some other characteristics, such as his ability to write *koinē* Greek, his richness, his being a member of the tribe of Levi and thus possibly a priest, his knowing the names and family relations of the officers of the temple prison who arrested Jesus and brought Him to the temple fortress Antonia, his being able to cite Caiphas' words, spoken in secret meetings, such as the nightly trial of Jesus in Caiphas' palace in Antonia, and his allusions to minutiae of the temple service – such as to the specific kind of punishment for a sleeping guard, the time the superintendant gets by, the washing of the feet –, all regulated by the judicial Council of the Temple, identiy John Mark as the secretary of this Council, which formed a distinct priestly block within the Great Sanhedrin and which was presided over by the high priest Caiphas.

In this office he had to wear temple garments, which had to be ritually clean and white linen (Ex

28,5-6). But, as the young man who ran to Jesus and said that he had observed all the commandments from his youth (Mark 10,20), he had also fulfilled the commandment of Num 15,38:

*“Say to the children of Israel that through all their generations they are to put on the edges of their robes an ornament of twisted threads (‘tsiytsith’), and in every ornament (‘tsiytsith’) a blue cord (‘pathiyel’ = cord, twisted thread).” Num 15,38 (Bible in Basic English)*

Here the expression “an ornament of twisted threads” translates just the one word ‘tsiytsith’, which means (literally) a shining thing, (figuratively) ornament (Strong’s 06734 and 06731). But in the Septuagint – the Bible translation used in the first century in Judea – at Num 15,38, the word ‘tsiytsith’ is translated as *kraspeda* = (plural of) hem, margin.<sup>1</sup> So, the commandment of Num 15,38 can be read as a prescription to put on every robe a margin with a blue cord in it. In order to fulfill this commandment in a Pharisaic meticulous way, even for his all white linen temple garment, Mark probably applied a margin to his cloak by making a long seam a few centimeters from one of its long edges, and made a hole in the corners of this margin, to which a blue cord could be fastened (for out-of-temple situations, such as in the House of Caiphas in the Upper City and perhaps also Caiphas’ office palace in Antonia) or loosened (for in-temple situations, especially for when inside the sanctuary of the temple, where the Council of the Temple and also the Great Sanhedrin gathered in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Court of the Israelites<sup>2</sup>). Another possibility is that he had two blue cords hidden inside the seam, at its two ends; then they would be present in the inside of the white garment, but their color would not be visible from the outside.

John Mark probably belonged to the Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection of the dead, for he already believed in the existence of “eternal life” before he came running to Jesus (Acts 23,8 Mt 19,16 Mr 10,17 Lu 18,18). And it was the custom of Pharisees to “enlarge the borders (*kraspeda*) of their garments” (Mt 23,5 KJ21 NA<sup>27</sup>).

### A priest wearing the *petalon*

As the beloved disciple, John is described by Polycrates as “a priest wearing the *petalon*.<sup>3</sup> The Greek word *petalon* was used for the golden crown plate of the high priest.<sup>4</sup> Of the beloved disciple and author of the Fourth Gospel is also said, by Irenaeus, that he was called John – this is why it is called the Gospel of John –, and that he was the disciple who lay at the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper in the Cenacle, and that he published the gospel in Ephesus.

### Mark’s lost *sindōn* is a Jewish ‘talith’

The Hebrew word ‘ephod’, for a priest’s linen temple garment, is translated into various Greek words, e.g. *epōmida* (= garment attached to the shoulder, Ex 28,4), but never as *sindōn*. Lightfoot in his commentary on Mark 14,51-52,<sup>5</sup> says that the word סידון (‘sydwn’) = *sindōn* was used in the Talmud (Menacoth fol. 40.I) for a Jewish linen upper garment (‘talith’ = cloak), (also) worn by boys and priests, especially in the summer in Jerusalem, and that “with this garment they commonly covered their head when they prayed”. Lightfoot also cites the Talmud: “the ‘talith’ whereby the boy covers his head, and a great part of himself” and “the priests who veil themselves when they go up into the pulpit with a טלית = ‘talith’ which is not their own”, and also “Nicodemus went to a little oratory, and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Num&c=15&v=38&t=LXX#comm/38>

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/05.Num.mlxx>; first meaning given in G.J.M. Bartelink, Greek-Dutch lexicon, 1958, p. 147 and in Strong’s Lexicon 2899

<sup>2</sup> Middot 5,4 (J. Neusner, *The Mishnah – A New Translation*, p. 883)

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, Church History 5,24,2

<sup>4</sup> In modern times, the word has also been interpreted as the (high) priest’s golden breast plate, for unknown reasons: translation of Kiropp Lake, Ecclesiastical History, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press 1926: “John, ... who was a priest wearing the breastplate” (5,24,2).

<sup>5</sup> John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew – 1Corinth*, Hendrickson Publishers, reprinted from the 1859 edition, on Mark 14,51 (vol. 2 p. 458-460)

covered himself, and prayed” and “Nicodemus goes to his oratory again, covers himself and prays”.<sup>6</sup> He also says, that this garment usually had the blue corded tassels (called ‘tsiytsith’) attached to its corners, although there was a discussion among the rabbis whether a linen garment could have the usually woollen tassels, as this would go against the commandment not to wear garments made of two different kinds of material (De 22,11); for this reason some rabbis loosened the woollen tassels from their linen ‘talith’.<sup>7</sup>

---

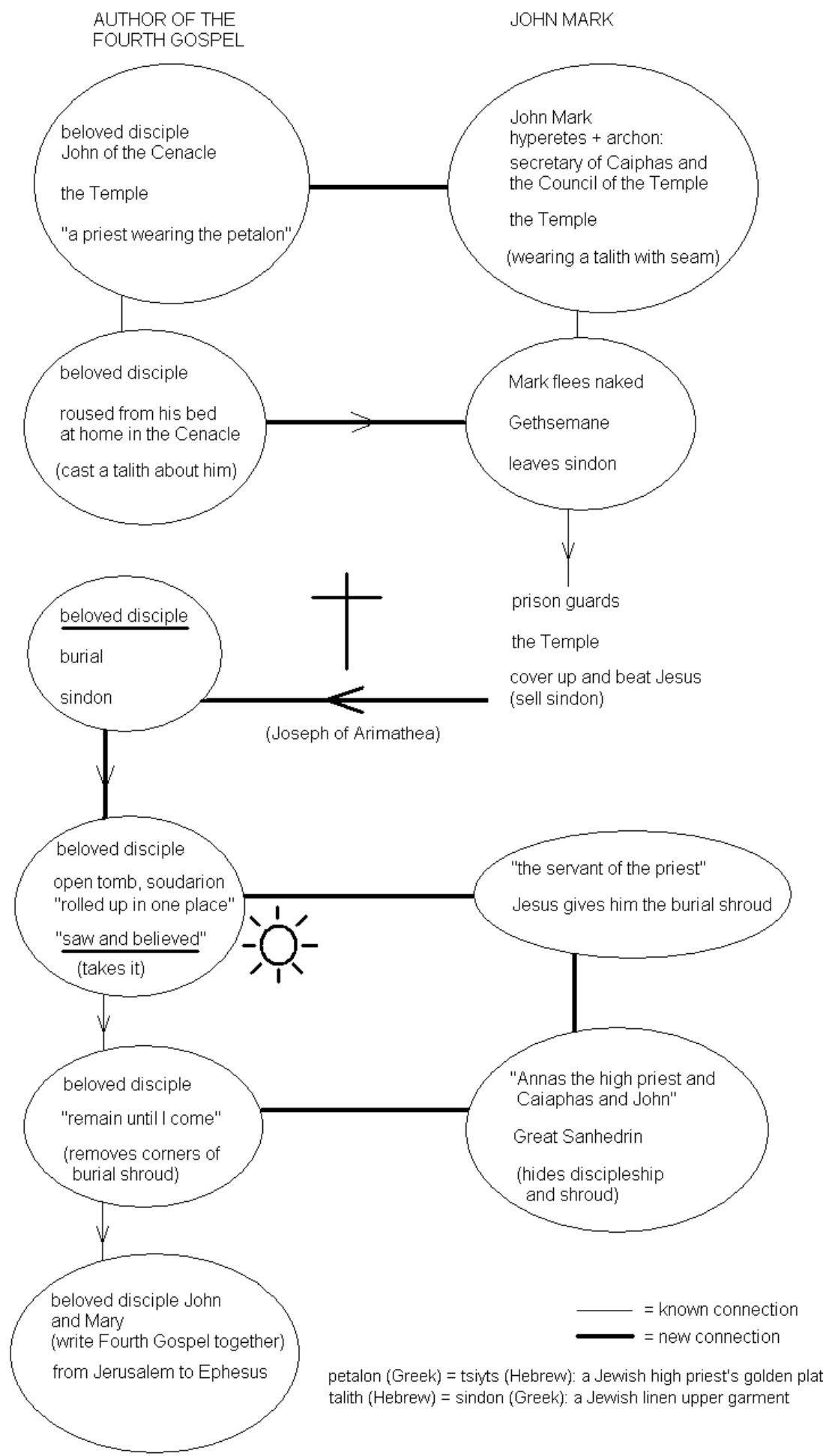
<sup>6</sup> Ibid. on John 3,1 (vol. 3 p. 262), citing the Talmud: Taanith, fol. 20.I. Avoth R. Nathan, c. 7.

<sup>7</sup> “The Rabbins deliver (Menacoth, fol. 40.I.): סידון בציצית Sindon [linen] with tassels, what of them? The school of Shammai absolves, the school of Hillel binds, and the wise men determine according to the school (Leusden’s edition, vol. ii. p. 149.) of Hillel. R. Eliezer Ben R. Zadok saith, Whosoever wears hyacinth [purple] in Jerusalem, is among those who make men admire.” By *hyacinthinum* [*purple*] they understand those tassels that were to put them in mind of the law, Num. xv. And by סידון sindon, *linen*, is understood טלית talith, a cloak, or that garment, which, as it serves for clothing of the body, so it is doubly serviceable to religion. For, I. To this garment were ציציות the tassels fastened, concerning which mention is made, Num. xv.38. 2. With this garment they commonly covered their heads when they prayed. Hence that in the Gemarists in the place quoted: טלית שמתבשה בו קשון ראשו ורוכבו talith, or the cloak whereby the boy covereth his head, and a great part of himself; if any one of elder years goes forth (English folio edit., vol. ii p. 355.) clothed with it in a more immodest manner, he is bound to wear tassels.” And elsewhere, “The priests (Piske Tosaphoth in Menacoth numer. 150.) who veil themselves when they go up into the pulpit, בטלית שאינו להם with a cloak which is not their own,” &c.

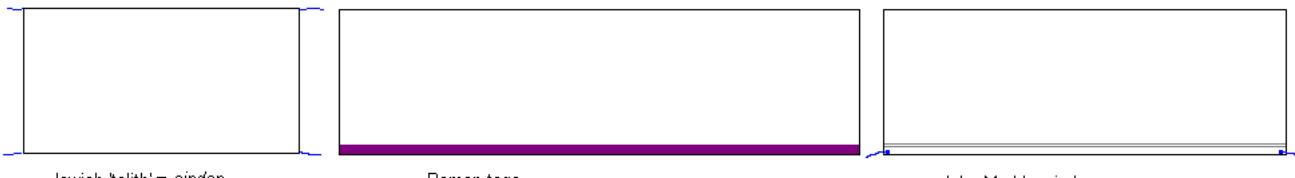
But now it was customary to wear this cloak, in the summer especially, and in Jerusalem for the most part, made of *sindon* or *linen*. And the question between the schools of Shammai and Hillel arose hence, that when the tassels were woollen, and the cloak of linen, how would the suspicion of wearing things of different sorts be avoided? שרא ר' זира לסדרנייה R. Zeira loosed his *sindon*. The Gloss is: “He loosed his tassels from his *sindon* [that is, from his *talith*, which was of ‘sindon,’ *linen*], because it was of *linen*,” &c. “The (Ibid. fol. 41.I.) angel found Rabh Ketina *clothed in sindon*; and said to him, O Ketina, Ketina, sindon in the summer, וסדרבל א בסיתוֹא בקיימא and a short cloak in the winter.

You see that word which is spoke by the evangelist, επι γυμνου, *about his naked body*, carries an emphasis: for it was most usual to be clothed with the *sindon* for an outer garment. What therefore must we say of this young man? I suppose in the first place, that he was not a disciple of Jesus; but that he now followed, as some curious looker on, to see what this multitude would at last produce. And to such a suspicion they certainly do consent, who think him to have been roused from his bed, and hastily followed the rout with nothing but his shirt on, without any other clothes. I suppose, secondly, St. Mark in the phrase περιβεβλημένος σινδόνα having a *sindon* cast about him, spake according to the known and vulgar dialect of the nation, or מיכס סדינא מ Habakkuk סדינא מ *clothed with a sindon*. For none shall ever persuade me that he would use an idiom, any thing uncouth or strange to the nation; and that when he used the very same phrase in Greek with that Jewish one, he intended not to propound the very same sense. But now you clearly see, they themselves being our teachers, what is the meaning of *being clothed with a sindon*, with them, namely, to have a *talith* or *cloak made of linen*; that garment to which the tassels hung. I suppose, in the last place, that this young man, out of religion, or superstition rather, more than the ordinary, had put on his *sindon*, and nothing but that *upon his naked body*, neglecting his inner garment (commonly called חלוק chaluk), and indeed neglecting his body. For there were some amongst the Jews that did so macerate their bodies, and afflict them with hunger and cold, even above the severe rule of other sects. [...] And in that place in the Talmudists, which we but now produced, at that very story of Rabh Ketina, wearing a *sindon* in the winter for his *talith*, we have these words; “The religious in elder times, when they had wove three wings [of the *talith*], they joined the purple,” whereof the tassels were made: “but otherwise, חסידים דמחMRI לנטזיהו they are religious who impose upon themselves things heavier than ordinary.” And immediately follows the story of the angel and Ketina, who did so. There were some who heaped up upon themselves burdens and yokes of religion above the common rule, and that this is to be understood by לנטזיהו מחMRI such as laid upon themselves heavier things than the ordinary, both the practice of some Jews persuade, and the word itself speaks it, being used by the Gemarists in the same sense elsewhere.

Such, we suppose, was this *young man* (as Josephus was, when a young man, of whom before), who, when others armed themselves against the cold with a double garment, namely, חלוק an *inner garment*, and טלית a *talith* or *cloak*, clothed himself with a single garment, and that of *sindon* or *linen*, and under the show of some more austere religion, neglecting the ordinary custom and care of himself.” (Ibid. on Mark 14,51, vol. 2 p. 458-460).



So, John Mark may have worn an ‘ephod’ as under garment and, on certain occasions in summer, a ‘talith’, a *sindōn*, as upper garment. And as John Mark, as the rich young ruler, “had great possessions” (Mr 10,22), he may have owned quite a few of these ‘talith’s, in his case probably resembling the long, rectangular, purple edged togas of Roman magistrates – and perhaps his Roman colleague secretaries of Pilate,<sup>8</sup> with whom he had frequent contact –, but made of linen and with a Pharisaic seam and holes in the margin to which a blue cord could be fastened and loosened.<sup>9</sup> Just as his Jewish-Roman name – ‘Jochanan’ Marcus – also his cloak was Jewish-Roman.



The fact that the young man who followed the arrested Jesus, had his “*sindōn*” “cast about his naked body” and could leave it behind and flee naked (Mark 14,51-52), indicates that this *sindōn* certainly wasn’t an ‘ephod’, which had “joined” “shoulder pieces”,<sup>10</sup> and could not as easily be put off, while running, as a ‘talith’. Lightfoot says that, as the *sindōn* was usually worn as an outer garment, some think that the person who wore it in the night when Jesus was captured, had been roused from his bed.<sup>11</sup> So, it may certainly have been worn by the beloved disciple, who, while lying in bed, or elsewhere at home, heard that Jesus had come secretly to the upper room of his house – note that (only) Mark says that Jesus “came with the twelve” (Mr 14,17) –, and who then, with a (perhaps brand new) *sindōn* cast about his naked body, rushed to Jesus and was allowed to lie down at Jesus’ breast, on the bench where Jesus already lay amidst the benches of his twelve apostles. “According to the Jewish custom, the host, or, in his absence, ... “his firstborn son sat to the right of the guest, his head leaning on the latter’s chest”.<sup>12</sup> And when Jesus and the Twelve went to Gethsemane, he followed them wearing only his *sindōn*.<sup>13</sup> The fact that only the young man wearing the *sindōn* there, was caught by the temple officers, and Simon Peter was not, indicates that the *sindōn* probably was white and thus more visible at night than the ordinary clothes of the fisherman Simon Peter. When the young man fled naked, he wasn’t caught again, probably because he had become less visible when he left his white *sindōn*.

<sup>8</sup> “Following up on this motif, R.A. Veenker comments that in the ancient Near East, the *hem* of the garment was closely identified with the person of the wearer. It was regarded as an extension of the owner’s personality and authority (Veenker, 1976. “Hem”. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible (Supplementary Volume)*). Nashville: Abingdon, p. 401.).” Albert R. Dreisbach, Jr., *The Shroud and Healing*, 1999 (Revised) <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/dreisbch.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> The commandment of De 22,12 “You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your cloak with which you cover yourself” is not literally obeyed then, but as some rabbis didn’t wear tassels on their ‘talith’ at all, only two tassels would be a good alternative. And perhaps John Mark even made four tassels, to the four corners of the margin. Or he made two tassels on the corners and also hid two blue cords inside the Pharisaic seam, at its two edges.

<sup>10</sup> Ex 28,6-7

<sup>11</sup> Lightfoot on Mark 14,51 (vol. 2 p. 459)

<sup>12</sup> Cazelles, *Johannes* p. 480, cited by Pope Benedict XVI in *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2007, p. 225

<sup>13</sup> In the beginning of the evening/night, when Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, it was not as cold yet as three long prayers of Jesus – one of at least an hour (Mt 26,40) – later and after the effectuation of the arrest, when it started to get cold: the prison officers, also the ones who had remained in their own court yard when their colleagues were arresting Jesus, only decided to kindle a fire there after Jesus had been brought in (Lu 22,55). And when John Mark left home, he probably didn’t expect Jesus to stay on the Mount of Olives that long: only Jesus knew He would get arrested there (Mt 26,30-47). (The site of the temple prison and Jesus’ imprisonment there, are discussed in my long article *John Mark – Author of the Gospel of John with Jesus’ mother*, <http://jesusking.info/John%20Mark.pdf>, just as many of the other arguments of this article.) Now an upper room usually could be reached directly from the street, without having to enter the house (S. Safrai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, W.C. van Unnik (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen/Amsterdam 1976) p. 731). So, when Jesus left the upper room directly to the street, it was quite natural for John Mark to simply follow Jesus without re-entering the house.

### Jesus' bruised face

Joseph of Arimathea was member of the Great Sanhedrin as an elder, and not as a scribe or temple priest, for he had hewn his own new tomb in the rock (Mt 27,60). He thus may have been one of the “elders” who had come with the band and were present when Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane by the officers of the temple prison (*hypēretai*) (Lu 22,52). Here it was John Mark who fled naked and Joseph of Arimathea who followed Jesus and the officers back to the gate of the high priest and overruled the doormaid to let Simon Peter enter.

John Mark ran home, got dressed, and was present at the trials of Jesus as the high priest’s secretary. Here he is the *hypēretēs* who first slaps Jesus’ face, still caught in fear to be recognized by the prison officers, or addressed by Jesus, as a disciple, when Jesus points his finger in his direction and says “Behold, they know what I said” (John 18,21). This slap and the argument used by the *hypēretēs* to justify his slapping Jesus – “Is that how you answer the high priest?” (John 18,22) – would not be expected or accepted from an ordinary lower prison officer, who should only act to order, but they comply very well with John Mark’s office of ruler and secretary of the high priest(s), in which he was the daily witness of how all people, small and great alike, addressed the high priest with great awe and reverence, and in which he himself had to address these priests with all due respect every day. And although only Annas, Jesus, and *hypēretai* were present when Jesus received his first slap in the face – the Council of the Temple was only present when Jesus was led before Caiphas later that night (Mt 26,59 Mr 14,55 Jo 18,24), and the other high priests, scribes and elders were only present in the morning, when Jesus was led before the Great Sanhedrin (Mt 27,1 Mr 15,1 Lu 22,66) –, the incident is reported in John’s gospel. This suggests the presence of the evangelist himself at this incident.

A fact is, that after this first slap in the face Jesus was beaten further by the other *hypēretai* (Mr 14,65 Lu 22,63-64). If one of their rulers had slapped Jesus before He even had been trialled, then the lower officers felt they could freely beat Jesus too. When Jesus was in prison, ready for the trial the next morning, the “men who were holding Jesus mocked him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and asked him, “Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?”” (Lu 22,63-65). The officers of the temple prison asked Jesus to point out the one that struck Him, and in this way took revenge on Him for pointing his finger to them in Annas’ room, as the ones who had heard Him in the temple. And the cloth which they used for blindfolding Him, literally “covering him up” (Darby-translation) (*perikalupsantes* Lu 22,64 NA<sup>27</sup> = ‘cover all around, i.e. entirely’, Strong’s 4028), may very well have been the *sindōn* which they perchance had gotten into their hands in Gethsemane and had brought to the prison, with Jesus.

### Bought by Joseph of Arimathea

At the cross, when Jesus was dead, three secret disciples were present: the elder Joseph of Arimathea, the scribe Nicodemus – “the teacher of Israel” (John 3,10) –, and the beloved disciple, the (high) priest John Mark; three respected members of the Great Sanhedrin. Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ dead body. Pilate’s praetorium was located in the temple fortress Antonia, just as the high priest Caiphas’ palace and the temple prison. This can be proved by Simon Peter’s movements in the night of Jesus’ arrest and by the presence of the temple’s *hypēretai* at Pilate’s midday process. So, after Pilate’s consent, Joseph, who knew that the prison officers had taken John Mark’s precious *sindōn* to their barracks, and who needed a burial shroud for Jesus, and who didn’t have the time or opportunity to go and buy a burial shroud in the city (it was the day of Preparation and almost evening), bought John Mark’s ritually clean (*katharos*) temple *sindōn* for the burial of Jesus, whom he considered to be the Christ, the biblically promised high priest-king (Mr 15,46). Note that none of the evangelists writes that Joseph bought a new *sindōn*, but they do say it was (ritually) clean (*katharos* Mt 27,59). It was only the grave that was “new” (Mt 27,60 Jo 19,41), not the *sindōn*.

### Buried in a garment “as is the burial custom of the Jews”

In Jesus’ days, which is before the death of Rabbi Gamaliel II, who died in the beginning of the second century CE, it was still the custom to bury a person in the garments he had worn in life. So, they didn’t have to be new:

"In Biblical times persons, especially of high rank, were arrayed at burial in the garments, ornaments, and weapons which they had worn in life ... To be buried without garments was considered a disgrace ... As a token of honor, it was customary to cast the most costly garments and ornaments upon the bier of a dear relative or friend ... In fact, since funeral expenses became common extravagances and an object of alarm to the relatives, R. Gamaliel II. set the example by the order he gave for his own funeral, and thus introduced the custom of burying the dead in simple linen garments (Ket. 8b; M. K. 27b)."<sup>14</sup>

It is very significant now, that only John says that Jesus Christ – the "high priest" and "priest for ever" (Ps 110,4 Heb 5,6.10 6,20) – was buried "as is the burial custom of the Jews" (John 19,40):

*"Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh ('smurna') and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices ('aromata'), as is the burial custom of the Jews."*  
*John 19,39-40*

Only John and Joseph of Arimathea knew that Jesus was buried in a priest's garment: John Mark's own *sindōn*. But Nicodemus also abode by the burial custom of the Jews by bringing for the Christ (= 'Messiah' = Anointed High Priest-King) an enormous amount of the most costly spices, of which the myrrh could be used for the sanctifying anointment of the high priest – cf. the *murou* with which the anonymous woman of Mark 14,3 anointed Jesus' head –, and the myrrh and aloe wood also could be used for the incense sacrifice brought by the chosen priest in the Holy Place of the sanctuary of the temple.<sup>15</sup> Jesus' own clothes had been divided among the soldiers who had crucified Him and who were Romans, for over Jesus' head "they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews'" (Matt 27,35-37). The high priests strongly protested against this title, written and even "put" there by Pilate (John 19,19), but Pilate answered "What I have written I have written" (John 19,22). So, it certainly weren't the high priests' *hypēretai* who put it there. After the crucifixion Jesus' clothes were in the hands of the ritually unclean Roman soldiers, and probably brought to the ritually unclean Roman praetorium (cf. John 18,28). So, Jesus' clothes were already defiled by the touch of the Romans anyway. But John Mark's temple *sindōn* was still very near Pilate's praetorium, in the ritually clean hands and barracks of the temple's prison guards. This was a very providential opportunity for Joseph to spare Jesus a disgraceful burial and to give Him the burial even of a temple priest.

And John was present at this burial, for on Easter morning he would find Jesus' empty tomb without the help of anyone: the beloved disciple "outran Peter and reached the tomb first" (John 20,4).

<sup>14</sup> "In Biblical times persons, especially of high rank, were arrayed at burial in the garments, ornaments, and weapons which they had worn in life (I Sam. xxviii. 14; Isa. xiv. 11; Ezek. xxxii. 27; compare Josephus, "Ant." xv. 3, § 4; xvii. 8, § 3; "B. J." i. 33, § 9; and "Ant." xiii. 8, § 4; xvi. 7, § 1). To be buried without garments was considered a disgrace (Shab. 14a; compare Spiegel, "Avesta," ii., Introduction, p. xli.). As a token of honor, it was customary to cast the most costly garments and ornaments upon the bier of a dear relative or friend, and as such objects could no longer be used for other purposes, בְּדָמָנָה the Rabbis deprecated such practise (Sem. ix.; Sanh. 48a *et seq.*). In fact, since funeral expenses became common extravagances and an object of alarm to the relatives, R. Gamaliel II. set the example by the order he gave for his own funeral, and thus introduced the custom of burying the dead in simple linen garments (Ket. 8b; M. K. 27b)." ([www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view/jsp?artid=1607&letter=B](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view/jsp?artid=1607&letter=B));

Gamaliel II: [www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view/jsp?artid=52&letter=G](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view/jsp?artid=52&letter=G)

the Talmud: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/t01/t0135.htm> and <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/t04/rab02.htm>; and <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/t04/rab03.htm>

<sup>15</sup> anointment: "Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, two hundred and fifty, and of aromatic cane two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin; and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; a holy anointing oil it shall be." Ex 30,23-25; also see Ex 40,15 37,29 Le 8,12 1Jo 2,20 Online Bible Greek Lexicon 5545 and New American Standard Greek Lexicon 4666; fumigation sacrifice: Ex 30,34-38 Ps 45,8 141,2 Pr 7,17 Lu 1,9 Online Bible Greek Lexicon 250 and Strong's 07004 and 2370

### Obliged to check out the grave cloths

When John reached the tomb on Easter morning, he didn't enter it, but waited for Simon Peter to arrive and take a look inside. Only after Simon Peter had seen it was empty, except for the grave cloths, of which one was rolled up, John entered the grave himself. The reason for waiting outside may have been that he didn't want to be ritually defiled by the tomb or the dead body unnecessarily, for it was only the beginning of "the first day of the week" (John 20,1), the first day after the Sabbath. He had to be ritually clean to be able to enter the temple and go to work.<sup>16</sup> A defilement by entering an occupied grave or touching a dead body lasted seven days (Lev 21,1-4 Nu 19,16-22).

So, when Peter first entered the tomb and told John Mark that the tomb was empty except for a linen roll, John Mark must have thought "A roll? But it was only folded once at Jesus' head, enveloping his body, at the burial! Is this roll really my *sindōn* then?" But as Peter didn't know – and wasn't supposed to know – that Jesus had been buried in John Mark's *sindōn*, bought from the *hypēretai*, John Mark could not ask him "Is the linen roll, that you're seeing, my *sindōn*?" So, John had to enter the grave himself, for if it was his unique *sindōn*, he would have to take it away, as it was the proof of his discipleship. He entered the tomb, not to verify it was empty, for Peter had already told him this. He entered it to check out the roll: did it show the Pharisaic seam?

### "Rolled up in one place" by Jesus: John "saw and believed"

*Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. And he saw the linens (othonia) lying there. And the grave-cloth (soudarion) that was on His head was not lying with the linens (othonia), but was wrapped up in one place by itself. Therefore, then, that other disciple also went in, the one who came first to the tomb. And he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead. John 20,6-9 (MKJV)*

It is remarkable, that only for John Mark it was decisive to see that in Jesus' open grave not only the *othonia* (windings) lay at the entrance, but also the cloth that had covered his face (*soudarion*, similar to the Aramaic 'soudara' = large veil or mantle, cf. Targum Ruth 3,15) lay inside the grave, neatly "wrapped up into one place" (Douay translation) or "rolled up in a place by itself" (RSV), in Greek: *entetuligmenon eis hena topon* (John 20,5-8 NA<sup>27</sup>). This may mean 'rolled up, without rolling it to the left or right but by keeping the roll in the direction of one place', just as a priest would roll up his long fine linen garment that is easily creased by folding or careless rolling. But it may also refer to the special place where the roll lay, namely on the stone platform where Jesus had lain – or on the rock floor right under it –, at his head. This is what the Mishnah and its commentary says about the priests who slept on stone platforms/raised pavements of stone along the walls of the priests' guard room in the temple:

"They did not sleep in the consecrated garments. But they spread them out, doubled them over, and lay them down under their heads, and cover themselves with their own clothes" (Tamid 1,1 J, translation by Neusner)

"The priests on watch did not sleep in the priestly garments. Instead, they folded (מִקְפָּלִין) ('mqplyn') them, placed them at their heads, and wore their own clothes." (Mishneh Torah by Maimonides)<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The high priests, when they brought Jesus to the Roman procurator Pilate, "did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (John 18,28).

<sup>17</sup> J. Neusner, *The Mishnah – A New Translation*, Yale 1988, p. 863; "The Chamber of the Hearth was a large, domed structure, surrounded [on the inside] with projections of stone. The elders of the priestly watch of that day slept there(24) with the keys to the Temple Courtyard in their hands. The priests on watch did not sleep in the priestly garments.(28) Instead, they folded them, placed them at their heads,(29) and wore their own clothes." Footnote 24: Tamid 26b explains that they slept on these protrusions, because it was disrespectful to bring beds into the Temple complex. Footnote 28: This refers to the four priestly garments which an ordinary priest was required to wear while serving in the Temple.

Maimonides says that they did not lay the clothes under their heads and use them as pillows, for they were not allowed to derive benefit from the priestly clothes outside the sacrificial service, because they contained a mixture of linen and wool (Sha'atnez).<sup>18</sup> And in his text the Hebrew word used here for “doubled over”/“folded” is מkaplin<sup>19</sup> (“mqplyn”) and in the Jastrow Hebrew dictionary the verb קפל (‘qopel’) is translated as “to double, fold, roll up”.<sup>20</sup> So, מkaplin<sup>(‘mqplyn’)</sup> certainly could be expressed in Greek as *entetuligmenon*, which means “rolled up”.<sup>21</sup> And the fact that the priests first spread out the clothes, also indicates that they probably rolled them up, for folding could be done while the garment hung down from the hands. And a priest probably first spread out all his garments on top of each other – cloak (‘talith’), tunic (‘ephod’), girdle, underpants and head covering<sup>22</sup> –, and then made one single roll of them, for in this way his garments would not get mixed up with the garments of the priests who slept next to him. It is important to note, that only the girdle contained a mixture of wool and linen, and therefore could not be allowed to be used outside the sacrificial service.<sup>23</sup> So, it indeed must have been the fact that the girdle was inside the roll, which was the cause that the whole roll could not be used as a pillow: all his clothes were rolled up together and in one place, at his head. Now, when the beloved disciple – the secretary of the Council of the Temple, which regulated these details – entered the tomb, he “saw (the roll with seam, placed at the head) and believed” (that Jesus had risen – and he didn’t know this from Scripture) (John 20,7-9).

If Joseph of Arimathea had taken away Jesus’ dead body on the first day after the Sabbath for reburying, he would have taken the *sindōn* too, not only because it was his property, bought from the *hypēretai* for a high price, but also because it facilitated the carrying of Jesus’ body. This last argument is the reason why, when the empty grave and linen cloths were found, they kept the departing Peter “wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Lu 24,12). But the moment John Mark sees his *sindōn* lying there in the grave, identifiable by the Pharisaic seam and rolled up as a priest’s garment and placed at the head, he realizes it must have been laid there by Jesus for him: it had to have been done by someone who knew it was a priest’s garment and nevertheless left it in the grave, and thus by someone who had seen that John Mark fled from the *hypēretai* leaving his *sindōn*, and who knew that Joseph of Arimathea had bought it, and who would understand that John Mark, as a secret disciple, would want the garment back as it was the proof of his discipleship (and who knew

---

(Rambam, Beis Habechirah 8, <http://www.chabad.org/dailystudy/rambam.asp?tDate=9/30/2021#footnoteRef29a1007193>)

<sup>18</sup> “Instead, they folded them, placed them at their heads,(29) ... Footnote 29: The priests could not place their priestly garments under their heads to serve as pillows, for they were forbidden to derive benefit from them. See Yoma 69a. In his commentary to Tamid, Chapter 1, Mishnah 1, the Rambam explains that this prohibition was instituted because the priestly garments contained Sha'atnez, a mixture of linen and wool. Hence, though a priest was permitted to use them during the Temple service, once that service was concluded, he was forbidden to do so. See also the Kesef Mishneh.”

(Rambam, Beis Habechirah 8, [www.chabad.org/dailystudy/rambam.asp?tDate=9/30/2021#footnoteRef29a1007193](http://www.chabad.org/dailystudy/rambam.asp?tDate=9/30/2021#footnoteRef29a1007193))

<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew text according to Maimonides is:

ו. לא היו הכהנים השומרים ישנים בבדיהם כהונה אלא מkaplin<sup>אותן ומניחין</sup> את רأسם ולבשין בגדי עצמן וישנים על הארץ כדרך כל שומרי חיצרות המלכים שלא יישנו על המתו:

(<http://www.chabad.org/dailystudy/rambam.asp?tDate=9/30/2021&rambamChapters=1&lang=heb>)

<sup>20</sup> M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, Judaica Treasury, 1971, 2004, p. 1401

<sup>21</sup> Online Bible Greek Lexicon 1794; the 1984 New International Version even translates John 20,7 as “The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.”

<sup>22</sup> “The priests (Piske Tosaphoth in Menachoth numer. 150.) who veil themselves when they go up into the pulpit, לְבַטְלִית שָׁאִינוּ בַטְלִית שָׁאִינוּ with a cloak which is not their own,” (J. Lightfoot, on Mark 14,51, vol. 2 p. 458-460); “And he in whom no cause of invalidation was found dresses himself in white clothing and cloaks himself in a white cloak and goes in and serves with his brethren, the priests.” Middot 5,4 (J. Neusner, *The Mishnah – A New Translation*, p. 883); “The high priest serves in eight garments, and an ordinary priest in four: tunic, underpants, head covering, and girdle.” Yoma 7,5 (J. Neusner, p. 277) So, a priest entered the sanctuary wearing the four ordinary clothes plus the cloak (‘talith’), but put off the cloak, when he actually performed the rites of the service.

<sup>23</sup> Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Kli Hamikdash 8, halacha 11-12

([http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1008233/jewish/Chapter-8.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1008233/jewish/Chapter-8.htm))

that John Mark would be one of the first visitors of the grave).<sup>24</sup> This person was not one of the *hypēretai*, for they would simply have taken possession of the precious linen cloth again and would not have left it in the grave, nor Joseph of Arimathea (or Nicodemus) – he would have taken the body with the *sindōn* –, nor Simon Peter – he had been with John Mark all night and didn't know the grave was empty and wondered about what had happened –, nor John Mark himself, so only a risen Jesus could have done it. John Mark interprets the rolled up *sindōn* as a personal gift from Jesus to himself, and takes it from the grave, and thus takes away the proof of his discipleship.

#### Given to “the servant of the priest”

In this sense the risen Jesus “had given the grave cloth to the servant of the priest”, as Jerome cites the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gospel of the Hebrews in *De Viris Illustribus II*.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps John Mark already then, or some time after he had seen the risen Jesus in person, found the image of Jesus' face and its bruises – as on the Turin Shroud –, but he certainly understood that Jesus had returned his bloodstained temple garment to him as a sign that Jesus forgave him his secret discipleship, his fleeing from the *hypēretai*, and his slapping Jesus' face in Annas' room in Antonia, just as the three identical questions which the risen Jesus directed to Simon Peter at the Sea of Tiberias – “do you love me?” (John 21,15.16.17) – referred to Simon Peter's three denials of Jesus in the high priest's courtyard and porch. John Mark doesn't destroy the *sindōn*, perhaps because it could be regarded as the proof of Jesus' resurrection, and perhaps because of its significance: Jesus' personal forgiveness for John Mark, “the servant of the priest”.

Another connotation may be derived from the fact that the garments of the priests who had been dismissed from their sacrificial service in the temple (of a week's shift, about twice a year), were laid in “wall niches there, on which were written [the names] of the various pieces of clothing”.<sup>26</sup> And the fact that the priests put on a ‘talith’ “which was not their own”,<sup>27</sup> indicates that also a sacrificing priest's ‘talith’ was perhaps a garment that was rolled up and kept in a wall niche in the priests' guard room or in the Chamber of Hewn Stones for the next shift of priests. It were the members of the Council of the Temple who judged, in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, whether a new priest was fit to start his sacrificial ministry in the temple<sup>28</sup> and who allowed him to wear a priest's ‘talith’:

“And it judged the priesthood. And a priest in whom was found a cause of invalidation dresses himself in black clothing and cloaks himself in a black cloak and departs and goes his way. And he in whom no cause of invalidation was found dresses himself in white clothing and cloaks himself in a white cloak and goes in and serves with his brethren, the priests.”<sup>29</sup>

In this way Jesus' leaving his rolled up ‘talith’ in the empty tomb, hewn in the rock, for the priest John Mark perhaps could be seen as a sign that Jesus judged John Mark fit and that He extended his New Testamental high priestly sacrificial ministry to John Mark.

<sup>24</sup> It is not sure whether the women who entered the empty grave first, saw the *sindōn* (Luke 23,55-24,12 Mark 16,1-8 Matt 28,1-8), so it is possible that either they didn't pay attention to it because they saw the angel(s), or didn't know what to think of it (just as Peter), or that it was taken out of the grave before the women arrived and then put back there deliberately (by Jesus) only after the women had left and before John Mark and Simon Peter reached the grave.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome (in Latin: Hieronymus), *De Viris Illustribus 2*. “When the Lord had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, He went to James and appeared to him ...” (other translation: “but the Lord, after he had given his grave clothes to the servant of the priest, appeared to James”

([www.studylight.org/his/ad/ecf/pos/jeromeandgennadius/view.cgi?file=npnf2-03-27.htm](http://www.studylight.org/his/ad/ecf/pos/jeromeandgennadius/view.cgi?file=npnf2-03-27.htm)).

<sup>26</sup> Tamid 5,3 (Neusner: 869-870)

<sup>27</sup> “The priests (Piske Tosaphoth in Menacoth numer. 150.) who veil themselves when they go up into the pulpit, בְּתַלִּית שָׁאֵינוֹ with a cloak which is not their own,” (J. Lightfoot, on Mark 14,51, vol. 2 p. 458-460)

<sup>28</sup> A. Edersheim (1825-1889), *The Temple – Its Ministries and Services* (Peabody 1994), ch. 4, p. 70, S. Safrai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, W.C. van Unnik (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen/Amsterdam 1976) p. 602, 874

<sup>29</sup> Middot 5,4 (J. Neusner, *The Mishnah – A New Translation*, p. 883)

### The seam hidden in order to “remain until I come”

At the Sea of Tiberias the risen Jesus also said that He wanted John to “remain until I come”, and not follow Him (John 21,22). This didn’t mean that Jesus wanted him to stay alive until Jesus’ glorious return, for this is explicitly refuted in the gospel’s next verses. John Mark had to remain a secret disciple until Jesus would appear to him again: remain in the office and seat of the secretary right beside Annas and Caiphas and keep transmitting, what the high priests “conferred among themselves”, to the New Testament (Acts 4,15). And John Mark obeyed this commission of Jesus:

*“And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them [Simon Peter and John of Zebedee] in the midst, they inquired ... But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any one in this name." So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” (Acts 4,5-7.15-18)*

The commission given to John by Jesus to stay a secret disciple is probably also the reason why he kept himself anonymous in his Gospels of Mark and John, and called himself “a man” and “a young man” (Mr 10,17 14,51) and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21,20 cf. 13,23 20,2 21,7), and why John’s anonymous and ambiguous description of the beloved disciple’s visit to Jesus’ empty tomb is even strikingly missing in Mark’s gospel.<sup>30</sup> John Mark could be sure Jesus loved him – the secretary of Israel who had been silently present, or even spoke his consent, when Jesus was condemned to death (“they all condemned him as deserving death” Mr 14,64 and “those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers (*archontes*), ... , fulfilled these by condemning him. ... they asked Pilate to have him killed. ... they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.” Acts 13,27-29) –, for Jesus had shown him He had forgiven him by returning his *sindōn* after He had risen.

*“God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” (Acts 5,31)*

And he also loved Jesus, for “he who is forgiven little, loves little” (Lu 7,47) and he who is forgiven much, loves much.

Now, in order to remain a secret disciple he had to prevent that anyone would recognize the rolled up burial shroud as his temple *sindōn*. It would be sufficient to cut off the margin along the Pharisaic seam, for then this seam would look like an ordinary functional hem, applied to prevent the edge from loosening, and not like the unique Pharisaic seam of his ‘talith’. And he didn’t have to cut off the margin for the complete length of the cloth, for the seam was only visible in the last and next to last layer of the roll, formed by the ends of the cloth when it is doubled in the middle and rolled up from the fold. And in removing the two ends of the margin he of course simultaneously removed its two holes to which the blue cords were fastened (or he took the blue cords out of the Pharisaic seam, when transforming it into a hem).

---

<sup>30</sup> After having introduced an anonymous rich man (Mr 10,17), and an anonymous fleeing young man (Mr 14,51-52), Mark could’t simply introduce a third anonymous man who visits the tomb together with Simon Peter. So, he just skips the whole scene of his visit to the tomb, and then the story indeed continues right after it, with Jesus’ appearance to Mary Magdalene (Mr 16,8-9 cf. John 20,1-14). For the chronology of Jesus’ resurrection appearances, see my article *Chronological Sequence of Appearances - And the Eleven, Cephas, and James discussed* <http://jesusking.info/Chronological%20sequence%20of%20appearances%2016-02-2009%202.pdf> on [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info).

## Kept by John and Mary

According to Pfeiffer, professor of iconography and Christian art history, a grave cloth may have been kept by Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, and John, the evangelist,<sup>31</sup> and, according to Van Haelst, a, or the, grave cloth was brought to Ephesus by Mary.<sup>32</sup> According to the ancient author Irenaeus, John published the Fourth Gospel in Ephesus.<sup>33</sup> This John was John Mark, and the co-authorship of Mary explains the difference between the Fourth Gospel – set up by Mary, then edited by John – and the Gospel of Mark, written by John Mark earlier.<sup>34</sup>

## The Turin Shroud

The Shroud of Turin was and is an expensive, costly woven (twill herringbone weave), rectangular 4,4 x 1,1 m (14,3 x 3,7 ft), linen cloth, having about 38 warp threads and 25 weft threads per square cm.<sup>35</sup> Each thread (ca. 0.25 mm diameter) consists of 70-120 fibers of 10-20 micrometer diameter<sup>36</sup>, spun in a Z-twist, as opposed to the ordinary Egyptian S-twist.<sup>37</sup> Textile expert Vial noted during the 1988 sampling of the Shroud, that “faults in the preparation of the shafts point to a specifically ancient twill weave manufacturing method” and said that “the only European 3.1 chevron twill in linen that stands some comparison to the Shroud is the canvas of a late 16th. century ‘Last Supper’ painting attributed to Martin de Vos - and even so its weave is much simpler than that of the Shroud. In effect, he concludes, the Shroud weave is ‘incomparable’”.<sup>38</sup> Also a sample of a herringbone weave of Z-twisted threads from ca. the second half of the fourteenth century has only 22 warps and 12 wefts per square cm and coarser yarns than those of the Shroud, and thus “is not a candidate for a parallel to the fabric of the Turin Shroud”.<sup>39</sup> The Ancient Egyptians were capable of making incredibly fine linen garments. For instance, the girdle of Ramses III has 107-134 warp threads per cm.<sup>40</sup> The Shroud’s reversing twill weave resembles the pleated linen skirts worn in Ancient Egypt, it is less likely to curl than plain weaves and drapes and sheds soiling and creases better, and “It may be, therefore, that the Shroud linen was originally intended as an expensive apparel fabric”.<sup>41</sup> The Shroud’s individual threads’ ““Z”-twisting suggests sacerdotal Syro-Palestinian origin”<sup>42</sup>. The high priest’s white garments had to be of “byssos retorta” (Ex 28,6.8.15 Vulg)<sup>43</sup>, in which “byssos” means the finest linen or cotton (the Hebrew word “shesh” means ‘something bleached, whitened’<sup>44</sup> and “is

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.voltosanto.it/Inglese/paginadx1.php?c=2> (S. Sora, *Treasures from Heaven: Relics From Noah’s Ark to the Shroud of Turin* (Hoboken 2005) p. 46)

<sup>32</sup> R. van Haelst, *Het gelaat van Kristus, de lijkwade van Turijn* (Antwerpen 1986) p. 28

<sup>33</sup> Irenaeus (Eusebius 3,23) designates this John as “John, the disciple of the Lord”.

<sup>34</sup> Alternatives for the author of the Fourth Gospel are discussed in my long article *John Mark – Author of the Gospel of John with Jesus’ mother*, <http://jesusking.info/John%20Mark.pdf> on [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info). There the couple John Mark and Mary seems the best of all of them.

<sup>35</sup> Gian Marco Rinaldi, Autogol a Tucson, <http://sindone.weebly.com/autogoltucson.html>

<sup>36</sup> Fanti et al., Evidences for testing hypotheses, introduction p. 2, and evidence A6  
<http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/doclist.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Tyrer, Looking at the Turin Shroud as Textile, *Textile Horizons*, December 1981, p. 20,  
[www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF](http://www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF),

<sup>38</sup> BSTS newsletter 26,9, p. 2, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n26part9.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Tyrer, The textile said to be similar in weave to the Turin Shroud, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n27part5.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Henry Ling Roth, Ancient Egyptian and Greek Looms,  
<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=mjjypsmKZMC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ancient+Egyptian+and+Greek+Looms&hl=en&sa=X&ei=4mn4UP-jHJS10QXmjYGYCQ&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA&q=per+cm.&f=false>

<sup>41</sup> J. Tyrer, Looking at the Turin Shroud as Textile, *Textile Horizons*, December 1981, 20-23,  
[www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF](http://www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF)

<sup>42</sup> G. Fanti and B. Faccini, *Sindone: la scienza spiega la fede*, <http://www.dim.unipd.it/fanti/Mostra%20Sindone.pdf> p. 2. Prof. Fanti read that in the Biblical description of the materials for the tabernacle and the high priest’s garments often the Latin expression ‘byssos retorta’ is used.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2028:6,8,15&version=NIV1984;VULGATE>

<sup>44</sup> Strong’s H8336 *shaysh, shesh-ee*’ (The second form for alliteration with H4897); for H7893; *bleached stuff, that is, white* linen or (by analogy) marble: - X blue, fine [(twined)] linen, marble, silk. Easton’s Bible Dicitonary, Linen: “Heb. shesh; rendered “fine linen” #Ex 25:4 26:1,31,36 etc. In #Pr 31:22 it is rendered in Authorized Version “silk,” and in Revised Version “fine linen.” The word denotes Egyptian linen of peculiar whiteness and fineness (byssus).”  
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/linen.html>

applicable to both linen and cotton”<sup>45</sup>, and even to silk, alabaster and marble;<sup>46</sup> in Greek and Latin, both linen and cotton were called *byssos/byssus* in the first century<sup>47</sup>; the word *byssus* is a corruption of the Hebrew word ‘butz’<sup>48</sup>, which means “whiteness”<sup>49</sup>), and “retorta” means spun twisted backwards, viz. in a Z-twist.<sup>50</sup> The Shroud has a margin at one of its long edges, adjoining the rest of the cloth at a long seam about 9 cm from the edge (see the figure below and the photograph at [www.shroud.com](http://www.shroud.com)). The transverse hems have been rolled and stitched across the longitudinal seam of the margin.<sup>51</sup> The seam rejoins two sections of the same cloth by two lines of tiny overcast stitches; Flury-Lemberg published a photograph of the seam, showing that, when the seam was opened by

<sup>45</sup> Morrish Bible Dictionary, Linen: “Various Hebrew and Greek words are translated ‘linen,’ and there can be no doubt that linen made of flax was known in ancient Egypt and to the Israelites; but cloths generally are called ‘linen’ whether made of cotton or flax, some being distinguished as ‘fine linen,’ such as was worn by the priests, kings, &c. The word *shesh*, often translated ‘fine linen’ and ‘fine twined linen’ (for the curtains of the tabernacle, &c.) signifies ‘whiteness,’ and is applicable to both fine linen and cotton. Ex 26:1,31. Joseph was arrayed in ‘vestures of fine linen.’ Ge 41:42. The wrappings on the ancient Egyptian mummies were for a long time judged to be cotton, but by the use of the microscope they have been discovered to be linen.” ([http://www.stempublishing.com/dictionary/473\\_500.html](http://www.stempublishing.com/dictionary/473_500.html))

<sup>46</sup> Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon 08336 ‘shesh’ = 1) something bleached white, byssus, linen, fine linen 2) alabaster, similar stone, marble.

<sup>47</sup> Pliny the Elder, Natural History, 19, 2: “The upper part of Egypt, in the vicinity of Arabia, produces a shrub, known by some as “*gossypium*,”<sup>26</sup> but by most persons as “*xylon*;” hence the name of “*xylina*,” given to the tissues that are manufactured from it. The shrub is small, and bears a fruit, similar in appearance to a nut with a beard, and containing in the inside a silky substance, the down of which is spun into threads. There is no tissue known, that is superior to those made from this thread, either for whiteness, softness, or dressing: the most esteemed vestments worn by the priests of Egypt are made of it.” 26 “Our cotton, the *Gossypium arboreum* of Linnæus. See B. xii. c. 21. The terms *xylon*, *byssus*, and *gossypium*, must be regarded as synonymous, being applied sometimes to the plant, sometimes to the raw cotton, and sometimes to the tissues made from it. *Gossypium* was probably the barbarous name of the cotton tree, and *byssus* perhaps a corruption of its Hebrew name.”

(<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D19%3Achapter%3D2>).

<sup>48</sup> 2006 Smith’s Revised Bible Dictionary - LINEN : “3. B-ts, {c} ({c} יְלֵן, βυσσος, byssus) always translated “fine linen” except, {#2Ch 5:12} is apparently a late word, and probably the same with the Greek βυσσος, by which it is represented by the LXX It was used for the dresses of the Levite choir in the temple, {#2Ch 5:12} for the loose upper garment worn by kings over the close-fitting tunic, {#1Ch 15:27} and for the vail of the Temple, embroidered by the skill of the Tyrian artificers. {#2Ch 3:14}”

<sup>49</sup> Easton’s Bible Dictionary: Linen: “Heb. butz, “whiteness”; rendered “fine linen” in #1Ch 4:21 #1Ch 15:27 2Ch 2:14 3:14 Es 1:6 8:15 and “white linen” #2Ch 5:12. It is not certain whether this word means cotton or linen.”

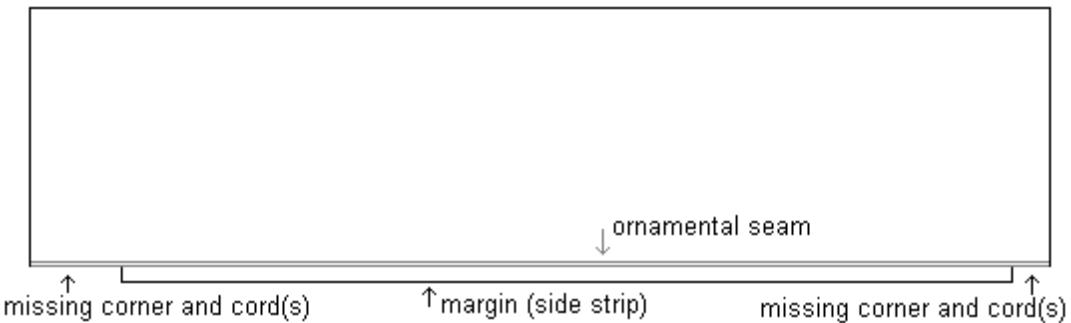
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/linen.html>. ‘butz’ Strong’s H948: From an unused root (of the same form) meaning to *bleach*, that is, (intransitively) *be white*; probably *cotton* (of some sort): - fine (white) linen.

<sup>50</sup> “*byssos retorta*” occurs and has been translated as “finely twisted linen”, in Hebrew: ‘shesh mshzr’ (Ex 39,2.5.8.22.24.28.29 NIVUS, Ex 39,2.8.22.28 Vulgate), next to the ordinary ‘*byssos*’: “fine linen”, in Hebrew: ‘shesh’ (Ex 1, (25), 26, (27) Vulgate).

This ‘re-torta’, meaning ‘twisted back’ (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=retortum&la=la>), in Hebrew from ‘shazar’ = to twist, Strong’s 07806 Ex 39, 2.5.8.22.24.28.29) – in stead of ‘torta’ (‘twisted’ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=tortum&la=la>) –, may refer to the Z-twisting, as opposed to the ordinary S-twisting of Egyptian linen (J. Tyrer, *Looking at the Turin Shroud as Textile, Textile Horizons, December 1981, 20-23*, [www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF](http://www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF), p. 20). For ‘*byssos retorta*’ the Septuagint has *byssou keklōsmenēs* = spun Egyptian linen, from *klōthō* = to spin. The Hebrew women spun the (white) byssus, and all the other blue, purple, and scarlet linen, themselves (Ex 35,25). Egyptian fine linen was called byssus, in Hebrew: ‘shesh’ (Easton’s Revised Bible Dictionary on ‘linen’ <http://topicalbible.org/l/linen.htm>), and could have up to 140 x 64 threads in an inch (warp x weft) or even 107-134 warp threads in a cm. If ‘*retorta byssos*’ meant “fine twined linen” (RSV), in the sense that the threads would consist of two or more yarns plied around each other, the threads would be at least twice as thick, and the weave could not be as fine as Egyptian fine linen anymore. (The Shroud has about 98 x 65 threads in an inch.) It’s important to note that either way ‘*retorta*’ refers to a Z-twist: either as a) the (primary) Z-twist of the first spinning of the linen fibers into a yarn, or as b) the (secondary) Z-twist of the twining/plying of two S-twisted, Egyptian spun, yarns into one Z-twisted twined thread. “Plying is twisting two or more single threads together, in the opposite direction from which they were spun” ([www.joyofhandspinning.com/yarn-plied.shtml](http://www.joyofhandspinning.com/yarn-plied.shtml), cf. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand\\_spinning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_spinning)). Even if the Hebrew text originally meant the secondary Z-twist of twining (b), first-century Jews/the Septuagint may have interpreted it as the primary Z-twist of spinning the linen fibers (a).

<sup>51</sup> T. Heimburger, *COTTON IN RAES/RADIOCARBON THREADS: THE EXAMPLE OF RAES #7*, Fig. 15, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/thibaultr7part3.pdf>

removing the sewing thread, two cutting edges appeared.<sup>52</sup> At the ends of the margin two strips, about 35 cm and 14 cm long respectively, are missing.



“Dr. Flury-Lemberg found the cloth’s finishing, at its hems, and in the joining seam to have been done using an unusual type of stitching very nearly invisible on one side, and as such closely resembling that of ancient Jewish textiles as found at Masada, the Jewish palace-fortress that was overthrown by the Romans in AD 73, never to be occupied again”.<sup>53</sup> She also says that “at no time has the need to reinforce the corner parts arisen!”<sup>54</sup> The ancient Egyptians specifically used two lines of overcast stitches to sew on a fringeless braid along an edge of a garment.<sup>55</sup> The Egyptian mending stitches – whipped stitch and running stitch<sup>56</sup> –, on the other hand, are different from the non-whipped overcast stitches of the Shroud’s seam. So, the margin of the Shroud may be a braid, deliberately sewn to an ancient mantle, not as a mending or repair or display facility. Moreover, the seam has been planned before manufacture, as it is located at a woven-in selvedge of warp threads with spun-in cotton,<sup>57</sup> and joins two sections of the cloth with almost perfectly matching weft threads across the seam – so without a missing third section –, and without frays in the seam.<sup>58</sup> The missing of the two corner strips, already removed before the fire of 1532 CE, could be explained as an effort by John Mark to both remove the blue cords and hide the Pharisaic seam of his extra large ‘talith’.<sup>59</sup> See the

<sup>52</sup> Flury-Lemberg, Die Leinwand des Turiner Grabtuches zum technischen Befund, Proceedings of International Scientific Symposium Turin 2000, Abb. 3 a, p. 34 and p. 23; a drawing of the seam type is visible in P. Soons’ “Presentation: Halo”, slide 11, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/soonspanppt.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> ‘The Turin Shroud – past, present and future’, Turin, 2-5 March, 2000 – probably the best-ever Shroud Symposium <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n51part2.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Mechthild Flury-Lemberg, *The Invisible Mending of the Shroud, the Theory and the Reality*, BSTS Newsletter No. 65 – Part 5, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n65part5.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> “Only a limited range of structural details, such as seams and hems, were used in ancient Egypt. The most common of these were: simple hems, rolled and whipped hems, simple (open) seams, and lap-over seams. Other seams known from the Dynastic period include a form of run-and-fell seam and overcast seams (see Fig. 11.11), but these were rarely used on items of clothing. When a braid was added to a garment, one of several techniques was used, depending on the nature of the braid and the place where it was to be attached. If it was a fringed braid placed at the lower edge of a garment, it would normally be secured with one line of overcast stitching (e.g. Carter no. 367i; Cairo JE 62625). On the other hand, two lines of overcast stitching were used to sew on fringeless braids, whether along an edge of a garment or down the middle” (P.T. Nicholson and I. Shaw, *Ancient Egyptian materials and technology*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 282-283,

[http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Vj7A9jJrZP0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ancient+Egyptian+materials+and+technology,+Cambridge+University+Press,+2000&hl=nl&sa=X&ei=pSv0UN7RC\\_Sr0AXYsoHwBQ&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA&q=fringeless&f=false#v=snippet&q=fringeless&f=false](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Vj7A9jJrZP0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ancient+Egyptian+materials+and+technology,+Cambridge+University+Press,+2000&hl=nl&sa=X&ei=pSv0UN7RC_Sr0AXYsoHwBQ&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA&q=fringeless&f=false#v=snippet&q=fringeless&f=false).

<sup>56</sup> P.T. Nicholson and I. Shaw, *Ancient Egyptian materials and technology*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 283

<sup>57</sup> Selvedge at seam: J. Tyrer, *Looking at the Turin Shroud as Textile*, *Textile Horizons*, December 1981, 20-23, p. 22, [www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF](http://www.sindone.info/TYRER1.PDF); cotton spun-in at internal selvedge: A.A.M. van der Hoeven, Internal Selvedge, par. 2.1., <http://jesusking.info/Internal%20selvedge.pdf>

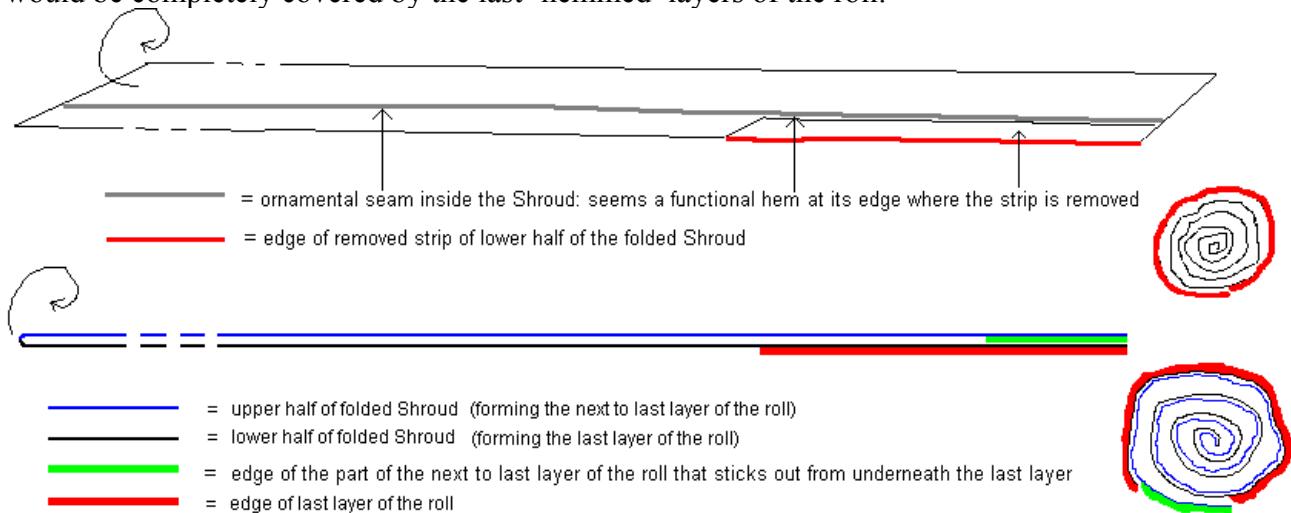
<sup>58</sup> A. Adler and A. and M. Whanger, Concerning the Side Strip, <http://www.shroud.com/adler2.htm>

<sup>59</sup> In November/December 1997 Donald Smith already posted the idea that the Shroud was a Jewish ‘talith’ in Issue #46 of the Newsletter of the British Society for the Turin Shroud (which I read only in October 2010). The measurements he gives for this tallit/himation are 118,4 cm by 444 cm (<http://www.shroud.com/bsts4610.htm> at “Can you help”). And the Wikipedia article on Tallit (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tallithim>) reads, on the “Tallit gadol” (= big tallit): “Sizes of tallitot vary, and are a matter of custom and preference. Some are large enough to cover the whole body while others hang

image, of a Jew with a ‘talith’ as long as the Shroud, with very long border(s) and corner fringes, thrown loosely around him, from a fifteenth-century Jewish prayer book, through this link to the Jewish Encyclopedia:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14210-tallit>

If a cloth, folded in half (= doubled), is rolled up from the fold to the ends, the upper half forms circles with a smaller circumference than the circles formed by the lower half of the cloth. So, in the last layer of the roll the lower half would not completely cover the upper half, which thus would protrude from underneath the lower half. So, the Pharisaic seam would not only be visible in the last layer of the roll, formed by the lower half, but also, for a shorter length, in the next to last layer of the roll, where the upper half protrudes (see the figure below). When the Shroud of Turin, 4,4 m in length and about 0,4 mm in thickness, is rolled up loosely (thickness of one layer of 1 mm) with an initial circular circumference of 24 cm or less, the complete roll would attain a circumference of 34 cm or less. Cutting off the margin asymmetrically, for 35 cm and 14 cm, and thus removing the blue cords and/or the holes for the blue cords at the same time, would be enough to transform the seam into a functional hem and make John Mark’s temple ‘talith’ an unidentifiable linen roll, especially if it is rolled up a bit askew, in order that the seam in the inner layers, and the transition from seam to ‘hem’, would be completely covered by the last ‘hemmed’ layers of the roll.



around the shoulders”. Besides, John Mark’s tallit was a deliberate cross between a Roman toga and a Jewish tallit. A Roman toga was “a cloth of perhaps twenty feet (6 metres) in length” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toga>).

On January 24, 2011, I read about the book of the renowned antiquities expert John N. Lupia, *The Ancient Jewish Shroud at Turin*, Regina Caeli Press, 2010, and its cover says that “the Shroud of Turin is an ancient linen *tallit* garment type worn by Essenes at Qumran before A.D. 66” (<http://www.reginacaelipress.com/home>). This supports my thesis on John Mark’s temple garment, in that the Essenes were originally orthodox temple priests, Levites and Nethinim, who focussed on purity in the temple and therefore protested against its illegal practices and its desecration and moved to Qumran; the white clothing of the Qumran Essenes corresponded to the obligatory white linen temple clothing (see my article *The Eleven – Jesus appeared risen to the Officers of the Temple Prison*, <http://jesusking.info/The%20Eleven%2001-08-2010.pdf>, August 1, 2010). Besides, Joseph Caiphas probably had been a Qumran Essene, and lived in the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem (see my articles *With Child of the Holy Spirit – Joseph willing to give her in marriage to his heir*, <http://jesusking.info/With%20Child%20of%20the%20Holy%20Spirit%202009%204.pdf>, March 23, 2009 and *Jesus and Isaac – Joseph Caiphas*, <http://jesusking.info/Jesus%20and%20Isaac.pdf>, July 7, 2009), and his secretary John Mark lived in the house of the Cenacle, virtually next door to Caiphas (see my article *John Mark – Author of the Gospel of John with Jesus' mother*, <http://jesusking.info/John%20Mark.pdf>).

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* says on the Tallit: “The original *tallit* probably resembled the “*abayah*,” or blanket, worn by the Bedouins for protection from sun and rain, and which has black stripes at the ends. The finer *tallit*, very likely, was similar in quality to the Roman pallium, and was worn only by distinguished men, rabbis, and scholars (B. B. 98a; Gen. R. xxxvi.; Ex. R. xxvii.). The *tallit* of a “*talmid ḥakam*” extended to within a hand-breadth of the length of the bottom of his undergarment (B. B. 57b). The *tallit* was sometimes worn partly doubled, and sometimes with the ends thrown over the shoulders (Shab. 147a; Men. 41a).” (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=29&letter=T>)

Discussing the patches, which were stitched on the burn holes of the Turin Shroud, Dr. Flury-Lemberg says, that there wasn't any other stitching done, "apart from the one vertical seam and the small rolled hems at the edges of the width. This is all that ever needed to be done - leaving out, for now, the two cut away corners."<sup>60</sup> Thus the faults in the loom shaft preparation, the fineness of the linen, the presence of the singular original first century seam (present before the hems were)<sup>61</sup>, the reversing twill weave typical of expensive apparel fabric, the threads' Syro-Palestinian, possibly sacerdotal, Z twisting, the fact that the Shroud was doubled and rolled up, the image-bearing starch impurities on the fibers of the Shroud,<sup>62</sup> and the missing corners to which the tassels were fastened, indicate that the Shroud once was a Jewish sacerdotal garment, that was not supposed to be creased. Recently I found that also its other physical and chemical properties indicate it was a Jewish temple garment.<sup>63</sup> The inside part of the sharp crease below the image of the chin doesn't contain an image,<sup>64</sup> so the crease was probably formed before the image was; and the crease is in the upper half of the cloth, so the crease was not formed by the weight of Jesus' dead body; the crease is not completely horizontal and is slightly curved, so it probably wasn't formed by folding by Joseph of Arimathea or the seller of the cloth. So, the crease may have been formed by the weight of John Mark's body, when he was wearing the *sindōn* and was leaning against Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. All this indicates that the Shroud may have been the cloth which the prison officers snatched off from the fleeing John Mark and used to cover up and beat Jesus and then sold to Joseph of Arimathea. Barrie Schwortz, a sindonologist, said about the Shroud: "It is a bloodstained cloth. It was against Jewish tradition to even handle. So, they would have kept it a secret. It would have been well preserved, probably kept hidden most of the time, and perhaps that's the reason why the condition is as good as it was when I first saw it in 1978."<sup>65</sup> And perhaps that's also the reason why its history is so hard to trace. In 750 John Damascene called the Image of Edessa – allegedly sent to Edessa by Jesus, and often regarded as the same as the Turin Shroud – a *himation* (= mantle, cf. Mr 10,50 Jo 19,5); in 1203 the Shroud probably was in Constantinople and (later) equated by some with the Mandylion of Edessa, in which 'Mandylion' is a unique Greek corruption of either the Latin mantellum = mantle, or the Latin mantile (also mantele) = towel.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> "These repairs were the only historical stitching done on the shroud - apart from the one vertical seam and the small rolled hems at the edges of the width. This is all that ever needed to be done - leaving out, for now, the two cut away corners." Mechthild Flury-Lemberg , *The Invisible Mending of the Shroud, the Theory and the Reality*, BSTS Newsletter No. 65 – Part 5, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n65part5.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> See the Raes sample, cut from the Shroud in 1973 in fig. 15 of T. Heimburger, *COTTON IN RAES/RADIOCARBON THREADS: THE EXAMPLE OF RAES* #7, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/thibaultr7part3.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> Giulio Fanti et al., *Evidences for Testing Hypotheses About the Body Image Formation of the Turin Shroud*, September 2005, Fact A15, [www.shroud.com/pdfs/doclist.pdf](http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/doclist.pdf), I removed the former reference to soap because fact B58 of the list of evidences says "It is unknown whether Saponaria officinalis can be detected on the Shroud".

<sup>63</sup> A.A.M. van der Hoeven, *Internal selvedge in starched and dyed temple mantle – No invisible repair in Turin Shroud – No Maillard reaction*, <http://jesusking.info/Internal%20selvedge.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Giulio Fanti et al., *Evidences for Testing Hypotheses About the Body Image Formation of the Turin Shroud*, September 2005, Fact B16, [www.shroud.com/pdfs/doclist.pdf](http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/doclist.pdf)

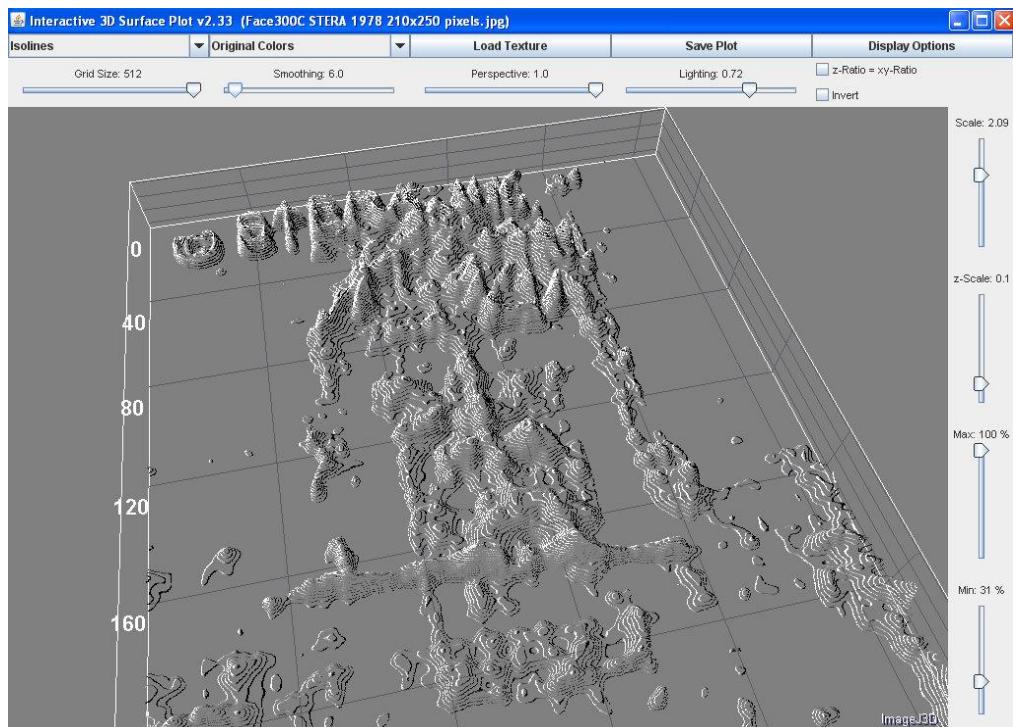
<sup>65</sup> [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/23742321#23742321](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/23742321#23742321)

<sup>66</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image\\_of\\_Edessa#Links\\_with\\_the\\_Shroud\\_of\\_Turin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image_of_Edessa#Links_with_the_Shroud_of_Turin) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud\\_of\\_Turin#Possible\\_history\\_before\\_the\\_14th\\_century:\\_The\\_Image\\_of\\_Edessa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud_of_Turin#Possible_history_before_the_14th_century:_The_Image_of_Edessa)

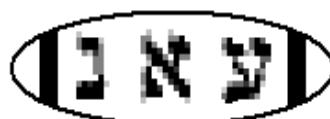
### Three Hebrew letters on the *petalon*



(photograph © 1978-2011 Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA Inc.; enhanced by Dr. Petrus Soons)



( ImageJ isolines view of thumbnail of 1978 STERA photo)



70 1 Nesium

The three protuberant Hebrew letters on the oval plate beneath the chin of the body image on the Turin Shroud, seen by Dr. Petrus Soons on a hologram<sup>67</sup> and also visible in an isolines view of a 1978

<sup>67</sup> Dr. Petrus Soons had the gray-scale values of the Shroud mapped and displayed as a hologram and the natural form of a 3D-body appeared. It also showed the presence of a flat oval object beneath the chin (see <http://shroud3d.com/findings/solid-oval-object-under-the-beard> and <http://shroud3d.com/findings/three-hebrew-letters-on>

photo made by Schwortz,<sup>68</sup> may have been אַנְיָן ayin – aleph – nun. The last of the three letters, the nun, is not written as a final nun (long א), but as a non-final nun (short נ). This means that the three letters probably aren't one single word, but may be an abbreviation. A possible interpretation is that the ayin – aleph are Hebrew numbers: 70 – 1,<sup>69</sup> and that the nun is an abbreviation of the Hebrew word נְשִׁים ‘nesiim’ = rulers or נֶסֶיךְ ‘nasi’ = ruler (Strong's 05387), and that the three letters mean: the 71 rulers of the Great Sanhedrin, the seventy ordinary members plus the president (the Nasi or the Ab-beth-din).<sup>70</sup> In the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Bible in first-century Judea, the word ‘nesiim’ in “Aaron and all the ‘nesiim’ of the congregation” (Ex 34,31) is translated as *archontes* (plural of *archōn*), which word was used for the members of the Great Sanhedrin in the first century. Jesus was buried by three *archontes* of the Great Sanhedrin (“those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers (*archontes*), ... took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb” Acts 13,27-29), and one of them may have held the oval object which represented the authority of this council. This person may have been John Mark, the secretary of the council, who was ‘a priest wearing the *petalon*'.<sup>71</sup> The “*petalon*” (Ex 28,36 LXX = leaf, cf. petal, Greek translation for the Hebrew ‘tsiyts’ = blossom, flower, Ex 28,36 BHS) originally was the unique golden crown plate of the anointed high priest, engraved with the words ‘Holy to the Lord’ and attached to his mitre with a blue ribbon,<sup>72</sup> and Josephus says it still existed in the first century.<sup>73</sup> Maimonides says it was two fingers broad, and that it reached from ear to ear, and that the letters were protuberant, or stood out.<sup>74</sup> But in Jesus' days the high priest's splendid liturgical clothes with all their ornaments were kept locked up by the Romans

---

surface-of-solid-object). The presence of this object was confirmed by Pete Schumacher, who displayed the gray-scale values of the Shroud as height in a so-called VP8 Image Analyser (<http://shroudnm.com/docs/SEAM-VP8-Presentation.pdf>).

<sup>68</sup> The thumbnail of the 1978 copyrighted STERA photo is online at <http://www.shroud.com/gallery/images/Face300C.jpg>

<sup>69</sup> A Mishnaic textual source (Pirkei Avot 3:23) makes clear that the use of gematria (and thus of numeric value of individual letters) is dated to at least the Tannaic period (0-200 CE) (<https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Gematria>).

<sup>70</sup> T. Bab. Sukkah 5 speaks of the 71 golden seats in a palace (“the glory of Israel”) in Alexandria “for the seventy-one sages of the Great Sanhedrin” (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/sukkah5.html>). And when Aaron was the high priest, the priest Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was “the chief leader”, the ‘nasi nasii’, of Levi, נֶשֶׁי נֶשֶׁי הַלְויִי (Nu 3,32 NIVUS and BHS).

<sup>71</sup> 'hos egenēthē hiereus to petalon pepforekōs' (Eusebius, *Church History* 5,24,2) in which ‘pephorekōs’ is the verb ‘pherō’ = to carry. (translation of Kirsopp Lake, Ecclesiastical History, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press 1926: “John, ... who was a priest wearing the breastplate”; another translation : “John, ... being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate” <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxi.html>). That John's *petalon* was a Jewish and not a Christian ornament, is convincingly demonstrated on <http://geocities.ws/aleph135/Storage/polycrates.html>. It shows that Polycrates, while defending the Jewish origin of the Christian Passover date, stressed the evangelist John's Jewish authority by referring to John's *petalon*. To this can be added that the word for a Christian priest was ‘presbyteros’ (= literally ‘oldest’; elder/ruler, ecclesiastical officer)(e.g. Clement of Alexandria (182-202 CE), Stromata 3,12,90), while ‘hiereus’ (= man busied with sacred rites, temple officer, from ‘hieros’ = sacred, a sacred thing, temple, e.g 1Co 9,13) was a general designation, used for Jewish temple priests (e.g. Mt 8,4 12,4.5) and heathen priests (Ac 14,13), and for Christ as a high priest like Melchisedek (Heb 5,6 7,1.17 8,4 10,21) and for the general priesthood of all Christian believers (Re 1,6 5,10 20,6).

<sup>72</sup> καὶ ποιησεὶς πεταλὸν (*petalon*) ξρυσούν καψάρον καὶ εκτυπωσεῖς εν αυτῷ εκτυπωμα σφραγίδος αγιασμα κυρίου ... (Ex 28,36-37 LXX)

<sup>73</sup> Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, briefly mentions the crown plate as “a golden plate, which had inscribed upon it the name of God in sacred characters” and says that “the crown upon which Moses wrote [the name of God], was only one, and hath remained to this very day” (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 3,7,6 and 8,3,8 (93), Hendrickson, *The Works of Josephus*, 1987, reprint 2003, p. 90 and 218). Talmud Sabbath 63b and Sukkah 5a quote Rabbi Eliazar bar Yossi as saying: “I saw it in Rome (where it had been taken after the Temple's destruction) and the words קְרֵשׁ לְהִיא were written on one line.” ([http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1008234/jewish/Chapter-9.htm#footnote4a1008234](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1008234/jewish/Chapter-9.htm#footnote4a1008234))

In Jesus' days the high priest's official clothes only consisted of the purple robe and a crown/turban, because “the oracle [the big square breastplate which contained the Urim and Thummim Ex 28,15-30] ... did not exist during the period of the Second Temple” (S. Sarfai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, W.C. van Unnik (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen/Amsterdam, 1976) 874). Sirach 45,12 speaks of the golden crown of the high priest and in 1Macc 10,21 Jonathan, the high priest, puts on the holy robe on the Feast of Tabernacles.

<sup>74</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, Sefer Avoda, Kli Hamikdash 9,1-2 ([www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1008234/jewish/Chapter-9.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1008234/jewish/Chapter-9.htm))

in the fortress Antonia,<sup>75</sup> so, the mitre with the golden crown plate attached to it (Ex 28,37), was there too. As an alternative, the Jews may have made another oval (= petal-shaped) plate, engraved with the letters י נ ו, for the high priest and perhaps all other members of the Great Sanhedrin, expressing the ruling authority of its wearer.<sup>76</sup> From 6 AD the high priest was arbitrarily appointed and dismissed by the Romans, but the Great Sanhedrin was independent, and legally represented and ruled the Jewish people under the Romans. Also James the Just, head representative of the people in the temple liturgy and probably member of the Great Sanhedrin, wore the *petalon*.<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, the earliest known representation of a Jewish high priest – in a mural in the synagogue of Dura-Europos, Syria, of 245-256 AD (see figure below) – shows him wearing a headdress without a crown plate, and wearing a mantle closed on his breast by a golden oval-shaped engraved plate.<sup>78</sup> A mantle did belong to the biblical outfit of the high priest but a plate attached to the mantle did not (Ex 28,31-35 and 39,22-26).

<sup>75</sup> Jos., *J. Antiq.* 15,11,4(403); and 18,4,3(93-95); The clothes were only given free the day before the three great liturgical feasts of the Jews and before the Day of Atonement.

<sup>76</sup> Of king David is said in Ps 132,18: “His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown (‘nezer’) flourish (‘tsuwts’).” As the ‘nezer’ will flourish (‘tsuwts’ = to blossom), it may have had the form of a petal, just as the ‘nezer’ (= sign of dedication) of the high priest (his ‘nezer’ is his ‘tsiyts’ Ex 28,36 29,6). So, the wearing of a *petalon* was perhaps not restricted to the high priestly dignity, but could also have been a sign of royal or ruling dignity. This is confirmed by Epiphanius, who says that even Herod wore a diadem just as the high priest-king Alexander: “(3) ... Alexander, a ruler of priestly and kingly stock. (4) ... Alexander was crowned (*diadēma epetheto διαδημα επεθετο*) also, as one of the anointed priests and rulers (εις των χριστων και ‘ηγουμενων ‘υπαρχων ). (5) For when the two tribes, the kingly and priestly, were united – I mean the tribe of Judah with Aaron and the whole tribe of Levi – kings also became priests, for nothing hinted at in holy scripture can be wrong.) (6) But then finally a gentile, King Herod, was crowned (*diadēma epethento διαδημα επεθεντο*), and not David’s descendants any more” (Panarion 29,3,3-6 [http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=IKyxt9kyy8C&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+\(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.\)%22&q=alexander&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Herod%20crowned&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=IKyxt9kyy8C&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.)%22&q=alexander&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Herod%20crowned&f=false) and [http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=4LfUAAAAMAAJ&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+\(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.\)%22&q=29+&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=82&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=4LfUAAAAMAAJ&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.)%22&q=29+&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=82&f=false)).

Also in Panarion 51,22,21 he speaks of the “anointed rulers descended from Judah and Aaron” (<http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=brxgNsxJKkUC&q=anointed+rulers#v=snippet&q=descended%20from%20Juda%20and%20Aaron&f=false>). After king Herod there was no Jewish king and the Jewish ruling dignity passed on to the rulers of the Great Sanhedrin. In Egypt (Joseph) and Babylon (Daniel) a gold necklace had been a sign of ruling dignity (Ge 41,42 Da 5,7.16.29).

<sup>77</sup> That James the Just, the brother of Jesus, wore the *petalon*: note 862 on Eus., Church History 3,31,3 by Cushman McGiffert, [www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxi.html#fnf\\_iii.viii.xxi-p13.2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxi.html#fnf_iii.viii.xxi-p13.2), says it’s written in Epiphanius, Haeres. LXXVII.14; I found it online in Epiphanius “Panarion” 29,4,4 ([http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=IKyxt9kyy8C&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+\(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.\)%22&q=priestly%20tablet21&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&id=IKyxt9kyy8C&dq=inauthor:%22Saint+Epiphanius+(Bp.+of+Constantia+in+Cyprus.)%22&q=priestly%20tablet21&f=false) p.125). It is possible that he wore it as an elder and member of the Great Sanhedrin, for according to my article *James and the brothers – Davidic representatives in the temple liturgy* , <http://jesusking.info/James%20and%20the%20brothers%2016-02-2009%202.pdf> James the Just was the head of the representatives of the people of Israel in the temple liturgy. There even seems to be a trace of a tradition that Mark wore the *petalon* ([http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/James/James\\_lesson2\\_intro\\_part2.htm](http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/James/James_lesson2_intro_part2.htm), 6<sup>th</sup> answer), although I haven’t found it in any of the sources referred to.

<sup>78</sup> <http://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/801/flashcards/405801/png/tabernacle1305588413983.png> and <http://www2.palomar.edu/users/mhudelson/WorksofArt/32Jewish/2892.html> and <http://www.elcamino.edu/faculty/eatherton/earlychristian.html>



The high priest (Aaron) wearing a golden oval-shaped engraved breastplate – Mural in Dura-Europos 245-256 AD

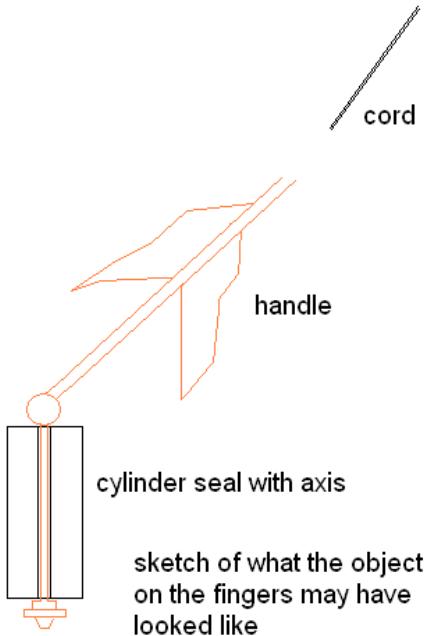
The Jewish rulers – high priests, elders, and scribes – probably didn't all wear a mitre/turban, and for this reason the alternative *petalon* may have been worn as a breast plate, also by John Mark. In this case it would have been very appropriate, and in line with the “burial custom of the Jews” (to bury a person of high rank with his most costly ornaments and weapons), and also in line with the high priestly/royal spices brought by Nicodemus and with the high priestly temple *sindōn* brought by Joseph of Arimathea, that John Mark put his high priestly authoritative *petalon* on the breast of Jesus, the everlasting high priest. The fact that the linen shroud (one of the *othonia* of Jo 19,40) and the spices are explicitly mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, and the *petalon* isn't, suggests that its anonymous author, the secret beloved disciple, was himself the one who offered it to Jesus. John Mark, as the very rich secretary of the Great Sanhedrin, may very well have been the executive who conferred such a breast plate to each new member of this council. In that case, when he put his own *petalon* on Jesus' breast – where he expected it to remain, especially after they had sealed the grave (Mt 27,66) –, he knew how to get himself a new one, secretly.

#### “Aaron’s rod that budded” or “your seal and its cord”?

On the hologram Dr. Soons also found the presence of a certain object lying on the hand of the crucified man: one part that is visible looks like a rope or a rod, and another, cylindrical, part, at the other end, looks like an ampoule or flower or fruit, and two parts in the middle look like two leaves (see fig. 4 on the page Ongoing Holographic Research).<sup>79</sup> One of its possible explanations is that the object (if it is one single object) is the twig of an almond tree, with two leaves and a fruit on its end or in the middle.<sup>80</sup> The reason why such a twig would have been laid on the hand of Jesus is, that it represented the rod of the high priest Aaron, which, when put in the temple, miraculously put forth buds and flowers and even ripe almonds, as a sign that only Aaron was the chosen high priest of the Lord and no one else (Nu 17,5-10). According to Heb 9,1-6 “Aaron’s rod that budded” was still inside the Ark of the Covenant in the temple, so it was still a vivid concept in the first century. Also

<sup>79</sup> <http://shroud3d.com/findings/ongoing-holographic-research>

<sup>80</sup> The almond tree blooms in february-march (<http://www.tytyga.com/category/Almond+Trees>). For some pictures see: [http://www.iknow-portugal.co.uk/tourist\\_information/portugal\\_holidays/the\\_douro/](http://www.iknow-portugal.co.uk/tourist_information/portugal_holidays/the_douro/) (“A young almond tree growing wild”), [http://free-photos.biz/photographs/food/fruits/322206\\_almond\\_tree.php](http://free-photos.biz/photographs/food/fruits/322206_almond_tree.php), <http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-27168472/stock-photo-almond-tree.html>.



the mocking soldiers had put a reed in Jesus' right hand, referring to the staff of a (high priest-)king (Mt 27,29). But the Messiah, the Christ, would receive his scepter from God and rule in the midst of his foes (Ps 110,2).

Another, probably better, interpretation is that the object on the hand is a cylinder seal in a pendant,<sup>81</sup> in the shape of a fruit bearing almond twig, probably signifying it belonged to the high priest. It seems attached to a cord as a necklace (cf. Ge 38,18 “your seal and its cord” NIVUS).<sup>82</sup> The rope-shaped object along the lower arm, of which on a certain photograph there even seem to be two<sup>83</sup>, and which seems to run up to the upper arm, then probably is the seal’s corresponding cord. The high priests sealed Jesus’ grave with a seal or mark (Mt 27,66). And John Mark, as the Great Sanhedrin’s secretary, must have had a seal, perhaps even that of the high priest himself. Joseph of Egypt received fine linen, a gold necklace, and a seal as signs of his ruling authority (Ge 41,42-43). And the reason why John Mark left it in

the grave? It wasn’t just the most appropriate honorific grave good for the Christ. It was also the ‘murder weapon’, the seal that had sealed Jesus’ fate, the proof that he had personally consented to Jesus’ death, as this seal’s impression was on the written verdict. Perhaps he wanted to get rid of it and get himself/the high priest another, different one. But the risen Jesus returned it to him. It was inside the rolled up *sindōn*, along with the *petalon*, as another proof of his resurrection: “your seal and its cord”.

### Imageless areas

A suggestion for the cause of the seemingly imageless area below the anatomical right side of the lower lip, is that the “vinegar”, that was “held to his mouth” by a soldier and “received” and perhaps spilled by Jesus right before He died (Mt 27,48-50 Mr 15,36-37 Jo 19,29-30), blocked the formation of an image.<sup>84</sup> And perhaps some other imageless areas on the face and body<sup>85</sup> were caused by dielectric salt crystals from sweat. In Gethsemane Jesus’ “sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lu 22,44 AV). They may also have been salt crystals from the salt that Jews used for preserving a corpse before burial.<sup>86</sup> Jesus’ hurried burial probably was a preliminary

<sup>81</sup> “Graves and other sites housing precious items such as gold, silver, beads, and gemstones often included one or two cylinder seals, as honorific grave goods” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cylinder\\_seal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cylinder_seal)). “... the seal [of king Ahaz] with which it was impressed was set in a metal bezel, either in a signet ring or in a pendant. ... The letters are small (the seal itself is only 2/5 of an inch wide), but they are of very high quality”

(<http://www.archaeological-center.com/en/monographs/m1>). For a cylinder seal which may have closely resembled the seal on the Shroud, see <http://art.thewalters.org/viewwoa.aspx?id=4399>. A precious stone cylinder seal could also have a silver knob on its top (L.H. Grollenberg, Kleine Atlas van de Bijbel, Elsevier 1973, p. 49: photograph of a cylinder seal of a priest). Another cylinder seal with a knob: <http://www.lessing-photo.com/dispmg.asp?i=08021531+&cr=5&ccl=1>.

<sup>82</sup> “He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” She replied, “Your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand.”” (Ge 38,18 RSV)/ “And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand” (AV). Here “cord”/“bracelets” translates פַתִּיל, ‘pathiyil’ = cord, thread (twisted) (Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon 06616). The Septuagint has *ormiskos* = creek (<http://translate.google.com/?hl=nl#ellen|ormiskos>), cf. the verb *ormizō* = anchor, place in a certain position, be suspended from (G.J.M. Bartelink, Greek-Dutch dictionary, 12<sup>th</sup> reprint 1978, p. 178). The Vulgate has *armillam* = bracelet.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRB16BARvz0>, at 01:56

<sup>84</sup> Perhaps the electrons from a corona discharge (see G. Fanti e.a., BODY IMAGE FORMATION HYPOTHESES BASED ON CORONA DISCHARGE, <http://www.dim.unipd.it/fanti/corona.pdf>) were caught by the vinegar’s acid ions.

<sup>85</sup> <http://shroud3d.com/findings/ongoing-holographic-research>

<sup>86</sup> “the body placed upon sand or salt on the floor to retard decomposition, metal or glass being put upon the navel to prevent swelling. Then the body was washed and anointed with aromatic unguents, and wrapped in linen clothes (Shab. xxiii. 5; Sem. i. 2, 3; Acts ix. 37; John xi. 44, xii. 7, xix. 39 *et seq.*, xx. 6 *et seq.*; Matt. xxvii. 59; Mark xv. 46 *et seq.*; Luke xxiii. 53 *et seq.*; Testament of Abraham, xx.).”

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1607&letter=B&search=burial>

one (cf. Jo 19,42 Lu 23,56-24,1 Jo 20,2). A thick dielectric salt layer on the floor on which the shroud was, might also explain the absence of a second image on the dorsal reverse of the Shroud (as opposed to the presence of a second image on the frontal reverse)<sup>87</sup>, and would comply with the preliminary burial of Jesus as well.

### Conclusion

As my hypothesis about John Mark's *sindōn* solves not only one biblical enigma (buried "as is the burial custom of the Jews") but no less than seven biblical enigmas all at once (also "rolled up in one place", "saw and believed", "remain until I come", the why and the who of "the disciple whom He loved", and the striking sudden end of Mark's gospel), and as it is in accordance with both the Talmud (a 'talith' is a *sindōn*), the Targum (a mantle is a 'soudara', cf. *soudarion*), and Christian tradition (John was "a priest wearing the *petalon*" and the grave cloth was given to "the servant of the priest"), and with the physical properties of the Turin Shroud (the ancient loom shaft preparation, the high number of warp and weft threads per cm, the threads' possibly sacerdotal "Z" twisting, the two lines of overcast stitches (typical of sewing a braid to a garment in antiquity) almost perfectly rejoining two sections of the cloth cut at a woven-in selvedge, the transverse hems rolled and stitched across the long seam, the first-century Jewish enlarged border and asymmetrically missing corners (and fringes), no reinforcement or other stitching needed or done, the image-bearing starch impurities, the imageless curved crease, and the possible images of a *petalon* and a cylinder seal), and with the Shroud's possible names (*himation* and *Mandylion*), the hypothesis can't be far from the historical truth. In fact, the chemical properties of the Turin Shroud, as described in my recent article "Internal selvedge in starched and dyed temple mantle – No invisible repair in Turin Shroud – No Maillard reaction" on [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info), confirm this.

The Netherlands, June 6, 2013

---

<sup>87</sup> Fanti and Maggiolo, The double superficiality of the frontal image of the Turin Shroud, *Journal of Optics A: Pure and Applied Optics* 6 (2004) 491-503, p. 501, <http://www.sindone.info/FANTI.PDF>