

In memoriam
Père André-Marie DUBARLE, o.p.
October 19th 1910 – April 15th 2002

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Father André-Marie DUBARLE has departed from us on April 15, 2002 in his 92nd year, 73rd of his Dominican profession, and 58th of his ordination. His funeral took place in religious and familial intimacy on April 18 in the Church of the Convent of Saint-Jacques in Paris. The scholars of CIELT manifested their affection for him, their recognition of his historical research, and their admiration for the quality of his counsel.

He was the youngest of the boys in a family of six children, whose father died in the Great War, and which gave the Church three children. Two Dominicans, Brothers Dominique and André-Marie, preserving "the spirit of the family"; the oldest, "uncle Louis" was a true *pater familias* watching over the Dubarle "tribe." As for "uncle Henri," he was the joy of the nephews and nieces, as much by his affection as by his mischievousness: who would believe that the austere celibate exegete, historian, and professor (of Hebrew and Greek) could also make the children laugh?

I met Father Dubarle for the first time on September 28, 1995, in the Convent of Dominicans in the 13th district of Paris. Friend of the president-founder of CIELT, André van Cauwenberghe, he was asked a short time before to assist in the researches of CIELT on the scientific decipherment of the "phantom letters" revealed on the Shroud by Piero Ugolotti and Aldo Marastoni. Father Dubarle was almost cloistered, so much did his deafness handicap him in normal outdoor relations. But in the quiet of his monastic room, he could give free course to his desire to communicate and to his very vivacious spirit: only sometimes a slight irritation was perceptible because some words of the conversation had escaped him.(1)

I was accompanied by André Marion, professor of the Institute of Optics of Paris, who had entered upon a meticulous scanning program of the photographs of Vernon Miller for digital processing. Father Dubarle began by showing us a letter from Father Dubois, a French Marist whom I had met two years before at a dinner of CIELT (presided over by the Countess of Paris and Professor Lejeune) which had already suggested that I should study the inscriptions of Ugolotti, as well as three enlargements of the Holy Face to better show these inscriptions.

(1) Later he wrote to me very kindly: "Here in my quiet room, where I can be closer to guests who have come especially to see me, I am in the best conditions to hear. And you would not have to raise your voice!"

Marion and I showed him the precise locations of the Greek letters (rezw) and others in Latin (INNECE). Father Dubarle decided that he "did not see them." He was adamant. Then he showed us a gigantic work that Ugolotti had offered in 1976 to Monseigneur J-C Thomas, founder of Montre-Nous Ton Visage, of which he considered himself to be only the "depository" (there were very few copies of this homage to the SINDONE intended for the Pope and for the Custodian). He then lent us the two large boxes 52 cm X 37 cm, containing sheets imprinted on only one side and many photographs, many of them in artificial colors, of which he had not been able to understand the interest. He asked us to explain their significance and to inform Mgr.Thomas of this loan.

Father Dubarle was of a character organized, precise and demanding: "my investigations relate to the history of the relic, its voyages, and not its contents." He used the term "relic" because for him the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin was beyond any doubt: this certainty provoked many disagreements in his own circles and in that of MNTV, whose members included, among others, Mr Jacques Evin (2), the stubborn defender of Tite and his (medieval) dating.

As for the "contents", he referred to the "letters", for which he said "I refuse to render a personal opinion and prefer to wait until more qualified researchers could give a valid explanation." For him, as for us, the explanations given up to the present date have not appeared very reliable.

Later, he decided to talk to us about the Pray Codex: he showed us the folds of the Shroud below the middle of the body, indicating that, in his opinion, it was not the "imagination of an artist," but rather was very significant. He looked in his library for an image of St. Lawrence and showed us the same fold in the same place. Was it a matter of a ritual of placing the Shroud under the body, as the folds under the head could indicate that at the time of unction it was used as a pillow, before the unfolded part of the Shroud would overlap the Body.

But it was not only that which intrigued him. Here is what he wrote on August 20, 1995 to president van Cauwenberghe: "The article of Miss Bongert on the manuscript Pray is of interest to me. One element of dating, very imprecise indeed, is the representation, in the scene of the anointing, of a fold of the Shroud below the legs of Christ. This fold does not exist any more in the relic of Turin, but Paul Vignon had deduced its existence owing to the fact that the frontal image stops midway between the knees and the feet. The cutting of the cloth was probably extremely ancient."

I must say that I did not understand even half of these views. I thus leave them, just as they are, to the shrewdness of the researchers.

(2) Director of the Radiocarbon Dating Center of the University of Lyon.

As I presented to him, as secretary of the Scientific Council of the CIELT, my greetings for the year 1996, and invited him to take part in IIIrd Symposium which would be held in Nice the following year, here is what I received back, concerning his *Histoire*:

I have a better French town to propose for the [undocumented years of the] Shroud currently kept in Turin. It is nothing less than Paris, and nothing less than the heart Paris, the Ste Chapelle, built to shelter the Crown of Thorns and which received a considerable number of other relics ceded by the Latin emperor of Constantinople Baldwin to Saint Louis. Among those was the “*Holy Cloth (linen) inserted in its casket*”, which had not been unfolded, and whose image hidden beneath the folds was not known. One can follow its absence from veneration in the liturgical feasts, then its disappearance following the unconscious gift, and finally its revelation at Lirey. And much later we see the consent of the gift by king Philip de Valois, at a time when the relic, having passed to the hands of the dukes of Savoy, had no more hope of being returned to Lirey or fear of being confiscated by the king of France. In 1537 Nice was not a part of the kingdom of France. It was necessary to await Napoleon 1st for a brief period, then Napoleon III with the help of finances.

As a good historian, he continued his letter with considerations of time (artificial centuries and millennia, without synchronicity as to the rise and fall of civilisations). And then he spoke of his "new work on the Shroud which should be published (delayed until 1997) in the *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*." (This was his work on Gregory Referendarius).

I mention, for the historians who have appreciated his works, in particular the two volumes of his irreplaceable *Histoire Ancienne du Linceul de Turin* and his translation and commentary of the homilie of Gregory Referendarius (pronounced on the occasion of the ceremonies of the transfer of the image of Edesse to Constantinople), that the huge archives of Father André-Marie are preserved in the library of the Convent Saint-Jacques (20 rue des tanneries, 75 013 Paris).

For the scientists, somewhat disturbed, both by the incongruous dating of British Museum, and by the offensive thoughtlessness of certain clergymen, as Father Maldame (rector of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse) exhuming the strange Memoire of Bishop d'Arcis quoted by the canon Ulysses Chevalier, the work of Father Dubarle was an oasis in which they can again find courage to face hard realities at a time of deep mystery in which the inexpressible image of the Crucified is written against the triumphs claimed by rationalist positivism. It is in this azure sky that he has helped to clarify, that our brother André-Marie, his work accomplished, has gone to enter the house of his Father. Let us be thankful that Christ has received him in his Kingdom, and may he continue to inspire us in our work.