

THE LIREY TOGA

A True Narrative

by

David Day

On the third day he rose again from the dead

Nicene Creed

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DEDICATED TO

GOD THE FATHER

JESUS CHRIST

&

THE HOLY SPIRIT

&

SAINT JOAN OF ARC

the

MAID OF ORLÉANS

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PREFACE

The following story is told about six hundred years after the events take place. In it are included writings of those times, from eyewitnesses of those days, in order to draw closer to those happenings and to see them through the eyes of those who were actually present. So the words of poets, chroniclers, knights and others who were involved tell their own stories and, in so doing, illuminate this time in history, the Hundred Years War, when a most extraordinary and important story unfolds. The works of scribes, done under the often difficult conditions of those faraway days now serve, when gathered together, to reveal a sequence of events that culminate in a most extraordinary conclusion. The scraping of those feather quills over rough vellum or heavy paper in some primitive monastic cell or draughty castle apartment were all working towards the revelation of an almost unbelievable yet true event.

SECTION ONE

CHAPTER 1 JERUSALEM.

When an innocent man is nailed to a cross of wood outside the old walls of a Middle Eastern town, it is the beginning of a new chapter for the world. When the Son of God dies for the redemption of Humankind this true story also begins. Amid the desolation of His followers and the turmoil of thoughts and feelings concerning Him among all and sundry, the totally innocent man, who is the Son of God, is laid to rest. He is wrapped in a linen shroud and placed in a newly-made tomb cut out of the rock and a large stone is used to seal the entrance.

⁵⁰*And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a councillor; and he was a good man, and a just:*

⁵¹*(The same man had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.*

⁵²*This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.*

⁵³*And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.*

Luke XXIII 50-53.

Afterwards, on the first day of the week:

²*And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.*

³*And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

Luke XXIV 2-3.

Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. As for the Holy Shroud, it too has been effected and an imprint of Christ's body has been left on it. Meanwhile, Joseph of Arimathea is strongly reputed later to have travelled to England, most likely in 37 AD, to Somerset, where he establishes a Christian community in the area known as Avalon, about present day Glastonbury. The Holy Shroud eventually finds its way to France where it is well-documented during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

CHAPTER 2 DE NOYERS.

It began, quite simply, with the name, Noyes. On my father's side, my great-grandmother's maiden name. An unusual word, containing both affirmation and the opposite as well as providing a route of conjecture and a desire to know its origins. And so it was, with the Web at my disposal, I found myself with no choice but to set out on the quest that was destined to uncover a remarkable story beyond anything I had ever imagined.

It could be described as a form of electronic archaeology, only possible fairly recently, and it proved to be absolutely ideal for the task in hand. There would be no kneeling and scraping with trowels while suffering the inclement vicissitudes of the weather however fascinating this kind of approach may be at times. One would miss the enjoyment of certain attractive, rural locations and the company and camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts for things past. I would not hold in my hand a Roman coin last touched by a human being two thousand years ago, and what speculation that spawns, but I would uncover people, their lives and activities and, in the case of my forebears, the events with which they were associated.

And so I set out as a traveller on the Web or perhaps explorer would be a more accurate title. No special clothing or sturdy boots, just a PC, a router, the 'phone line and an old battered chair and, of course, the ever-present cup of coffee. Do I remember the day when it all began? No, but there are moments from the quest that the memory is most unlikely to surrender. These were occasions when some singular coincidence would make itself known causing a distinct elevation of the eyebrows and intake of breath.

A minimum of research revealed the family name to be derived from the French, De Noyers – noyer meaning walnut. I typed into a search engine and sought out old genealogies that spoke of dim and distant lives of family members in far off times. However, it is the generations who live through the Hundred Years War who drew my attention. And the Hundred Years War is not such a neat and straightforward event as would at first appear. As such it is a snare for the unwary history examiner who, knowing the date of the beginning or end of this prolonged conflict between England and France, thinks they have merely to add or subtract a century. In fact, the Hundred Years War lasts from 1337-1453 – 116 years. It is a time of battles; Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt, and others less well known between France and England and their respective allies during, what is for France, a time of great turmoil and for many, appalling suffering. Anarchy reigns and as if this were not enough it is a time that includes the ravages of the Plague. While on the even more important spiritual front, the Western Schism divides the Roman Catholic Church.

And so I progressed, at the mere touch of the letters of the keyboard, I would be deluged with full and fascinating screens of information. And I soon found how easy it is to be sidetracked as one interesting link leads to another and then to another until the origin of the search is temporarily forgotten.

As my quest continued, in what seemed like no time at all, a grand medieval scene was displayed rich in pageantry, colour and historical romance. Old genealogies, continued to feed the imagination with names and characters, individuals who had felt the heat of a summer sun, smelled the new-mown grass of medieval France and shivered in the winters of those more primitive days. With lance, shield and crested helm, armoured knights lived on between the covers of old leather-bound tomes. I was not fortunate enough to have yellowing, ancient documents crackle between my fingers revealing a name here, a note there, encapsulating a life, its achievements, successes and sometimes failures. However, ancient pages appeared on screen and the imagination was granted no rest when paragraphs at times described names and events familiar from the history books – the battles of Crécy, of Poitiers, Agincourt and others, in some of which the family had played a part.

DE NOYERS CASTLES.

1 CHÂTEAU DE MONTCORNET.

I soon discover that one branch of the family occupies a castle in the Ardennes in the north east corner of France. This is extensive, spread out, turrets and walls over a large promontory, constructed between the 11th C and 12th C. According to Pattou, (2005a), it becomes the home of Miles VII de Noyers (1271-1350), following his marriage to Jeanne de Rimogne *dite de Rumigny*, dame de Montcornet. Miles VII is known as le Grand de Noyers. Among other roles he also fulfils that of Marshal of France, Ambassador of Philippe the Bel, Grand Bouteiller of Burgundy and of France and Porte Oriflamme. Hourseau, (2012: 67), states that his activities extend throughout all royal affairs and that by placing those close to him in key positions, it is the Burgundians and Champenois who come to dominate the political scene.

2 CHÂTEAU DE NOYERS-SUR-SEREIN.

Home of another branch of the family, this is the castle referred to by the poet and historian, Jean Froissart (1337-1405), in his book: *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles on England, France and Spain, and the adjoining countries*. Concerning Château de Noyers-sur-Serein, the following is the relevant section from his works. King Edward III of England has just failed to capture the city of Rheims:

The king of England left the road to Auxerre on his right hand, and took that which leads to Noyers his intentions were to enter Burgundy and pass his Lent there. He and his whole army marched above Noyers; but he would not suffer any attack to be made on it since the lord of it was his prisoner since the battle of Poitiers. (Bourchier, Berners, Macaulay, 1908).

The number of individuals who are captured by the enemy and obliged to pay a ransom is considerable. Jean, the French king, had been captured at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, brought to London and no less than three million gold crowns asked for his release. The French nation, despite its wealth, but perhaps not surprisingly, was unable to meet the demand. At the battle of Poitiers about 2000 French were taken prisoner. (Meiklejohn, 1897).

CHAPTER 3 DE CHARNY, DE VERGY AND DE NOYERS, THE THREE FAMILIES.

While searching for information on the De Noyers family, sooner or later, one is bound to stumble upon the name, Geoffroi I de Charny. What interests me in particular about him is his involvement with the Holy Shroud. As a Christian I have, for a long time, been interested in this very unusual object and, having read about it and weighed the evidence, I believe it to be the genuine article. However, any further information I could discover about it would be welcome and would, perhaps, be forthcoming through Geoffroi I de Charny. I would also be delighted soon to learn that my distant ancestors were somehow involved in the story of this amazing relic.

Since there are mainly three families involved in this narrative it would help to know a little about each of them. Furthermore, since it is much easier to follow such details when represented in the form of a diagram, I recommend having on screen, or, should you possess the facilities, the printing out of the three genealogies from Pattou's website. (Pattou, 2005). The one of the *Seigneurs de Mont-Saint-Jean & de Charny* and those of *Famille de Noyers* and *Seigneurs de Donzy & de Vergy* are all at the same address. The following paragraphs, covering the basic details of the three families, are easier to understand when referring to these genealogies.

INTERRELATIONS: DE CHARNYS, DE VERGYS, DE NOYERS.

Geoffroi I de Charny's father is Jean de Charny, lord of Charny and Lirey. His mother is Marguerite de Joinville. This is the family of Jean de Joinville who wrote the biography of King Louis IX of France, also known as Saint Louis. Geoffroi I de Charny is born at the beginning of the fourteenth century. He is one of three children, having two brothers. He appears in 1337 at the outbreak of the Hundred Years War between England and France. (Pattou, 2005b). Despite his genealogy, Geoffroi I de Charny is described as being: *of relatively lowly social background*. (Wilson, 2011).

The De Charny family is a cadet branch of the Lords of Mont-Saint-Jean created for Pons by his brother Guillaume I de Mont-Saint-Jean, ergo, Pons is the first of the De Charnys. In around 1211, Pons de Mont-Saint-Jean marries Sybille de Noyers. Going even further back than Sybille de Noyers, by one generation, the mother of Pons is Elizabeth de Vergy. This has now introduced the other two families important in this story – the Noyers and the Vergys and these are only two of the inter-marriages between these families and the Charnys. (Pattou, 2005b).

COATS OF ARMS.

These are to be seen represented in the above genealogies. (Pattou, 2005). The coat of arms of the De Noyers translates as a golden eagle on an azure background. The family motto is: *A message of Peace*.

THE TEMPLARS.

Like so many others in the Middle Ages, who were involved in the passage of arms, all three families take part in the crusades and I now include the following quotes from the book: *Templar Families: Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France*, by Jochen Schenk (2012), because they serve to show some of the earlier interrelations between the three families in this context. But first a brief appraisal of the Knights Templar. They can be termed as comprising a religious military order. A martial organisation, amongst other things, they took upon themselves the role of protecting pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem or other places of pilgrimage, as they made their sometimes long journeys through often dangerous territories. Recognised by the Church in 1129 at the Council of Troyes, the Templars take their name from the time when, as crusaders, they

had lived close to the Temple in Jerusalem. They became rich and owners of many properties throughout Europe, and elsewhere, some of them military. They lent money to the King of France, Philip the Fair, who, unable to repay his debt, seized their assets and had them arrested in 1307. Some were taken to the Château of Chinon and locked in the ground floor of the Coudray Tower, one Geoffroi de Charny among them who, according to Ian Wilson (2010), is very likely related to Geoffroi I de Charny of Lirey. The French Templars were seriously wronged by their king who had many of them tortured and killed.

Jochen Schenk provides information on the involvement of the Charnys, Vergys and Noyers with the Knights Templar:

The lords of Noyers continued to appear in Templar Charters after the Third Crusade and supported the Temple throughout much of the thirteenth century. The lords of Pierre-Perthuis made gifts to the Order on at least two occasions after the Third Crusade, once in 1219, when preparations for the Fifth Crusade were under way, and a second time in 1260.
(Schenk, 2012).

The lords of Vergy, who married into the family of Mont-St-Jean before 1152 and later into that of Noyers, and whose relatives, the lords of Pierre-Perthuis, occasionally engaged with the Templar community of Saulce-d'Island in the thirteenth century, gave to the Templars from before 1183 until at least 1271, but were mentioned in the charters for even longer.
(Schenk, 2012).

Deals were done with the Templars to cover the costs of going on crusade. Schenk (2012) mentions how some would agree to the Templars utilising their lands while they were away. The Templars even devised a system of travellers' cheques. Money deposited with them before the crusader or pilgrim set out could be withdrawn, when required, at some distant Templar outpost. The above quotes are interesting because they mention the lords of Pierre-Perthuis. When Geoffroi I de Charny marries his first wife, Jeanne de Toucy, she brings with her, as her dowry, the Château of Pierre-Perthuis so this provides a link to him.

CHAPTER 4 GEOFFROI I DE CHARNY AND THE HOLY SHROUD.

The De Charny family is a cadet branch of the Lords of Mont-Saint-Jean, (Pattou, 2005b), and the formidable, multi-towered Château of Mont-Saint-Jean is an impressive edifice. The great donjon, or keep, with a tower at each of its four corners is set in a large area within the curtain wall. To the south of it is a substantial chapel while to the north the enclosure or bailey stretches away offering generous facility for martial exercise. A fertile place for the imagination, the ring of sword on polished armour plate is quick to invade the mind and the duller sound of blow upon dented shield. Men, horses, the accoutrements of armed conflict amid the confines of a castle on a day in the Middle Ages are easily envisaged here.

Many are required to run and maintain such an establishment as well as to protect it in time of threat. Soldiers comprising the castle guard, armourers, blacksmiths, stable hands, servants assigned to various duties within the castle itself, all are necessary to fulfil the day-to-day needs. For the provision of food and, in the winter, heating, are the busy activities of hunting and wood gathering from the forests. Large logs, fit for enormous fireplaces, would flare and roar against the winter's damp and penetrating cold. For some, hanging tapestries provide scant insulation against damp and freezing stone. Furniture is of the most primitive and uncomfortable where there is no real relaxation to be found. Occasional furs underfoot on stone floors afford a vestige of comfort while the kitchen is probably one of the most welcoming areas. Here is one, or perhaps more than one, enormous fireplace with large spits to accommodate deer, sheep, oxen and such like to satisfy fearsome appetites born of active lives under trying conditions. Summer would be preferable, the castle then providing welcome cool amid the heat of the day. Such is the home of Geoffroi I de Charny's forbears.

Before 1336 Geoffroi I de Charny marries Jeanne de Toucy, lady of Pierre-Perthuis. (Pattou, 2005b). Pierre-Perthuis translates as, *stony gap*, describing admirably the hamlet's situation between rocky hills in the arrondissement or area of Avallon. The château, a smaller stronghold than Mont-Saint-Jean, and now in a ruined condition, Pierre-Perthuis forces the imagination to work harder to picture Geoffroi I de Charny here, those many years ago.

In 1337 Geoffroi I de Charny is reported, on page 56 of Alain Hourseau's book; *Autour du Saint Suaire et de la collégiale de Lirey (Aube)*, (2012), as fighting in Gascony under the command of the Comte d'Eu and later, in 1339, taking part in the defence of Honnecourt-sur-Escaut, page 57. Hourseau, also on page 57 of his book, makes mention of Geoffroi I de Charny at Cambrai, where with other knights he assists in the lifting of the siege of the town. At the time, 1339, he is, according to Froissart, (Bourchier, Berners, Macaulay, 1908), around thirty years of age and a bachelier, with six squires. Bachelier is the term applied to a young noble who has not yet been knighted. (Hourseau, 2012: 57).

When it comes to Life and the way it should be lived, the sagacious Geoffroi I de Charny states his case unequivocally in his writings which are most revealing of him. He claims that if a man is really wise he gives thanks to God and the Virgin Mary for any success he may achieve and does not attribute it merely to his own ability. This is Geoffroi I de Charny, a committed Christian as well as a chivalrous knight.

Geoffroi I de Charny's first wife, Jeanne de Toucy, passes away in around 1352. His second wife is Jeanne de Vergy, lady of Savoisy. (Pattou, 2005b). Jeanne de Vergy's family is again an ancient one, tracing its roots back into the distant past. The importance of this marriage to Jeanne de Vergy centres around the Holy Shroud since she provides, in my opinion based on present historical information, the most likely way it may have come into the De Charny family.

THE HOLY SHROUD.

The history of the Holy Shroud is, up until the time of the De Charny's, open to much conjecture and scholarly research. About thirteen hundred years of the convoluted and tormented history of the Middle East serve to reveal tempting clues to its whereabouts at particular times as well as to veil other details one would dearly like to know. It is encouraging to discover items or fractions of items one is seeking and frustrating to discover two articles completely at loggerheads. Yet the quest is thoroughly fascinating, even addictive.

The principal authority on the Holy Shroud, or Shroud of Turin as it is now described, is Ian Wilson. His book, written in 1978, *The Turin Shroud*, served to encourage many to consider this most unusual icon, to examine the information pertaining to it and to wonder at the amazing claim made on its behalf.

The Holy Shroud is a piece of linen cloth measuring about fourteen feet in length by four feet in width. On it is the image of a man together with further markings consistent with that individual's having been crucified. This has led many to believe it was used by Joseph of Arimathea to wrap the body of Christ following the Crucifixion.

Radio-carbon testing suggests its time of manufacture to be in medieval days leading many to brand it a fake. However, the Holy Shroud has been repaired on more than one occasion and it has been suggested that samples tested could have been contaminated with later material giving an incorrect result. An alternative argument to this, and one to which I subscribe, is that the means whereby Christ is raised from the dead effects the cloth's result when radio-carbon dated. For those who consider it a fake many suggest the marks on the cloth to be the result of paint. In other words they believe it to be the work of a medieval artist. As for the original fabric of the Holy Shroud, it is in accordance with that produced in the time of Christ in Palestine. Furthermore, seeds from that part of the world are claimed to have been found amongst its fibres.

The first photograph of the Holy Shroud was taken by Secondo Pia at the 1898 Exhibition in Turin Cathedral. What was revealed on the negative plate was a positive picture of a man, the Shroud itself having acted in the photographic process as a negative image.

THE HOLY SHROUD AND THE DE CHARNY FAMILY.

Concerning the Holy Shroud's appearance with the De Charny family, there appear to be several possible ways this may have occurred. There is the other, already-mentioned, Geoffroi de Charny, member of the Knights Templar, who was incarcerated in the Coudray Tower at Chinon. As to the relationship of this individual to Geoffroi I de Charny of Pierre-Perthuis, what exactly is it?

Ian Wilson in his book: *The Shroud. The 2000-year-old mystery solved*, (2010), has more to say on the subject on pages 275-277.

Geoffroi de Charny, the Templar Master of Normandy, was burned at the stake in 1314. Geoffroi I de Charny, of Lirey, was the first recorded owner of the Shroud in the west, beginning his appearance in French historical records around 1337 and living until 1356. So was there some family connection between the two by which the Shroud could have passed from the Order of Knights Templar into the de Charny family of Lirey? The short answer is that although the available genealogical records are insufficient to provide absolute proof, enough has been learned about both individuals during the last three decades to make the family connection near definite.

... Location-wise Geoffroi de Charny the Templar is known to have come from a knightly family and

to have been admitted to the Order near Étampes to the south of Paris in the year 1269.

Again, concerning the Holy Shroud's appearance with the De Charny family, Ian Wilson, who outlines a number of ways this may have occurred, including the above mention of possible Templar involvement, now describes the route of acquisition I, at present, consider most likely:

Again, a possible means to Geoffroi I's acquisition of the Shroud is that his second wife, Jeanne de Vergy, had members of the Besançon-based de la Roche family among her ancestors. Jeanne de Vergy's great-great-great-grandfather Otho de la Roche had been with the Fourth Crusade, and in 1205 he acquired the lordship of Athens, living on until 1224.

Having come to occupy such a prestigious title Otho de la Roche would have power and influence in the Mediterranean theatre. It is during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, on the occasion of the disgraceful sacking of Constantinople by the crusaders, when religious relics and treasures are plundered, that the Holy Shroud is taken. In a position of such high authority, Otho de la Roche could have come into possession of the Shroud.

GEOFFROI I DE CHARNY AND THE CHURCH AT LIREY.

In September 1342, at the Battle of Morlaix in Brittany, Geoffroi I de Charny, according to (Wilson, 2011), *given command of the first line of French cavalry* against the English, is taken prisoner by Richard Talbot. He is incarcerated in Goodrich Castle, in England, by his captor. (Wilson, 2011).

And now a pause, since this is a defining moment in his life. He prays to be released and, should his prayer be granted, promises to build a church and dedicate it to the Mother of Christ. His prayer is granted and he quickly gains his freedom in 1343.

However, work does not begin on the church at Lirey until 1353 when it is constructed completely of wood in a mere four months. (Hourseau, 2012: 88). Although it is interesting to observe that in the charter he signs together with King Philip VI no mention is made of his wishing to preserve a holy relic in the proposed church. It is to be for the salvation of the souls of himself, Geoffroi I de Charny, his wife and his predecessors. (Hourseau, 2012: 61).

It is in this church that the Holy Shroud will be exhibited to the public and, here at Lirey, a medal is produced for visiting pilgrims. On it is depicted the Holy Shroud together with the coats of arms of both Geoffroi I de Charny and his wife Jeanne de Vergy.

One of these, found in the the river Seine in 1855, is now in the Cluny museum. (Hourseau, 2012: 231).

For France, the Battle of Crécy in 1346, proves a disaster. The fifteen thousand Genoese bowmen fighting on the French side suffer from having wet bowstrings and the sun in their eyes. However, the English bowmen manage to keep their bowstrings dry and return the poorly aimed attack of the Genoese with a hail of well-aimed and devastating arrows. King Edward's son, Edward the Black Prince, finds himself in the thick of battle, under heavy attack from the leader of the French knights, the Count of Alençon. Sending for assistance from his father, the latter, having found out that his son is neither wounded nor unhorsed, refuses, saying: *... let the boy win his spurs: for I wish, if God so order it, that the day may be his.* (Meiklejohn, 1897). And so it comes to pass.

One event of supreme bravery, among many that day, must be that involving the blind King of Bohemia fighting on the French side. His horse, tied between the horses of two other knights, he demands: *I pray you, to lead me so far into the fight that I may strike one good blow with this old*

sword of mine! Immense bravery is shown by all three participants who, inevitably, perish in the battle. The French again are defeated. (Meiklejohn, 1897).

THE ORIFLAMME, THE BANNER OF SAINT- DENIS.

Both Geoffroi I de Charny and Miles VII de Noyers are accorded, the great honour of being chosen as Porte Oriflamme, bearer of the *Bannière de Saint Denis*. The Oriflamme, the red banner of the French kings, was so named because, together with its colour, the pointed edges of its material gave it the appearance of a burning flame when blowing in the wind. Kept at the Abbey of Saint Denis, just north of Paris, it was with great ceremony that it was taken from there by the king before he was to go into battle. In his presence, together with valiant knights and important members of the realm, Mass was celebrated. During this ceremony, the knight chosen by the king to perform the role of Porte Oriflamme would swear his oath on the Body of Christ and the relics of Saint Denis. This oath, among other promises, describes how the Porte Oriflamme is going to hold and manage the banner to the honour and profit of the king and his kingdom come what may and would not, under any circumstances, forsake his charge. This solemn and exceptional ceremony is described in great detail by (Rey, 1837: 182). This celebrated banner, the Oriflamme, is a topic filling many volumes.

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS.

On 19th September, 1356, Edward the Black Prince, having led a raiding expedition in the mid-western area of France, is at Poitiers. Here, with his army's provisions exhausted he is faced with a French force five times the size of his own. Despite offering to surrender his army's booty and promising other concessions, the French insist that they take him prisoner together with one hundred English knights. (Meiklejohn, 1897). This he refuses. A number of notable men, both English and French, speak before the battle, including Geoffroi I de Charny, who, to reduce the inevitable carnage, suggests one hundred knights from each side engage in conflict rather than both armies. Sadly his advice is not followed.

Froissart describes the Battle of Poitiers where Geoffroi I de Charny bore the Oriflamme:

... the lord Guichard d'Angle, who fought that day by the king, right valiantly, and so did the lord of Charny, on whom was great press, because he bare the sovereign banner of the king's: his own banner was also in the field, the which was of gules, three scutcheons silver. So many Englishmen and Gascons came to that part, that perforce they opened the king's battle, so that the Frenchmen were so mingled among their enemies that sometime there was five men upon one gentleman. There was taken the lord of Pompadour and the lord Bartholomew of Burghersh, and there was slain Sir Geoffroi de Charny with the king's banner in his hands.... (Bourchier, Berners, Macaulay, 1908: 128).

GEOFFROI I DE CHARNY'S CAREER.

At Poitiers, on the field of battle, he had given his life to save that of his king, Jean II le Bon. In so doing he had fulfilled his oath sworn at Saint Denis before his king and his peers. And true to another oath, he had built the church at Lirey where the Holy Shroud would be housed and exhibited.

Geoffroi I de Charny had been knighted at the siege of Aiguillon in 1346. Wilson (2011), has linked this to some brave action by Geoffroi I de Charny at Smyrna when the fortress was taken.

He had experienced both success and failure in battle – twice captured, namely at Morlaix and

Calais. In 1347 he had been made advisor to the king who also nominated him Porte Oriflamme, while in 1348 he became governor of Picardy and captain of Saint-Omer. In 1352 he is elected to become a Knight of the Order of the Star. Further, he fulfils a diplomatic role at the highest levels such as in 1351, when he is involved in peace talks in Flanders. (Hourseau, 2012: 249). This being the case, and with Miles VII de Noyers having become Marshal of France, Grand Bouteiller of France and, like Geoffroi I de Charny, Porte Oriflamme the two would surely have spent time together discussing affairs of state before, very likely, broaching topics of a more martial nature.

Alan Hourseau's comment regarding Geoffroi I de Charny and Miles VII de Noyers is revealing. He states that the two men were well-acquainted and, not only frequently fought in the same battles, but were also related. (Hourseau, 2012: 67).

Geoffroi I de Charny has been described as the epitome of knighthood in terms of both chivalry and fighting prowess, and he not unnaturally became the leading knight of Europe. In his day, he was recognised as the ultimate authority on questions pertaining to chivalry and knightly decorum. A man of many parts, he was also a writer whose works include a book on Chrétien of Troyes, a man particularly important in this story – Chrétien of Troyes being the first writer on King Arthur to mention the Holy Grail.

Other works by Geoffroi I de Charny include: *Questions concerning the Joust, Tournament and War, The Order of Chivalry* and *The Book of Charny*. (Hourseau, 2012: 249).

Without doubt, here is a truly outstanding individual. Yet, above and beyond all the achievements which constitute his most illustrious career, this is the man who establishes that church at Lirey where the Holy Shroud is first displayed in France. This is the man whose family has in its care the Holy Shroud at that very important time of its presence in France during the Hundred Years War. Without doubt the Holy Shroud was divinely placed. With the De Charny family it was in safe hands – safe and most appropriate hands.

There is now one important item to be mentioned here. This is Geoffroi I de Charny's involvement with the implementation of the chivalric order known as the *Company of the Star*. Ian Wilson in the BSTS Newsletter No. 76 Part 2 (2013a), describes it very succinctly:

The Company of the Star was founded to reflect in real life the story of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, whose ultimate prize, for the perfect knight Galahad, was highly privileged vision of the crucified Christ within the Holy Grail.
(Wilson, 2013a).

The Order was instituted by Jean II le Bon of France in 1351, the motto being, *Monstrant regibus astra viam*. "The stars show the way to kings." (Berry, 1828). In this case it is one star that is being referred to, namely, the Star of Bethlehem.

SECTION TWO

CHAPTER 5 JOAN OF ARC – THE BEGINNING.

As I followed the story of the Holy Shroud and the course of the De Noyers family's fortunes, a very important historical event was looming ever closer. This was the birth of Joan of Arc on 6th January, Epiphany, 1412. It was at Domrémy, a small village in the Lorraine region of France, in the north-east, that Jeanne D'Arc was born into a Christian family who owned a modest, detached house on a small farm. This same house with its single, down-sloping roof and small windows, exists to this day and Domrémy remains, thankfully, a tiny village that has not spread and destroyed the local landscape in which she grew up. Were she to visit her home today she would recognise many of the places she would have known so well. There is much remaining of the original, nearby church of Saint Rémy where she prayed and worshipped and was baptised and the present font is the one used on that very special occasion. Added to this, and by virtue of the life she lived, there is also an immense amount of information about her, much of it substantiated.

Her family consists of her mother, Isabelle from Vouthon Bar, who is entitled to use the surname Romée, having been on a pilgrimage to Rome. Her father is Jacques Darc, her brothers are Jacquemin, Pierre and Jean. She also has a sister, Catherine.

As God can be seen at work during the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, so too He can be seen at work in the life of Joan of Arc and what is particularly interesting is the most blatant and obvious manner in which He is present. As in the case of Jesus Christ, before her birth, Joan of Arc is also prophesied. Furthermore, she also, as does Christ, makes accurate prophecies concerning herself.

Joan is born into most difficult times. In 1425 the area we recognise today as France consists of Burgundy to the east while in the south-west much territory belongs to the English crown, this in the area of Gascony. In the north of France, apart from Brittany, the territory is occupied, by the English, down to the river Loire. France is torn apart with fighting between different factions. Marauding bands ravage the countryside with invading English freebooters and others stealing, burning and generally laying-waste the land and, as a result, there is much human suffering. The Hundred Years War is under-way due to Edward III of England having laid claim to the kingdom of France, by reason of his being the grandson of King Philip IV of France. Burgundy, almost a kingdom in its own right, is allied with the English against the French. The French for their part are supported by the Orléanists or Armagnacs, followers of Charles, Duke of Orléans. The main ally of France is Scotland.

Joan's village of Domrémy is in Burgundy but in an area loyal to the king of France. With the situation as it is, her family is sometimes forced, with other villagers, to take their livestock to the Castle of Bourlémont nearby. Here, within the castle confines, is increased security.

(Lowell, 1896).

Joan, who is of a highly religious nature, while still at a young age, begins to hear her Voices:

When I was thirteen, I had a voice from God to help me to govern myself. The first time, I was terrified. The voice came to me about noon: it was summer, and I was in my father's garden. I had not fasted the day before. I heard the voice on my right hand, towards the church. There was a great light all about.

I vowed then to keep my virginity for as long as it should please God.

I saw it many times before I knew it was Saint Michael. Afterwards he taught me and showed me such things that I knew that it was he.

He was not alone, but duly attended by heavenly angels. I saw them with the eyes of my body as well as I see you. And when they left me, I wept, and I wished that they might have taken me with them. And I kissed the ground where they had stood, to do them reverence.

Above all, Saint Michael told me that I must be a good child, and that God would help me. He taught me to behave rightly and to go often to church. He said that I would have to go into France.

He told me that Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret would come to me, and that I must follow their counsel; that they were appointed to guide and counsel me in what I had to do, and that I must believe what they would tell me, for it was at our Lord's command.

He told me the pitiful state of the Kingdom of France. And he told me that I must go to succour the King of France.

Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret had rich crowns on their heads. They spoke well and fairly, and their voices are beautiful – sweet and soft.

The name by which they often named me was Jehanne the Maid, child of God.

They told me that my King would be restored to his Kingdom, despite his enemies. They promised to lead me to Paradise, for that was what I asked of them.

Twice and thrice a week the voice told me that I must depart and go into France.

And the voice said that I would raise the siege before Orléans. And it told me to go to Vaucouleurs, to Robert de Baudricourt, captain of the town, who would give me men to go with me.

And I answered the voice that I was a poor girl who knew nothing of riding and warfare.

(Trask, 1996: 5-7).

The figure of Moses, herding his father-in-law's sheep near Mount Sinai and hearing God's voice from the burning bush telling him to return to Egypt and save His people, Exodus 3., is not so dissimilar to the case of Joan being instructed by her Voices to save France. Neither is the case of the Old Testament prophet, Amos, so different when he is called by God from his work herding cattle and caring for sycamore trees, to prophecy to the people of Israel. Amos 7. 14-15. It is on her father's farm at Domrémy where, among other duties, she attends the livestock that the young Joan often hears her Voices, those of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Margaret of Antioch. And for the amazing mission entrusted to her by God she is to become, like Joshua, like King David, a military leader and commander. As her Voices become ever more insistent Joan feels compelled to follow their instructions.

She persuades her uncle, Durand Laxart, to take her to see Robert de Baudricourt in Vaucouleurs, about twelve miles away. It is 13th May, 1428 and she is sixteen. De Baudricourt, Captain of the Royal Garrison, listens to her story and is unimpressed and nothing is achieved by her visit.

In 1428 there is an Anglo-Burgundian raid on Domrémy. At the same time Vaucouleurs comes under siege and the town's captain, the French-sympathising, Robert de Baudricourt, is persuaded to

remain neutral and not take sides with Charles the Dauphin. During the raid on Domrémy, Joan and her family are forced to flee to Neufchateau. On returning to their village they find the fields laid waste and their home, like others, damaged by fire. (Lowell, 1896).

In February, 1429, for the third time, she goes to Vaucouleurs to see De Baudricourt. She waits in the town for several days, often praying in the castle's underground chapel:

I know that Jeanne came to Vaucouleurs, and said that she wished to go to the Dauphin. I was then young, and attached to the Chapel of the Blessed Mary at Vaucouleurs. I often saw Jeanne in this Chapel; she behaved with great piety, attended Mass in the morning, and remained a long time in prayer. I have also seen her in the crypt of the Chapel on her knees before the Blessed Mary, her face sometimes bent to the ground, sometimes raised to heaven. She was a good and holy maiden.

Messire Jean Lefumeaux, Canon of the chapel of Saint Mary at Vaucouleurs.

(Frohlick, 2013b).

The situation is desperate. The English have placed Orléans under siege and France *hangs by a thread*. Orléans, on the river Loire, is the key to the country, whoever takes it wins France. Eventually Robert de Baudricourt provides her with armour, a horse and a sword and on 22nd February, 1429, during a very wet winter, clad in male attire: ... *I do it at our Lord's bidding and in his service...* (Trask, 1996:118), she leaves Vaucouleurs, passing through the still-existing Gate of France, on her way to see the Dauphin in Chinon. Finally the setting out, the going forth after years of insistence from her Voices has now come about. It is the beginning of a momentous venture.

And the third time he received me and gave me men. The voice had told me that so it would come to pass.

The words of Joan of Arc.

(Trask, 1996: 15).

Robert de Baudricourt made those who went with me swear that they would guide me well and safely.

The words of Joan of Arc.

(Trask, 1996: 16).

For this dangerous journey, on horseback and of almost four hundred miles mainly through enemy territory, the company Baudricourt provides is described by the squire, Bertrand de Poulengy:

Then we started with her to seek the Dauphin, together with Julian, my servant, Jean de Honnecourt, servant of Jean de Metz, Colet de Vienne, and Richard the archer.

(Frohlick, 2013b).

Colet de Vienne is the emissary of the Dauphin.

Their travelling is done mostly at night for reasons of safety. It is winter of the year 1429 and it is a cold, wet and dangerous ride covering over thirty miles a day. Of the rivers they have to cross many of the bridges are held by English or Burgundian forces. To avoid being detected, this means

fording cold and sometimes treacherous waters – bad enough at the best of times but, wearing armour, a whole lot worse. In the words of Metz:

On the way she always wished to hear Mass. She said to us: "If we can, we shall do well to hear Mass." But, for fear of being recognised, we were only able to hear it twice. I had absolute faith in her. Her words and her ardent faith in God inflamed me. I believe she was sent from God; she never swore, she loved to attend Mass, she confessed often, and was zealous in giving alms. Many times was I obliged to hand out to her the money she gave for the love of God. While we were with her, we found her always good, simple, pious, an excellent Christian, well-behaved, and God fearing. When we arrived at Chinon, (March 6th, 1428.) we presented ourselves to the King's Court and Council. I know she had there to submit to long enquiries.

(Frohlick, 2013b).

When Joan is taken to see the Dauphin in the great château overlooking the town, an incident occurs that must have deeply impressed all present. Charles has one of his courtiers dress as if he were the Dauphin while placing himself where he is unlikely to be noticed. When Joan enters the room she is not taken in by the attempted deception and goes immediately to the real Dauphin. After the event she states:

And when I entered the King's chamber, I knew him among the rest, for the voice counselled me and revealed it to me.

(Trask, 1996: 20).

She is then granted a private audience with the Dauphin and during this she tells him something that he believes only he could possibly know. This further convinces him that she is genuine.

Informing Charles of her mission she announces:

I bring you news from God, that our Lord will give you back your kingdom, bringing you to be crowned at Rheims, and driving out your enemies. In this I am God's messenger. Do you set me bravely to work, and I will raise the siege of Orléans.

(Trask, 1996: 21).

They are face-to-face. The Divine Plan is coming together. One can imagine with certainty the delight, the immense joy, on the young Joan's face as, at last, she meets the future king and fulfils this part of the directions of her insistent Voices.

From Chinon, she is sent to Poitiers to go before a learned panel to answer questions concerning the Faith. In the words of Jean d'Aulon at the Nullification Trial of Joan of Arc:

... the King sent for certain Masters in Theology, Jurists, and other expert people,...

(Frohlick, 2013).

Again in the words of Jean d'Aulon, Steward to Joan of Arc:

... they did not see, know, or recognise in the Maid anything, excepting only whatever should be in a good Christian and true Catholic and for such they held her, and it was their opinion that she was very worthy;...

(Frohlick, 2013).

Within the great rambling structure that is the Château of Chinon, up on the hill above the river, she stays on the first floor of the Coudray Tower. And it is while at Chinon she first meets the young Duke of Alençon who is to fight alongside her in her campaigns. The following quote from this highly-placed member of the French aristocracy provides a delightful and valuable glimpse of their first meeting:

When Jeanne arrived at Chinon, I was at Saint Florent. One day, when I was hunting quails, a messenger came to inform me that there had come to the King a young girl, who said she was sent from God to conquer the English and to raise the siege then undertaken by them against Orleans. It was for this reason that I went on the following day to Chinon, where I found Jeanne talking with the King. Having approached them, she asked me who I was. "It is the Duke d'Alençon," replied the King. "You are welcome," she then said to me, "the more that come together of the blood of France the better it will be." The next day she went to the King's Mass; and when she perceived him she made a profound salutation. After Mass the King took her into his private room, where he kept me with him, as well as the Sieur de la Tremouille, after having sent away all the others. Jeanne then made several requests to the King amongst others that he would make a gift of his kingdom to the King of Heaven, because the King of Heaven, after this gift, would do for him as He had done for his predecessor; and reinstate him in all his rights. Many other things were said, up to the hour of dinner, which I do not remember. After dinner the King went for a walk; Jeanne coursed before him, lance in hand. Seeing her manage her lance so well I gave her a horse.

(Frohlick, 2013).

Joan is joined, early on by the, already mentioned, Jean d'Aulon who will serve as her squire throughout all her military endeavours. He will also prove an important witness at her Nullification Trial.

On 21st May, 1420, five years after the Battle of Agincourt, the infamous Treaty of Troyes had been drawn up. This was between Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy together with Isabel of Bavaria, the Queen of France, and Henry V, king of England. Essentially it granted Henry the right to succeed Charles VI of France as king, this to the disadvantage of his son, Charles the Dauphin.

In 1422, only two years after the signing of the treaty, Henry V had died of dysentery.

Two months after the death of Henry, Charles VI., king of France, also died; so that the infant Henry of Windsor was now king of England and France. But the Dauphin, who now took the title of Charles VII., contested his claim to the French throne. The territory, however, in his possession was so small that the English party styled him in scorn, not the king of France, but the king of Bourges. (Meiklejohn, 1897).

THE ROYAL COURT OF FRANCE.

The Dauphin, the future Charles VII, must have gazed over the fields of France on more than one occasion wondering just where to begin to regain his rightful kingdom. However, an important part of the solution to this monumental problem is to be found within his own court in the person of

Yolande of Aragon. The grand-daughter of John II of France and the daughter of Jeanne de Bar, she is married to Louis II, King of Naples and Duke of Anjou. She has several titles among them that of Queen of Jerusalem. In 1422, her daughter, Marie of France, marries Charles. The mother-in-law of the Dauphin is very pro-French, very wealthy and certainly influential. At Chinon, when she first meets the Dauphin, Joan also meets this same Yolande who will strongly support her cause. One who would not assist her and who would be her enemy from the beginning has already been mentioned by Jean II d'Alençon. He is, Sieur de La Trémoille.

CHAPTER 6 CONCERNING GEOFFROI II DE CHARNY AND THE HOLY SHROUD.

Geoffroi I de Charny's illustrious career had come to an end on the battlefield at Poitiers when he perished most honourably while protecting his king while bearing the Oriflamme of France. For a truly chivalrous knight this must be regarded as a glorious ending to a most honourable life.

He leaves behind his wife, Jeanne, his son Geoffroi II de Charny, and daughter Charlotte. Geoffroi I de Charny's widow, Jeanne, originally De Vergy, now marries Amé ou Aimon de Genève, seigneur d'Anthon. In 1392, Geoffroi II de Charny, marries Marguerite de Poitiers. They have three children, Marguerite, Henriette and Jeanne. (Pattou, 2005b). It is with Geoffroi II de Charny that the story of the Holy Shroud now continues.

A useful outline of this is found in Ian Wilson's, *Highlights of the Undisputed History*. (1996).

1355: According to the "D'Arcis Memorandum", written more than thirty years later, the first known expositions of the Shroud are held in Lirey at around this time. Large crowds of pilgrims are attracted and special souvenir medallions are struck. A unique surviving specimen can still be found today at the Cluny Museum in Paris. Reportedly, Bishop Henri refused to believe the Shroud could be genuine and ordered the expositions halted. The Shroud was then hidden away.

September 19, 1356: Geoffrey de Charny is killed by the English at the Battle of Poitiers, during a last stand in which he valiantly defends his king. Within a month, his widow, Jeanne de Vergy, appeals to the Regent of France to pass the financial grant, formerly made to Geoffrey, on to his son, Geoffrey II. This is approved a month later. The Shroud remains in the de Charny family's possession.

August 4, 1389: A letter signed by King Charles VI of France orders the bailiff of Troyes to seize the Shroud at Lirey and deposit it in another of Troyes' churches pending his further decision about its disposition.

August 15, 1389: The bailiff of Troyes reports that on his going to the Lirey church, the dean protested that he did not have the key to the treasury where the Shroud was kept. After a prolonged argument, the bailiff seals the treasury's doors so that the Shroud cannot be spirited away.

September 5, 1389: The king's First Sergeant reports to the bailiff of Troyes that he has informed the dean and canons of the Lirey church that "the cloth was now verbally put into the hands of our lord the king. The decision has also been conveyed to a squire of the de Charny household for conveyance to his master".

November (?), 1389: Bishop Pierre d'Arcis of Troyes appeals to anti-pope Clement VII at Avignon concerning the exhibiting of the Shroud at Lirey. He describes the cloth as bearing the double imprint of a crucified man and that it is being claimed as the true Shroud in which Jesus' body was wrapped, attracting crowds of pilgrims.

January 6, 1390: Clement VII writes to Bishop d'Arcis, ordering him to keep silent on the Shroud, under threat of excommunication. On the same date Clement writes a letter to Geoffrey II de Charny apparently restating the conditions under which expositions could be allowed. That day he also writes to other relevant individuals, asking them to ensure that his orders are obeyed.

June 1390: *A Papal bull grants new indulgences to those that visit Saint Mary of Lirey and its relics.*

(Wilson, 1996).

Geoffroi II de Charny passes away in 1398 and is buried at Froidmont in Belgium.

Ian Wilson, in his article: *The Tombstone of Geoffrey II de Charny at Froidmont*, provides further information including the very detailed likeness of the man together with the description of an exhibition of the Holy Shroud in the church at Lirey. (Wilson, 2013b), (Willemstad, 1398). The detailed depiction of Geoffroi II de Charny brings to mind the Holy Shroud.

After the passing of Geoffroi II de Charny it is with his daughter, Marguerite, born around 1393, that the story of the Shroud continues. In 1412, the year Joan of Arc is born, she marries her cousin, Jean de Bauffremont, who comes from an old and illustrious Burgundian family.

In 1415 Jean de Bauffremont is killed at the Battle of Agincourt (Pattou, 2005b). Also killed at Agincourt is Jean I d'Alençon the father of Jean II d'Alençon who fights alongside Joan of Arc.

Marguerite de Charny marries in 1418: *Humbert de Villersexel, comte de la Roche-en-Montagne*. (Pattou, 2005b).

July 6, 1418: *Due to danger from marauding bands, the Lirey canons hand over the Shroud to Humbert for safe-keeping. He keeps it in his castle of Montfort near Montbard. Later it is kept at Saint Hippolyte sur Doubs, in the chapel called Buessarts. According to seventeenth century chronicles annual expositions of the Shroud are held at this time in a meadow on the banks of the river Doubs called the Pré du Seigneur.*

(Wilson, 1996).

TIME FOR REFLECTION.

There are three incidents that shape this narrative. The first is in conjunction with the Château de Pierre-Perthuis, brought to Geoffroi I de Charny by his first wife Jeanne de Toucy in her dowry. This castle being in the area or arrondissement of Avallon, of course, brings to mind King Arthur.

The second incident occurs now, when I ask myself the question: Where is the Holy Shroud at Lirey in relation to the birthplace of Joan of Arc? A look at the map is thought-provoking. Lirey to Domrémy, in a straight line, is a mere 70 miles. Considering it had originated in Jerusalem, 70 miles is not very far at all and worth remembering. A thought soon follows; did Joan of Arc's mother ever see it? After all, she had made a pilgrimage to Rome so 70 miles should prove no problem for her. Does Joan of Arc ever set eyes on the Holy Shroud? Therein lies a Rembrandt or a Van Dyke painting. Reluctantly, I believe the answer has to be that she did not since such an occasion would, without doubt, have been recorded.

However, apart from such fascinating conjecture, the proximity of the Holy Shroud to Joan's birthplace of Domrémy lingers in the mind and I begin to wonder if there are other links between the Shroud and her life.

CHAPTER 7 JOAN OF ARC – POITIERS AND ONWARDS.

Now to continue with the all-important campaign of Joan of Arc. From Poitiers she sends an ultimatum to the English leaders occupying Orléans. At Poitiers, where Geoffroi I de Charny had perished in the battle of that same name and the Oriflamme had fallen, Joan of Arc is now about to set out to fulfil God's plan for her life. There is a continuation here, at Poitiers.

JHESUS MARIA

Her letter, written on Tuesday in Holy Week, 22nd March, 1429, is addressed, under the above heading to the King of England and the commanders of the English army besieging Orléans. She demands they:

... surrender to the Maid, who is sent here from God, King of Heaven, the keys of all the good towns you have taken and violated in France.

If they do not comply the English will face the consequences.

... I am sent here from God, King of Heaven, to put you, hand to hand, out of all France. Yet if they will yield obedience, I will grant them mercy.

... If you do not believe this news from God and the Maid, wherever we find you, there we shall strike; and we shall raise such a battle-cry as there has not been in France in a thousand years, if you will not do justice. And know surely that the King of Heaven will send more strength to the Maid than you can bring against her and her good soldiers in any assault. And when the blows begin, it shall be seen whose right is the better before the God of Heaven.

(Trask, 1996: 29).

Reading the above excerpts from her blunt ultimatum it is obvious she knows herself to be totally allied to God in the great venture that is unfolding before her.

JOAN OF ARC'S BANNERS AND PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

It is while at Tours that, as well as her armour, she has her banner made.

I asked the Lord's messengers what I should do. And they answered me, saying, "Take up the banner of your Lord." And thereupon I had a banner made.

The field of it was sewn with lilies, and therein was our Lord holding the world, with two angels, one on either hand. It was white, and on it were written the names Jhesus Maria, and it was fringed with silk.

But I loved my banner forty times better than my sword. And when I went against the enemy, I carried my banner myself, lest I kill any. I have never killed a man.

(Trask, 1996: 26-27).

Her own banner is triangular and measures at its maximum depth, three feet, and is twelve feet wide and split into two points at its extreme end.

It is possibly now that she sends for her sword. In her own words, spoken at her trial:

I sent to make search for another sword in the church of Saint Catherine at Fierbois, behind the altar. It was found there presently, all rusted, and on it there were five crosses. And the priests there rubbed it, and the rust fell away of itself.

I loved that sword, because it was found in the church of Saint Catherine, whom I loved.

(Trask, 1996: 26-27).

And so she leaves Tours, resplendent in her *white armour* – plain, unadorned – so that it reflects more light and, under certain circumstances, appears white, thus she rides her great war horse at the head of her army. The streets and squares of the town are packed with people, cheering and waving her on and what a remarkable moment this is as she leaves to meet the other part of her army in Blois. Consider the puissance, the hauteur, the remoteness of the nobility of medieval times from the ordinary citizen. Envisage the burnished chivalry, the shining knight mounted on his caparisoned charger, equipped at great cost, his shield proudly declaring his family coat of arms, knights and titles, arms and splendour, power and influence, riches and pride. How could a young farm girl, a mere seventeen years of age, possibly be placed in charge of the whole French army over and above these titled families schooled in the skills of warfare over the centuries? But it happens. It is God's will and here is a miracle.

One thing that runs through the whole of the life of Joan of Arc is sanctity. This applies continuously to her life with her compassionate attitude towards others, her constant praying, her church attendances and encounters with her Visions and Voices. It also applies to events with which she is involved. It is admirably demonstrated when she meets with her army at Blois where, one of the first things she does, is rid the baggage train of its prostitutes. On one occasion she is recorded as personally chasing one or some of them away, sword in hand. She strongly disapproves of blasphemy and censures any who use it. At Blois another banner is made:

At Blois she told me to have a banner made, round which the priests might assemble, and to have painted thereon the Image of our Savior crucified. I had it done, as she required of me. As soon as this banner was made, Jeanne, twice a day, morning and evening, charged me to assemble the priests around this banner: they then sang anthems and hymns to the Blessed Mary. Jeanne was with them, permitting only the soldiers who had that day confessed themselves to join her; she told the people to make confession, if they wished to come to this assemblage. There were Priests always ready to confess those in the army who wished to apply to them.

On leaving Blois to march to Orleans, Jeanne made all the priests assemble round this banner, and in this wise they marched at the head of the army. They departed, thus assembled, from the side of the Sologne, singing the "Veni Creator Spiritus" and many other anthems. On that and the two following days, we slept in the fields. On the third day we arrived at Orleans...

Father John Pasquerel. Chaplain to Joan of Arc.

(Frohlick, 2013).

Her squire also carries a pennon. It bears the scene of the Annunciation, Luke 1. 28-38, with the Archangel Gabriel presenting the Virgin Mary with a lily, a sign of her purity.

And so, with her spiritually-prepared army, Joan of Arc sets out from Blois for Orléans. The march takes place on 28th-29th April, 1429. More of her words from this time:

Trust in God. Make confession, and be shriven, for so God will help you. Being shriven, you shall have the victory, by God's help.

(Trask, 1996: 33).

Shriven: being freed from guilt and being reconciled with God.

Joan of Arc and her army reach Orléans, a town besieged by English and Burgundians:

In the midst of a terrible thunderstorm she marched through the English lines, unperceived and unopposed, and next morning showed herself with her banner on the walls of Orléans.

(Meiklejohn, 1897).

Over the next few days she leads her army against the enemy's positions around the city. One by one these fortifications are overcome until the siege of Orléans is lifted, most appropriately, on 8th May, Saint Michael the Archangel's Day. In a great change around from the days of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, other successes are soon to follow. In June are fought the battles of Jargeau, Meung-sur-Loire, Beaugency and Patay. Under the command of Joan of Arc the French are victorious in every one.

Guy de Laval is a young knight who fights alongside Joan throughout most of her campaign. In a letter dated 8th June, 1429, written to both his grandmother and mother, he gives an excellent description of her. Here, by means of his words, one of those moments lives on most vividly:

I went to see her at her dwelling: she had wine brought and told me we would soon be able to drink wine in Paris: and there appeared something totally divine about her being, and about the sight of her and the sound of her voice. On Monday (6 June), at the time of vespers, she left Selles to go to Romorantin three leagues away... the Marshal de Boussac and a large number of armed men and ordinary people with her; and I saw her mount horse all in white armour except for her head, a small hatchet in her hand on a great black steed which was at the front of her dwelling and was very agitated and would not suffer her to mount: and then she said: "Lead him to the cross" which was in front of the church near the road. And then she mounted and he was quiet, as if he were bound. And then she turned towards the front of the church which was close by, and said in a pretty female voice: "You, priests and people of the church, make processions and say prayers to God." And then she turned to the road saying: "Forward, forward", her unfurled banner carried by an elegant page and with her small hatchet in her hand. And her own brother who had arrived eight days before, also left with her, all in white armour...

(Buchon, 1838).

Translation by author.

Guy de Laval's description of Joan is understandable. It is to be expected: *...and there appeared something totally divine about her being, and about the sight of her and the sound of her voice.* This is the result of her spiritual closeness to God, her continual seeking after sanctity, her prayers, attendances at Mass and Confession. At first sight it is plain that here is a very holy individual whose presence and even her voice serve to reinforce this truth. Small wonder that Laval is among her ranks and serves on her campaign.

BATTLE OF PATAY 18th JUNE 1429.

After the battle of Patay, where the French are, yet again, victorious, Joan goes to Château de Sully-sur-Loire which is owned by her enemy, La Trémoille. Here the Dauphin is being entertained and encouraged to take his ease by La Trémoille as the latter deliberately attempts to disrupt the impetus of Joan's success.

JOAN OF ARC ENTERS TROYES.

On 10th July, 1429, the city opens its gates to Joan of Arc and the Dauphin, Charles. This after her forces were seen to be making obvious preparations for an attack.

CORONATION OF CHARLES VII AT RHEIMS 17th JULY, 1429.

A quote from Joan of Arc on this wonderful day:

O gentle king, the pleasure of God is done!

(Meiklejohn, 1897).

What must have gone through the minds of those attending this great ceremony, within the immense and prestigious Rheims Cathedral? as before them a seventeen year old farm girl, crying tears of joy, her banner in her hand, stands in the company of the newly-crowned king.

My banner was in the church at Rheims when the King was anointed. I held it myself for a little. It had shared in the toil; it was just that it should share in the honor.

(Trask, 1996: 59).

Without her God- inspired involvement, none of what was being seen would have been happening. There would be many present finding it hard to believe their eyes and many with a new-found faith in God.

Less than a year later, on 23rd May, 1430, she is captured at Compiègne. Duke Philip of Burgundy sells her to the English who put her on trial for heresy. A disgraceful, corrupt, ecclesiastical court, heavily biased against her by the English, passes judgement on her. Completely innocent, she is sentenced and burned at the stake in Rouen on 30th May, 1431.

I pray you, go to the nearest church, and bring me the cross, and hold it up level with my eyes until I am dead. I would have the cross on which God hung be ever before my eyes while life lasts in me.

Jesus, Jesus!

The last words of Joan of Arc, spoken at the stake.

(Trask, 1996: 144).

Eventually the agonising and totally unjust ending of the life of Joan of Arc results in a retrial in 1455-1456. In this, her Nullification Trial, the truth is deliberately and painstakingly sought by those sent out by the Church, to interview witnesses, to collect signed statements, to amass a plethora of information on one who had been so badly and purposely wronged those years before and to present it, this time, before an upright Court of Law.

For this, many witnesses are required to provide sworn testimonies as to her character and actions. These include friends from her own village of Domrémy and those who fought with her against the English and their allies. There are the testimonies of Metz and Poulengy who escorted her to Chinon at the very beginning of her extraordinary career. Jean II d'Alençon addresses the court. Churchmen, convinced of her piety and sanctity, speak out. In her Nullification Trial the true Joan of Arc shines forth, her holiness in no doubt. Where deceit, corruption and animosity ruled before, Truth now stands, emblazoned, unassailable. The following are but two of many testimonies:

A short time after Jeanne departed with the army to the succor of the town of Orleans, which was then besieged; I went with her, and did not leave her until the day when she was taken at Compiegne. I acted as her chaplain, confessed her, and sang Mass for her. She was, indeed, very pious towards God and the Blessed Mary, confessing nearly every day and communicating frequently. When she was in a neighborhood where there was a Convent of Mendicant Friars, she told me to remind her of the day when the children of the poor received the Eucharist, so that she might receive it with them, and this she did often: when she confessed herself she wept.

Father Jean Pasquerel. Chaplain to Joan of Arc.

(Frohlick, 2013).

So far as I could judge, I always held her for an excellent Catholic, and a modest woman: she communicated often, and, at sight of the Body of Christ, shed many tears. In all she did, except in affairs of war, she was a very simple young girl; but for warlike things bearing the lance, assembling an army, ordering military operations, directing artillery – she was most skilful. Every one wondered that she could act with as much wisdom and foresight as a captain who had fought for twenty or thirty years. It was above all in making use of artillery that she was so wonderful.

The words of Jean II d'Alençon.

(Frohlick, 2013).

The life of Joan of Arc gives the impression of a life of one who belongs more in heaven than on earth. There is about her light, a great radiance of light. Her actions, her ways, everything associated with her existence has this quality. She works closely with God and it shows. She is attended on many occasions by heavenly beings, by the Angel Saint Michael, by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. She loves their company and this is surely something that would be mutual. The life of Joan of Arc shows how God is able to work with human beings when they align themselves sufficiently with him. What He is able to achieve through them is, of course, completely beyond all normal expectations.

In 1456 her sentence is annulled. She is eventually declared a martyr and, in 1920, most deservedly, becomes a saint.

PROPHECY AND JOAN OF ARC.

There is a wood in Domremy, called the Polled Wood; you can see it from my father's door, it is not half a league away. ...when I was on my journey to my King, I was asked by some if there was not a

wood in my country called the Polled Wood, for it had been prophesied that a maid would come from near that wood to do wonderful things. But I said I had no faith in that.

(Trask, 1996: 5).

The words of Joan of Arc.

When seeking, in Vaucouleurs, an escort from Robert de Baudricourt for her journey to Chinon to see the Dauphin, she stays at the house of Catherine Leroyer:

When she saw that Robert refused to conduct her to the King, she said to me that, nevertheless, she would go and seek the Dauphin. "Do you know," she said, "the prophecy which says that France, lost by a woman, shall be saved by a maiden from the Marches of Lorraine?" I did indeed remember the prophecy, and remained stupefied.

(Frohlick, 2013b).

Words of Catherine Leroyer.

In this prophecy, prevalent in France at this time, Joan of Arc is identified as the "maiden" and the "woman", as Isobel of Bavaria, Queen of France and mother of Charles the Dauphin. Isobel of Bavaria had, together with the Duke of Burgundy, agreed in the Treaty of Troyes, that Henry V of England should inherit the kingdom of France to the disadvantage of her son, Charles the Dauphin.

On her third visit to De Baudricourt in Vaucouleurs, Joan, informed by the Holy Spirit, tells him that the French have suffered defeat at the Battle of the Herrings at Orléans – this before official news of the event has even reached him. When he eventually learns that what she has said is true he provides her with the escort she so vehemently requests for her journey to Chinon.

(Quicherat, 1847: 125).

Joan of Arc, informing Charles the Dauphin of her divine instructions:

I bring you news from God, that our Lord will give you back your kingdom, bringing you to be crowned at Rheims, and driving out your enemies. In this I am God's messenger. Do you set me bravely to work, and I will raise the siege of Orléans.

(Trask, 1996: 21).

All will eventually come true.

On 6th May, at Orléans, she tells her chaplain:

... tomorrow blood will flow from my body, above my breast.

(Trask, 1996: 36).

On 7th May at Orléans her prophecy is fulfilled.

I was the first to set a ladder against the fortress on the bridge, and, as I raised it, I was wounded in

the throat by a cross-bow bolt. But Saint Catherine comforted me greatly. And I did not cease to ride and do my work.

(Trask, 1996, 36).

On the Saturday, therefore, very early in the morning I rose and celebrated Mass; then Jeanne went to the attack of the Bridge Fort, in which was the Englishman, Cladas.(Glasdale.) The attack lasted from morning to sunset without interruption.

At this assault, after dinner, Jeanne, as she had predicted, was struck by an arrow above the breast.

(Frohlick, 2013d).

The words of Father Jean Pasquerel corroborating her prophecy.

On 7th May, 1429, before taking the bridge at Orléans:

Courage! Do not fall back: in a little the place will be yours. Watch! when you see the wind blow my banner against the bulwark, you shall take it!

In, in, the place is yours!

(Trask, 1996: 37).

The above are but a few of the very accurate prophecies of Joan of Arc.

CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY.

We are now in a position to overview the Hundred Years War and uncover a number of related incidents, occurring in particular as the prolonged struggle ends.

1 THE LIREY – DOMRÉMY PROXIMITY.

The fact that the Holy Shroud was situated so close to the birthplace of Joan of Arc – only about seventy miles – is interesting and noteworthy.

2 1453 THE END OF THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR.

This is marked by the Battle of Castillon or Chatillon when the English are defeated by the French and is one of a number of incidents all occurring in 1453.

3 1453 THE CHARNY – TALBOT INCIDENT.

Geoffroi I de Charny appears in 1337 at the beginning of the Hundred Years War and is soon in possession of the Holy Shroud, probably, through his marriage to Jeanne de Vergy. As has been mentioned he is captured at Morlaix on 30th September, 1342 by Richard Talbot and imprisoned in Goodrich Castle in England. It is, as has also been mentioned, this incarceration that causes Geoffroi I de Charny to pray for his release and swear an oath that, should his prayer be answered, he will build a church. His prayer answered, he duly builds his church at Lirey where the Holy Shroud is subsequently put on display.

Now, it is interesting to see that when his captor's great-grandson, John Talbot, the celebrated Earl of Shrewsbury, is killed at the Battle of Castillon, this again is in 1453, when the Hundred Years War officially ends with this particular battle. Thus Geoffroi I de Charny appears at the beginning and is linked exactly with the end of the hostilities through the Talbot family line. Further, it should be mentioned that it is this John Talbot against whom Joan fights on several occasions and who is mentioned in her letter to the English king and his commanders besieging Orléans.

4 1453 THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

Yet again, 1453 features with the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the last vestige of the Roman Empire. There is an interesting line of continuity here concerning Joan of Arc. Constantine the Great, on 28th October, 312, defeats his enemy Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge, 1100 years before the birth of Joan of Arc. Before the battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine is divinely inspired in a dream to mark his soldiers' shields with the Chi Rho, a symbol of Christ's name. He complies with the instruction and is victorious in his battle with Maxentius, fought on the banks of the river Tiber. He becomes Emperor of Rome and eventually declares Christianity to be the official religion. Joan of Arc also receives divine instruction regarding the design of her banner from Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. She too is victorious. It is also from Constantinople that the Holy Shroud finds its way to France.

5 THE COUDRAY TOWER EPISODE.

Nothing to do with 1453 for once but the incarceration of the Templar knight, Geoffroi de Charny, in the Coudray Tower at the Château of Chinon is noteworthy. Very likely related to Geoffroi I de Charny of Lirey (Wilson, 2010), he, together with other Knights Templar, suffers imprisonment in the base of the tower in 1308. Also in the Coudray Tower, but on the level above, Joan of Arc is lodged on her visit to Chinon in 1429. What is to be made of this? Well, the Templar having the same name as Geoffroi I de Charny serves to link the Holy Shroud with Joan of Arc. Furthermore, there is the identical ending of the lives of Geoffroi de Charny the Templar and Joan herself, by burning. She is totally innocent and it may well be that he and the rest of the French Templars are also not guilty of the charges brought against them by King Philip.

6 THE HOLY SHROUD AT CHÂTEAU GERMOLLES.

Now to examine an event in 1452, very close to the end of the Hundred Years War. This is the last exhibition of the Holy Shroud while in the hands of the De Charny's. Marguerite de Charny conveys her precious relic to the Château of Germolles, the residence of the Duke of Burgundy, cause of problems for the French during the Hundred Years War by his siding with the English. He was also responsible for Joan's being handed over to the English in 1430 and thence to her tragic demise. Here, at the Château of Germolles, the Holy Shroud is placed on display from 13th-18th September, 1452. The château possesses a tower in which there are two chapels, one on the ground floor and the other above it. The Shroud is first placed in the lower chapel where it is viewed and venerated by many members of the public. It is finally moved to the upper chapel which is used by the family and friends. (Duncan, 2010).

Is it too fanciful to see a similarity between the Shroud and the banner of Joan of Arc raised over the conquered House of Burgundy? Her own banner shows God holding the world with an angel on either side and on it the names: *Jhesus Maria*. The banner carried by her squire shows a representation of the Annunciation, while that around which the soldiers gather to pray shows Christ on the Cross. There is a progression here towards the Holy Shroud.

7 1453 THE HOLY SHROUD HANDED ON TO THE HOUSE OF SAVOY.

It is around 1337, the beginning of the Hundred Years War, that Geoffroi I de Charny appears. It is again, in 1453, the year of the ending of the Hundred Years War that his grand daughter, Marguerite de Charny, hands the Holy Shroud into the keeping of a new guardian. This means that the holy relic is featured in France almost exactly within the duration of the Hundred Years War. I believe this exactness is meant to be seen.

Marguerite de Charny is now a widow of advanced age, sadly with no children to whom she can pass on her most precious charge but a new guardian has to be found. With regard to members of her own family there is, Charles de Noyers, her half-brother from her mother's second marriage to Guillaume de Noyers, seigneur de Maisy, before 1400. (Pattou, 2008). There is also Antoine Guerry des Essarts, her cousin and godson who inherits her Lirey property when her life ends on 7th October, 1460. (Wilson, 1996). However she chooses neither as the Shroud's future guardian. It is surely with divine guidance that she places it with the House of Savoy to fulfil this most honourable and responsible role. Over the years the choice has proved to be right. The House of De Noyers ends in the 15th C, so Charles would not have been the right choice. The House of Savoy continues to this day.

The following facts are to be found in Ian Wilson's: *Highlights of the Undisputed History*. (1996). Again, it is in that very important year, 1453, that Marguerite transfers the Shroud to Duke Louis I of Savoy and his wife Anne de Lusignan, a committed Christian couple. It is exchanged for the castle of Varambon and income accrued from the Miribel estate. In 1457 Marguerite is under threat of excommunication if she does not return the Shroud to the canons at Lirey but now a De Noyers becomes directly involved in the Holy Shroud story. Marguerite is eventually excommunicated, which for one such as herself would have been most distressing, especially at her age. However, Charles de Noyers, assists her by negotiating with the canons on her behalf so that agreement is reached and her excommunication lifted.

SECTION THREE

CHAPTER 9 AVALLON AND THE REALISATION OF ARTHUR.

Now for a different era of history and a very surprising one. But why are we here? When I first read about Geoffroi I de Charny's marriage to Jeanne de Toucy I well remember noting that the Château of Pierre-Perthuis, brought to him in her dowry, lay in the arrondissement or area of Avallon. It was the first particular incident, while writing this narrative, that effected its course and content. Avallon for me meant King Arthur, despite the slight spelling difference from the English – Avalon. The second had been the question concerning the whereabouts of the Holy Shroud during the life of Joan of Arc, but now for me was gently born a reverie of Avallon. As if the very important and interesting links between the Holy Shroud and Joan of Arc were not enough, other links now appear from a most unexpected direction.

King Arthur is one of the most evocative names the world has ever known. The chivalrous Arthur, romantic, enigmatic, that distant, time-shrouded individual, both elusive and unique, the inspiration of poets, writers, academics and occupier of a richly enticing dreamer's world.

Arthur. Who was he? What was he? Had you put this question to a historian in the 1800's the answer would very likely have been that he was a myth. Ask the same question today and there are likely to be many in favour of his having existed. *Dux bellorum*, is the term often used to describe him – duke of wars or war chieftain.

It is now that, like many others before me, I set off into the world of Arthur. Writings on the subject of Arthur abound, as for sound facts, therein lies the problem. However, it would seem that the general consensus is, that he features at the end of the 5th century and that he is a Romano-British citizen. He is celebrated for fighting the invading Saxon hoards and upholding Christianity in a Britain abandoned by the Romans in 410 AD. As for Arthur's domain there are many claims as to its location. However, many believe, and I count myself among them, that it is in the south of England at Cadbury Hill in Somerset. Archaeological investigations here have revealed findings that would suggest Cadbury Hill was a fort in use at that time although there is, as yet, no specific evidence of Arthur himself.

Yet there is a real King Arthur to be found among the dusty tomes and time-scarred documents, the faded writings from book-filled nooks and crannies who would have ridden and fought while clad in Roman-style armour. Yet, despite there being many sources of information, they are of varying accuracy and there are many Arthurs to take into consideration. There are the works of Gildas, who lived not so long after Arthur himself, and of Nennius, 8th century AD, to name but two of many writers on this topic. In around 1138, Geoffrey of Monmouth produces his very popular work, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, in it he too provides information about Arthur but somewhere along the line the Romano-British Arthur changes. So many of the varied tales of King Arthur and his Round Table are not about a man living in the 5th century AD, they are about a medieval king. How does this come about?

Following the publication of Geoffrey of Monmouth's book, there is a growing enthusiasm in Europe for tales Arthurian, romantic embellishments of the original story of Arthur. These non-historical works emanate from the pens of many writers and poets. This is found particularly in France, in the north-east, in the area associated with Joan of Arc where the land is steeped in Arthurian lore. Chrétien of Troyes, around 1170, one of the most important writers of Arthurian tales, is very close to Domrémy, her birthplace. Robert de Boron comes from Boron, a few miles to the south while Guiot and Wace, also writers on Arthur, are again in the vicinity. These are but a

few of what could be termed writers of Arthurian fiction.

It is Chrétien of Troyes who is responsible for introducing the Holy Grail into the non-historical story of Arthur. He is also responsible for Lancelot and Camelot while Wace invents the Round Table and puts forward the idea that Arthur is to return. In the writings of Robert de Boron the Holy Grail becomes the cup with which Christ had celebrated the Last Supper.

As well as a plethora of poets and writers contributing to an ever growing mass of Arthurian literature, all this activity is set in a world not so dissimilar to that of Arthur himself. But there is more flair here, especially in the French locations where there is style, even flamboyance. This is not just the story of a hard-bitten post-Roman warrior. During the days of the Hundred Years War these stories of the romantic Arthur proliferate and reverberate during a time when, among those whose birthright lay in the passage of arms, their lives match closely his way of life despite the time difference of about a thousand years or so.

By the time of Joan of Arc such is the hold over the imagination of these noble families, especially in France, that there are even martial events taking place called *Round Tables*. These involve jousting and, as the name would suggest, are placed within an Arthurian setting with a marked Arthurian ambience. There can be no doubt that a *literary Arthur* is alive and in the best of health and growing ever stronger as more poets and writers are commissioned to celebrate his deeds and Domrémy, so close to Chrétien's Troyes, could be described as being in the midst of it all. The court of King Arthur is, very likely, being emulated in many ways by many a knight and his household and, in 1429, surrounded by all of this, is Joan of Arc.

The continual writings Arthurian gained more and more plots and characters as they progressed but, for the purpose of this narrative, it is necessary to reduce the story to its most basic, to the barest framework. The most important item in Arthurian fiction has to be, the Holy Grail, the Holy Cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. Next, there is Arthur himself, followed by the sword, Excalibur, received by him from the Lady of the Lake or pulled by him from a stone. Lancelot, a member of the Round Table of knights, is an indispensable part of the story together with his son, Galahad, the knight who is so pure in heart as to be the only one able to achieve the Holy Grail. Then there is Avalon, in Somerset, England, where Arthur is taken when he is mortally wounded.

I have mentioned so far two incidents that directed the course of this narrative namely, Geoffroi I de Charny's first wife and her association with Avallon in France, and the close proximity of the Holy Shroud at Lirey to Joan of Arc's home at Domrémy. Now for the third incident and it concerns the comment by Joan of Arc about her sword:

I had the sword which I had brought from Vaucouleurs. I sent to make search for another sword in the church of Saint Catherine at Fierbois, behind the altar. It was found there presently, all rusted, and on it there were five crosses. And the priests there rubbed it, and the rust fell away of itself.

I loved that sword because it was found in the church of Saint Catherine whom I loved.

(Trask, 1996: 26-27).

Joan is informed by her Voices where her sword is located in the chapel of Saint Catherine at Fierbois. In the case of the non-historical Arthur, it is on the advice of Merlin that he is directed to the lake where he receives the sword, Excalibur, from the *Lady of the Lake* or, in the other version of his acquisition of his sword, he pulls it from a stone.

Another similarity between Joan of Arc and King Arthur is that they both fight under Christian

emblems. Joan has her own banner: *The field of it was sewn with lilies, and therein was our Lord holding the world, with two angels, one on either hand. It was white, and on it there were written the names Jhesus Maria, and it was fringed with silk.* (Trask, 1996: 26). Arthur, in his battle with the Saxons at Bath, is described by Geoffrey of Monmouth as bearing, as well as his banner, a shield by the name of *Pridwen* on which is a painting of the Virgin Mary. Consider here that Joan of Arc, in these similarities, again realises Arthur.

Now, an important step but one not so unreasonable: consider the Holy Shroud to be the Holy Grail. In so doing we have now realised, out of the Arthurian tale, both the Holy Grail and Avallon together with Joan of Arc and the Arthurian manner in which she obtains her sword. Furthermore there is Joan's Christian banner and, in Arthur's case, his shield with the Virgin Mary depicted on it. One of the other basic elements of the Arthurian story, as has already been mentioned, is Lancelot. Is there a counterpart in the Joan of Arc story?

A very direct and positive answer to this question is to be found in the book: *From Scythia to Camelot*, by C. Scott Littleton & Linda A. Malcor (2000). Think of Jean II d'Alençon and read the following. Littleton and Malcor describe how the Alans are a tribe originally from the north eastern area of Iran. They migrate to occupy an area north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea – Scythia. In their various migrations they again spread west and, in the fifth century, invade France. Where do these migrating Alans settle on reaching France? In particular, and of special relevance here, they settle in the Champagne region. This being the area containing Troyes, and situated next to Lorraine, home to the birthplace of Joan of Arc and, in her day, a place steeped in Arthurian lore. The Alans also settle in Normandy and Brittany. When reflecting on the Normandy connection the town there that leaps to mind is, of course, Alençon, a derivation from the name of that tribe. (Littleton & Malcor, 2000).

Those of the Alans who were left behind in the Caucasus gave rise to the Ossetians whose folklore possesses surprising and unexpected similarities to the stories of King Arthur. In it Batraz is the commander of warriors called the Narts. At the start of his martial career, Batraz pulls his sword from among the roots of a tree. At the end of his life, his enemy having mortally wounded him, he orders his sword to be cast into the ocean. His servants, finding the sword too heavy, hide it instead. When asked by Batraz what they saw, when they were supposed to have carried out his instructions, they have nothing to report. Realising they have not followed his command, since he knows what will happen when they obey it, he orders them a second time to cast his sword into the sea. When they finally do so the waters bubble red and when he is duly informed of this he realises with satisfaction his instructions have been carried out and passes away. (Littleton & Malcor, 2000).

As already mentioned, the non-historical Arthur had received Excalibur either from the *Lady of the Lake*, or pulled it from a stone. When he too is mortally wounded he, likewise, orders Excalibur be cast into the lake. In similar circumstances to the disposal of Batraz's sword, Sir Bedevere is unwilling to follow Arthur's orders. Eventually, when he does so, it is received by the *Lady of the Lake*. Furthermore these are not the only similarities. Littleton and Malcor (2000) go on to describe a number of other parallels between Lancelot and Batraz, and then there is the Nartamongæ, the sacred cup of the Narts and this shares several similarities with the Holy Grail.

It can only be awarded to one who is absolutely pure and it knows when an individual using it is not telling the truth.

Remarkably, in addition to all the above, Littleton and Malcor (2000), have even postulated a very plausible derivation of the name, Lancelot. It lies in the migration of some of the Alans to the south of France, where they settled in the Lot area. To express their argument in the most simple terms,

they suggest that the name, Lancelot, may have been derived from, an Alanus of Lot or Alanus à Lot, the latter describing a celebrated Alan from this region. Over the years the original name would have become corrupted until, with the *A* having been lost in the process, we are left with Lancelot.

How perfectly the above fits the overall picture especially the mention of Alençon in conjunction with Lancelot. So, Jean II d'Alençon does indeed realise Lancelot. He seems almost a product of Arthurian legend itself. Although, in fact, Alençon is more Lancelot than Lancelot himself since the name, Lancelot, is derived from his family name!

THE IMPORTANCE OF TROYES.

On 10th July, 1429, Joan of Arc pauses, with her army, outside Troyes at Saint Phal. Here is a moment rich in symbolism when so much of this story is gathered together. She is only about four miles from Lirey where the Holy Shroud had arrived to be placed on display, almost 60 years before her birth in 1412. Ahead of her is the city of the poet, Chrétien of Troyes, the first to introduce the Holy Grail into the Arthurian tales. These elements of this most unusual but true story seem to be drawn together here. The Holy Shroud, Joan of Arc and King Arthur. This too is the city where the Knights Templar received official backing from the Church. It is also the city where the infamous Treaty of Troyes had been signed to hand over the kingdom of France to Henry V of England. There is also the involvement of the Bishop of Troyes with the establishment of Geoffroi I de Charny's church at Lirey. A week after she takes Troyes, the coronation of Charles VII takes place in Rheims Cathedral. Joan's presence amongst all these involved elements promotes conjecture. It has the feel of a tableau – a tableau with an approaching air of fulfilment.

BOURGES.

This city is of particular relevance. Paris, having been captured by the English, for a time, Bourges becomes the main city of France and the enemies of Charles disparagingly describe him as the, King of Bourges. Joan attempts to take Paris by force but her endeavours are undermined by Charles who begins negotiations with the Burgundians, in effect she is betrayed. After being wounded during her attack on the city she visits the Abbey of Saint Denis, where both Geoffroi I de Charny and Miles de Noyers had sworn the oath to become Porte Oriflamme about seventy years before.

I made an offering of a sword and armor in Saint-Denis – a whole suit of my white armor and a sword which I had won before Paris. That is the custom among soldiers when they are wounded. And because I had been wounded before Paris, I offered them to Saint Denis, for his name is the war-cry of France.

(Trask, 1996: 69).

Following the attempt on Paris, Joan spends the winter in Bourges in 1429-1430.

CHAPTER 10 RIOTHAMUS AND FRENCH AND ENGLISH ARTHURS.

Now follows more concerning Joan of Arc's realisation of Arthur. Towards the end of the fifth century AD, Rome is in trouble. Having already abandoned Britain in 410 AD and now, with its territories in Gaul under threat from Visigoth invaders, it seeks help from Britain. In response to Rome's request, Jordanes, the sixth century historian informs us that; a certain, Riothamus, whom he describes as *King of the Britonnes*, arrives by sea bringing with him 12,000 soldiers. According to Littleton and Malcor (2000), it is possible that Riothamus fights the Saxons in the area of the Loire, close to Angers. Again, according to Jordanes, near Bourges, Riothamus is involved in battle with the Visigoths under the command of Euric. Betrayed by Arvandus, the Roman prefect in Gaul, and lacking promised Roman support, Riothamus is defeated and, with what remains of his army, makes his way to Avallon in Burgundy.

This is very briefly a part of the story of the French Arthur since there are many, myself included, who believe that Arthur and Riothamus are one and the same person. Now, why do the above acts of Riothamus sound familiar? Consider:

1. Joan's battles along the Loire.
2. Her arrival and stay in Bourges.
3. Her eventual journey from Bourges into Burgundy.
4. Her betrayal. Charles VII interferes with her attempt to take Paris, enters into negotiations with the Burgundians and, after her capture, makes no attempt to save her.

So, here are four further incidents of her realisation of the historical Arthur. Where Arthur fights the Visigoths, Joan of Arc fights the English and the Burgundians along the same river in the same direction and both end up in Bourges. Concerning the historical Arthur in Britain, after the Battle of Camlann, his final recorded conflict where he is mortally wounded, he is taken to Avalon, understood to be in the area of Glastonbury in Somerset.

Following on from Bourges, an incident that links Joan to the Holy Shroud occurs in November, 1429. At this time she is in Moulins where, it is traditionally believed, during her stay she goes to pray at the convent of the Colettine Poor Clares, named after Colette de Corbie, later Saint Colette. It appears highly likely that she and Colette would have met at this time. (Touchet, 1920: 18).

The interesting point about this is that Wilson, (1996), states that on 4th December, 1532 a fire damages the Shroud in the Sainte Chapelle in Chambéry and it is nuns of the order of the Poor Clares in Chambéry who are eventually given the task of repairing it in 1534.

Further to the above it is worth noting that Duchesse Yolande of France, the daughter-in-law of Duke Louis I of Savoy, to whom Marguerite de Charny had passed on the Holy Shroud, is the founder of Chambéry's Poor Clares Convent. Also, she happens to be the granddaughter of Yolande of Aragon, the mother-in-law of Charles VII. So that here, a descendant of Yolande of Aragon, who had so resolutely supported Joan of Arc in the court of Charles VII, is now a member of the family that owns the Holy Shroud.

CHÂTEAU DE SULLY – A NEXUS OF EVENTS.

Joan of Arc stays at Château de Sully-sur-Loire in 1429 where she is kept, almost as a prisoner by her enemy, La Trémoille, then the owner. So we have Joan of Arc recorded here. Now for Arthur and his involvement.

THE REMARKABLE GLASTONBURY.

Years before, in 1189, Henri de Sully had been made Abbot of Glastonbury, a place very important in the Joseph of Arimathea and Arthur stories. This is where Joseph of Arimathea came following the Crucifixion, most probably in 37 AD, to establish a Christian community. Glastonbury, in what was described as Avalon in Somerset, England, was also believed to be the burial place of King Arthur. What does Henri de Sully do while he is at Glastonbury? He presides, no less, over the exhumation of the body of Arthur. (Le Baron de Roujoux, 1837).

It was said ancient records indicated that he was buried there and others claimed to have had visions to the same effect. Two skeletons were found, the remains of a very large male and a female. (Gerald of Wales, 1190's)

A lead cross, located with the remains had, engraved upon it, the words:

*HIC IACET SEPULTVS INCLITVS REX ARTVRIVS CVM WENNEVERIA VXORE SVA SECVNDA
IN INSVLA AVALONIA*

*HERE LIES BURIED THE FAMOUS KING ARTHUR, WITH GUENEVERE HIS SECOND WIFE,
IN THE ISLE OF AVALON.*

(Gerald of Wales, 1190's).

Many see this as a promotion on behalf of the abbey to attract more pilgrims. For the purpose of this narrative this is of no consequence. What is important here is that Henri de Sully provides a link to Joseph of Arimathea and his association with the Holy Shroud as well as a link to Arthur. There is also, via Joseph of Arimathea, a link with the Holy Grail.

Another fascinating detail, Glastonbury Abbey naturally had its own seal. On each side are shown three figures. On one side is depicted the Virgin Mary, on her left arm she bears the infant Christ while in her right hand she holds a vase of lilies. On either side of her are, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, the Voices of Joan of Arc. (Greswell, 1909: 31). Furthermore, Joseph of Arimathea is reported as being buried at Glastonbury. (Greswell, 1909; 20).

This place, Glastonbury, where so many saints have been laid to rest also lays claim to another most important story. According to local lore – strong local lore – Christ, some time before He begins His Ministry, is brought here by his great-uncle, Joseph of Arimathea. It is as a trader in tin that Joseph of Arimathea journeys to this part of the world on regular occasions.

CHAPTER 11 OUT OF AVALLON.

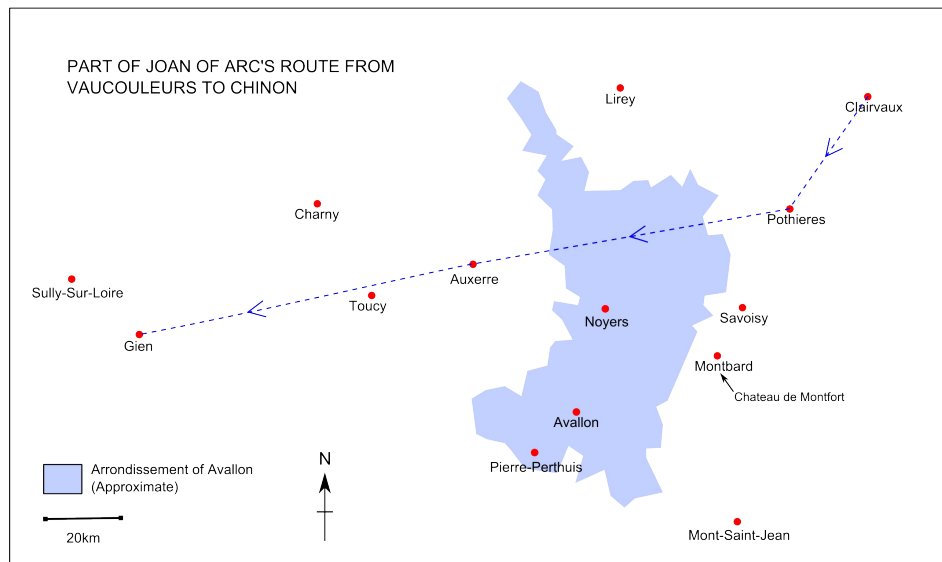
Time now to look, once again, at that journey from the Gate of France in Vaucouleurs to Chinon and the young Joan and her company. In retrospect how amazing are the following words:

... I was a poor girl who knew nothing of riding or warfare.

(Trask, 1996: 7).

She is about to complete eleven days in the saddle covering about thirty miles each day, under appalling circumstances, and much at night. As for the warfare yet to come, we know of her unprecedented successes.

The relatively close proximity of the Holy Shroud at Lirey with her home at Domrémy presented itself early on. Following this, further links were revealed. However, the ride from the Gate of France in Vaucouleurs to Chinon, an event that could be something straight out of the Arthurian romances, when examined in greater detail, provides even more for serious conjecture.



Concerning the route followed by Joan of Arc and her company, after spending their first night at Saint Urbain they pass through Clairvaux and Pothières. Since they are heading west to Chinon, this means that ahead of her is the area of Avallon, where Arthur/Riothamus disappeared. Avallon contains Pierre-Perthuis, in Geoffroi I de Charny's dowry from Jeanne de Toucy, and linking him to Avallon. However, in addition to this, to the north-east there is Noyers-sur-Serein, also in Avallon and about fifteen miles north of the town of Avallon itself. Now, to the east, and only just outside the border of Avallon – about three or four miles, no more – is Montbard with Château de Montfort close by. As we know, this is De Vergy territory as is Savoisy only about seven miles north-east of Montbard, Jeanne de Vergy being Geoffroi I de Charny's second wife. About twenty miles south and slightly to the east of Montbard, is Mont-Saint-Jean. As for the town of Charny, from which the

family takes its name, that too is only about fourteen miles north west of Toucy, the latter is about forty miles west of Montbard.

So, we have places associated with the families who care for or are involved with the Holy Shroud, Charny, Vergy and Noyers, located very much together, and they are either in or around Avallon. Toucy also comes within this category and this town, associated with Geoffroi I de Charny's first wife, is no more than 25 miles beyond the western border of Avallon. Of all the places they could have been, these châteaux, all linked with the Holy Shroud, are gathered together in this area. There are three points to be made here. The first is their close proximity to each other. The second is their location either actually in or very close to the arrondissement or area of Avallon. The Holy Shroud and Arthur (historical and fictional) are both strongly represented here. The third point is that it is through or among all of these significant places that Joan of Arc passes on the way to fulfil her life's purpose.

Again it is rather like Troyes, her pause at Saint Phal, just to the south of the city and so close to Lirey, home of the Holy Shroud for so long. This time, before she enters the area of Avallon, it is Château de Montfort, that had sheltered the Holy Shroud, that stands just outside its border. In fact, on her route through Avallon, Lirey, the initial home of the Shroud in Geoffroi I de Charny's time, lies about 25 miles to the north, with Château de Montfort a slightly greater distance to the south. Once through Avallon, she appears to pass within fifteen miles of Chateau de Sully-sur-Loire situated to the north.

Her entry into Avallon marks a moment of considerable significance because this is where Arthur/Riothamus had disappeared.

There are a number writings, by authors through the ages, in the non-historical exploits of Arthur contending that when his country is in dire need he will return to save it. One of the first of these is the work of William of Malmesbury. According to various fictional sources, Arthur and his men sleep in a cave or beneath a hill – Cadbury Castle has been cited – to be awoken in that time of great necessity. From whence do these writings suggest he is to appear? One answer, not surprisingly, is from Avalon.

On this journey, to fulfil her divine destiny, Joan of Arc continues on her way to Chinon, accompanied by the knight, Jean de Metz and the squire, Bertrand de Poulengy and the rest of her escort. A small group, in enemy occupied territory, on an immensely important mission. Hiding, taking cover at times, probably snatching sleep in some deserted barn or outbuilding, moving on so as not to attract attention they make their way westwards. Now, as she leaves Avallon she appears to burst forth from the pages of Arthurian lore by realising an Arthurian event. It is with France in dire need of a military saviour that she is now fulfilling the role, from the romantic writings, of the *Returning Arthur!*

On Sunday 27th February:

We passed through Auxerre and heard mass in the great church. My voices were with me often. (Trask, 1996: 20).

The group continues heading westwards until:

When we came to Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois I sent a letter to my King to ask if I might enter the town where he was. It said that I had travelled a hundred and fifty leagues to come to him with help, and that I knew many things which would profit him.

I heard three masses in one day there; then I went on to Chinon, where the King was.

(Trask, 1996: 20).

It must have been like a home-coming for her, to be in a church dedicated to one of her Voices, one of those who had kept insisting that she: *Go into France*. It is also the church that is to provide her with her sword. They eventually arrive in Chinon where, in that grand, spread out château above the town, Charles the Dauphin is in residence.

I came to Chinon about noon and put up at an inn, and, after dinner, I went to the King in his castle. And when I entered the King's chamber, I knew him among the rest, for the voice counselled me and revealed it to me. And I told the King that I would go to make war on the English.

(Trask, 1996: 20).

CHAPTER 12 GALAHAD AND DIVINE REVELATION.

There remains to be considered one character of great importance from the non-historical Arthurian story – Galahad, the son of Lançelot. Galahad is the knight whose shield is white with a red cross like that of the Templar.

Galahad is the perfect knight in the Arthurian stories, who, due to his state of purity, is the only one able to achieve the Holy Grail. Is he also to be realised in the life of Joan of Arc? The Holy Grail in her story is The Holy Shroud and its many links with her, together with her purity, naturally serve to identify Joan of Arc with Galahad. So what does this mean?

The essential features of the Arthurian saga, containing both historical and fictional elements, have been fulfilled in the life of Joan of Arc. All have become real: Excalibur and Joan of Arc's sword from the church of Sainte Catherine of Fierbois. There are the several Avallon links via the families associated with caring for the Holy Shroud and, especially, Joan's riding out of Avallon on the way from Vaucouleurs to Chinon. There are the dramatic similarities between Lançelot and Alençon. There is the route of military confrontation followed by both Joan of Arc and Arthur along the Loire with both ending up in Burgundy. Furthermore, both are betrayed. What Arthur does in history and fiction, Joan of Arc does in reality.

I fully believe that her realisation of Galahad makes the Holy Shroud, with which she has many links, the equivalent in her life of the Holy Grail. This being the case, since all the other main features of the Arthurian saga have been realised, the Holy Grail itself is now actualised in the form of the Holy Shroud. In other words it too becomes real. This means it is, truly, the Holy Shroud of Jesus Christ.

This is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from this story. The Shroud of Turin is genuine. It is the cloth in which Christ is wrapped following the Crucifixion. This is nothing less than a divine revelation and authentication, a divine proof, established over centuries through lives and events under divine direction. It is such an unusual situation, where poets and writers of the Arthurian saga are made prophets on account of its unique outcome. Here is a framework, a structure, deliberately and divinely established in order for it to be fulfilled and, in so doing, indicate the absolute authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. The life of Joan of Arc re-enacts the Arthurian saga and results in this remarkable conclusion.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CONCEALED; IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE OLD TESTAMENT IS REVEALED.

Saint Augustine.

It is now time to pause, look back, and bear in mind Geoffroi I de Charny's involvement with that chivalric order, the *Company of the Star*, designed to reflect in real life King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. (Wilson, 2013a). He is believed to have played an important part in the establishment of this illustrious order begun by King Jean II of France. Here is a definite resonance even more so since the inauguration ceremony is on 6th January, Joan of Arc's birthday. Here the Arthurian element in that organisation appears almost to be preparing for Joan's realisation of itself. On reflection it is not surprising that the *Company of the Star* would arise and how natural it seems that Geoffroi I de Charny, as carer of the Holy Shroud, should be involved with it. Furthermore, now is an appropriate time to remember Geoffroi I de Charny's book on Chrétien of Troyes, the first writer on the Arthurian scene to mention the Holy Grail.

THE HOLY GRAIL – THE LIREY TOGA.

This immensely holy item, the Holy Shroud, has here been identified with the Holy Grail. Is this acceptable? Does the Holy Grail itself contain information that could provide the answer to this question? Here is something interesting. What is to be found in the twelve letters that constitute the three words, The Holy Grail? One word that can be made if the letters are reconstituted is, LIREY. Among the remainder of letters a second word stands out and the letters are in the correct order. The word is, TOGA, defined, and so similar to the Shroud, as a long piece of cloth worn wrapped around the body. The Holy Grail transmutes itself into the Lirey Toga, a garment worn by a living Roman at the time of Christ. How appropriate considering Christ's miraculous Resurrection.

Once again think of Lirey, think on the name and reflect on the fact that, for a French individual, *Lire y*, translates as *Read it*. So many, in medieval times, were unable to read but what they could do was follow and learn from the glorious stained glass windows in the great cathedrals. Here, many pilgrims would gather and gaze upwards at the richly coloured and astonishingly portrayed stories from the bible and wonder and learn. And so it was with Lirey. Here the pilgrim would, in similar manner, read the various marks on the Holy Shroud and, realising what they were, venerate their Saviour, the Son of God. *Lire y – Read it*. Know that this cloth has touched the Son of God – was touching Him when He rose from the dead.

The Turin Shroud is sometimes referred to as the *Fifth Gospel*. Considered as such and remembering the means of its creation, the author has to be Christ himself. Small wonder then at what has emerged from it and again, how appropriate are those imperative words: *Lire y – Read it*.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. John 10:11. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father. John 10:17-18.

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