

## THE EDESSA IMAGE AND PRE-LIREY FOLDING OF THE SHROUD

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To amplify and make clear how the Holy Shroud was kept in its various reliquaries, will establish beyond question how the Shroud was preserved through the centuries.

The illustrations given in Rome in 1993 demonstrated how two important periods of the cloth folding were achieved, Fig. 1, the Edessa Image, and Fig. 2, the pre-Lirey folding.<sup>1</sup> The folding of the cloth into the casket preserved at Ray castle is another important piece of evidence. The historical tradition at château de Ray favours its owner as Othon de la Roche; it is the casket that carried the Shroud from Athens to Burgundy; and it is an ideal size for travelling. Also, it is a logical step to the production of the de Charny casket size by merely unfolding the cloth once from the château de Ray folding.<sup>2</sup> This would certainly place the folding of c. 21.5 x 9.5 inches, Fig. 2 e, to pre-1225 or more probably to pre-1204, if, that is, the Shroud was not involved in the Besancon cathedral fire of 1349.

The Edessa Image has been hypothesized as the Shroud.<sup>3</sup> I do not have an hypothesis about this - I am certain it is the Shroud, and it can be proved. Also, the hypothesis that the Shroud was folded to one-eighth of its length and left in panoramic format is erroneous.<sup>4</sup> The Shroud was folded as illustrated in Fig. 1, proving conclusively that the Shroud was preserved in a practical sized reliquary, which served its purpose till a replacement reliquary was used sometime after AD 944.

Historical documents that identified the Edessa Image as the Shroud are several and well known e.g. the record attributed to Pope Stephen III in 769; the record of Ordericus Vitalis c. 1140; the record of canon lawyer Gervase of Tilbury, who crossed the year 1200 and then compiled his history in the new century. These records were regarded by Ian Wilson as of 'little value',<sup>5</sup> no doubt because he planned that his hypothesis would be the final arbiter in the matter. In reality these documents are so conclusive that they make the hypothesis unnecessary.

Exactly how the Shroud was folded into the Edessa reliquary can be followed in the diagrams of Fig. 3; fold 1 = line AB; fold 2 = line CD; fold 3 = line EF; fold 4 = line GH; fold 5 = line IJ, which is the second fold over the face area, the Face Image being on the underside of the cloth making 24 layers in all. When the folded Shroud is then lifted up and turned over and rotated 90°, the Face is presented ready for placing in the reliquary, Fig. 3 e. The hatched missing corners have been included in the diagrams to assist the folding sequence, the corners were probably still intact in Edessa.

Another question concerns the term *tetradiplon* in the *Acts of Thaddaeus*. The Greek '*tetradiplon*' does refer to the Edessa Image, as is clear from the original Greek context; and it refers to the folded cloth which showed the imprint of the Face of Jesus. Wilson was unable to cope with Greek and passed the problem on to the Erastian scholar John A.T. Robinson and to G.W.H. Lampe, with the

## EDESSA AND PRE-LIREY FOLDING OF THE SHROUD - DICKINSON (cont'd)

result that no correct interpretation of *tetradiplon* was produced.<sup>6</sup> The meaning arrived at, 'doubled three times'-(sic), allowed Wilson to use '4 x 2 folds' to fit-his erroneous landscape folding;<sup>7</sup> in reality 'doubled three times' is a reverse translation of 4 x 2 folds.

Dorothy Crispino also gave her interpretation citing '*rhakos tetradiplon*'.<sup>8</sup> The reason why Wilson did not refer to '*rhakos*' was because it was not seen in the English translation of the *Acts of Thaddaeus*, *rhakos* is not in the Greek text (Lipsius), but it is in the apparatus as a variant reading, in the form '*rhakkos*' (*rhakos* is found with *tetradiplon* in the *menologion* for the 16th August, 944+). Crispino quotes the translation, 'a little piece of cloth folded in four [layers]', which is not as accurate as it might lead us to suppose. The best translation of the Greek '*rhakos*' is, in the singular: a ragged, tattered garment; a cloth that is creased, wrinkled and old, a strip of such cloth; undressed cloth. In any sense, *rhakkos tetradiplon* can only be construed as referring to the folded Shroud, and this is reinforced in that the Greek of the *Acts of Thaddaeus* goes on to record that the image of Christ's face was imprinted on the '*sinдон*', the same Greek word used in the synoptic Gospels for the Shroud. The tradition that was recorded held elements of the original item, a folded sindon in a reliquary showing Christ's face. Of course how the image got there was not accurately recounted, but there was no doubt as to whose it was.

It now remains to set out the meaning of *tetradiplon* and its possible application. The Greek scholars have been looking in the wrong part of the lexicon ; *tetradiplon* is a compound and some etymology is as follows: *diple*, was a cloak folded double; *diplois*, a double cloak; hence *diploos*, twofold, doubled, bent double = *diplon* (cf. contemporary *diplo*, to fold up). Thus, *tetra-diplon* is most likely the description of a cloth bent double, i.e. folded, four times; therefore '*rhakkos tetradiplon*' can carry the meaning 'a (creased) cloth folded up four times'. The Greek obviously referred to a multi-folded cloth and if it was intended as a technically accurate connotation, then it must have followed the sequence of folding in Fig. 3, the fourth fold would have to include the fifth as a symmetrical complement of the same fold; the fourth fold would then refer to the final dimensions of c. 21.5 x 14.3 inches.

As the Edessa Image reliquary dimensions are now known and recorded in the Paris Ste-Chapelle inventory of 1740, this has to be the most logical explanation for *tetradiplon* used by the writer of the *Acts of Thaddaeus*; and behind such terms as Edessa Image, *tetradiplon*, *acheiropoietos*, *mandelion*, lies the Shroud folded in its 23.5 x 16 x 3 inch reliquary. Such is the association of these terms, that the Greek *TO HAGION MANDELION* found on the, Genoa icon, is translated 'The Holy Shroud' in an article on the Abgar tradition in 1964.<sup>9</sup> The Genoa painting is an iconographic copy of an historical artefact, just as Stephen III, Ordericus Vitalis and Gervase etc. left a documentary record of the Holy Shroud preserved at Edessa; which must have been unfolded and folded into its reliquary, there is no other way, that these documents could record the visible impression of a whole body on the linen.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

The dimensions of the cloth folding in the diagrams have been reduced from the convenient integrals of 172" x 43", which match the Anouti cubit physical length of c. 21.5" and the Edessa reliquary dimensions; remembering that a third dimension of layer thickness will have some impact on the area of the cloth. Eventually, replicas can be made of the reliquaries using the correct weight of cloth as a control.

1. 'L'Identification Scientifique de l'Homme du Linceul Jesus de Nazareth, *Actes du Symposium Scientifique International*, Rome 1993', Ed. A.A. Upinsky, Centre International d'Etudes sur le Linceul de Turin, Paris, 1995, pp. 307-311. See also *Shroud News* No. 74, Dec. 1992, p. 12.
2. Ibid. 'Linceul de Turin le trou historique : 1204-1357', Michel Bergeret, pp. 345-348. The importance of the Ray reliquary cannot be overstated; it is also the earliest known object that has been in contact with the Shroud to have survived; other than what remains of the Holy Sepulchre (the Oviedo Sudarium is still sub judice).
3. 'The. Turin Shroud', Ian Wilson, London. The 1978 ed. is used for ease of reference; all the editions were published by the author without the expense of an index.
4. Some while after I made contact with Wilson in late 1989, he asked me: folding the Shroud to one-eighth of its length as the Mandylion, it would measure 1 x 2 cubits? His calculation was somewhat obvious, but I replied 'if that was how it was folded' which I had reason to think it was not. I did not think much more of his comment as the 1 x 2 was, in any event, of no relevance. Then in April 1991, 'Holy Faces, Secret Places' appeared, and on p. 181 I was puzzled to see the cubit dimensions of the Shroud followed by 'we hypothesized' about the 'holy face' folding; because 'we' had been in regular contact but no mention was made by him about the imminence of a book containing any of these details. The 'we hypothesized' stance was staged for his purposes in the book, i.e. to set up his 1 x 2 'finding'. This was one of many deceptions from the Wilson agenda, but minor in comparison with the more serious schemings of Wilson, which will be reported at a later date, suffice it to say here that Wilson is one of the greatest scandals to appear in the history of the Shroud.
5. Op. cit., 1978, p. 136.
6. Ibid., p. 260.
7. If *tetradiplon* was meant to indicate layers of cloth, then 8 would result, but as the Shroud was certainly not carried about in a cumbersome landscape format, it would have to refer to the 21.5" x 14" folding of 24 layers. The only possibility left here then, is a count of the folded edges of the 24 layers i.e. 8, and the observer described the cloth as *tetradiplon*; this is stretching the translation, not totally impossible, but not very probable.
8. *Shroud Spectrum International*, No. 40, Dec. 1991, pp. 35-6.
9. 'Is This the Face of Christ?', Conrad Allen, *Weekend Telegraph* magazine, (London) No. 14, 23 Dec. 1964, pp. 6-11; (the cover photograph of the Icon is reversed, as is the photo on p. 10, col. 3).

EDESSA AND PRE-LIREY FOLDING OF THE SHROUD - DICKINSON (cont'd)

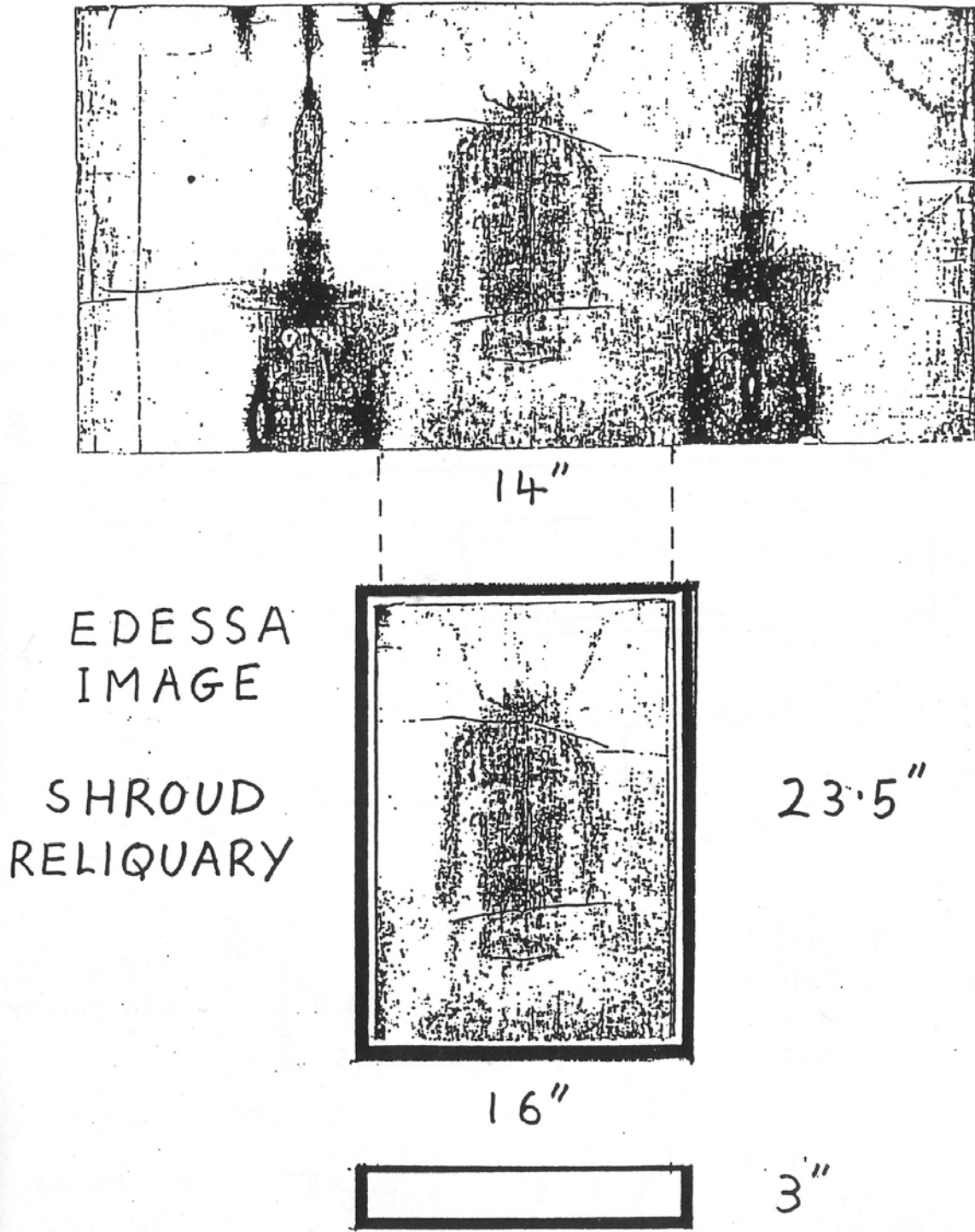


Fig. 1

EDESSA AND PRE-LIREY FOLDING OF THE SHROUD - DICKINSON (cont'd)

SHROUD FOLDING PRE-LIREY

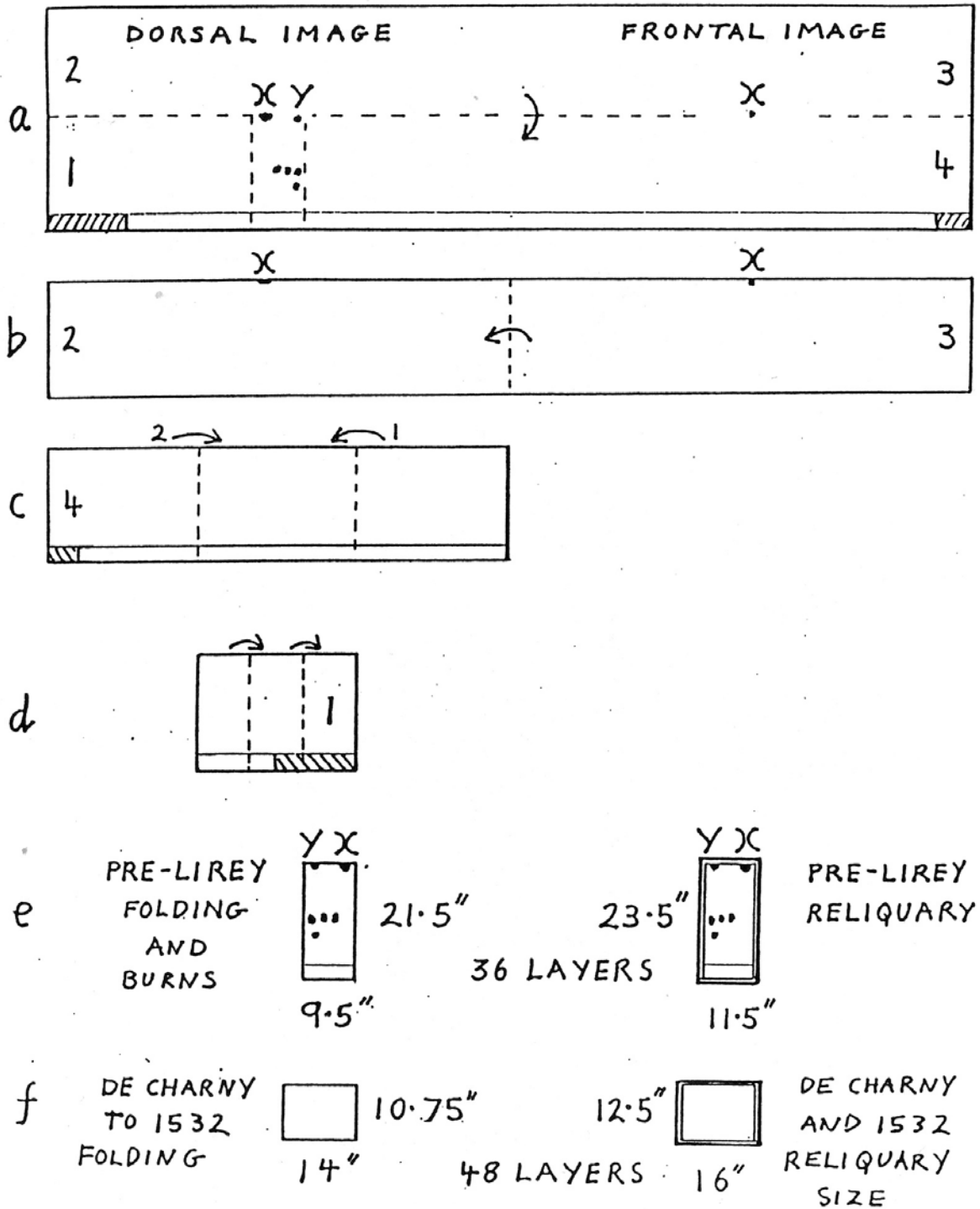


Fig. 2

EDESSA AND PRE-LIREY FOLDING OF THE SHROUD - DICKINSON (cont'd)

# SHROUD FOLDING AS EDESSA IMAGE

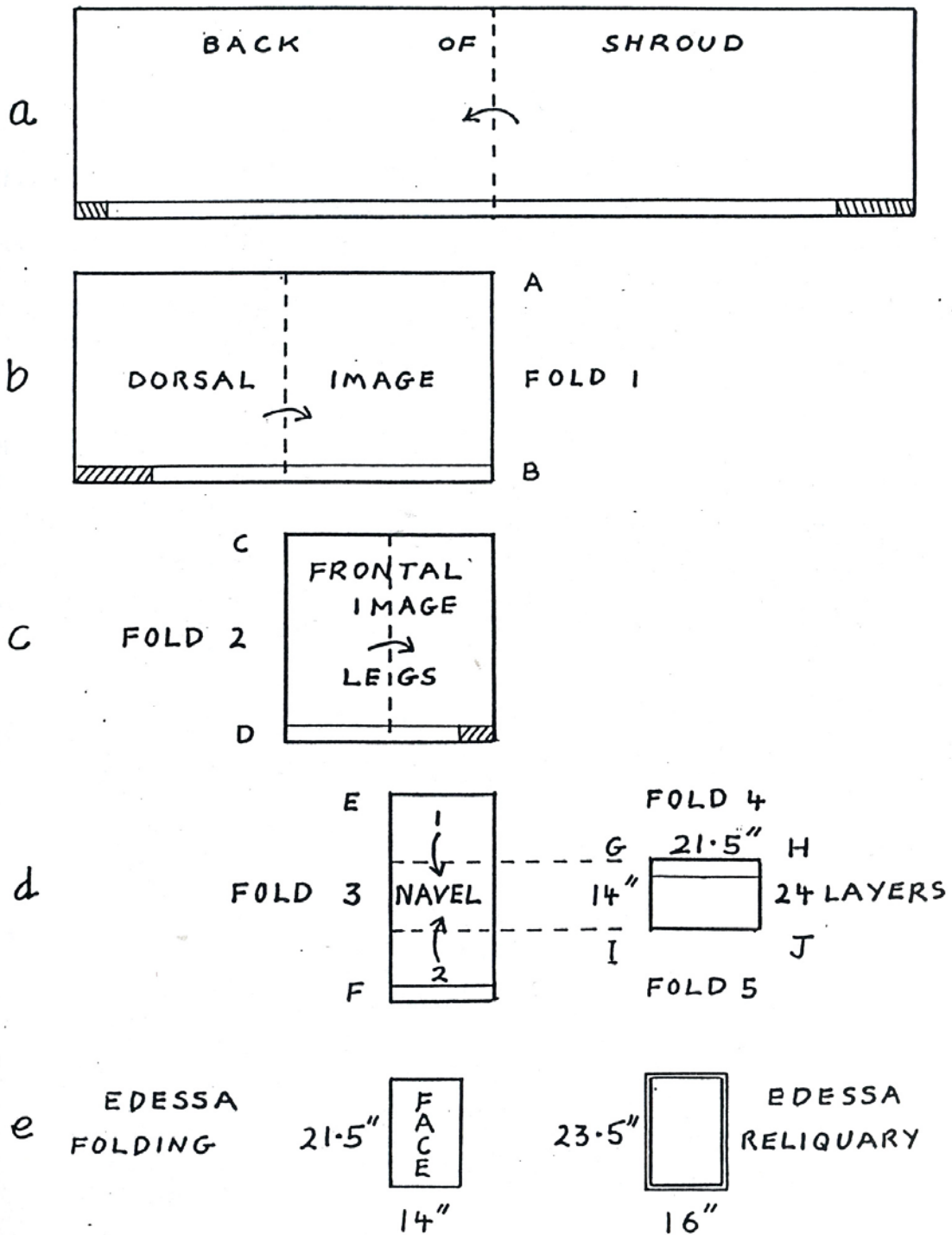


Fig. 3