

# THE CAPPADOCIAN FRESCOES AND THE TURIN SHROUD

by Lennox Manton\*

## Introduction by Rex Morgan\*\*

This is the second paper by E. Lennox Manton to be published by Runciman in the series of Shroud Monographs. The first, *Byzantine Frescoes and the Turin Shroud*, spoke of the similarities between some of the extraordinary icons in Cappadocia and the image on the Turin Shroud. The present work reproduces for the first time more of Manton's work in colour.

For many years Manton has been systematically recording a large archive of his photographic slides of the major Rupestral Churches and their frescoes in Cappadocia, Asia Minor. His work is very important since his photographs, taken in sometimes extremely difficult cave church locations, have not been, and in most cases can never be, duplicated since the frescoes are now dilapidated or inaccessible.

Manton has given exhibitions and lectures in a number of places on his fascinating research which was also featured in a series of programmes on Southern Television in England called "The Cones of Cappadocia".

In the quest for the truth about the Turin Shroud numerous art historians and students of iconography have gathered information from the past 2000 years and there is much evidence to suggest that artistic representations of Christ, especially in the "received likeness" tradition, have been based on observation of the Shroud image back to the earliest times.

Manton has recently made supportive scholarly comment on current work by Bogdanescu and Morgan concerning their discoveries in the Roman catacombs to be published in due course.

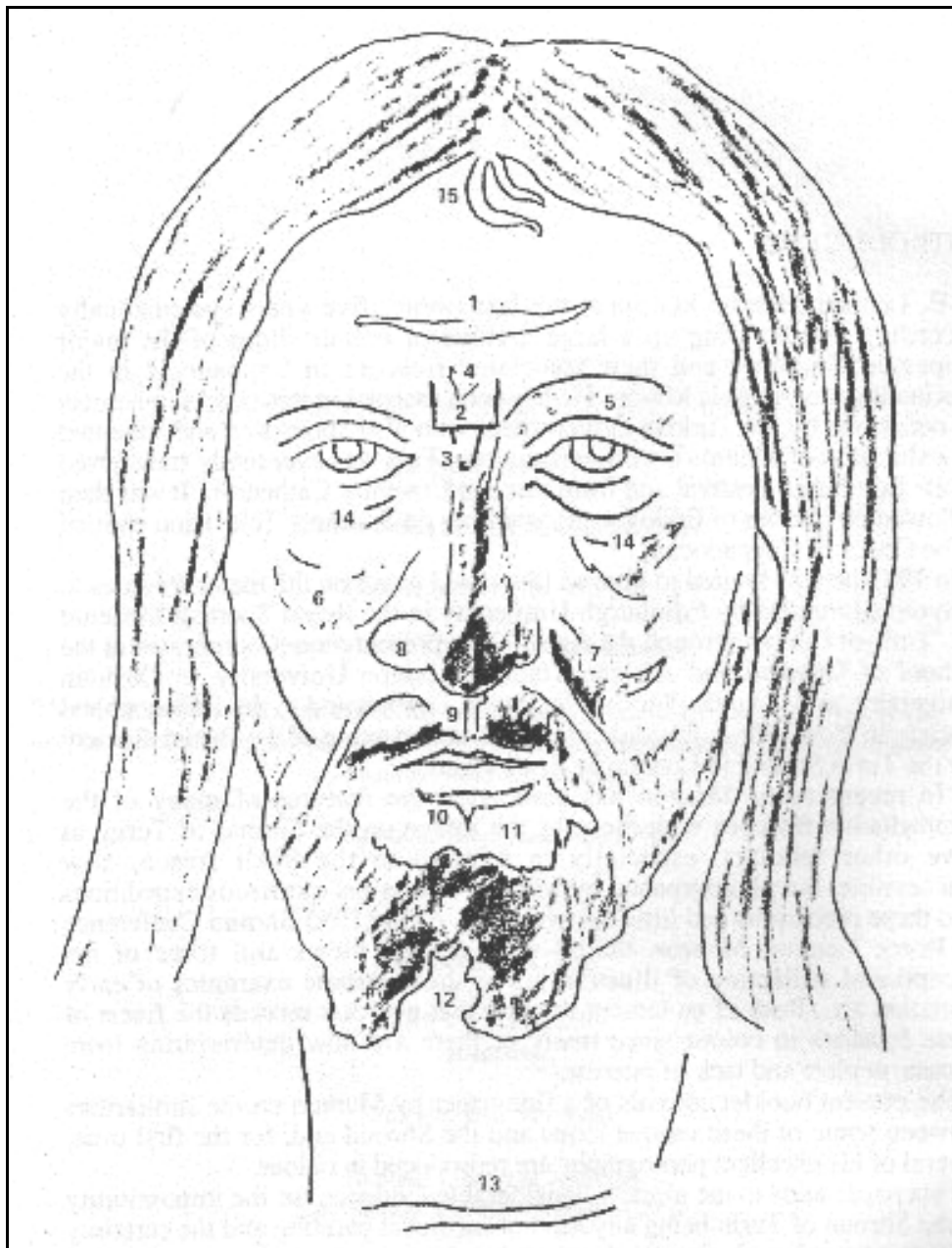
This monograph traces the similarities between the Shroud and icons of Cappadocia. Manton also argues his views convincingly relating to the recently published theories that Da Vinci painted the Shroud image in his own likeness and that of its being a medieval photograph of an actual crucifixion.

As in his first monograph Manton has added further compelling evidence for the certainty of the Shroud's existence well before the fourteenth century and the impossibility of its being any kind of medieval painting.

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\* E. Lennox Manton is a retired dental surgeon who now lives in Stirling, Scotland. He has had a lifelong interest in Cappadocia and the numerous medieval and earlier churches in that region. He has taken and collected a remarkable archive of coloured slides of the church sites and their frescoes thus making a very valuable and unique contribution to the history of that area, of Christianity, and of art. He has given many papers and lectures on these matters and is regarded as an expert on early Byzantine art. Most of the existing books on this subject appear to ignore the areas of Asia Minor he has meticulously covered and recorded in his expeditions. It is therefore to be hoped that Lennox Manton will consider writing a major book on the subject which might record his collection and his research for posterity.

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*The Vignon markings - how Byzantine artists created a living likeness from the Shroud image. (1) Transverse streak across forehead, (2) three-sided "square" between brows, (3) V shape at bridge of nose, (4) second V within marking 2, (5) raised right eyebrow, (6) accentuated left cheek, (7) accentuated right cheek, (8) enlarged left nostril, (9) accentuated line between nose and upper lip, (10) heavy line under lower lip, (11) hairless area between lower lip and beard, (12) forked beard, (13) transverse line across throat, (14) heavily accentuated owl-like eyes, (15) two strands of hair.*

The theory put forward by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, together with that of Professor Allen, seeks to explain how the image on the Turin Shroud was produced in the Middle Ages. Both of them are certainly ingenious but, to say the very least, somewhat far fetched. Neither of them take any cognisance whatsoever of the frescoes of the Pantocrator to be seen in the early Rupestral Churches of Cappadocia; all of them dating from the late 9th to the 12th centuries. These frescoes show very clearly the Vignon markings nos 12, 13, and 15, and in the case of that of the Pantocrator in the dome of the Apse of the monastery church of Eski Gumus, a fresco that dates to the mid 11th century, Vignon marking No 1, the band of the Phalactery.

It has been clearly shown that the features of Christ, as they are generally accepted today, date from A.D. 525 when the Shroud was found in the ruins of The West Gate house of Edessa, the result of a disastrous flood that devastated much of the City. Before that date His image was generally portrayed as that of a

Hellenistic young man, notably to be seen on various sarcophagi of the Roman period in the Vatican museums. Vignon marking "15" is a constant in the early Cappadocian frescoes and this quiff of hair is usually denoted by three oblique lines dropping from the centre hairline of the forehead. It is one of the definitive features in these images of Christ, figs 1 - 11 Runciman Shroud Monograph no 2, even to the extent that the artist who decorated the Kilicar church in the Urgup valley saw fit to include this feature in the Christ child in the "The flight into Egypt," a fresco that dates to the late ninth to the early tenth century, Fig. 5 Runciman monograph. One other example of this feature can be seen in the Christ child held in the arms of the Virgin in a fresco in "Direkly Church", the Church of the Columns, in the Inlara valley where the epigraphy is such that the frescoes can again be dated to the late tenth to the early eleventh centuries. It is interesting to compare these images with that of the Christ child in the arms of the Virgin looking down from the centre of a mosaic that covers a dome of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul and is dated to 1335 (Fig. 1). Of the two the naivety of that in the Kilicar church is possibly the more appealing.



*Fig. 1 - Virgin and Child, Kariye Camii*

Constantinople was possibly the most important centre for Byzantine art, until the city was sacked in A.D. 1204, its craftsmen working in ivories, mosaic, enamels and painted ikons and enjoying a flourishing export trade. A cloisonne enamel depicting the "Death of the Virgin" was looted by the Venetians in 1204 and is now a part of St Mark's treasury: in it the features of Christ standing by her bedside clearly show the markings 12, 13 and 15. A mosaic depicting the head and shoulders of Christ, that dates between 1150 to 1200, is in the Bargello in Florence and these three markings appear in the image, and one of a similar date in the Louvre of the "Transfiguration of Christ" unmistakably has these features. During the mid twelfth century an artist from Constantinople decorated the iconostasis beam in St Catherine's with a series of New Testament scenes and in that of "The raising of Lazarus" the Vignon markings feature in the image of Christ.

Constantinopolitan artists decorated many of the Cappadocian churches at the behest of wealthy donors and it is in these churches where the markings 12, 13 and 15 appear in all the images, as they do in the few ikons that have survived the sack of Constantinople and various other vicissitudes. Amongst the few that have survived from the late eleventh century is notably that of "Christ with Saints" which is also in St Catherine's, and again in the mosaic of Christ Eleemon in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin that dates to the late eleventh century. These markings spread Eastwards into Georgian religious art as the unmistakable norm in the ikons that date from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, especially in the Svaneti region, but here the features of Christ do not as a rule conform to the Cappadocian style and would possibly not show up very well under the comparison techniques of Dr Whanger.



The majority of the Cappadocian frescoes date from the time the Shroud arrived in Constantinople in A.D. 944. In A.D. 842 the edict of "The Restitution of Images" brought to an end the Iconoclastic period that saw the destruction of many icons and other religious decoration. From this date on the iconoclastic designs that decorated the early Cappadocian churches were plastered over and then frescoed with scenes from the New Testament. One of the earliest examples of this decoration, possibly dating to the late ninth century, is to be seen in Old Tokali Church cut into the Urgup hills where the New Testament scenes are laid out in the form of a strip cartoon.

The Emperor Leo is shown prostrate before Christ enthroned in the mosaic above the central door of the narthex of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, and this must date the mosaic to a period a little after A.D. 912. In it the Vignon markings 13 and 15 can be seen but the beard is rounded, fig 3 Runciman Monograph no 2. The rounded beard is also present in the early frescoes of Christ enthroned in the Virgin church in Urgup, the Snake Church that is cut into the rocks of the very deep and remote Ihlara gorge that connects the villages of Ihlara and Peristrema (Fig. 2), and in the Pidgeon Church in the Goreme valley that is the property of a local farmer. In this church the fresco of "Christ enthroned" in the dome of the apse follows very closely the Leo VI mosaic, in the Hagia Sophia, fig 9 Runciman Monograph 2. Thus all these works must belong to the earliest period, that is after 842 to the early tenth century.



*Fig. 2 - Ihlara Gorge*

After its discovery the Shroud was kept in Edessa in the Hagia Sophia built by Justinian to house it, and in this respect it must not be overlooked that Edessa was a considerable pilgrimage from Constantinople: and is still not an easy journey today and a long and tedious drive by car. For this reason alone access to the Shroud for the Constantinopolitan artists must have been limited, but after 944 when it was taken to Constantinople the many artists of the numerous ateliers in the City were able to study it more closely. It is from this date when the beard appears to lose its rounded contour and vary in form from a marked deep cleft to a later central notch. It is the shape of the beard with a deep cleft that features as the norm in the Cappadocian frescoes that date from the very late tenth to around the first quarter of the twelfth centuries, and markedly in churches painted by the Constantinopolitan artists at the instigation of their wealthy donors.

However, in the Daniel church that is also carved into the cliffs of the Ihlara gorge the frescoes present more of an enigma. They appear to have been the work of two artists, one responsible for a series of splendid iconoclastic designs that cover a barrel vault and owe much to early Arab art, paintings according to Thierry that must have been done at some time during the Iconoclastic period; the other for scenes from the New Testament that decorate the rest of the church. These include one of Daniel, badly damaged, with

two stylised lions each in a cartouche on his either side. These paintings are not the work of Constantinopolitan artists for the whole of the decoration has an Eastern influence that is exemplified in the fresco of the three wise men in what once were short blue grey robes, Scythian hats, and shoes with laces that criss cross to below the knee (Fig. 3). The fresco is unique for they are not carrying gifts as generally depicted, but dancing in line playing tamborines, an iconographic treatment that has no parallel in any other Cappadocian church; their dress is somewhat akin to that of priests in a painting that was found in the ruins of the Synagogue in Duro Europos.



*Fig. 3 - Daniel Church*

The frescoes are bright in colours of yellow, pale blue and russet and have great decorative impact but in many cases, as in that of the three wise men, the iconography is unusual in concept and has no counterpart in any of the other Cappadocian churches. Though the painting is archaic in treatment the image of the Pantocrator (Fig. 4), has definite connotations with that of the Christ in the Kariye Camii dated to 1335, no quiff of hair, a notched beard, with the line at the base of the neck and the contour of the hair closely following that of the Kariye Camii image. However, this could be entirely due to the fact that the artist in question had no connections with those of Constantinople but was of Eastern origin. A similar case in point can be seen in the "El Nazir" church in Urgup where the fresco of the Nativity does not follow the usual pattern and in it the features are distinctly Mongolian. Cappadocia was on a branch of the Silk Road and Mongolians were known to have been in Kayseri, the ancient Caesarea, that lies just outside the Cappadocian valleys.



*Fig. 4 - Pantocrator, Daniel Church*

Another unique feature in the Daniel church frescoes lies in the open white lozenges that take the place of a detailed eye. This is deliberate and not a question of the eyes having been scratched out by Moslem fundamentalists in the past, as is the case in many of the other churches. Strangely enough it has a parallel in

the frescoes in the Romanesque church at Areine near Vendome in France that dates to the thirteenth century, and is only to be seen in this church where the frescoes owe much to those in the Daniel Church. Areine was once an important market town and port, being then at the head of the navigable Loir but little remains today apart from the Church.

It has been suggested that the white lozenges of the eyes were once detailed in with a wax medium that had later dropped out, but I noted on examination that this was not the case, the frescoed white being quite clear and showing no signs of pitting or scoring from another medium. The explanation for this unusual treatment of the eyes lies in the fact that the white lozenges were more luminous in the dim flickering light of lamps during evening and night services.

The Shroud that was kept in Constantinople till its disappearance in 1204 must have had the Vignon markings that feature so prominently in the Cappadocian frescoes. That it fell into the hands of the Templars is more than possible, a fact that could have inspired the crude painting of the Mandylion that came to light in the village of Templecombe in Southern England. The very name Templecombe is significant for in the past "Combe" meant village of district in this part of the country.

However, what is interesting and significant is the fact that the Romanesque frescoes decorating the churches in the villages of the Loir, and that of Christ in Majesty in the Chapelle des Moines de Cluny, do not show the Vignon markings. The Cluny mural (Fig. 5), is said to date from the twelfth century but could belong to the thirteenth whilst those of the Loir date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This idiosyncrasy could be related to the fact that the Shroud went underground, so to speak, after its disappearance in 1204 and from that date could not be studied in detail. The first appearance of the Shroud before the public in France is thought to have taken place in Lirey in 1357, some 150 years after its disappearance.



*Fig. 5 - The Cluny Mural*

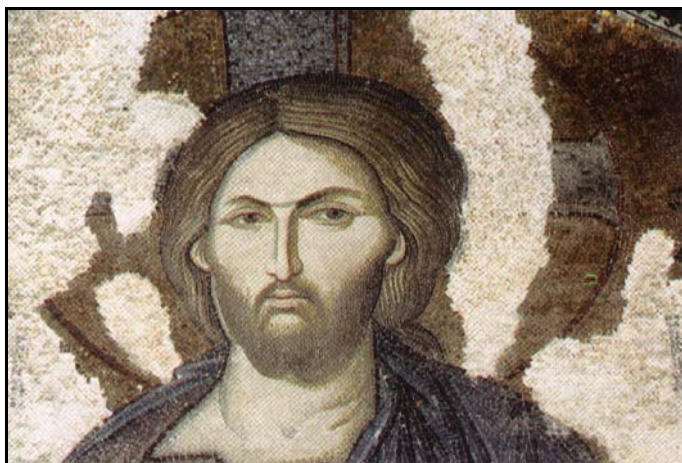
Artists from France did work in St Catherine's from the middle to the last half of the thirteenth century. An icon of the "Crucifixion and busts of Saints" painted on wood shows Christ with the quiff of hair, but another of a similar date depicting the "Death of the Virgin", also painted on wood but not by the same hand, has His image devoid of all these markings. The detail in the drawing of "Christ entombed" from the Pray manuscript of A.D. 1192, (see Ian Wilson, *The Turin Shroud*) clearly indicates the fact that this particular artist did see the Shroud in Constantinople at some time before 1204, but the drawing is not particularly competent and suggests that it could have been done from memory at a later date.

The Vignon markings in the great majority of Christ's various images appear to follow a distinct pattern. That of the quiff of hair is the most persistent up to the disappearance of the Shroud in 1204, and it spreads

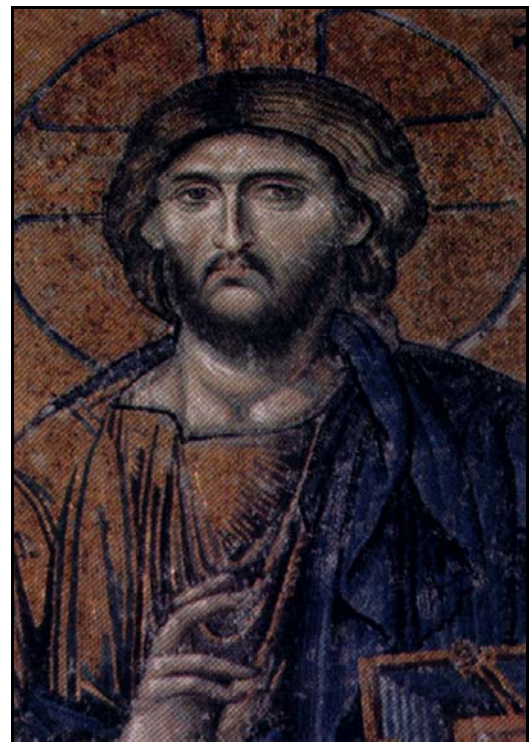


East into Georgian art as demonstrated in the Ikons of Svaeti and others in Russia, such as in the twelfth century "Christ of Veronica" in the Cathedral of the Dormition in Moscow. The neck line is also a constant and the forked beard after A.D. 944 when the Shroud was brought to Constantinople. From that date on until 1204 the frescoes of Christ in the Cappadocian Churches, in conjunction with other works of art that were the product of the craftsmen of Constantinople, clearly and persistently show these markings. It is therefore not too much to assume that the Vignon markings that feature in the image on the Turin Shroud of today could well have been the markings that inspired the artists of Constantinople.

After 1204 it is noticeable that the Vignon markings in the images gradually fade out, to the extent that they do not figure in the ikons and murals of Macedonia and Serbia that date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Furthermore the quiff of hair does not appear in the mosaic of Christ that is over the entrance to the narthex of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul (Fig. 6), a work that dates to 1335, and here the beard reverts to a more rounded contour with a slight notch. Neither does the quiff of hair appear in the mosaic of Christ in the South gallery of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (Fig. 7), a work that dates to the end of the thirteenth century, and here again the beard reverts to a more rounded contour with a slight notch. It is significant that work on these mosaics took place some 130 years after the disappearance of the Shroud from Constantinople and, as has been mentioned, none of the markings figure in the images of Christ in Glory in the Romanesque churches of France.



*Fig. 6 - 13C Mosaic in the Kariye Camii*



*Fig. 7 - 13C Mosaic in South Gallery Hagia Sophia*

There is, however, an interesting oleograph of the head of Christ in the Bridges chapel in the village Church of St Nicholas - at - Wade in Kent. It dates to the mid nineteenth century, is of German origin and reminiscent of Dürer. Here the beard is forked but the hair line is across the forehead with three marks that go from the mid line to the base of the nose. At first glance this could be Vignon marking 15, but they do in fact indicate part of the blood flow from the crown of thorns (Fig. 8).



*Fig. 8 - Oleograph in St Nicholas at Wade*

If the Turin Shroud, as we see it today, is a copy that dates to the mid fourteenth century it would seem therefore that its Vignon markings must have been copied directly from the Shroud that disappeared from Constantinople in 1204, in order that the markings should so accurately reflect those of the original that inspired the Constantinopolitan artists in their execution of the Cappadocian frescoes and other works of art. If the present Turin Shroud is such a copy, what was the fate of the original after the copy was made by the Medieval forgers, and furthermore what was the necessity for a copy?

If the Shroud, that only carbon dating has attested a Medieval forgery, is not a direct copy from what was then an extant original, but one contrived some 150 years after the disappearance of the original in 1204, how comes it that the whole image with its Vignon markings and blood stains appear so accurately on a forged replica, as some maintain is the case with the present Shroud. If this is the case it is very odd that the Vignon markings on the Turin Shroud of today, a so called forgery, so closely reflect the Vignon markings that are a feature of the Cappadocian Pantocrators that date from the late ninth to the early twelfth centuries. Again, if the Shroud is a forgery it is a strange fact that its image shows many points of similarity with other early images of Christ when comparisons are made by Dr Whanger when using his specialised techniques. From whence did a forger of the Middle Ages obtain this unique information if the original had not been seen for some 150 years? Whoever the forgers were it seems unlikely that they made themselves conversant with the Vignon markings that are a feature of the remote Cappadocian frescoes, frescoes that were more or less lost to the West at that time.

Taking all the above into consideration the findings of Professor Allen together with those of Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince must indeed be queried. Professor Allen of fine arts at Port Elizabeth is of the opinion that the Shroud is a true photographic negative, created in the Middle Ages by using a quartz lens, silver nitrate, and sunlight, thereby chemically inducing a scorch on the linen. He furthermore stipulates that the lens was placed between a specially crucified body and the cloth, and that the body and cloth were some eight yards apart. This would not have produced an image that could be converted into a three dimensional one as demonstrated by the American scientists, Mottern and Jackson.

But one of the main obstacles to this curious thesis is, from whence in France in the Middle Ages did the individual who was crucified to produce this spurious relic originate? Furthermore, how was the poor peasant or other unfortunate, who had the misfortune to have a likeness akin to that which inspired the artists of Constantinople till 1204, selected? Having been selected he must then have been given a crown of thorns and, before being very reluctantly crucified, inflicted with the wounds necessary to produce the Vignon and other markings that were a feature of the cloth that disappeared in 1204, some 150 years earlier.

But none of the Romanesque frescoes in France show the Vignon markings in their images of Christ thus, if the Shroud is a medieval forgery produced by the method put forward by Professor Allen, how did these markings that are reflected in the Cappadocian frescoes up till 1204 appear in the Turin Shroud of today. The comments and observations made by Bro Michael Buttigieg regarding this theory are not only very cogent and concise, they also cover the many other reasons that go to negate the theory, one of the most



important being the fact that crucifixion was outlawed by Constantine and it would have been difficult to have illegally carried out such a one in France in the fourteenth century.

The theory proposed by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince as to the method used by Leonardo Da Vinci to produce the image is equally as curious as that of Professor Allen. Here again they formulate the suggestion that the likeness is nothing less than that of Da Vinci himself, fixed onto the cloth with a lens and the use of a primitive photographic technique that is unspecified. Professor Scavone's review of the book is admirable, one of the salient points being the fact that Leonardo was born in 1452 to die in 1519.

It is well known that the Mona Lisa is essentially a self portrait of Leonardo in drag painted in 1503 when aged 51. The last few years of his life were spent in France where he died in Amboise in a small house not far from the Chateau. The house is now a small museum, or was when I was last there; it is also maintained that he was so attached to the picture he actually took it with him when he left Italy. It must then have reflected much of himself in it, but its features have very little in common with the Shroud image and Dr Whanger, I feel with all his expertise, would be hard put to it to find any points of congruence between the Mona Lisa and that of the Shroud.

The theory stipulates the Shroud image being nothing less than a photograph of Leonardo that is so doctored it incorporates elements of his own features. With all the undoubted genius of Leonardo the mind boggles as to how this could have been achieved. On many occasions Dr Whanger has demonstrated the fact that there are numerous points of convergence between the Shroud image and the early images of Christ. This being the case how did Leonardo obtain the information as to the Vignon markings that characterise the Shroud image? And incorporate all this into a self portrait by using a primitive photographic technique, even given his genius. Did he dress himself up with a forked beard and a wig of long hair, force a crown of thorns onto his head till the blood flowed, and then draw a line across his throat before he took his own photograph; and having done this, photograph the back of his head with the semblance of a pigtail.

Furthermore, this had to be photographed directly on to the cloth above an image already taken of a contemporary headless cadaver, the front with the hands crossed to show the nail marks through the wrist; was Leonardo familiar with this method of fixing the arms to the cross in Roman times? Renaissance paintings of Christ Crucified together with countless Crucifixes that adorn the altars and walls of Cathedrals, Churches and Chapels throughout the whole of Italy feature the nails penetrating the palms of the hand. I agree with Professor Scavone's conclusion as to the validity of the hypothesis.

Carbon dating is not the final word on that of the Shroud. It has been shown that many factors can contribute to an inaccurate result. All aspects of the history of the Mandylion must be considered. The peculiar features that the present cloth exhibits, the source of the pollens, the weave, the flax, the Vignon markings together with the body markings, the presence of the blood stains, and the features of congruence as demonstrated by Dr and Mrs Whanger. Not the least the history and evidence of the Cappadocian frescoes together with that of contemporary ikons and mosaics when seen in contrast with those of later centuries. In spite of many suggestions and experiments research has not as yet explained exactly how the image was imprinted on the cloth. It may yet be a miracle.