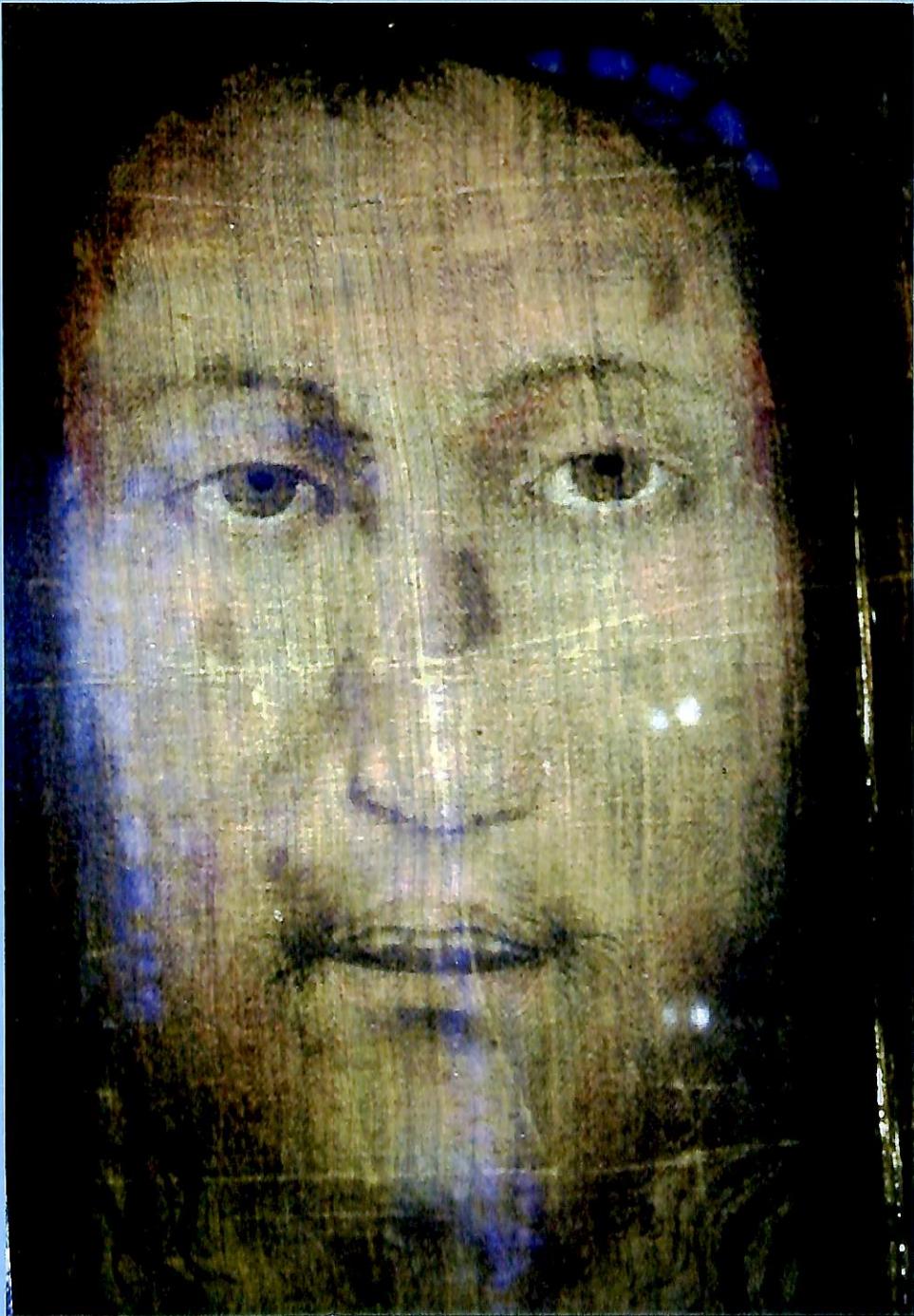


Blandina Paschalis Schlömer



## JESUS CHRIST

The Lamb and The Beautiful Shepherd

The Encounter with the Veil of Manoppello

English translation : Cynthia Krystyna Simla

NIHIL OBSTAT

Sr. Maria Gratia Adler OCSO

Abbess of Maria Frieden, 53949 Dahlem, Germany

copyright:© Nostra Signora del Volto Santo,  
Associazione di Volontariato, 65024 Manoppello (PE), Italy,  
Via P. Domenico da Cese, 34  
e-mail: nostrasignoravoltosanto@gmail.com

Blandina Paschalis Schlömer

# JESUS CHRIST-

## The Lamb or The Beautiful Shepherd

My encounter with Our Lord Jesus Christ's most Holy Face in the Veil of Manoppello

Herrn Prof. Andreas Resch  
in großer Dankbarkeit!

Manoppello, 31.8.2014

L. Blandina P. Schlömer

You, my God, know all my secret thoughts;  
You know that I am compelled by a force,  
which is external to me, indeed is against my will,  
to commit these things to writing. I consider that I have  
profited but little from your gifts, and so I cannot believe  
that they were meant for me alone, because in your eternal  
wisdom you cannot be misled.

That is why, Giver of gifts, you who have so freely loaded me  
with gifts unmerited, I ask you to grant that at least one  
loving heart reading these pages may be moved to compassion,  
seeing that through zeal for souls you have permitted such a royal  
gem to be embedded in the slime of my heart. May such a one be  
led to praise and exalt your mercy, with hymns of heart and lips.

(Gertrud of Helfta, The Herald of Divine Love, Book II chap.5)



2014, 54  
(67165)

## PART I

<b>I. FOREWORD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>II. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. MY PATH</b>	<b>9</b>
1. First contact with the Cloth Relic of Manoppello	9
2. Observation on the Veil	10
3. My sojourn in France	10
4. My first 'Double Picture' transparency	12
5. The Years 1991-1995	12
6. A face to face encounter with the Veil	13
7. Inner perceptions	16
<b>IV. CHRIST ICONS AND THE VEIL</b>	<b>17</b>
1. Christ's Icon of Recklinghausen, My first steps into Icon Painting	17
2. Six Icons from different centuries	22
1. The Risen Christ (VyssiBrod) 1350, Altar of Hohenfurth, Prague, National Gallery	25
2. The Images of Edessa: The Holy Face of Genoa and the Christ's Image of the Vatican	26
3. The Holy Countenance of Novgorod, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow	26
4. Christ the Compassionate, 12th century, South Italy, Berlin State Museum	28
5. Christ Pantocrator, 6th century, Sinai, Saint Catherine's monastery	29
6. Christ Pantocrator, 4th century, Santa Pudentiana Church, Rome	32
<b>V. THE TWO PRIMEVAL IMAGES</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>VI. THE VEIL AND THE SHROUD</b>	<b>34</b>
1. External differences	34
2. Ten "congruent" features	35
<b>VII. THE "DOUBLE PICTURE"</b>	<b>40</b>
1. Overview	40
2. Some particular aspects	40
3. Concluding remarks	40

## PART II

<b>I. MY TIME IN MANOPPELLO</b>	<b>43</b>
1. My relocation to Manoppello	43
2. 2004-2005	45

1. Paul Badde and the “Seashell Silk Veil”	45
2. The discovery of the year 2004: The Veil is made of Bysus!	45
3. Chiara Vigo - The byssus weaver	46
4. The Volto Santo, a painting?	51
5. The Sudarium of Oviedo	51
6. Saverio Gaeta	52
3. Pope Benedict’s XVI visit in 2006	53
<b>II. CHRIST’S BURIAL CLOTHS TODAY</b>	<b>54</b>
1. General information about the burial cloths	54
2. The burial cloths and their stations	55
1. The Shroud of Turin	55
2. The Sudarium of Oviedo, Spain	56
3. The Holy Head-dress of Cahors, France	56
4. The Sudarium of Kornelimünster, near Aachen, Germany	57
5. The Veil of Manoppello	58
6. The SindonMunda, a sort of linen used as support for the body	60
3. Modern comparison of the cloths	61
1. The Veil of Manoppello	61
2. The relationship between the Veil and the Shroud of Turin	68
4. The timing of the creation of the Face Image	76
1. Doctor’s meeting in June 2010	76
2. The imprint was created at the moment of resurrection, other witnesses: Padre Domenico da Cese and his perceptions during prayer	86
5. The correlation between the Veil of Manoppello and the Sudarium of Oviedo	96
6. Personal Review	96
<b>III. EARLY TESTIMONIES OF THE IMAGE IN THE VEIL</b>	<b>96</b>
1. The lamb and the beautiful Shepherd; the paintings of Christ in the catacombs	96
2. Early Christian Egyptian mummy portraits	101
3. Emmanuel and Pantocrator: Ancient mosaics and frescos	103
<b>IV. FINAL CHAPTER: JESUS CHRIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>“A LARGE CROWD OF WITNESSES” (HEBR: 12.1)</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>EPILOGUE - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>122</b>
The ten “congruent” marks	122
The vision of Saint Mechtild of Hackeborn	124
The herald of God’s loving-kindness, Saint Gerturd of Helfta	125
The newspaper article: The Volto Santo of Manoppello	126

## Introduction

I've been working on the Veil for over 33 years now. Today I live as a hermit in the little town of Manoppello. How did this happen? When did I first learn about the Holy Face in the Veil? What triggered my research? What can I and, have I to say today?

I'm repeatedly asked all those questions. Especially here in Italy, almost nobody knows anything about my personal or my daily life. They ignore how my work started and how God's Providence, exchanges, prayer and human relationships have created a completely new situation.

Even though, nowadays you can find many publications about the Veil, the Volto Santo remains quite unknown. You can get information from the books written by Prof. Heinrich Pfeiffer (Rome), by Prof. Andreas Resch CSsR (Innsbruck), by Paul Badde (former Vatican correspondent for the German newspaper *die Welt*), by Saverio Gaeta, Editor in Chief for the magazine "*Famiglia Cristiana*" (Italy) as well as on the Internet. You can get the Shrine's magazine "*Il Volto Santo di Manoppello*" in Italian or "*Vera Icon*", the magazine of the *Penuel Group* in Germany. Unfortunately, in spite of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Sanctuary on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 and the numerous Polish pilgrims, the knowledge doesn't seem to have reached a large number of the faithful, particularly here in Italy. Maybe the news is too unconceivable or its circulation is in some way hindered.

Also a lot of the accessible information is misleading.

All those reasons have convinced me to write this book and describe my personal participation in many of the crucial moments of the study of the Veil. The first part of the book contains an almost unchanged version of the book published by Resch in 1999 "*Der Schleier von Manoppello und das Grabtuch von Turin*". I didn't change it because most people are curious to know how it all started (1979 – 1999) and all this information is best found in the former publication. The second part describes the events that took place after 2003 and the comparison of the Veil with yet another cloth-relic attributed to Jesus.

The knowledge about the Holy Face has been enhanced by the other existing burial linens for example: the Sudarium of Oviedo, the Holy Head-dress of Cahors, the Sindone Munda and the byssus Sudarium found in Aachen, but up to 2005 I only knew about the Shroud of Turin.

Our knowledge is still very limited and will need substantial research into all the burial linens.

However I don't put the authenticity of the Veil of Manoppello into question as three witnesses testify to one and the same truth: Jesus Christ who had been covered with those cloths did not stay dead, but is risen. The Veil of Manoppello acts as a witness of his life, He is always the Living-One, the Son of God, who can say: "I was dead!"

On the other hand Oviedo testifies to the terrible sufferings and death of our Lord. The Shroud, researched for over a century, is a map of the different stages of Jesus' Passion, albeit the imprints cannot be explained naturally. A corpse doesn't usually leave its imprint. That is why the Shroud of Turin is a witness of Jesus' godly power, present even in death. The existence and safekeeping of the Shroud in spite of Jewish cleanliness rules testify to Jesus' resurrection.

In this book I will explain the close link between these three cloths, how I slowly perceived their connection and how the Face in the Veil of Manoppello is the image of the Risen One, a testimony to the living Son of God.

The apostles didn't see the image of a dead Christ, but it was the vivid, living image of Jesus, which showed them that he had vanquished death. The manifestation of His power over death is portrayed on this little Veil. It says nothing else but: "I was dead" and "I'm here for you!"

The title of the book refers to my experience with the Veil during my first seven years in Manoppello: I see the Lamb that has freed us, the Shepherd, who watches over us day and night. According to an interpretation by Archbishop Bruno Forte it represents the Slaughtered Lamb

standing on Mount Sion, spoken of in the Book of Revelations (Rev 5,6 and 14,1). It witnesses at the same time death and glory. In this passage of Revelations, the author describes that the Lamb has eyes all around, to the front and to the back, like the Volto Santo. Here we can experience John the Baptist's testimony of the "Lamb of God", both innocent and humble. I invite everybody to experience it for him or herself and to meet our Lords tender kindness.

*Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlömer*



Pic.1: Sister Blandina Paschalis

# FIRST PART

## “The Veil of Manoppello and the Linen of Turin”

The events during 1979-1999

An unchanged re-edition of the same titled book, published in 1999 by Resch publishing house, is a record and a summary of how it all started. It narrates how the Veil of Manoppello found its way from a local veneration into the Universal Church.

### I. Foreword

*By Professor Andreas Resch CSsR for the first edition October 29, 1999*

Certain moments in life literally take our breath away. I witnessed such an experience when I was reviewing the book “The true image of Christ” written by the Jesuits Werner Bulst and Heinrich Pfeiffer. The trappist nun’s, Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlömer, profound knowledge and explanation of the “Veronica” (the not man-made image of Christ), and the congruencies she found in both the Veil of Manoppello and the Linen of Turin impressed me deeply, and convinced me to invite Prof. Pfeiffer to the 15<sup>th</sup> Imago Mundi Congress in 1995. The congress’ theme was on religion and the paranormal. He held two conferences, one on the burial cloth of Turin and another one on the Veil of Manoppello. The recordings of both conferences created a lot of interest, because the explanation was straightforward, and triggered people’s interest to find out more about the Veil of Manoppello.

A couple of weeks ago I received a phone call from Sister Blandina asking me for the authorization to publish the articles by Prof. Pfeiffer on the Veil of Manoppello. I didn’t recognize who I had been speaking to and only a co-worker informed me that it was Sister Blandina Schlömer. I called her again and asked her for a copy of the publication of her work. She told me that her research had only been partly published. I therefore offered immediately to publish her complete works: her research on the different congruencies between both cloths, the relationship between the imprint on the Veil of Manoppello and Christ icons of different centuries. I wanted above all to expand and protect her idea of the overlapping of the transparencies, respecting the different specific congruent features.

This joint venture led to the publication of the following leaflet.

I am thankful to Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlömer OCSO for her trust, to Prof. Heinrich Pfeiffer for his introduction and to Miss. Mag. Priska Kapferer for the formatting of this book. I hope that the attentive reader will like me, be completely taken aback.

## II. Introduction

*By Prof. Heinrich Pfeiffer S.J June 29, 1999*

Could Renzo Allegri and Paul O. Schenker ever have imagined that their article<sup>1</sup> on the Veil of Manoppello and its mysterious Countenance, published in November issue of the 1978 monthly magazine "Das Zeichen Mariens (Marie's sign)", would find its way into a trappist sister's cell in the Convent of Maria Frieden in the Eifel region? What followed would have amazed them even more. Initially resistant, Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlömer then made it her life's mission to see whether the imprint on the cloth of Manoppello corresponds with the one on the Linen of Turin. At first she tried to draw the two faces and to find the similarities in them. She then sent those first sketches to the Jesuit Father Professor Werner Bulst in Darmstadt. This letter reached the Professor whilst I was with him working on a joint publication about the burial linen of Turin (it was probably 1984). Prof. Bulst opened the thick letter and as he saw the pictures and drawings, he handed them to me saying: "This is something for you!"

This moment was a turning point in my life. From then on, the Veil of Manoppello started to play an important role in my life. A short time later I went on a trip to the little town in the Abruzzi region. Unfortunately, Prof. Bulst died before having the opportunity to participate in one of my pilgrimages to the shrine of Manoppello. Thus, he could never experience how the imprint almost completely fades away when you hold the Veil towards a bright light or the sky, and how it reappears when you hold it against a white wall. I observed certain phenomena on my different trips to Manoppello, but I also visited sister Blandina a couple of times at the Maria Frieden monastery in the Eifel region. I shared all my observations with sister Blandina. She on the other hand, had become more specialized in her overlapping technique. She had two original sized transparent slides of the face of the Veil and that of the Linen; she spent hours sliding one over the other over a light. Those trials gave very surprising results. One has to try for one's self to move both images over a light until at a certain moment both countenances melt together to render a single and same face.

Sister Blandina continued the same process with various Christ icons dating from different centuries, starting with the 4<sup>th</sup> century and coming from the East as well as from the West. She not only realized that the icon's face merged with the image of the Veil of Manoppello and consequently with the image on the Linen, but also that the superposition of the Veil's imprint rendered the icon's face much more alive and expressive.

Her studies along with those of the French research team of C.I.E.L.T were presented in Rome during the International Congress on the burial Linen in 1993. Sister Blandina wasn't present during the congress in Rome, but was granted a special authorization to attend the congress in Nice in 1997 to present her findings alongside C.I.E.L.T's research team. There she talked about the representations of the Veronica in the light of the Veil of Manoppello and discussed the influence of the Veil on numerous middle-aged crucifixes. In the meantime, she had personally travelled to Manoppello and had contemplated on the Veil with her own eyes. Sister Blandina, a studied pharmacist, is a very talented icon painter. Her sense of observation is remarkable, but above all she has the ability to render accurately what she sees. She has greatly participated in making the Veil accessible to a growing number of people. She developed a sound technique to superimpose transparent snap-shots of both the Veil and the Linen, thus revealing a double picture, and for comparing the transparencies with ancient Christ icons.

I hope that many Sindone and relic researchers will find a source of inspiration in her work.

---

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for whole article

### III. MY PATH

Professor Andreas Resch asked me to write the following account in 1999.

In 1969, as a young missionary sister of the Precious Blood in Würzburg, I was studying Pharmaceuticals when a theology student asked me about the correlation between my studies and God's Kingdom. This question perplexed me and I didn't know what to respond.

After all, I was following the orders of my Superior in studying pharmaceuticals. Even if I didn't quite understand the reason, by following the orders of my Superior, I was somehow doing God's will and was thus integrated into God's Kingdom here on Earth. Being an artist, it was more difficult for me to master a subject like Chemistry, which required a lot of precision and the adherence to very strict rules. One could also bring up the question of the relationship between Art and Chemistry. I was convinced that God knew the reason why He made me do this and put my complete trust in Him. In 1971, I transferred to Bonn to finish my studies. It was there, during the preparation for my oral state-exams that I felt the call for a more contemplative way of life. This call led me to Maria Frieden, the German trappist monastery in the Eifel area. I entered the monastery for a half-year probationary period in 1972 just after having passed my state-exams.

#### 1. First contact with the cloth relic of Manoppello

Soon after my perpetual vows I was given the task of taking care of the sick. This is where I first came into contact with the unusual relic of Manoppello.

It was 1979, almost all the sisters had contracted the flu, and I had to look after them in their sickbeds. Since all the beds in the hospice were taken, I had to enter the individual cells of the nuns, where usually access is only granted to the Mother Superior. The only decoration of a trappist nun's cell is a crucifix and one more holy image. One of the sisters had over her cross a picture of the burial linen of Turin. Overcome with joy, I remarked: "Oh, you have it too!" I had been carrying this image on me since, as a young missionary sister (during my first fasting period in 1965) a book and its images convinced me of its authenticity. MY CHRIST IMAGE! I had painted it over and over again and taken it wherever I went. So this sister was worshipping it too! We didn't have the opportunity to speak more about this. She only murmured something concerning another existing image, but that didn't interest me. When she was healthy again, I suddenly found underneath my cell's door a newspaper article about "the Volto Santo" in Manoppello with a close-up black-and-white newspaper picture (pic 2). I wasn't prepared for that and I got really angry, took the paper and hid it in the monastery's linen cupboard, covering it up with other things. I didn't want to see it, nor have anything to do with it. Another Christ image next to that of Turin! Unbelievable! That was impossible! I wouldn't believe it! Furthermore I didn't want any "miracle image". There was only one possible way for me to cope with it and that was to put it away! That was the state I was in when I resumed my work with the sick on that day, and then I experienced something very particular!

Whilst I still had to take care of the sick and was running left and right, up and down the many stairs and corridors, His gaze followed me. I couldn't forget the eyes I had just seen. His eyes were not following me but they were just there, I couldn't escape them. At night I got tired of it and

VON EINER WETTERZEREN PERSON HERGESTRICHEN, IST ES SEIT 4 JAHRHUNDERTEN IN EINER KLEINEN ZUR VEREHRUNG AUSGESTELLT

#### DAS "VOLTO SANTO" VON MANOPPELLO

„Es handelt sich um eine seltsame Erscheinung... die Mutter der Kirche, in der das wertvolle Stoffstück, aufbewahrt wird... die ehrwürdige Tradition beschränkt es auf die Scheinwand Christi... Die Reliquie dieses Antlitzes hat schon die Geschichte von Turin...  
„Warum es nicht ein genaues Bild sein kann...“  
Die Reliquie ist ein wunderbares Heilmittel.

Von Rocco Altieri und Paul O. Schuster

Manoppello (Piemonte) im Sommer 1978...  
Die Bild des Antlitz Jesu, das seit fast 1500 Jahren in einem kleinen Dorf im Norden Italiens...  
Die Reliquie dieses Antlitzes hat schon die Geschichte von Turin...  
Die Reliquie ist ein wunderbares Heilmittel.



Pic.2: newspaper picture of the Volto Santo

searched for the newspaper and started reading it. It wasn't any kind of miracle article. It related to how the Veil was worshipped in Manoppello.

## **2. Observations on the Veil**

I was somewhat confused. Was all this true? I had learnt that the proportions of the Veil of Manoppello and that of the Linen of Turin were identical. Even though I had started to examine the pictures, the Face's expression remained a mystery to me. Finding no explanation to the different facial expressions, I decided to observe His Face and to find an answer within my heart. I looked at it directly but also studied its reflection in a mirror. I had realized that the picture I had of the Holy Face was not actually the front view, but a close-up of its mirror image. I found out more and more things: a resemblance to the Shroud of Turin and an incredible correlation with Christ icons, two years before I had started to study the characteristics and structure of icons. As I had to take care of the sick during the day, I barely had any spare time and the only time I could consecrate to my study were the very early morning hours (between 5 a.m.-7 a.m.) or the late evening hours before going to bed. One day, it occurred to me that His facial expression is one of respect and humility.

"Hebr 5.7b: [...] and He submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard". Christ's prayers were heard because of his extreme humility and innocence. In spite of the cruel wounds and marks of passion, His Face is humble and innocent, without any sign of tension or bitterness. Gradually, I started to understand more and could ascertain that this Face was really Christ's Countenance, because the wounds and features perfectly correlated with both the Shroud and ancient Christ icons. Most people I spoke to disapproved strongly of my theory. Many thought that the Face wasn't attractive initially, but this impression changed over time. Most people were reserved or even hostile. I understood that I had to keep my findings to myself and continued to research on my own. It had taken over 100 years for the Shroud of Turin to be accepted and it would probably take over 100 years for the Veil to be as well.

However the negative comments of my fellow human beings didn't discourage me. Like them, I didn't yet understand the "Face" but it had begun to reveal itself to me.

When for the first time I saw a coloured close-up of the Veil, God's hand fell upon me. "Sweet" peace and warmth enveloped me and confirmed to me that I was on the right track. From that moment I devoted my entire life to the "Holy Face".

I knew that a pollen grain analysis had been conducted on the Shroud by the criminologist Dr. Max Frei from Zurich that attested to its origin. I would like the same research to be done some day on the Veil. As a former pharmaceutical student, the medical aspect had always interested me more than the history art aspect. However History of Art played an important role in proving the Veil's authenticity. I will give you some examples in Chapter 2.

## **3. My sojourn in France**

In 1983, after the death of my teacher, I went to a monastery in France to complete my training in icon painting. One day I shared my research-results with my Rector. He gave me an article written by the sole German Sindone researcher of that time, Prof. Bulst. I asked for permission to send him my work on the Veil. Having the Rector's approval I was waiting for the right occasion to forward him the material. When my blood sister Elisabeth visited me unexpectedly, she took all my material with her to Germany, where she was supposed to send it to Prof. Werner Bulst. As I didn't get an

answer from him for a very long time, I started to worry and questioned whether my sister had really fulfilled her task.

I found out that she had kept the material in her house for quite a while prior to sending it to the addressee. I received the Professor's answer; he told me that he had forwarded it to one of his colleagues in Rome: Prof. Heinrich Pfeiffer, who was teaching History of Art at the Gregoriana University. In his letter he said that the Countenance in the Veil was really an ineffable image of Christ and that it was probably created in the same or in a similar way to the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe in Mexico, but that it had no correlation with the Shroud of Turin whatsoever. I was determined to prove him wrong!



Pic.3: Sister Blandina and her sister

Therefore, to prove their similarities, I worked on drawings for over a year. Icon painting had taught me to scale up accurately and I was able to make a size equivalent reproduction of the Veil's Holy Face. The effect when placing the transparency (on which I had drawn the Face) over various pictures of the Shroud, was simply breath taking: it simply corresponded. Our present Rector of the Maria Frieden monastery, P. Pius of Mariawald, provided me with different sized pictures of the Shroud, which meant that I could repeat the experience with different starting materials. He sent me the material from Germany.

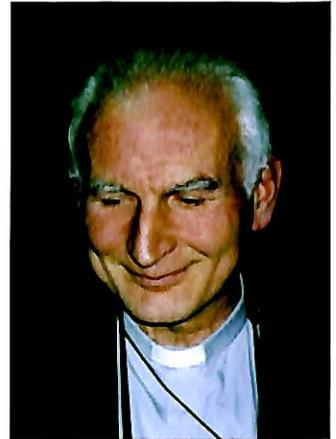
Once I had conducted all my experiments, I sent the evidence to Prof. Pfeiffer, who replied to me that I had convinced him. Later, however I found out that his doubts had been definitely erased only once he visited the Shrine.

I wasn't yet satisfied! The comparison was too approximate; the measurements were not yet set. Finally, Prof. Pfeiffer was able to get the original measurements of the Veil of Manoppello and Prof. Bulst gave me the exact measurements for the Shroud.

#### 4. The first “Double-Picture” transparency

My icons found a lot of interest with my family doctor. I explained to him my findings about the Veil. He suggested developing the pictures directly on a transparency in his home laboratory. My Superior allowed me to go there to supervise the measurements and the accuracy. The transparencies permitted a conclusive overlapping of the two pictures and showed the merge of the two faces. The correlation between both images was now clear. These two “unlike” faces had to be created during the same process.

Of course many questions kept coming up and whenever Prof. Pfeiffer came to Maria Frieden we would debate them. We were mostly concerned with the conditions in the tomb and the chronological creation of the imprints. In 1991 Prof. Pfeiffer wrote his book: “*Das echte Christusbild, the true image of Christ*”. However, the transparencies sent to the editor had been freely rearranged and the pictures in the book didn’t show the correspondence between both faces. They were imprecise and somewhat blurry. Financial constraints didn’t permit us to add the transparencies and Prof. Bulst reproached me for a lack of evidence and as such, refused my work as well as the book. I regret, that because of the misuse of the material I couldn’t convince Prof. Bulst, and also that he himself never came to Maria Frieden to have a proper look at the material. Sindologists, even nowadays still have difficulty to acknowledge another not-man made image next to the Shroud. I remember being faced with the same doubts in the beginning, which have since changed.



Pic.4: Prof.Dr. Heinrich Pfeiffer

#### 5. The years 1991-1995

One main event but also a huge disappointment of 1991 was the publication of Prof. Pfeiffer’s book “*Das echte Christusbild*” containing inaccurate pictures that couldn’t be replaced. In spite of this, the book found praise among many readers. It inspired some people to found the group of The Friends of Jesus Christ’s True Countenance.

Johannes Stöber, a Theologian and the President of this group, encouraged, pushed and financed my scientific investigations. He suggested that I present an article at the upcoming C.I.E.L.T congress in Rome. At first I felt overwhelmed, what would I write? I had no clue what the conference’s requirements were and I only had the discovery of the overlapping of those congruent imprints of both cloths to share.

Johann Stöber and Prof. Pfeiffer encouraged me to simply speak of my findings. I started to put it into writing and, the result is this book’s Fourth Chapter. The conference’s attendees didn’t show a lot of reaction. The publication of the documents took over two years. The news of the existence of another authentic Christ picture next to the Shroud was too alien and triggered a lot of anger and resentment. I knew



Pic.5: Johann Stöber

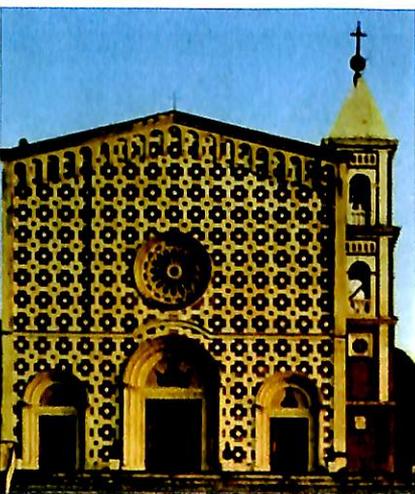
that people needed time to grow accustomed to this idea. I concentrated myself again on the painting of icons.

## 6. A face to face encounter with the Veil

I've never given up on looking for people or opportunities to make the matters advance. One of those opportunities was my surprising and unexpected visit to Manoppello, when my other blood sister, also a trappist nun in a monastery in Italy fell sick. I visited the Shrine of Manoppello for the first time on Friday October 20<sup>th</sup> 1995 together with my two sisters and Prof. Pfeiffer.

My personal encounter with the Face in the Veil affected me deeply. It is quite unusual to be confronted with something that surpasses our experiences. The Veil of Manoppello is one of those items that you can barely describe. It was covering Jesus' face in the grave and was placed on top of the Linen of Turin.

For over 300 years this little cloth has been secured between two sheets of blown glass surrounded by a wooden frame, encased by a larger, ornate silver



Pic.6: The Basilica of Manoppello

shining sclera. The gaze is friendly and almost smiles at us.

Stained graze-like areas on the forehead and on the cheeks are revealed when one shines a light behind it. The usually extremely white sclera and the eyelids also show those stains. I could constantly keep admiring the beauty of His shining softly curled hair.

Unfortunately my camera wouldn't render all those details. The translucent quality of the Veil and the stained glass make photography of the relic extremely difficult. The relic has a front side and a mirror side. In Manoppello, pilgrims can read a newspaper through the Veil.



Pic.7: The localization of Manoppello

frame. (pic. 34 a-d) It is kept in the Shrine of the Volto Santo in the Capuchin Sanctuary of Manoppello, a little town in the Abruzzi region near Pescara. There, I could admire the many different apparitions of the Face and thanks to the kindness of the friars take some pictures. The various changes in the Face have not got any logical explanation however (Fig. 1).

Yet each one of these faces is completely natural. These changes are quite uncommon and inexplicable. Sometimes the cloth appears to be old and crumpled, its surface dull and blunted due to rough fibres, yet at other times the fabric seems very delicate, completely translucent and shimmering. Likewise the picture changes from an ochre coloured image revealing a very detailed human face with a precise representation of his hair, his eyelashes and other features; to a white thin fabric disclosing a living face looking at us with falling, floppy shiny hair (pic.8). The eyes attract your whole attention, especially the white,



Pic.8: rear side of the Veil, frontal illumination

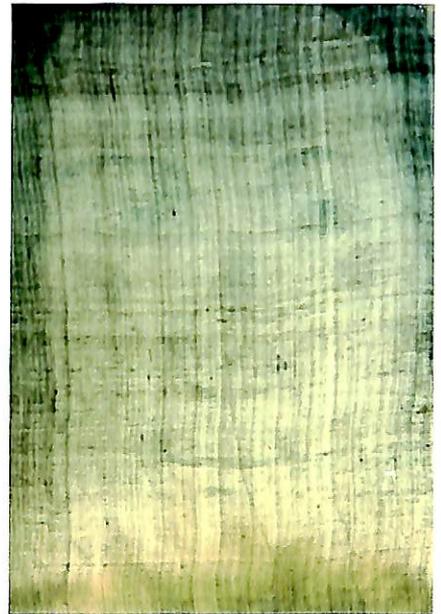
that two dissimilar faces merge into one will persuade anybody who considers it. In particular, the Face will speak to anybody who recreates it by overlapping the transparencies himself. The new Face from this “double picture” is vivid and alive. The compassionate gaze and the lack of bitterness and reserve, in spite of the terrible wounds, convey to the faithful observer Jesus’ present unlimited love and tenderness. The Face seems to express Jesus’ words: **“Courage! It is I!”** (Matt 14.26)

During my visit to Manoppello I had made dozens of suitable pictures which nourished my work and which I was then able to use during my presentation at the C.I.E.L.T congress in Nice, in 1997. At my first congress, I had mainly spoken about the impact of the Veil’s imprint on Christ Icon painting. My second presentation was about Ottonian crucifixes and the various Veronica paintings up until 1500. Even though Art History offers precious and necessary proof, my main concern lies in forensic medical research, which is unfortunately still lacking. I hope that my work on the impact of the Veil and the Shroud on most Christ representations up to 1600 will incite scientists to study the Veil, as they have already done for the Shroud.

Held against the bright blue sky, the Face completely vanishes. It seems that the fibres have absorbed and concealed the Face (pic.9), leaving a little white cloth made of uneven fabric, framed in a silver monstrance.

It seems to be a completely insignificant cloth, which however reveals to contain an incredible message. In my broken words, I try to describe a material reality that is completely out of the ordinary and cannot be compared with anything else. Since this experience is one of a kind and doesn’t correspond to any of our conceptions of reality, we are, in my opinion, encouraged to deduce that we are in the presence of a priceless Christ image/ cloth relic. This is proved by various studies of the Holy Face.

First we have the comparison with the Shroud of Turin; the Face in the Veil merges with that of the Shroud into one new, unique face. This is proved when you superpose the transparencies of both faces, or if you place a transparency of the Shroud over the relic of Manoppello. One can use either the positive or the photonegative of the Shroud, but one gets the most natural face when one uses the photonegative. On this double face you can see that the wounds are much more pronounced, that many features complete one another and become one. The fact



Pic.9: front side of the Veil against daylight

FIGURE 1: VARIOUS APPARITIONS OF THE FACE



I.1: Front side of the Veil in the midday sun



I.2: rear side of the Veil over light



I.3: front side of the Veil over light



I.4: rear side of the Veil against UV light in a black room

## 7. Inner perceptions

After all those years working on the Veil, I can conclude that the picture summarizes itself. People asked me to explain how it all came about, what the different stations of my journey were. I didn't know that all the events of my life were linked to the Veil and, then I realized that everything that happened around the Veil could be compared to the different apparitions of the Face in the Veil of Manoppello, which are completely independent one of the other. There is just no logical connection from a rational point of view and one might keep saying: "There is no correlation whatsoever!" or "Where do we find the common denominator?" One could continue the enumeration of countless illogical aspects and become irate, or simply listen to our heart and see what happens.



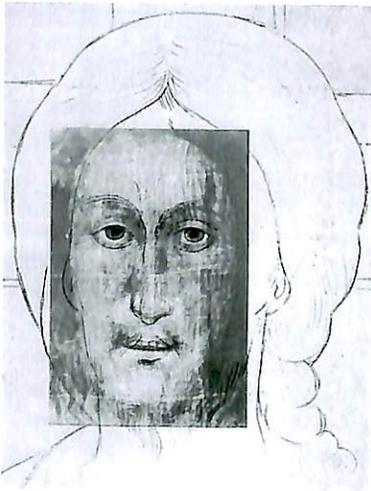
Pic.10

## IV. CHRIST ICONS AND THE VEIL

### 1. Christ's icon of Recklinghausen, My first steps in icon painting



Pic.11a: Pantocrator icon



Pic.11b: contour drawing of the Pantocrator Icon of Recklinghausen on the Veil of Manoppello by Sister Blandina

Towards the end of September 1977 a key event happened that enticed me to icon painting and thus, had an impact on my research about the Countenance of Christ. I was ill and lay in the monastery's hospice.

At that time God burst into my life and so began a long story. I've already mentioned that a trappist nun could only have a cross and one more Holy image on the walls of her cell. There was a reproduction of the icon of Christ found in the Museum of Recklinghausen, hanging on the walls of my sick room. This icon dates back to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (pic 11 a-c). In the beginning I was quite dismissive of it. The image of Christ I was used to be praying with was that of the burial cloth of Turin. I missed it a lot, and suffered from this discrepancy.

Since the icon of Recklinghausen was the only image on the otherwise blank walls I was forced to look at it from time to time and try to find some comfort and strength in it. But this Face was alien to me, and it seemed ugly. At that time I didn't know much about icons but only remembered a definition I had read a long time ago on an icon description: "Icon means to be present." The meaning of these words seemed alien to me.

Being in the presence of an icon depicting Jesus, I started to pray my special Jesus' prayer. Whilst praying, I regularly looked at the icon and gradually became more intimate with it: the icon revealed itself to be friendly and compassionate.

Then one day the icon appeared alive, light and warmth filled me and the icon imprinted itself into my soul and changed my life. I had developed such a strong relationship with this icon that I wanted to take it with me, and when I left the hospice I desperately tried to reproduce it. This however was a lost undertaking. It was almost impossible to reproduce what I saw and since I didn't succeed, I had to leave my beloved icon behind. I didn't give up though, and even out of the hospital I pursued my aim. One day, with a different model, I drew a face resembling that of my cherished icon. This undertaking brought to me the most important characteristics of a Christ icon:

- An asymmetrical face
- A faint beard phasing out into two tips leaving the chin bare
- A scant moustache
- Unequal nostrils
- The white of the eye, visible underneath the iris
- An almost stylish tuft of hair, falling on his forehead, in this case 4 lines of hair, sometimes 2

Back then all this seemed quite odd to me. I copied it carefully even though I neither understood it nor was able to classify it. Our Rector encouraged me to draw other icons, despite that at that time I didn't know anything about the actual technique of icon drawing. I searched for reproductions of Christ and Maria icons and painted them with liquid paint directly on wood.

I don't remember exactly the chronological order of the different events. I just know that I came across the picture of the Countenance of Manoppello during the early stages of my icon painting. My first encounter with the image of the Veil of Manoppello was full of resistance. However, against my will, an invisible hand led me to investigate into the image. I didn't want to disobey God's will and therefore followed his guidance.

I became more and more absorbed by the image. I discovered that the face on the Veil had all the above-mentioned characteristics of a Christ icon:

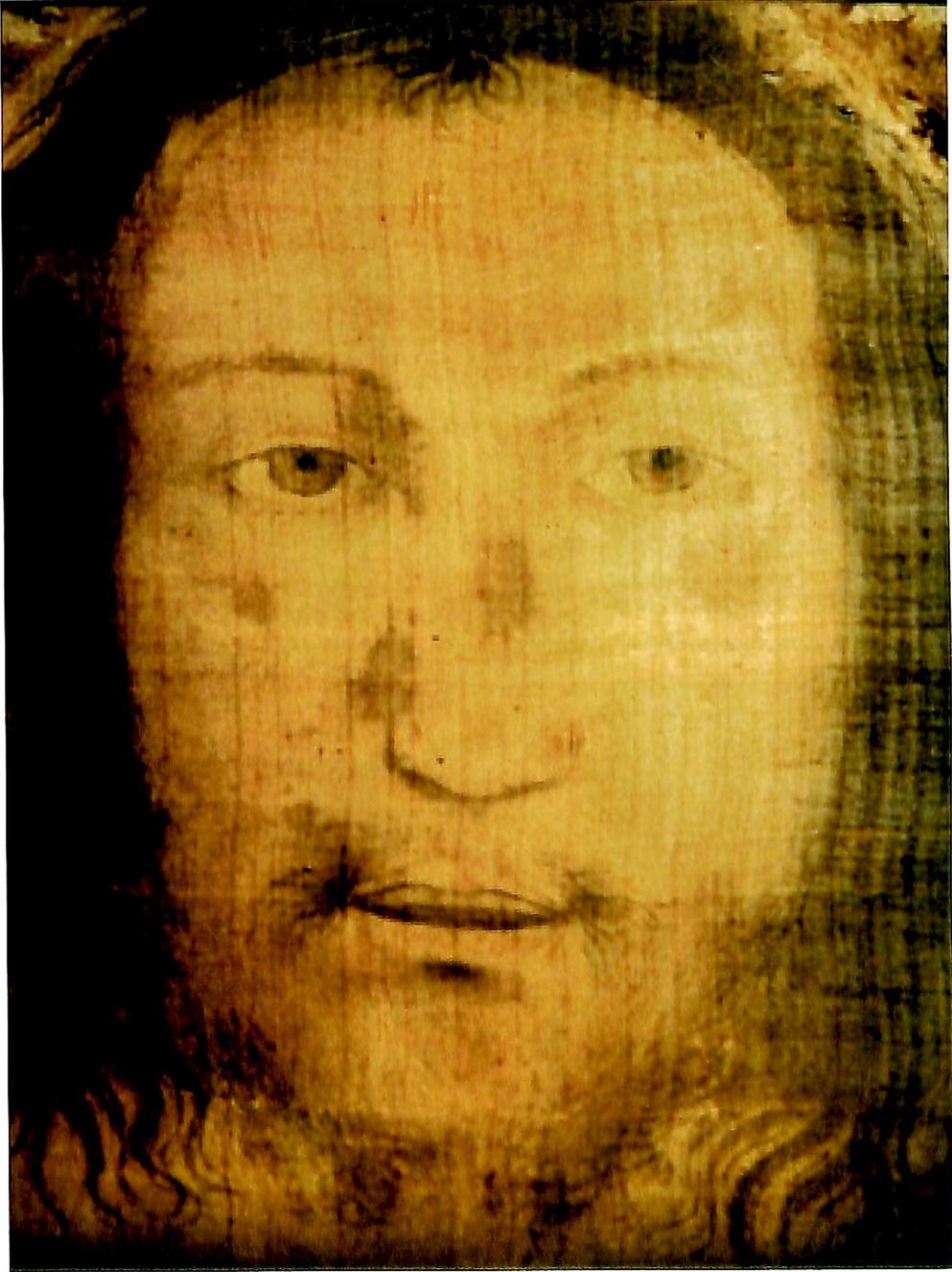


- An asymmetrical face
- A faint beard phasing out into two tips leaving the chin bare
- A scant moustache
- Unequal nostrils
- The white of the eye, visible underneath the iris
- An almost stylish tuft of hair, falling on his forehead.

Pix.11c: Icon of Recklinghausen covered with the Veil

Everything seemed real, like on a picture and not on a painting. The tuft of hair in the centre parting especially intrigued me. It took me quite a long time until I accepted all the aforementioned characteristics as simple facts. (pic 12)

At the same time I started to study and compare it with the Face on the Linen of Turin. I was comparing the proportions and searching for reference points. This whole undertaking grew ever more thrilling. I was left alone dealing with this distressing phenomenon: above all the mirror image of the Linen of Turin revealed the exact same asymmetric countenance (Fig.II): a swollen cheek, disfigurement of the right side of the face due to facial paralysis, raised up eyebrows and a slightly sloping mouth. And these similarities were more pronounced once I compared the Veil with the mirror image of the Linen.



Pic.12: Veil of Manoppello, front side, exposed to the UV light of the sun makes the stains appear

FIGURE II: THE BURIAL LINEN AND THE VEIL



II.1: Burial linen positive (original) side



II.2: Veil, rear side



II.3: Burial Linen, negative



II.4: Veil, front side

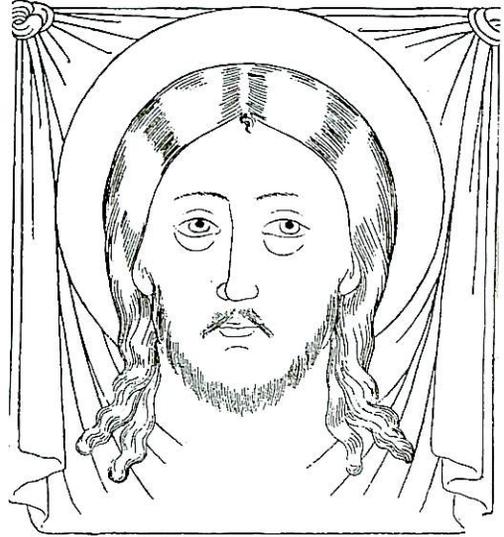
Somehow, somewhere I had found a “Mandy lion” type icon and I recognised in it all the elements studied on the cloths. I then started to draw these kinds of icons.

An icon expert, Hanz-Martin Fröhlich (art teacher in Achen, + 1993) recommended that I learn how to draw icons correctly. He bought me a specialised book and all the necessary material.

FIGURE III: COLOUR MODELS OF THE MANDYLION AND PANTOCRATOR ICONS



III.1: "Vera Icon", by a master painter of Westfallen, 1400 Berlin State Museum



III.2: The not man-made image of Christ (Mandylion), former church archeology museum of the Holy Academy of Saint Petersburg (book: Schneider, "Die Ikonenmalerei" 1984)



III.3: Christ the Ruler of All (book Schneider, "Die Ikonenmalerei", 1984)



III.4: Back side of the Veil, placed over a light plate

In this book I found models for Mandylion and Pantocrator icons. (Fig. III) I realised that the aforementioned characteristics were respected here as well, and drew the conclusion that the Byzantine painters must in some way have known or seen the cloth. There is no other way to explain how for generations the different criteria of Christ's Countenance were so meticulously respected, especially the scant bushel of hair on his forehead.

I was able to discuss these various subjects with Professor Pfeiffer, when I finally had the honour to meet him. I learnt from him that an original image of Christ's Face had been venerated in Rome from the 13<sup>th</sup> up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This image was very similar to that of the Veil of Manoppello and was probably the very same one. At first I didn't want to believe this explanation and remained convinced that the homeland of this veil must be in the Middle East and not in the Occident!

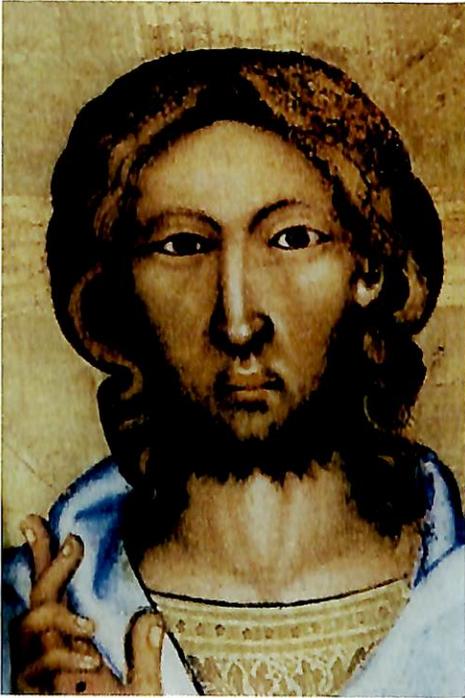
Nevertheless European paintings from the middle Ages soon convinced me otherwise. (Fig.III, 1; IV,1). I am very grateful to the librarian of my guest monastery, "Notre Dame des Gardes" in France, for having shown me various European Christ representations and thus erasing my resistance and doubts.

In the up-coming pages I will introduce you to six worldly Icons (Fig. IV and V) that highlight and reveal their correlation with the Veil of Manoppello. I share the Eastern Church's definition of "Icon": a picture, a religious figure, which meticulously respects its prototype. In the fourth section of this book I will deal with the close link between the Veil of Manoppello and the Linen of Turin.

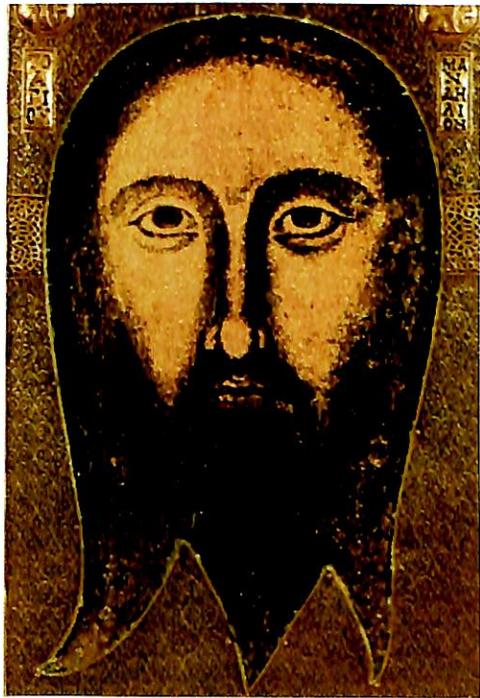
## **2. Six icons from different centuries**

I will introduce you to six renowned Christ icons and explain to you the congruencies between them and the Veil of Manoppello.

FIGURE IV: ICONS



IV.1: The Risen One, Hohenfurt, 1330



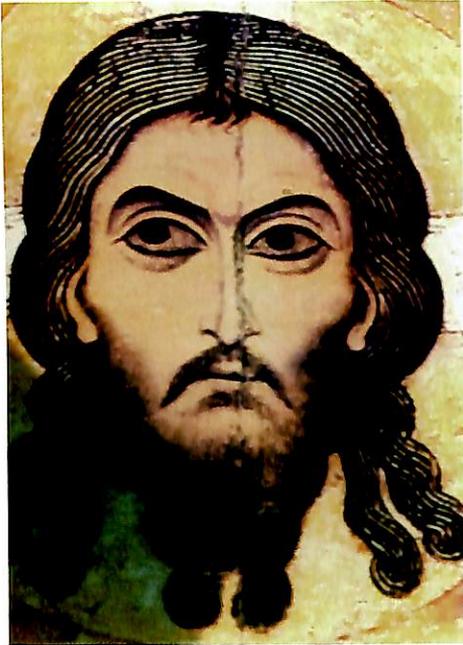
IV.2: Edessa image of Genua



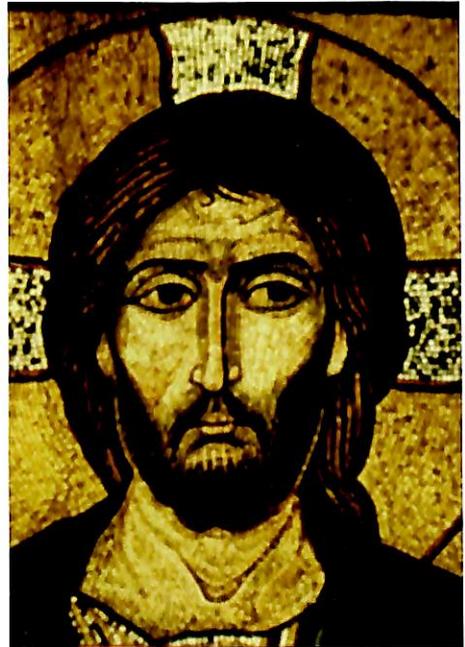
IV.3: Edessa Image of Genua, X-ray picture



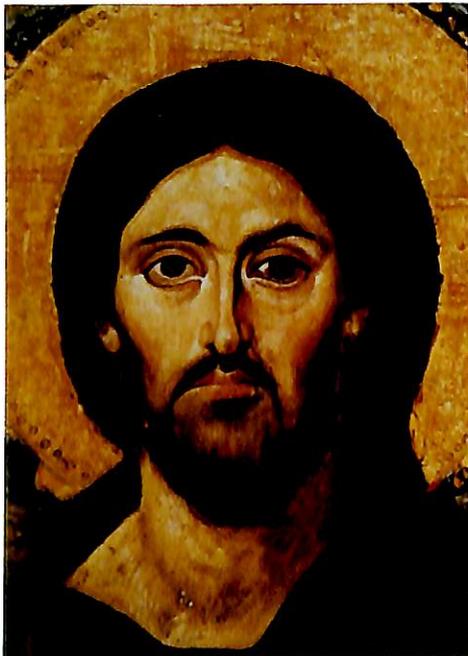
IV.4: Christ Icon of the Vatican



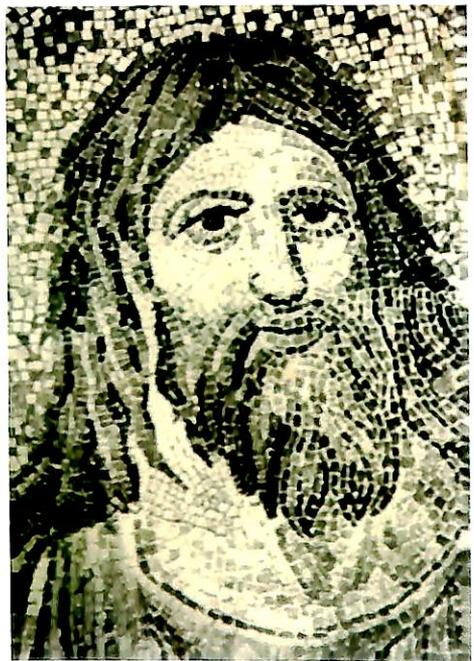
V.1: The Holy Countenance of Novgorod, 12th century



V.2: Christ the Compassionate, 12th century

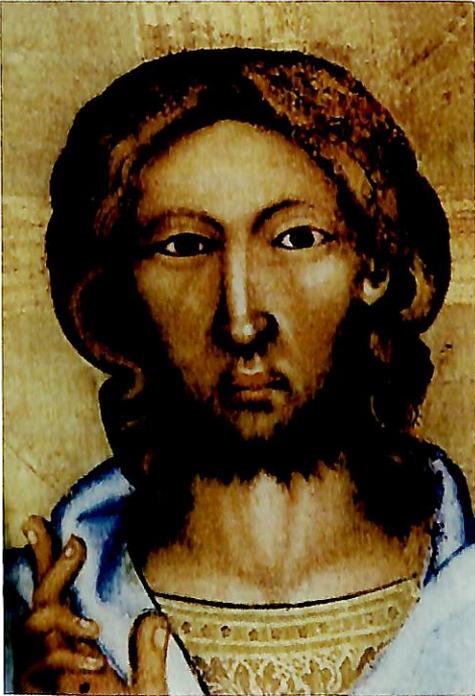


V.3: Sinai-Icon, 6th century

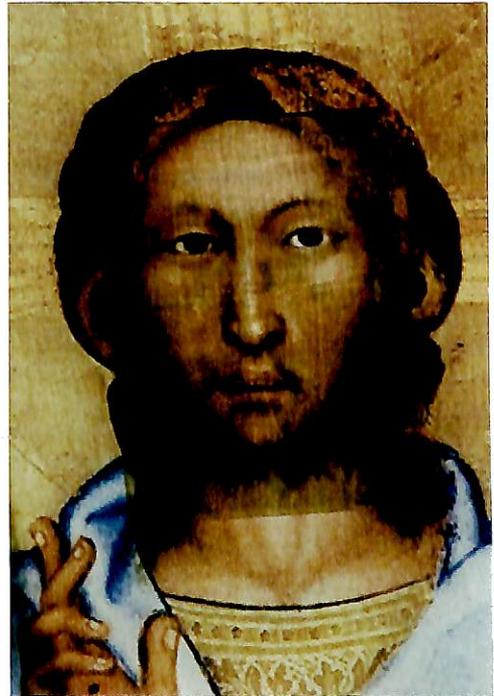


V.4: Christ Pantocrator, 4th century

1. **The Risen Christ (VyssiBrod) 1350, altar of Hohenfurth, Prague, National gallery (fig. IV,1)**



IV.1: The Risen Christ, without Veil



IV.1: The Risen Christ with Veil

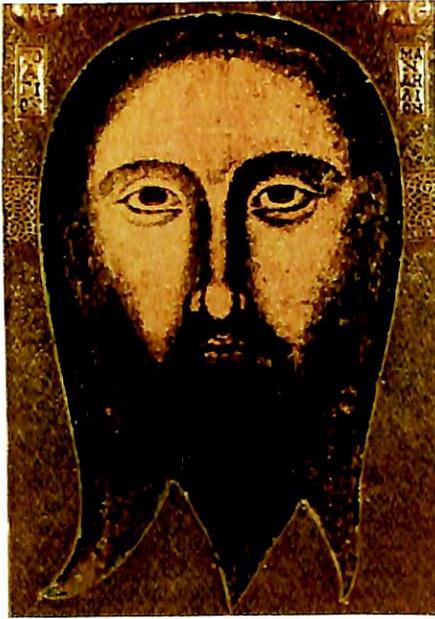
We start in the Christian Occident with the Risen Christ of the altar of Hohenfurth (presently in Prague). This masterpiece portrays the Risen Christ and is a good example of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century European Christ representations.

At that time various artists tried wholeheartedly to reproduce the famous Roman Veronica, whilst not always successful similarities remained. Notice: the uneven eyes, the asymmetrical nose, the half-opened mouth, the scant beard leaving the chin bare and the slightly elongated cheeks. When you cover this icon with the Veil of Manoppello, the Face suddenly becomes more alive.

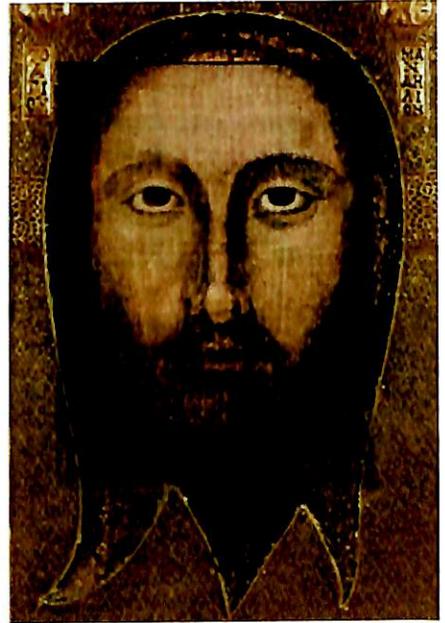
2. **The Images of Edessa: the Holy Face of Genoa and the Christ's Image of the Vatican (Fig IV,2 and 4)**

The dating of both, the Face of Genoa and Christ's icon (kept in the Matilda Chapel in the Vatican Palace) is uncertain, but both images made their way to the West during the Crusades. Due to their resemblance with the Veil of Manoppello it is sure that they are much older. Since there has been much more research conducted on the burial Linen of Turin than on the Veil of Manoppello, both Edessa images have been compared in relation with the Shroud.

I personally believe that even though the image on the Shroud and the Edessa icons are related, there is much more information in comparing them with the Countenance of the Veil. When we superpose the Veil of Manoppello on the Edessa images, a mystery is unravelled.



IV.2: Edessa Image of Genoa without Veil



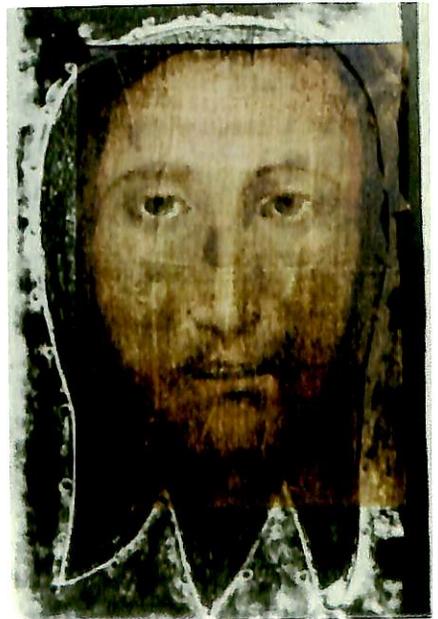
IV.2: Edessa Image of Genoa with Veil

The Christ Image of the Vatican however has a slightly longer nose than depicted on the Veil, but the eyes match perfectly.

The Countenance of Genoa has the exact same proportions as the Veil. This Edessa image is very sombre and slightly smaller than the Veil. It seems to be a very old picture, one of the oldest reproductions of the Edessa images, dating back to a time when both the Veil and the burial Linen were still kept together. The same applies to the image of the Vatican.



IV.3: Vatican image without Veil

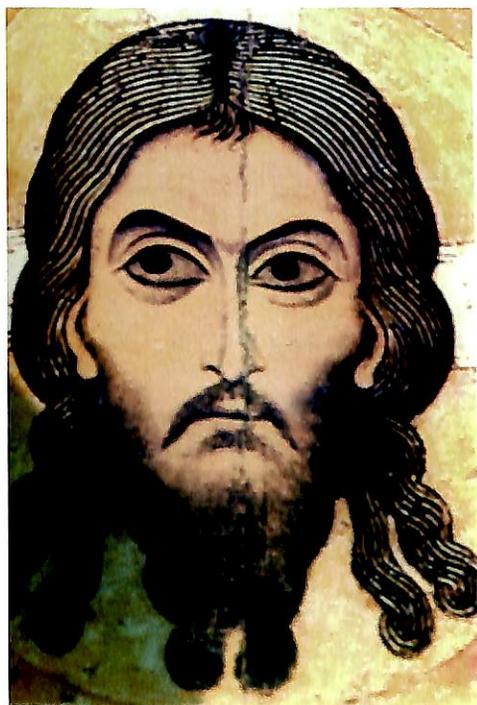


IV.3: Vatican image with Veil

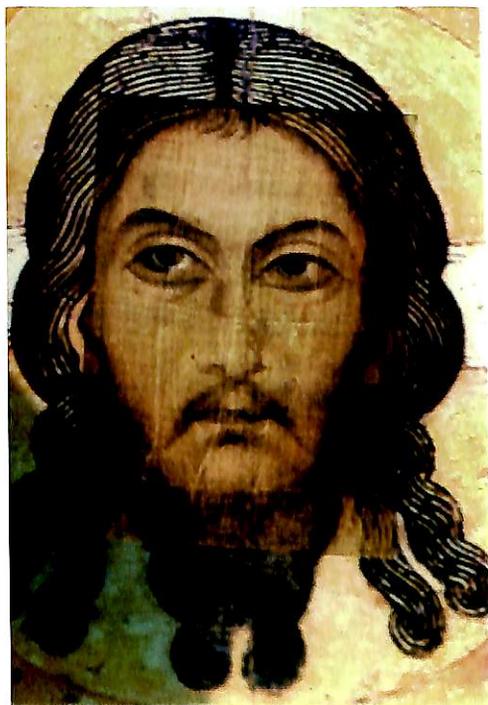
The latter one was exhibited in Hannover in 2000. Unfortunately, whilst visiting Rome, I wasn't able to contemplate the Edessa picture. Comparing the countenance on the Edessa images with those on the Veil and the Shroud, led me to the conclusion that they must date back to very ancient times and that the Veil influences them.

**3. The Holy Countenance of Novgorod, Tretjakow Gallery, Moscow (Fig.V,1)**

On this icon we not only see very clearly the influence of the burial Linen: the thicker beard, the narrow and lengthy nose, the shape of the hair, the gaunt cheeks, but we also recognize the impact of the Veil of Manoppello: the little stylish tuft of hair on the forehead, the slanted gaze and the uneven nostrils. When we place the Veil over this image we observe that the proportions are perfectly respected. Nevertheless the icon has slightly bigger eyes.



V.1: Face of Novgorod without Veil

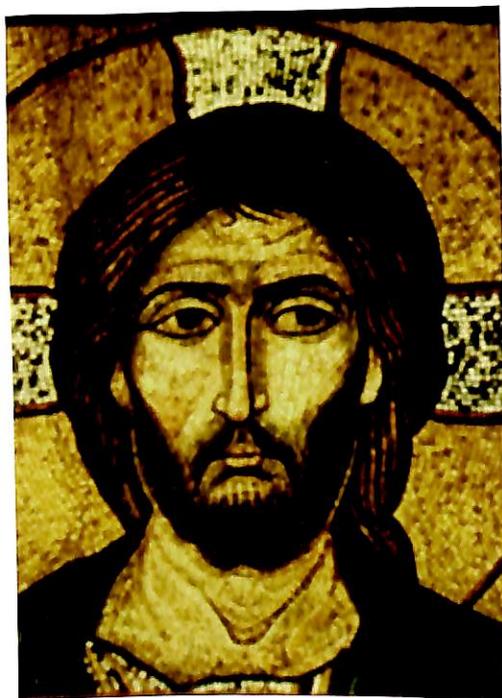


V.1: Face of Novgorod with Veil

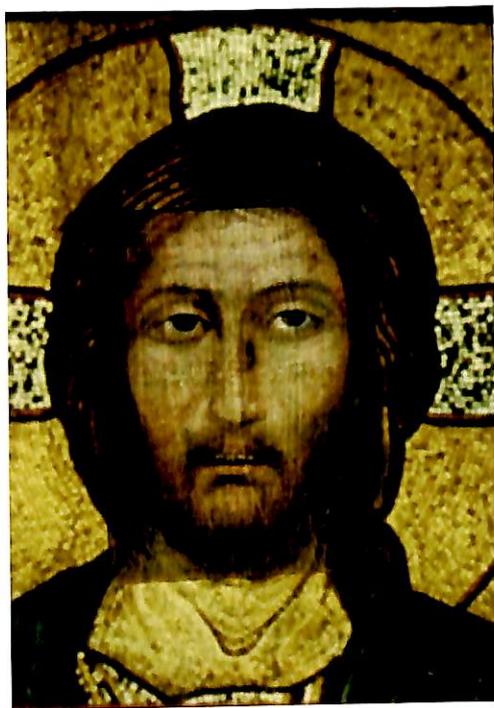
**4. Christ the Compassionate, 12<sup>th</sup> century, South Italy, Berlin State Museum (Fig. V,2)**

This mosaic renders the characteristic line by line representation of the hair, a light line separates two black lines of hair on the whole skull, as well as the little tuft of hair on the forehead, the asymmetrical face, the raised left eyebrow, the slanted gaze, the rather wide nose of the Veil, the bare chin, and a slightly fuller beard forking out into two tips. The relationship becomes apparent when you overlap this image with the Veil.

In this image we find the traces of the Veil and the Shroud even though the influence of the linen is predominant. The icon comes from a region that was very much under the influence of the Orthodox Church. We notice that the eyes are enlarged.



V.2: Christ the Compassionate without Veil



V.2: Christ the Compassionate with Veil, front side

##### 5. Christ Pantocrator, 6<sup>th</sup> century, Sinai, Saint Catherine's monastery

Lets now go back to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century and have a look at the Pantocrator icon of Saint Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai.

The asymmetrical face of Jesus immediately grasps our attention. The painter must have had the opportunity to contemplate both burial cloths since their influence is apparent. The Edessa image, which was venerated by the Emperor, had reappeared and had without a doubt an impact on the present icon.

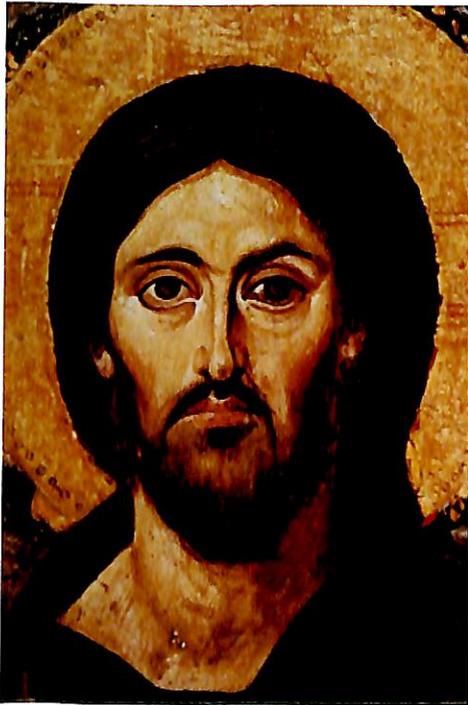
I don't want to contradict the historians, but my thorough knowledge of the Veil of Manoppello obliges me to claim that the Pantocrator image couldn't possibly only have been inspired by the Sindone. Its painter must have been in contact with the Veil as well. Most icons from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards show too many characteristics found only in the Veil. The Veil and the Shroud were probably kept together at that time. The painter commissioned by the Emperor had the privilege to admire closely both cloths. The commissioned artist was able to reproduce certain facets of the Veil and of the Shroud. Despite the tremendous difficulty of representing either one, he managed well.

Distinguishing marks:

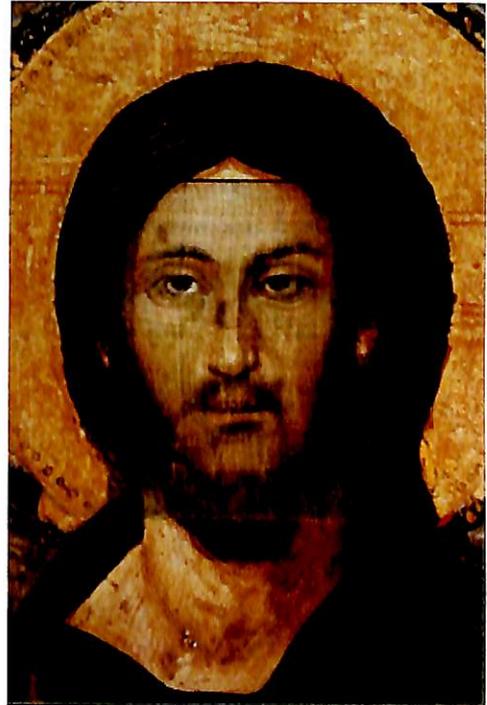
- The left side of the nose and the whole line, starting from the right nostril, around the tip of the nose, up the left side towards the risen eyebrow and the shortened left eyebrow, broken up in the middle of the bow. The lower nose line and the mouth area show well their source of inspiration.
- The somewhat sloping mouth – meets the criteria of the rear side of the Veil of Manoppello.

- The excessively enlarged and protruding eyes make it harder to draw a comparison with the Veil.
- The line of the eyelids, especially that of the left eye but also that of the right eye, correspond perfectly with those of the Veil. The pupils are surprisingly uneven too.
- The left cheek is raised around the eye, and a bit lower we can observe the swellings.
- How the artist used the light in this icon, especially the little bright triangle on the right side of the lower nose confirms the Veil's source of inspiration. He also puts some light around the right eye corner and uses a bright line on the right side of the nose.
- The lips have the same shape as on the Veil; however the artist refrained from depicting a slightly open mouth.
- The beard however shows the influence of the burial Linen.
- The bare chin, the whole area around the mouth and the little dimple under the lower lip are very significant features of Christ icons and are inspired by the Veil of Manoppello.

Despite keeping his artistic freedom, he rendered excellent work by respecting and reproducing some of the most important marks. He gives us an idea of how the Edessa image must have looked like in his time: a unity of the Veil and the Shroud. (Pic.14)



V3: Christ Pantocrator, without Veil



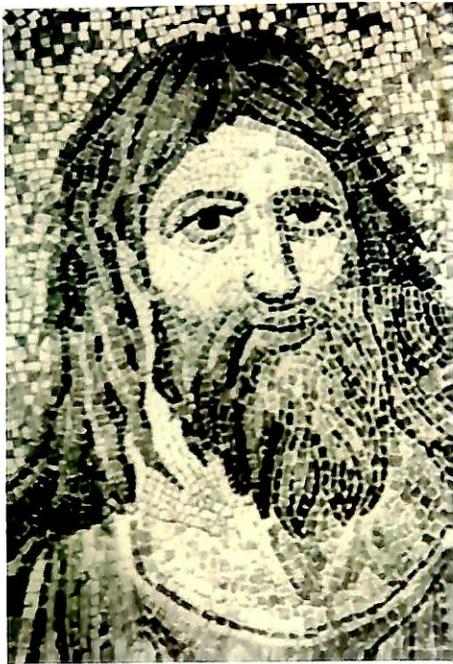
V3: Christ Pantocrator, with Veil, rear side

**6. Christ Pantocrator, 4<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Pudentiana Church, Rome (Fig. V,4)**

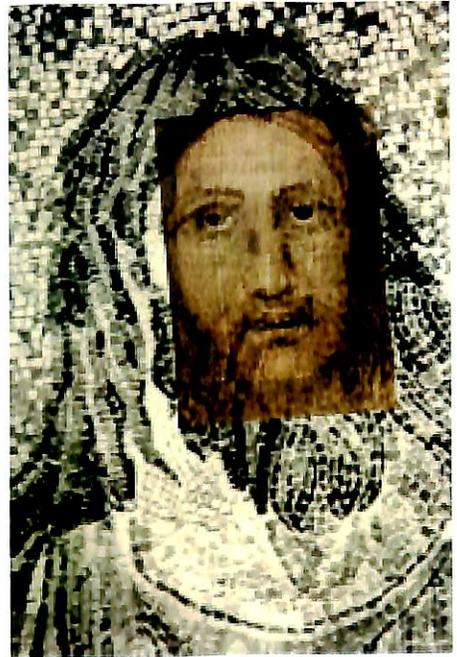
Even though the Sinai Christ icon counts among one of the oldest icons of the East, and is probably the oldest one, there are other Christ representations in the West where one witnesses the influence of both the Veil and the Linen. One of those is the mosaic, attributed to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and found in the Pudentiana Church in Rome. The following characteristics are present:

- A substantial hairstyle
- A full beard
- A sloping mouth
- An asymmetric nose
- A powerful, slightly sideways oriented gaze

Do these distinguishable marks attest to the presence, influence and knowledge of the Veil? At first you will probably deny it. In the beginning I wasn't aiming to study the congruencies with the Veil either.



V.4: Pantocrator icon without Veil



V.4: Pantocrator icon with Veil, rear side

However, when one day I placed a transparency of the Veil over a photopositive copy of the burial Linen I was immediately reminded of the strong persistent gaze of the Pantocrator Christ in the St. Pudentiana Church, as well as of the fresco in the catacombs of Saint Petrus and Marzellinus (Pic 13).

The correlation appeared clear to me, even though I couldn't at that time prove it due to lack of access to the said images. Only much later was it possible for me to compare how the Countenance of the Veil perfectly blends into the face of the mosaic: eyes, nose, mouth, high forehead and the shape of the face.

Everything corresponded exactly with the Face of the Veil of Manoppello. The abundant hair, the thick beard and the moustache refer however to the burial Linen. At this point it is important to take into consideration that until the year 1898 people only disposed of the positive of the burial Linen and that this cloth has blood stains over the upper lip, which were sometimes mistaken for a moustache. This is the case in this studied representation. I therefore conclude that the mosaic cannot be explained only by considering one of the two burial cloths, but that the artist must have

had full knowledge of both the Veil and the Shroud. Both cloths inspired the artists of those times, like the painter of the Sinai icon, since distinguishable marks of both *acheiropoiotos* are present. Back then, were both not man-made images only one? Can we reconstruct this? Which model could it be?



Pic.13: Pantocrator Christ, Catacombs

## V. The two primeval images

In recent years, it has been claimed repeatedly that the Holy Face in the burial Shroud influenced most Christ representations in the East and the West, since the proportions correspond. It is generally accepted that the Shroud served as a model for all icons.

I have already mentioned above that the earlier generations could only see a positive (Pic.15a) of the Shroud, unlike us nowadays, who have access to the photonegative. Therefore they didn't see a clear distinguishable face, but they only observed the reversed light-dark contrast in very fine yellow-reddish shades.

If the Veil of Manoppello didn't exist, it would be quite mysterious how through the generations, artists could produce such a precise Countenance from only the positive image of the Shroud. In the Veil of Manoppello we find all the explanations, all the traditional details of the representations of Our Saviour.



Pic.14: Photopositive of the Shroud, covered with the Veil

Which model was used for the paintings is still not clear. As I have tried to explain in the previous pages, the various Christ icons show traces of both cloths. Tradition reports that both cloths had been kept separately.

Was there however a time when the Veil and the Shroud formed a unity, maybe during the Byzantine era? Could one see the traces of the image created by the overlapping of both cloths?

The Veil was probably positioned back to front over the Shroud and revealed the image I described when I spoke about the Sinai icon. This was my belief during the congress in Rome.

In the meantime, Prof. Pfeiffer and I had come to the conclusion that the Veil, showing no traces of blood, must have lain on top of the Shroud. The Veil holds some bloodlike stains, which however hadn't come into direct contact with Jesus' Face. The Veil thus must have been placed on top of the Shroud enveloping Jesus' corpse. Placed in a back to front order, the various characteristics of the two images cannot complement one another in a noticeable way.

It is therefore very hard for me to envisage how the Byzantine painters could have seen both cloths: Side by side? Overlapping? Against the light? Would it be possible today to render this same impression by overlapping the cloths?

How the two cloths served as a model is impossible to explain, but it is sure that the artists observed both the Veil and the Shroud, as it is visible in the various mosaics and frescos. Thus there is not only one ancient *acheiropoietos*, but there are two.

Various statements about the Kamulia and Edessa images always speak of an image and its imprint. In my opinion, this refers to the existence of the two cloths, the precise sharp picture quality in the Veil on the one hand and the Shroud's vague outlines on the other hand. It might be impossible to ever find out precisely how both cloths were kept together after they left the grave. In the following chapters I will discuss the relationship between the Veil and the Shroud.

# PART II

## VI. THE VEIL AND THE SHROUD

### 1. External differences

Everybody who is confronted with either the original or copies of the two relics cannot at first see any similarities. Everything in both cloths appears to be different, conflicting and contradictory: the Shroud of Turin contains a shapeless image bearing almost no definite contours whereas the Veil of Manoppello is extremely precise and colourful, like a picture. In photography we could speak of a positive slide.



Pic.15a: Positive of the Shroud's Face



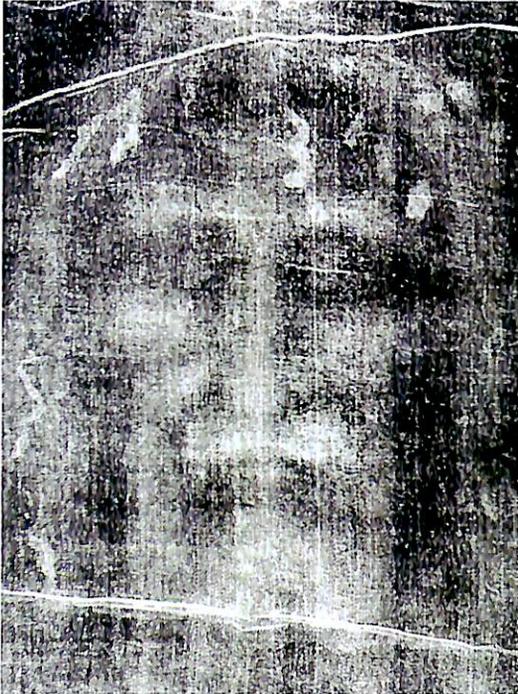
Pic.15b: Veil, rear side

The differences are even greater when one considers the photonegative of the Shroud and compares it with the Veil. On the one hand we have an impressive countenance, on the other hand we have only a human face, whose beauty lies hidden. Nobody wants to think of Christ as being only human. However the Veil exists and unravels the Face of the Living One, in opposition to the Shroud, which shows the body of Christ dead.

The risen Christ has the face of a living person. There is no comparison for this image, since nobody has ever seen a dead person rise again. In our lives we know people when they are alive and when we see their corpse we realize that their facial features have changed, since the soul left the

body. In the case of the Veil we can witness the face of a person (Rev.1.18) who died, and rose again after his death.

The Veil and the Shroud show the countenance of the risen versus the dead Christ. Many differences simply are a result of this fact, but both images belong to the same person.



Pic.16: Negative of the Shroud's Face



Pic.17: Veil, front side

## 2. Ten "congruent" features (see appendix for more details)

I was searching quite a long time to find the adequate word to describe what I meant and I decided to use the term *congruent*, because congruent triangles have one and the same shape and thus can become one another using turns, flips and slides. Likewise the cloths overlap perfectly and both merge into one and the same face, bearing the same marks, the same injuries as well as the same features.

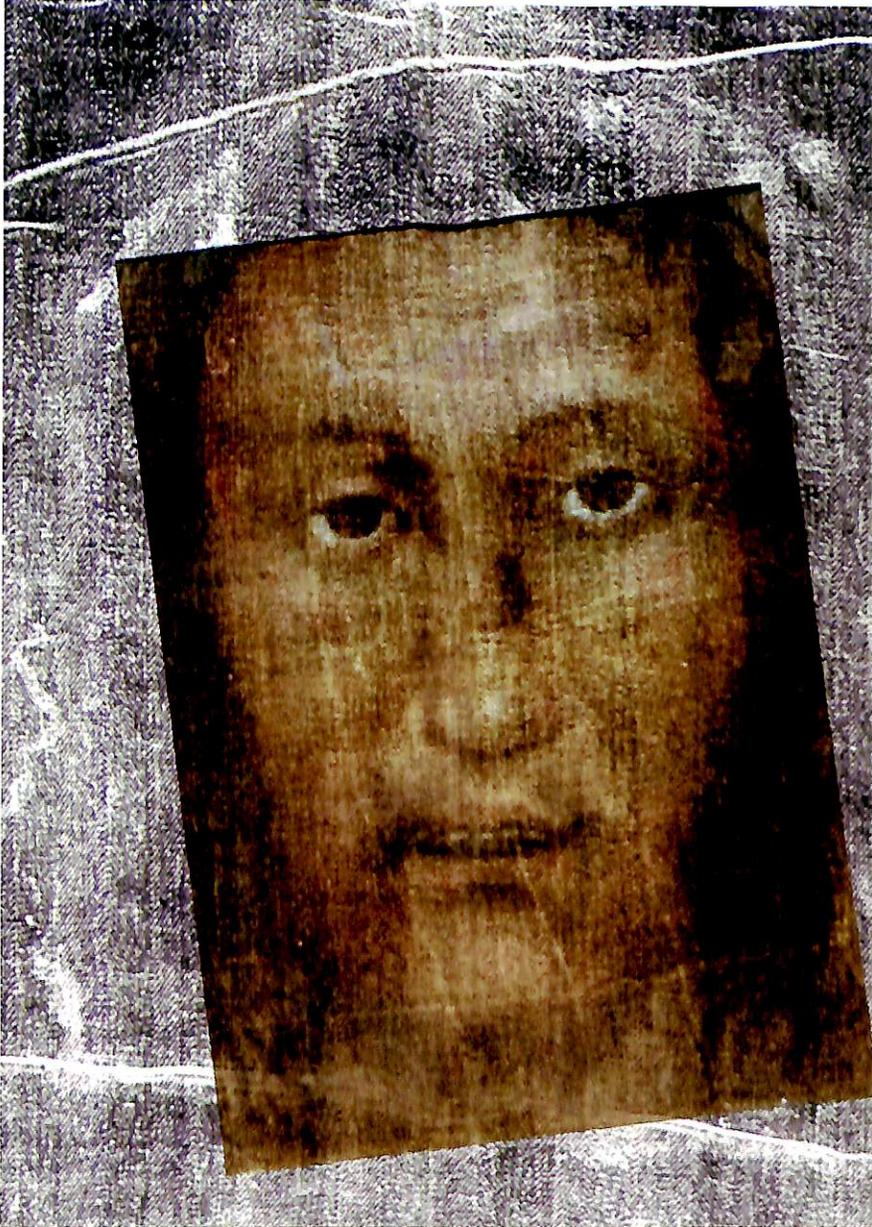
Tools used for the overlapping technique:

- S = the photonegative of the Shroud's face (pic.16)
- V = the front side image of the Veil of Manoppello (pic.17)
- D = the drawing of the 10 distinguishing marks (pic.18)

When all particular features are aligned, which has to be constantly checked, both countenances blend together and unravel as one single beautiful face (pic.19-22)



Pic.20: Front side of the Veil placed over the picture of the drawing with the Shourd's photonegative



Pic.21: Front side of the Veil placed over the Shroud's photonegative

## VII. THE “DOUBLE PICTURE”

### 1. Overview

Everybody can observe how out of these two relics, a unique Face appears. Whereas children have facilities to experience it, grown-ups might find it a little more tedious. I advise you therefore to follow strictly the 10 congruent points and the relationship between the Veil and the Shroud will be made apparent. Furthermore you will have to acknowledge that in the Shroud Jesus' eyes and mouth were not completely closed, as assumed from the first photograph. I hope that someday researchers will analyse this “double picture”. This double picture illustrates the use of thorns. The entire forehead bears signs of these lacerations. The face revealed on this “double picture” is like a map of the most atrocious wounds, as stated in the prophesies of Isaiah (Is 1.6) *“from the sole of the foot to the head there is not a sound spot: wounds, bruises, open sores.”*

### 2. Some particular aspects

There is not one single double picture, since this picture changes constantly. Variations in the double picture will occur depending on the lighting used whilst photographing the Shroud, and on which apparition was revealed in the picture of the Veil.

For instance the Passion of our Lord is made apparent when we use a high contrast picture of the Shroud. However, when we transpose a more graphic photograph of the Shroud over a picture of the Veil, taken in front of a dark background, the countenance appearing in this double picture is like a snapshot of the Risen One addressing directly the observer.

### 3. Concluding remarks

It is possible to conduct scientific research on both exceptional “relics” – research, which has already taken place on the Shroud. Maybe someday we will have some precise scientific, coherent explanations on the Veil as well. Up to then, History of Art offers sound evidence.

Before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a model that is akin to the countenance found in the Veil had inspired many artists. The Veil and the Shroud are both religious devotional objects. This awe inspired the silence and the omission of those sacred items from early century documents. Nevertheless we see that from the 4<sup>th</sup> century on, Emperors and artists made use of those Christian “unwritten documents”. Unfortunately Western society has forgotten most of its knowledge. I think it's time to wake up and to acknowledge now that there are two sources; two genuine not-man made Christ images and not just one.

While studying the burial cloths and the icons, the following mathematical property kept popping up in my mind: *“if two items are equal to a third item, then the two items are equal (transitivity axiom)”*. Therefore if the Face on the Veil and the Shroud corresponds to the traditional Christ image, both have to correlate with one another – they both represent the same person.

During this time, the Shroud's age was vehemently discussed because of the carbon-test. I was therefore asked to speak about the Shroud's age at the conference in Rome in 1991. I used the transitivity axiom to prove it: since both the Veil and the Shroud have touched a person about whom we know precisely when He lived and died, we can thus determine precisely the age of both burial cloths. Even though these recent findings don't compel you to have faith, a whole magnificent

world is opened up to a faithful heart, which suddenly enters into a very personal relationship with the Lord. Jesus' compassionate and peaceful eyes rest upon him.

In his doubt Saint Thomas was allowed to touch the wounds of the Risen Christ. I hope that through intensive research on the Veil, many scientists will have a similar experience and announce the praise of our Lord.

Maybe the readers of this book will also praise God in their hearts and recount his works so that this unknown relic no longer remains unknown: The Veil of Manoppello, the Shroud's dissimilar "twin".



Pic.22

# SECOND PART

## The Lamb and The Beautiful Shepherd

### I. My time in Manoppello 2003-2011

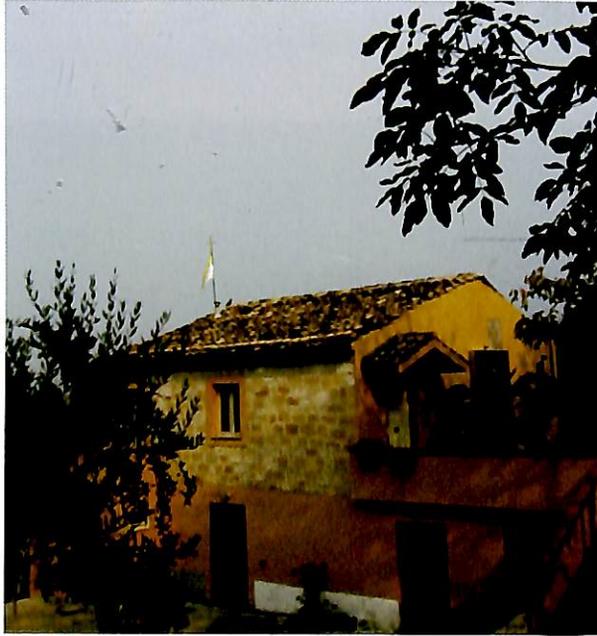
#### 1. My relocation to Manoppello

I couldn't have imagined the consequences of the first publication of the book. I also didn't quite comprehend what was happening. My work didn't find any sympathy within my monastic sisters, and the lack of understanding for my research has been growing stronger and stronger since 1997 when I first participated in the Congress in Nice. As a result, for three years I took part in the reconstruction of the new Helfta monastery in Saxony, which had been the monastery of Saint Gertrud and Saint Mechtild von Hackeborn. Both Saints had a very strong and intimate relationship with Christ's Holy Countenance. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they repeatedly had visions of the Holy Face, in particular on the Sunday known as "Omnis terra", the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany, the traditional day of worship of the Holy Face in Rome (appendix). On that day, the Holy Face was carried solemnly during the procession from Saint Peter's Church to the Santo Spirito (the Holy Spirit Church) in Sassia. Pope Innocent III had introduced the veneration of this holy relic in Rome. Already in the 13<sup>th</sup> century the worship of the Holy Face was an important ceremony in the Helfta monastery. The present Mother Superior, Assumpta Schenkl O. Cist., of the newly re-opened Cistercian monastery, also showed a lot of interest in the Holy Face of our Lord.

Towards the end of 2002, my sister Monika (Sister Gertrud) fell sick and I had permission to go to Italy in January 2003. This was the year when I had to decide whether I would remain in Helfta or not. As with my first trip to Italy I visited Manoppello. Two local women were astonished that I was still not living in Manoppello and encouraged me to move there, they wouldn't take no for an answer. The Shrine's general situation was such that it made me really consider a move to Manoppello. In August of that same year I moved to Italy.

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, our little group arrived in Manoppello. Since I didn't have any accommodation, we stayed in two hotel rooms. Soon enough I was invited to live in a little house on the hill behind the Sanctuary (Pic. 23). Initially it was hard for me because I had to take care of myself and communicate in a language I didn't speak. The inhabitants of Manoppello offered me their help and welcomed me warmly. Everything just fell into place.

This experience and everything that happened to me is proof of God's Providence and love. I felt like a little child, with everything being provided for me. I was in God's hands.



Pic.23: Sister Blandina's house



Pic.24: Sister Blandina and Paul Badde

## 2. 2004-2005

### 1. Paul Badde and the "seashell silk Veil"

During my first winter there, Professor Pfeiffer introduced me to a renowned German journalist for "Die Welt": Paul Badde (Pic.24). In his book he vividly describes our first encounter at the doorsteps of the Sanctuary. He visited me many times and finally decided to write a book about the Holy Face. 2004 was a very eventful year. Even though Paul Badde writes explicitly about the different events in his book, there are often many angles and interpretations possible. I will therefore describe the events as I remember them.

First, I will speak about the Veil made out of byssus (a silk mussel fibre), and then about my encounter with the Sudarium of Oviedo.

### 2. The discovery of the year 2004: The Veil is made out of byssus!

Whilst I was cleaning the mussel shells, which I had brought with me from my lunch in Ortona, Dorothea Link (a former staff member of the Penuel circle) called me excitedly and exclaimed: "Now I know what the fibre of the veil consists of! It's silk!"

We had spent the last few weeks searching and analysing many different fibres to find out what the Veil was made of.

I replied to her: "I don't think it's silk. Professor Pfeiffer had once said that it being silk was out of the question. He assumes it's byssus and so far I know byssus is a form of linen."

"No!" shouted Madame Link, "I have looked it up in a foreign dictionary: Byssus is an extremely fine tissue made of linen, silk or mussel silk."

"Mussel silk?" I repeated astounded: "What's that?"

My friend couldn't give me any further information except that mussel silk was used for adherence. We spoke a little more about the consistency of the Volto Santo thread, which seems to be pressed out of a nozzle, and with this we finished our conversation.

This conversation had shaken me up. Mussel silk! An animal fibre! We finally might be on the right track!

I resumed my work cleaning the mussels and almost didn't believe my eyes when I saw hair like fibres on the outside of the hard shell: Could this be mussel silk?

I took my magnifying glasses to inspect what I had found. What I saw was breath-taking. The sight was similar to that of a close-up shot of the Volto Santo's fibres, taken by Professor Fanti. The consistencies of the fibres were alike and had the same transparent characteristics. My intellectual curiosity was piqued. In spite of a severe eye infection, I remained there for hours bent over these little threads, examining them with my magnifying glasses. I shared my findings with Madame Link and Paul Badde.

The next day, a state employee drove me to the Hospital of Chieti. On our way home, I asked her to stop at a fishmonger in order to buy a kilo of mussels. My purchase surprised her and she asked me what I would do with so many mussels. I explained to her that the reason of my purchase was to examine the little hairs found on the outside of the shell. I was eager to find out whether it was possible to spin those fibres.

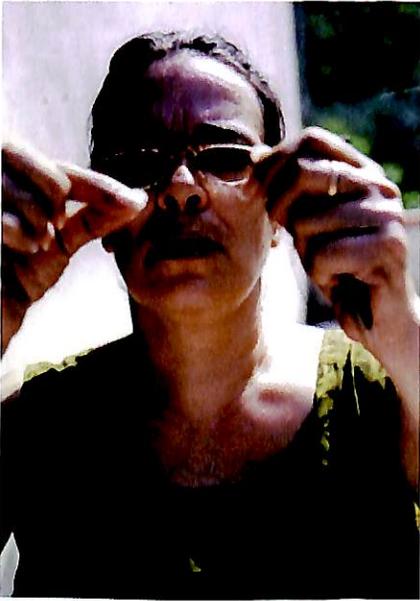
Two days later, she introduced me to a weaver who told me that there was still one byssus weaver alive, with whom she had worked on a book. She offered to find out her address for me, but in the end the state employee contacted the byssus weaver who asked that I write to her in person. Using

my broken Italian I managed to compose a letter and sent her a couple of pictures of the Volto Santo and some of the close-ups; the end of July was approaching!

### **3. Chiara Vigo – The Byssus Weaver**

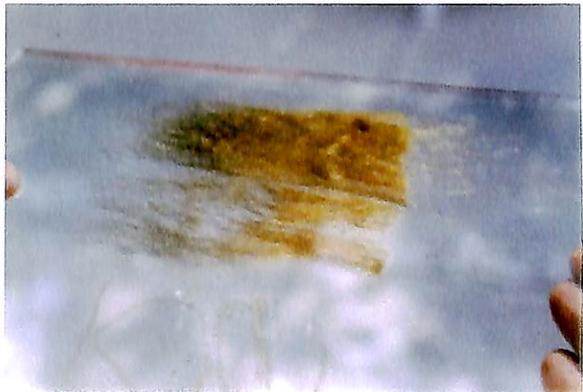
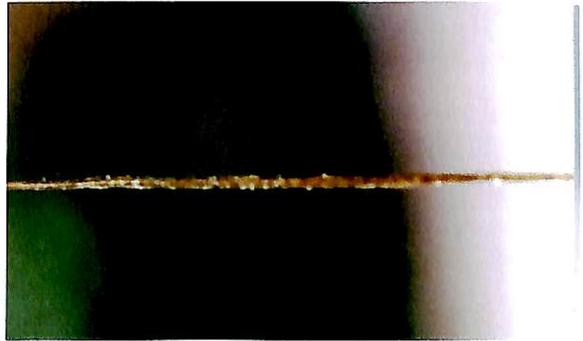
On August 6<sup>th</sup>, after the fireworks of the feast of the Volto Santo, I saw a message on my answering machine: It was Chiara Vigo, the byssus weaver! (Pic.25) She spoke in a Sardinian dialect, which was very difficult for me to understand and I had to listen to the message a couple of times. This expert weaver acknowledged that the Veil could be made out off sea silk! What an event! However in order to confirm this, she had to see it for herself! The mayor, Giorgio di Luca, agreed to come up with the travel expenses, and finally Chiara landed in Rome with the first available flight on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2004.

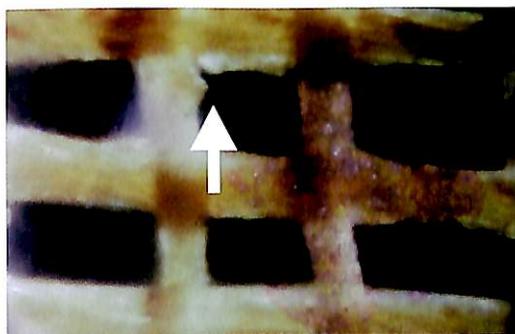
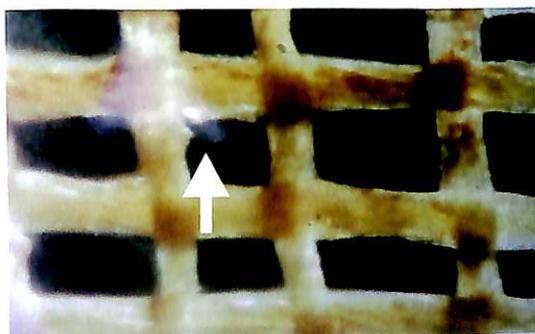
She brought with her fragments of unworked and woven byssus dating from the first century before Christ, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and finally from the present day. We could observe how the rough bronze coloured and the bleached fibre reacted to the sun. Chiara stated that a high-resolution microscopic analysis could unambiguously determine the byssus, since these fibres have a unique elliptical cross-section. Byssus has the capacity if required, to become liquid, elastic or to stretch out. In an acid environment, byssus forms dangling braids similar to micro sized cave stalactites or icicles. She pointed those specific formations out to us on the Volto Santo fabric. (Fig.VI and VII)



Pic.25: Chiara Vigo

FIGURE VI "BYSSUS"

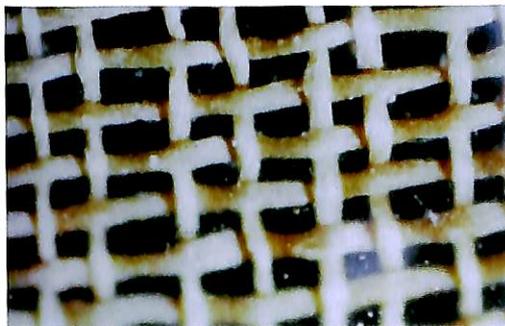




Stalactite formation in the byssus thread, back lighting



Fabric against the light, transparent



Fabric in frontal lighting



"Burnt effect" in the pupil

FIGURE VII, VOLTO SANTO FABRIC



FIGURE VIII: VARIOUS APPEARANCES OF THE LEFT EYE DUE TO CHANGING ANGLES OF LIGHTING AND ENVIRONMENT



Pic.26: A painting?

#### 4. The Volto Santo, a painting?

Summer 2004 was all about the byssus with many different people taking part in this adventure. With her research on the term “mussel silk”, Dorothea Link had set everything in motion. Her persistent enquiry kept my focus on the fabric. Maybe someday, marine biologists or line experts will confirm Chiara Virgo’s testimony. This would definitely give scientific weight to ascertain that the Volto Santo is not a painting. (Pic.26)

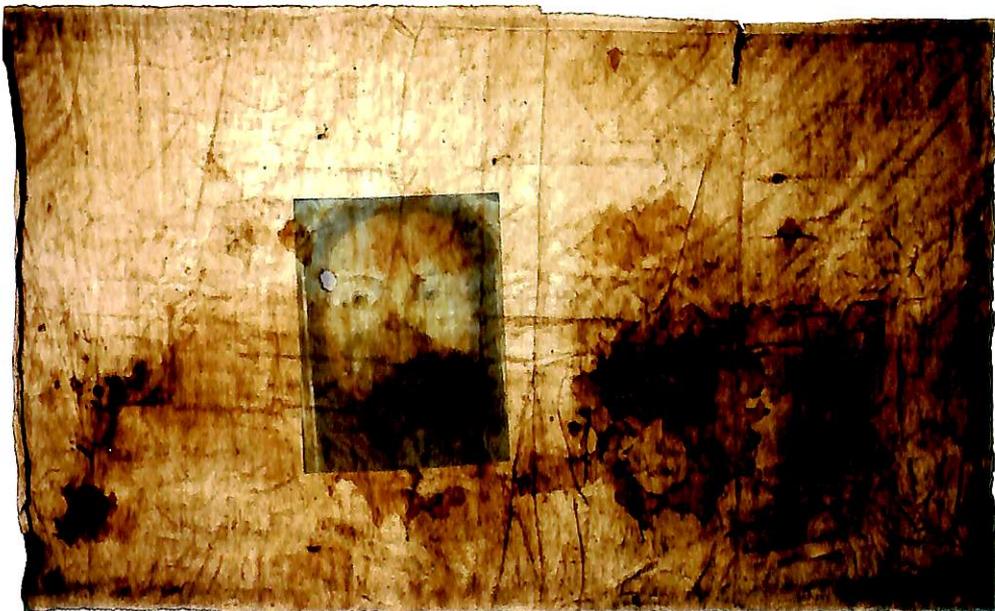
The University of Potsdam supported already one of Chiara’s statements: the byssus molecule can change its state. Under the right circumstances it loosens its solid bond and becomes fluid, and then if the environment changes again it regains its initial solid structure (like a stalactite formation).

Scientists ascertain that the byssus’ main chemical is iron (Fe) bound to protein chains, almost like haemoglobins, which allows the byssus to store information. Polish Professors had also conducted research into the characteristics of the byssus and of the Veil.

#### 5. The Sudarium of Oviedo

The second main event of the year was the knowledge of the existence of the Sudarium of Oviedo. This happened in late autumn at the beginning of winter. Paul Badde had travelled to Spain and was granted the privilege to see the Sudarium of Oviedo outside of the normal three exhibition periods. He brought me various books and material for contemplation and told me: “Have a look!” “Do with it as you please, I don’t need it!” ”I have seen it and that’s plenty!”

I had now plenty of information about the Sudarium and so I spent a whole night studying the material, trying to understand the Spanish explanations and contemplating the images. What I found out after many hours or more accurately many days of research and of contemplation, completely overwhelmed me. I was overexcited! I was completely flabbergasted! Was that now really true? I still can’t look at the bloodstains on the Oviedo cloth without being shocked. “Christ’s Passion was really so awful!” (Pic.27)



Pic.27: The Sudarium of Oviedo with the Veil of Manoppello positioned over it

After having adjusted and placed the Veil of Manoppello over the Sudarium of Oviedo I could see the holes made by the thorns, the broken bloody nose, the pierced eye and the blood flowing out of Jesus' mouth. The sheer horror of Jesus' Passion was depicted in front of my eyes. I had a similar sensation to the one I experienced when I first saw the Face made by the merging of the Countenances of the Veil and of the Shroud. I was trembling; this discovery was like an earthquake. It made the ground underneath my feet shake at the realisation that the cloth of Oviedo is a genuine witness of Jesus Christ's Passion and Death.

## **6. Saverio Gaeta**

In Italy, Saverio Gaeta, editor in chief of "*Famiglia Christiana*", also conducted research into the Veil of Manoppello. Several events triggered his interest. First his friend P. Nicola from Santa Maria Arabona spoke to him about the Veil, then his other friend, finally Bruno Forte, a world-renowned Italian Theologian from Napoli was proclaimed bishop of Chieti-Vasto to which belongs Manoppello. All this made Gaeta realize that he had to investigate further into the topic. He wrote a little book entitled "*Il Volto del Risorto*" published by Rizzoli Milano, which was added to the 2005 Easter edition of "*Famiglia Christiana*". The number of pilgrims to the Sanctuary increased.

More specific explanations about the historical connections are attributed to Saverio Gaeta:

- How Pope Urban VIII destroyed all evidence of the Holy Face after the disappearance of the Roman Veronica;
- how the relic was transferred from Rome to Manoppello;
- and how the Patriarch Kallinikos transferred the icon from Constantinople to Rome, after the Emperor Justinian II had exiled him to Rome in 705.



Pic.28: Saverio Gaeta

Guiseppe Ricci, from Manoppello, gave substantial information to clarify the transfer from Rome to Manoppello. He explained to Saverio the connection that linked Rome to Manoppello after the Sacco di Roma in 1527. The link was the commanding officer of the Sacco di Roma, Ferdinand Alarçon. In January of that same year, the King of Naples gave him the county of Manoppello as a token of recognition for his outstanding merits in war. It is in this little town that years later the missing Christ relic re-appeared, but under a different name. I assume it would be interesting to grant historians access to the archives of the noble Neapolitan family De Fabriziis who, in 1638, the De Fabriziis offered the relic to the Capuchin Friars. He was probably responsible for the transfer of the relic from Rome, or had found it within his war booty.

In Manoppello everybody was forced to keep quiet about the origin or the transfer of the Veil. Likewise in Rome, the matters concerning the missing Veronica were silenced. The Romans have the merit to have maintained the cult of the Veronica even after its disappearance. However, pilgrims feeling that the essence was missing became more and more scarce.

Nowadays a pilgrimage is undertaken to Rome to see the Holy Father and the tombs of the Apostles. That however hasn't always been the main reason; crowds were flocking to Rome to see Christ's true Relic.

Any person who has had the opportunity to contemplate the Veil of Manoppello, whose heart was open for God's grace, understands the yearning of the Europeans of the Middle Ages! An invisible

force urges the pilgrims, after having seen the Holy Face, to spread the good news and to come back with family and friends.

### 3. Pope Benedict's XVI visit in 2006

Paul Badde and Saverio Gaeta's books have rapidly spread between the faithful. Pope Benedict XVI was informed by Paul Badde of the existence of Christ's Countenance in the Veil of Manoppello. Pope Benedict XVI read Paul Badde's article for the German newspaper *"Die Welt"* on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004. This information also reached Pope John Paul II, who by that time was unfortunately much too ill to comment on it. Nevertheless, as I see it, he reacted very well to this incredible news. He advised that after his death a veil of silk was placed over his face as a mark of approval of the Countenance of Our Lord and Saviour in the Veil of Manoppello. He couldn't speak but his gesture said everything. It seems that he wanted to say after his death: *"Search for the Veil! Search for Christ's Face, The Risen One!"* Pope Benedict hastily followed this unusual request!

We had the honour to welcome Cardinal Ratzinger in Manoppello in 2006. (Pic.29)

On September 1<sup>st</sup> the Pope, deeply touched, descended the stairs, after having contemplated and prayed silently to the Holy Face for 6 minutes. A young man who was following the Pope's visit on a big screen in front of the Sanctuary said: "As the Pope enters the Sanctuary, the Holy Face of our Lord suddenly appears on the big screen and is broadcasted worldwide! One could say, the Pope opened the worlds' door to Our Lord." A couple of weeks later, the joy was uncontainable when the Pope elevated the Sanctuary to a Basilica.

Pope Benedict came here as a successor of Saint Peter. He was wearing his official papal stole and Archbishop Bruno Forte greeted him as follows: "Peter, on Easter morning in the grave, is the first to be a witness to the Sudarium of Christ!"



Pic.29: Pope Benedict's visit to the Shrine

Organized pilgrimages flooded to Manoppello after the Pope's visit. Now the Italians were finally coming as well! Unfortunately, the message hasn't quite reached everybody yet and people easily forget. How could this change? The Church doesn't realise what a treasure it owns.

I often ask myself: "What needs to be done to spread the news? How can the love for Christ's Holy Face be awoken? I guess it shouldn't be that complicated! Love grows through contemplation. We only have to look at His Countenance for long enough and welcome into our hearts His loving gaze. This will change everything. Our hearts will rejoice over the revelation of this enormous treasure. Maybe one day, inspired by the words of our Patriarch Jacob : "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go see him before I die" (Gen. 45.28), we might cry out : "It is enough for me that Jesus is alive!"

Our heart will know intuitively: "Jesus lives!" " He is here present!" "He looks at me!" "He is!" "Our Faith is the Truth!"

## II. Christ's Burial Cloths Today

### 1. General Information about the burial cloths

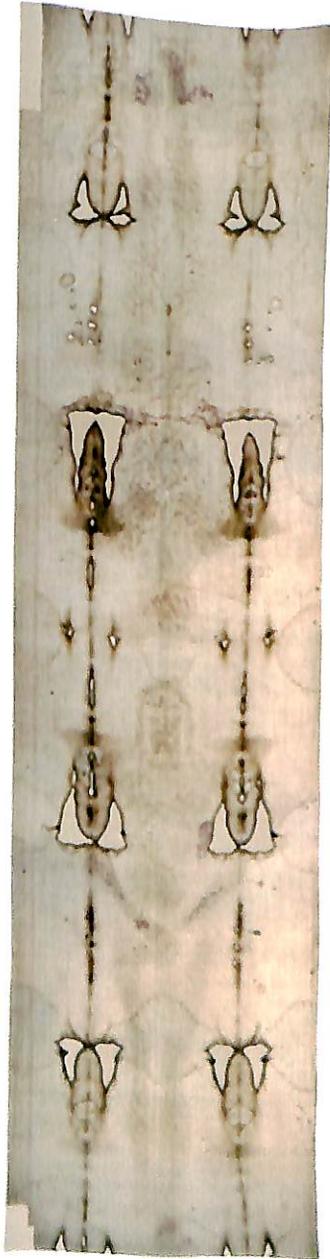
In this Chapter I invite you to discover Jesus' burial cloths, which are handed down to us through tradition. Above all, I will focus my interest on the linens that were covering the face of our Lord. To this day we know of 6 cloths. Even though you might consider this number quite large, it doesn't contradict in any way the first century Jewish funeral rituals used to cover a tortured and beaten up body. Usually a person who died on the cross wasn't granted an individual funeral. However, in the case of Jesus the funeral took place and, the laws for the wrapping of a blood-drenched corpse were applied. The law required the use of several linens and not only of the one linen known as Sindone. Two of the used cloths have a not man-made imprint on them and they complete one another as we have already seen in the first part of the book.

Paul Badde explains in his book, "*The True Icon*", how honouring and touching something from a tomb is unacceptable and contradicts the Jewish standards of ritual cleanliness. However, today we still have at least six of the burial cloths used for Jesus' shrouding!

I will introduce you to those burial cloths, which I have had the honour to contemplate personally with the exception of the cloth of Oviedo. Thorough studies and tradition convinced of their authenticity. I also didn't have the opportunity to see the Sudarium kept in Mainz. I mention it only to give completion to my work.

## 2.The Burial cloths and their stations

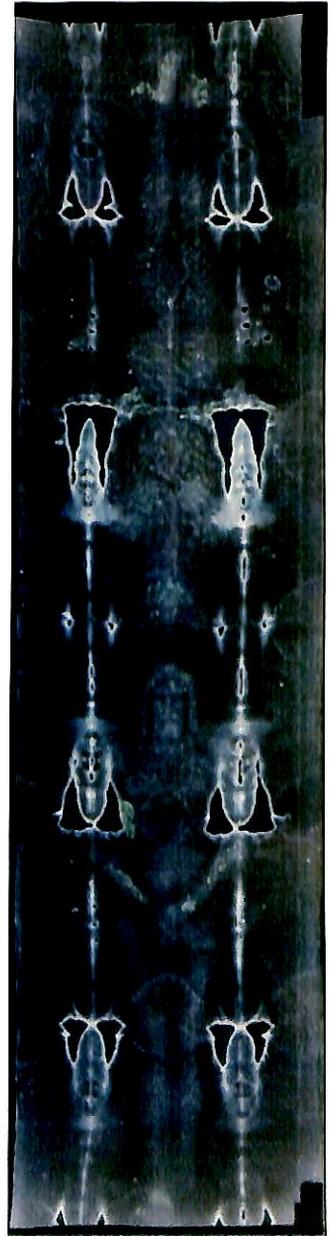
### 1. The Shroud of Turin



Pic.30a: Photopositive, detail of the face and entire body picture



Pic.30b: Photonegative, detail of the face and entire body picture



Possible journey: Jerusalem - Rome - Edessa - Constantinople - Lirey - Chambery - Turin

## **2. The Sudarium of Oviedo, Spain**



Pic.31: Sudarium of Oviedo

Possible journey: Jerusalem - Alexandria - Carthage - Toledo - Oviedo

## **3. The Holy Head-dress of Cahors, France**



Pic.32: The Holy Headdress of Cahors, France

Possible journey: Jerusalem – Constantinople – Venice - Cahors

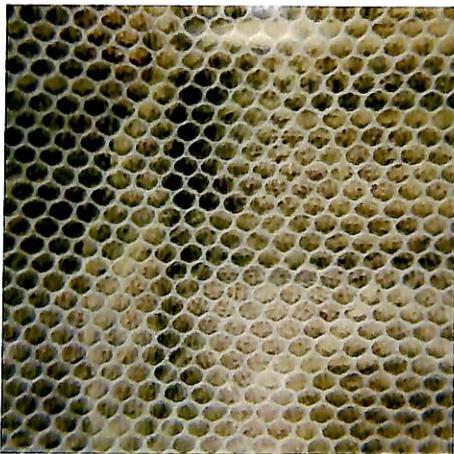
#### 4. The Sudarium of Kornelimünster, near Aachen, Germany

The patriarch of Jerusalem offered it to Carl the Great who kept it in the Cathedral of Aachen.



Possible journey: Jerusalem - Aachen  
- Kornelimünster

Pic.33a: Sudarium of Kornelimünster, in a cover



The Syrian byssus, visible under a protective tulle, measures when unfolded 6 x 3.5 m. You can notice that the tissue is not so finely manufactured as the tissue of the Veil.

Pic.33b: the byssus fabric seen through the protective tulle

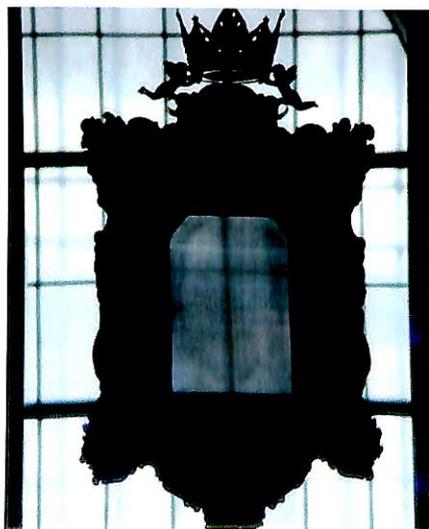
**5. The Veil of Manoppello**



Pic.34a: Frontal light, black background



b: Frontal light, white background



c: Daylight from behind



d: Sunlight from behind

Possible journey: Jerusalem – Edessa – Rome<sup>2</sup> – Edessa – Egypt<sup>3</sup> – Kamulia – Constantinople – Rome – Manoppello

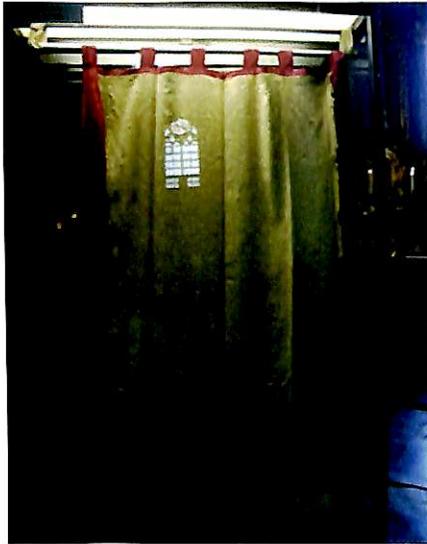


Pic.34 e: Artificial backlighting on the Veil of Manoppello

<sup>2</sup> At first it was Mary who took the Veil under her wing and therefore under the authority of the apostle John. During the Council of Jerusalem the Veil, as a Christ relic, was passed on to Jude the Apostle, a relative of Christ. It is probably Jude the Apostle who first brought the Veil to Edessa. After his martyrdom, the next person in line to take the responsibility over the Veil was Peter. The Veil was then sent to him in Rome. The first documentary pictures of the Veil are found in Rome: The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century Good Shepherd and Pantocrator representations in the Catacombs, the Christ mosaic in the baptistry of the St. Costanza Church and the Christ mosaic in the Latran Palace.

<sup>3</sup> Under the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-63), the Veil had to be removed from Rome and secured in Edessa. Here starts its Middle Eastern, Byzantine era (361-704). For 183 years, 361-544, the Veil remained within Edessa's city walls, for the next 30 years, from 544 – 574, the Veil was kept in Kamulia. In 574 the Veil was taken to Constantinople. During the Byzantine era (574 – 704) a Patriarch could easily travel with the Veil and take it with him to Egypt. In Memphis, in the Fayum Oasis, a pilgrim from Piacenza gives the following description: "We saw a cloth made of linen which bears the imprint of the One, who is said to have left an image of his countenance on the cloth whilst wiping his face with it. Since then the Cloth has been venerated and adored. We too have prayed in front of this image, but we weren't able to sustain our gaze on it, blinded by the light emanating from it and because of its constantly changing features, when one looked at it." In 670 the Frankish Bishop Arculf venerated the Sudarium of Jesus in Jerusalem. In 704, just before the iconoclast controversy, the Patriarch Kallinicos took it with him on his exile to Rome, preserving it thus from destruction. Since then the Veil had remained in Rome up until the Sacco di Roma on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1527. 85 years later, in 1620, the Capuchin Friars restored it and placed it between glass and a wooden frame. For over 400 years, the Veil has remained unidentified, hidden, forgotten and its existence buried.

## 6.The SindonMunda, a sort of linen used as a support for the body



Pic.35: SindonMunda, Aachen

Possible journey: Jerusalem – Aachen – Kornelimünster

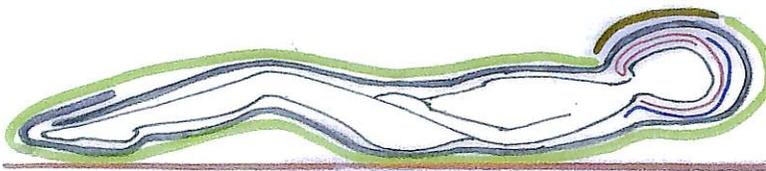
Among these 6 different cloths the most widely known are: the Veil of Manoppello, the Shroud of Turin and the Cloth of Oviedo. The others are venerated only locally.

- The Shroud of Turin wrapped the entire body of the Crucified.
- The Sudarium of Oviedo touched directly Jesus head; it was used to soak up the blood and the serum. The post-mortal blood belongs to the group AB.
- The Veil of Manoppello was delicately placed over Jesus' head, on top of the Shroud and shows the imprint of a vivid, living Face.

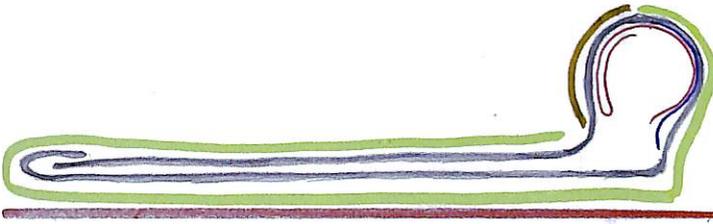
The position of the "Face", the eyes and the mouth are similar to the one on the Shroud. The position of the Living Face corresponds exactly with the face frozen in death, visible on the Shroud. The following outline explains the sequence of the cloths, wrapping the corpse of Our Lord.

### Representation of the burial cloths in the grave

#### A. On Holy Saturday



## B. On Easter morning



### Explanation of the colours:

	1. The dead corpse of Our Lord
	2. The Sudarium of Oviedo, blood drenched and dried, hard like paper
	3. The Holy Headdress of Cahors, supporting the chin and knotted underneath the chin
	4. The Holy Shroud of Turin, wrapping the entire body
	5. The Sudarium of Kornelimuenster, transparent mussel silk, as a token of honour
	6. The Veil of Manoppello, Sudarium made of mussel silk placed on top of the linen over the head
	7. The so called "SindonMunda", made of linen and laid down on the ground to support the corpse.

## 3. Modern comparison of the cloths

### 1. The Veil of Manoppello

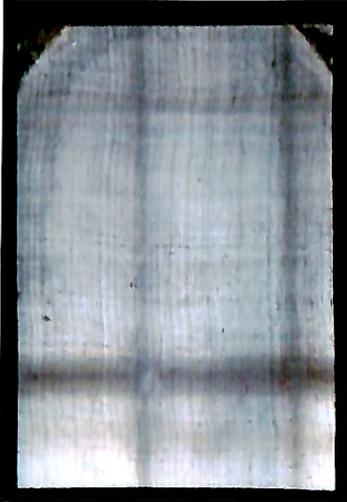
The Veil of Manoppello is a completely transparent fabric made of sea-byssus, and was probably the last cloth that covered Jesus' corpse at his funeral. Its function, unlike that of the cloth of Oviedo wasn't to absorb blood and serum, but rather to honour and glorify Jesus. It is a token of great love and respect. The fabric is so refined and thin that according to the testimony of the weaver, Chiaro Vigo, it is impossible to recreate its quality today. Furthermore this material is unsuitable for painting: the salt contained in the fibres and the glossy surface block pigment adherence. Additionally, byssus can only be tinted all over in one colour by cooking the mussel silk before weaving.

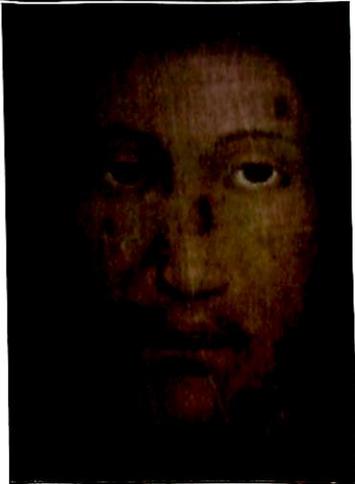
However, on the Veil, you can witness different pictures of the same face and distinguish clearly various colours and shades depending on the angle of the lighting, the background and the room conditions. A different lighting induces a different face. When you hold back the Veil against daylight it becomes completely transparent and the viewer only sees the blank fabric. The numerous faces are encoded invisibly in or around the fibres of the fabric. The various countenances seem to

behave independently of the fabric. Their behaviour surpasses human understanding, logic and experience. They are one of a kind.

When you take a picture of the Veil you never know which Face will be revealed to you. This adds to the difficulty of working with the Veil. There are no words to describe what I am desperately trying to explain.

On the following pages you will therefore find a dozen pictures of the Face of Manoppello and maybe you will see what words cannot contain.







Pic.36



Pic.37



Pic.38

## **2. The relationship between the Veil and the Shroud of Turin**

At first it is quite hard to see the similarities in the faces on both shrouds. The two pictures are completely different or as I stated already in the first part of the book, their unlikeness is greater than their likeness.

Albeit the study of both pictures reveals numerous common points and lines, corresponding features, swellings as well as the same facial dissymmetry. I drew the following sketch to show the congruent points in both pictures and added slightly more precision to the sketch made in 1999. I realized that I had to slightly adjust the position of the Veil in relation to the Shroud. The following points guide me in the positioning of one face over the other.

Pic 3: Orientation and congruent points

- The pupil of the left eye
- The pupil of the right eye
- The long, asymmetric nose (one oblique nostril, one horizontal nostril)
- The lower line of the upper lip (the middle line over the teeth and the teeth themselves)
- The bruise on the left side of the nose
- Signs of violence on the left corner of the mouth
- Injuries of the lower left eyelid (V shaped incision)
- A vertical line on the left cheek (series of scratches due to spikes)



Pic.39

In spite of the smoothness of the passage from one picture to the other, the two pictures differ. It is important to use the adequate starting position and to use the exact original size<sup>4</sup>, as I have defined them in the Polish Atlas, otherwise both images won't blend in.



original size of the measured section: 13.4 cm



original size of the measured section: 23.7 cm

The following sequence shows what happens when you gradually place the Veil over the Shroud, how the Faces perfectly blend in and complete one another.

---

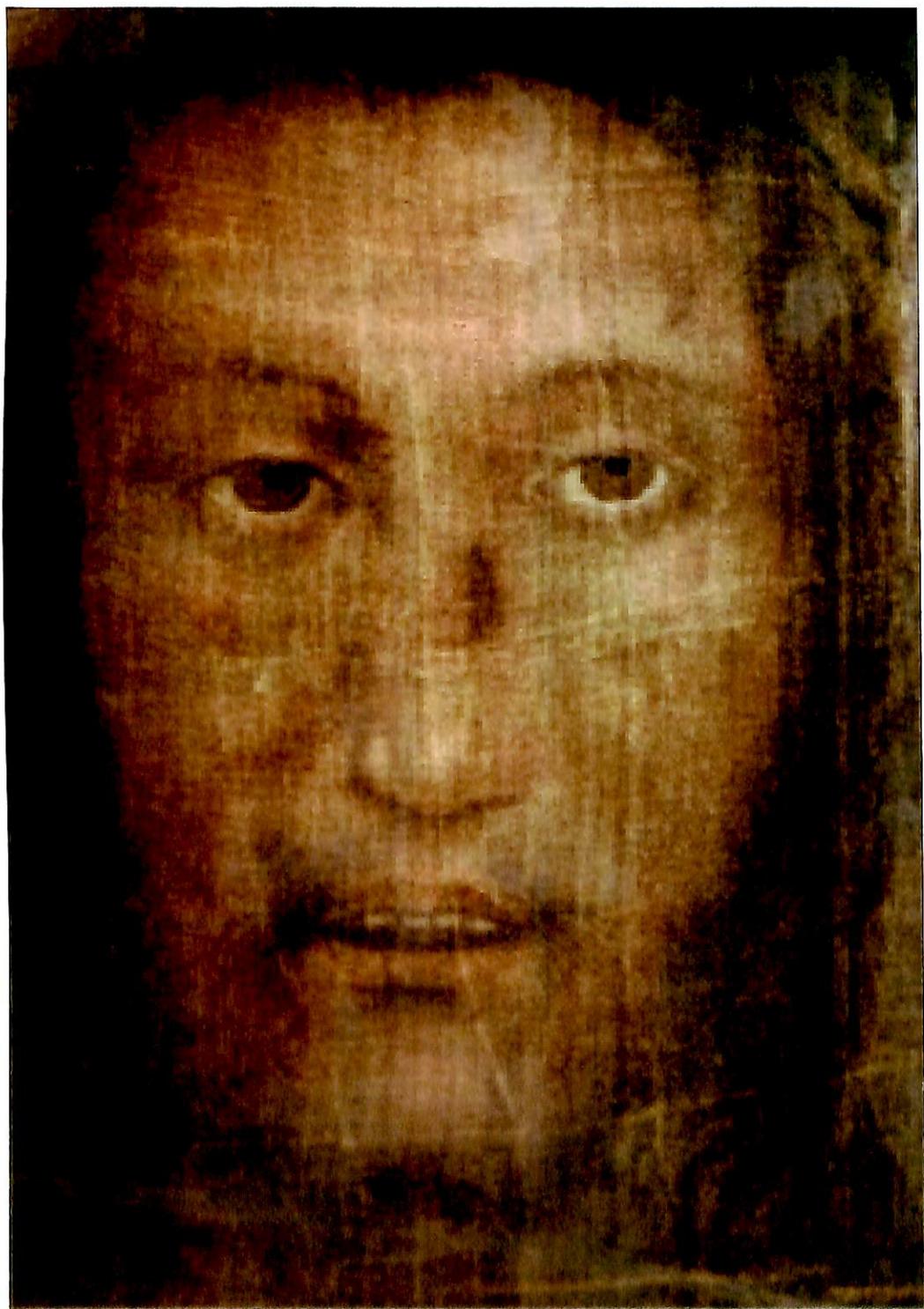
<sup>4</sup> The collaboration with Prof. Bulst and Prof. Pfeiffer permitted to determine, in 1991, the original measurements of the cloths. It was very difficult to find the exact measures for the Veil: when you try to place greaseproof paper over the relic's glass top, in order to trace the lines of the Face, the Face vanishes and you are no longer able to distinguish any features. Prof. Pfeiffer let another person trace with a pencil the delicate lines; by following the top of the pencil he traced the lines on some greaseproof paper and created thus an image with the original size.

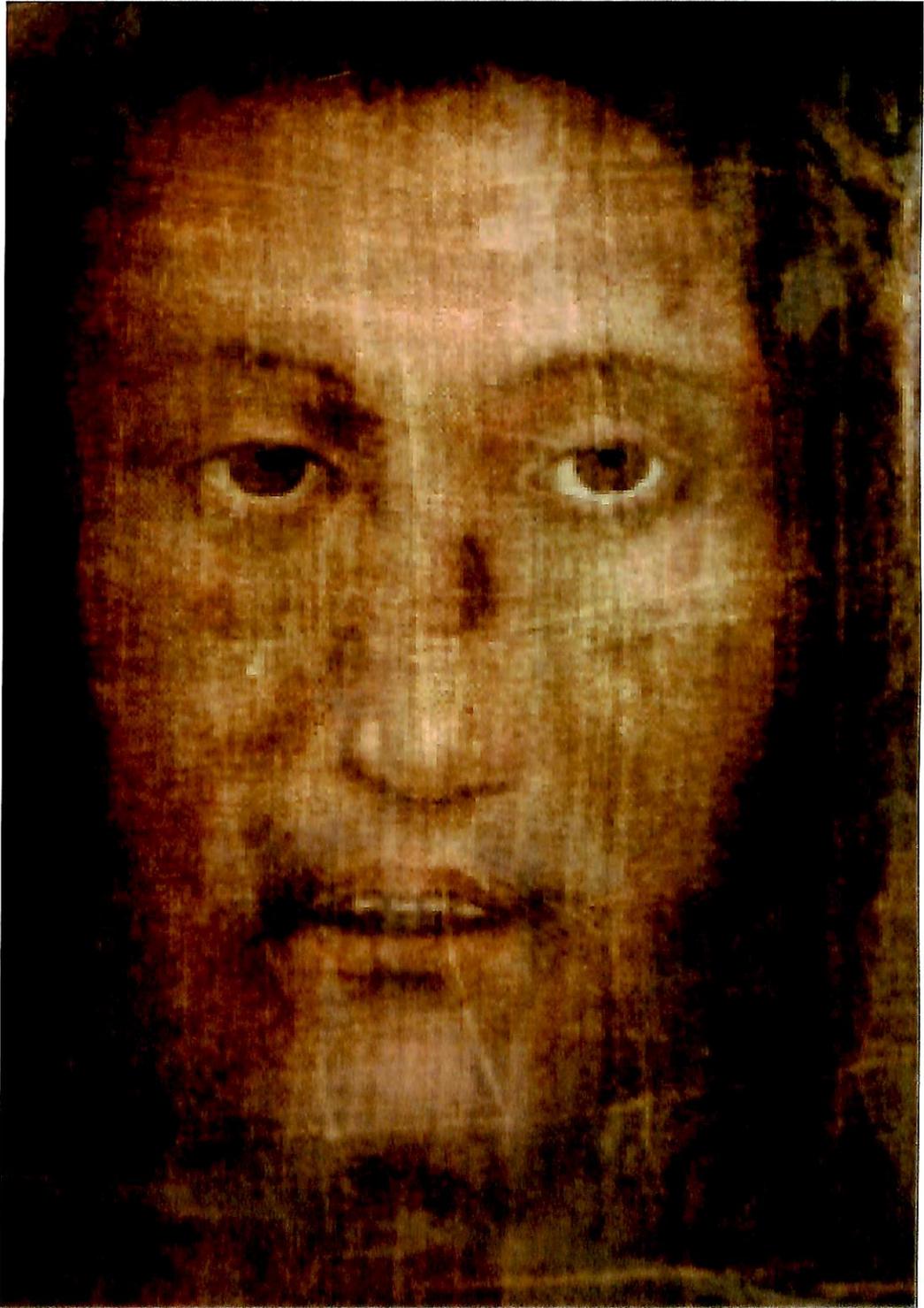
This wobbly picture allowed me to set section of measurements: from the central parting to the tip of the nose, 13.4 cm. It was slightly more complicated to determine the sections of measurements on the Shroud, since there are almost no lines on the Face. I chose the protruding crease line, which doesn't really belong to the face, but at least shows a clear delimitation. Prof. Bulst assured me that the copy he sent me respected the original size. I had to trust the two professors and used their information to create real size overhead transparencies and start to work with them. Despite the apparent congruent points my doubt concerning the original size subsisted. In 1995 I could finally see the Veil for myself and compare the size of my transparency with that of the Veil: the worked out sizes matched the original, and revealed a correlation between the Veil of Manoppello and the Shroud of Turin. I want to thank Prof. Pfeiffer for having provided the exact measures and for having participated since the beginning in the reflection about these incredible congruencies. Without his help the results of the overlapping wouldn't exist today. He himself describes it as a "miracle" handed down to us.











#### **4. The timing of the creation of the Face Image**

The present fact of the possible blending in of the picture traces stands as a witness for a great temporal adjacency and for a successive creation of the images: the Face of the Shroud lay before that of Manoppello and therefore the image inscribed on the Linen is chronologically older and anterior to the imprint of the Veil of Manoppello.

Physiological reasons exclude the theory that the image could have appeared a couple of hours prior to death. It is obvious that a suffering, living body is in constant change up to the moment of his last breath. If the imprint had occurred a couple of hours before death, the two Faces couldn't possibly match and overlap perfectly. They both witness the exact same position of the mouth, the eyelids, the signs of passion and the facial traits. The perfect overlapping of both Faces and their changed aspects - the burial Linen of Turin portrays a dead face whereas the Veil of Manoppello reveals the Face of the Living One - indicate that the Veil of Manoppello shows "Christ's Holy Face" after death recreating the imprint of His Face in the moment of resurrection.

##### **1. Doctor's meeting in June 2010**

In June 2010, a small group of doctors came to Manoppello to respond to the question of the chronological succession of the creation of the imprints. I was curious to know what doctors had to say about the different injuries and characteristics of the face of the Veil. Are there medical indications to explain the simultaneous marks of death and of life on His Face? From a medical point of view, can we ascertain a successive, yet almost simultaneous creation of the images? The team was composed of various experts and the Rector of the Sanctuary repeatedly allowed us to spend an hour observing the Veil from very close up.

The fleeting nature of the image leaves every attentive observer perplexed: the image vanishes completely or partially in an open space, whereas an opaque background makes it visible. Even the doctors had to get used to the constant vanishing and reappearing of the image. A dark background and frontal lighting offer the conditions to witness clearly the soft pinkish - livid stains around the contours of the Face, on the cheeks and on the forehead. These stains are to be differentiated from the faint blue and green marks found around the nose and the eyes. Doctors stated that those soft pinkish stains resembled those appearing on a face of a person after being resuscitated with an oxygen supply, and were also comparable to skin-reddening of newly born babies, who have just taken their first breath (pic. 38, 40+42). Suddenly, I remembered how a midwife once said that in the presence of the Volto Santo she was constantly reminded of premature babies. Women who have given birth can probably confirm it. I, however, don't have any personal comparison to draw from and could only welcome their testimony. I was astounded to realise that as Jesus passes from death to life his face displays the characteristics of a face in the moment of birth.

The livid stains or the parts around the nose and eye areas are hematomas due to strokes and injuries sustained through falling and therefore are a bit older. The broken nose provoked a severe swelling and abundant nasal mucus which prevented Jesus from breathing through his nose. This justifies his open mouth. I also consider the open mouth to be a consequence of the last cry Jesus made, which is spoken of in the gospels. This cry might have also been provoked by asphyxia, or according to cardiologists by myocardial rupture, due to unattended infarctions, but probably all these reasons are relevant.

During the meeting, one of the doctors present pointed out that if the eyes remain open at the time

of death, the sclera (the white outer area around the iris) changes to black and doesn't remain white. I've been wondering about this phenomenon since 1995, since the sclera of the Volto Santo is usually white. (Pic.37, 44, 45). However, when light is directed from behind on the Volto Santo, the sclera becomes black and is no longer white as it usually is. (Pic. 41,43,46) Is that really linked to the death He suffered? At the moment of death Jesus' eyes remained open since rigor mortis occurred instantaneously.

One hour after His death, when His body was taken off the cross neither his eyes nor his mouth could be closed in any way. The Linen of Turin also shows very clearly the open mouth of Our Lord as well as his teeth. The severe injuries surrounding the eyelids and the entire region around the eye sockets render it impossible to notice the open eyes.

When one applies frontal lighting directly onto the Volto Santo, the sclera is white. Furthermore, according to the testimony of an oculist, the position of the pupils corresponds to that of a person who after having remained in the dark for a long time gets his first contact with light. Every person perceives His look slightly differently, but His gaze always remains very strong and alive.

The Holy Face can only be approached with a lot of respect and fear, and a doctor will not readily reveal his or her observations and impressions. This meeting was a first attempt to analyse the Volto Santo from a medical point of view and to pay more attention to the imprint than to the fabric.<sup>5</sup>

The general question was: *What does a doctor see?* My personal question concerned more the timing of the creation of the imprints: *Before or after death?* I am searching for medical evidence that will attest to my observations made on the Face of double picture emerging from the superposition of both cloths.

---

In November 2011 and in February 2012, a dozen Italian doctors came together to discuss their insights on the imprint in the Veil. They defined the Face as "lively" and noticed that it showed the exact same marks and wounds as the Face of the Crucified-One in the burial Linen of Turin. They also diagnosed the symptoms of a fracture of the base of the skull: a bilateral periorbital hematoma, an asymmetric face due to paralysis of a branch of the 7<sup>th</sup> facial nerve obstructing the closing of the mouth.

In 2013, Dr. Ute Stass, a German dentist, diagnosed a Le Fort II fracture, which is a type of facial fracture extending from the nasal bridge, at or below the nasofrontal structure through the frontal processes of the maxilla. This type of fracture is responsible for the so-called "open bite" and a dish face deformity, extending the middle of the face bilaterally. A prolonged middle-face and a nasal-ridge-fracture are consequences of a LeFort II fracture, the open-bite and a movement of the mandibular line from the middle to the right side are due to a fracture of the mandibular condylar process.

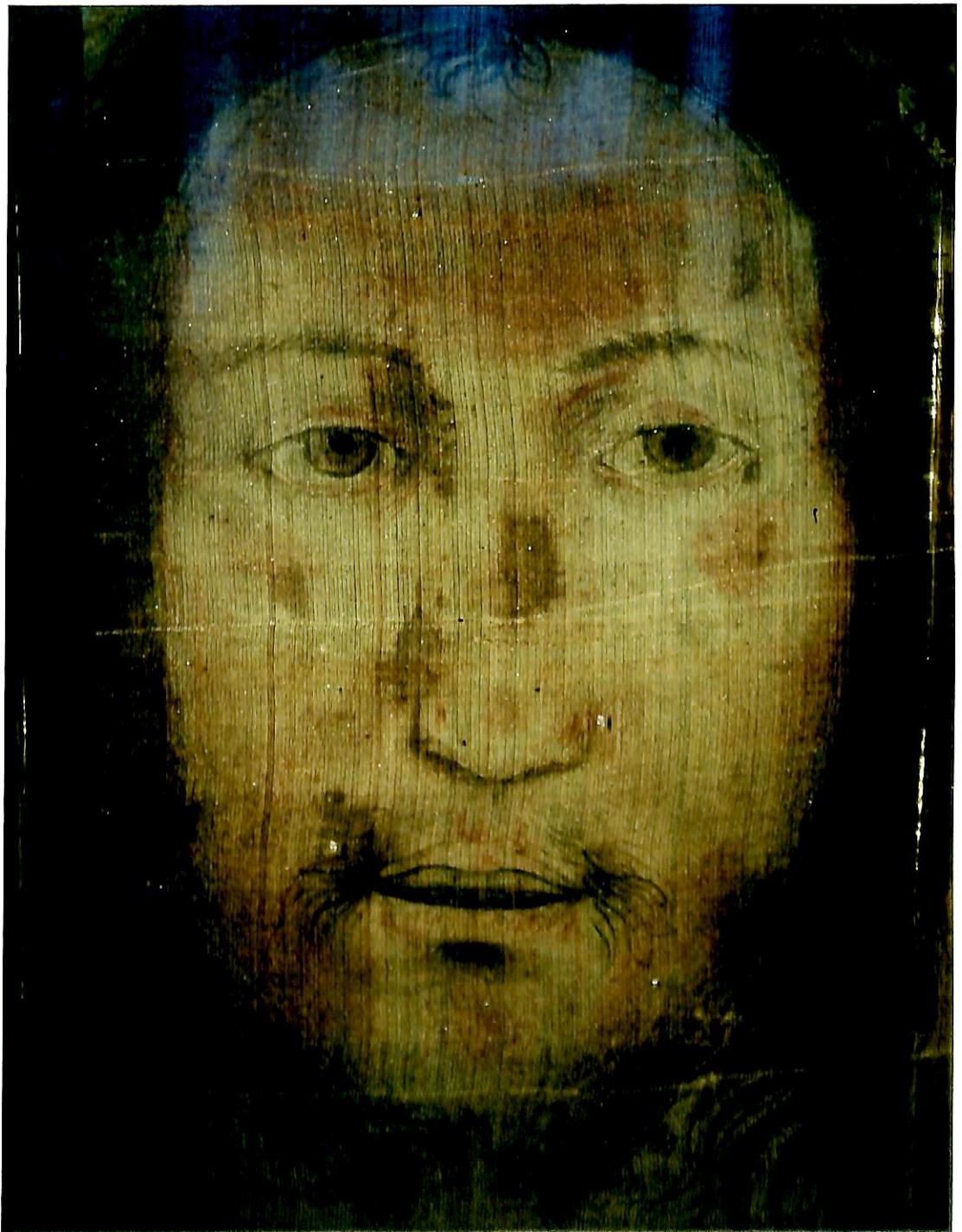
An Italian cardiologist attributed the reason of death to a sudden cardiac death; the myocardial ruptured (loud cry) whilst a piece of the heart muscle was dissolving itself (the muscle became soft like marmalade; this state makes any operation or even the insertion of a needle impossible). According to the cardiologist's opinion, the entire Psalm 21 gives an almost medical description of Jesus' death: "My heart has become like wax"... Such a heart rupture is usually the sequel of one or two myocardial infarctions. She also identified livor mortis, *suggillation* (a setting of blood causing purplish red discolouration of the skin, when the heart stops to function) around the chin area, occurring in particular when a person dies in a vertical position or drowns. The researchers of Oviedo stated that at the moment of death, Jesus' head tilted up and over the right shoulder. This is also reported in the Gospel of St. John: "... And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." (John 19.30)

The sudden cardiac death froze Jesus' Face in the moment of death, and his Countenance didn't change during the 36 hours He spent in the grave. At His resurrection, Jesus' soul re-entered the Face, which had been frozen and fixed at the moment of death. The Countenance in the Linen of Turin reveals the Face of the dead Christ and therefore cannot be called the "Face of Christ". Christ is the "Living One" and He reveals himself as such in the Veil of Manoppello, in His "Sudarium" (John 20.6). A simple burial cloth becomes a sign of Eternal Life.

For more information contact Dr. Marina De Cesare, [marinadecesare@yahoo.it](mailto:marinadecesare@yahoo.it)



Pic.40: red spots on forehead and cheeks



Pic.41: red spots on forehead and cheeks



Pic.42: Forehead and eyes, you can clearly observe the pinkish-livid stains





Pic.43: dark sclera, normally white

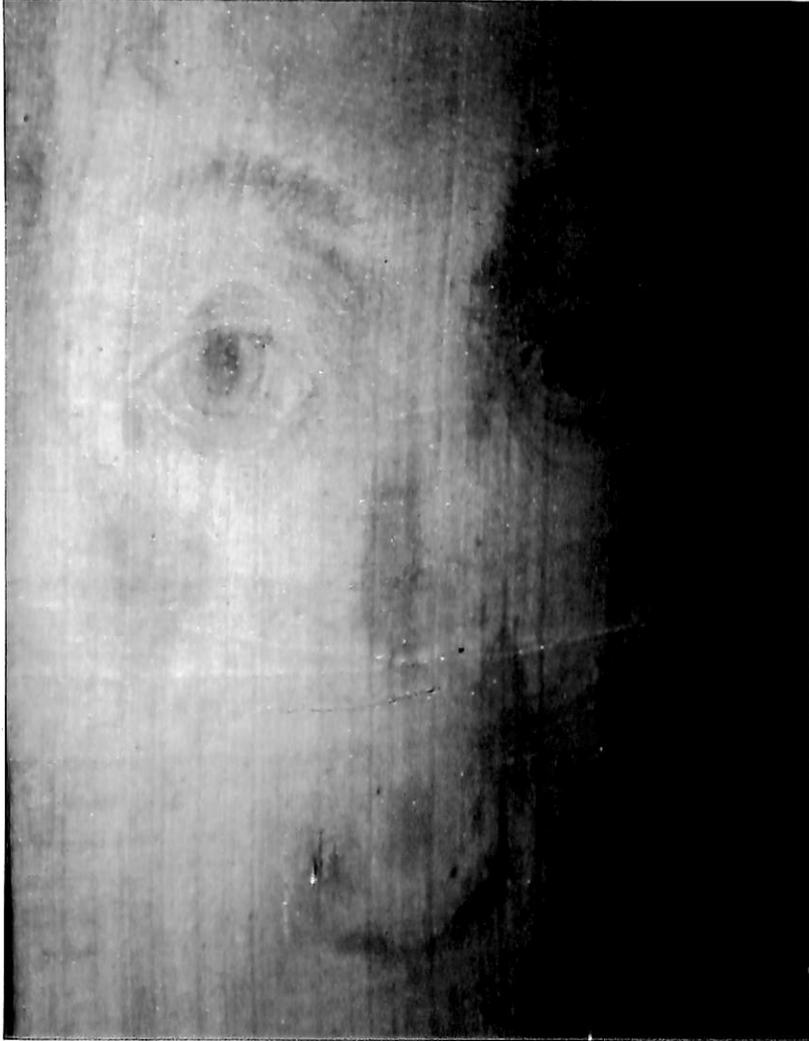




Pic.44



Pic,45



Pic.46: dark sclera



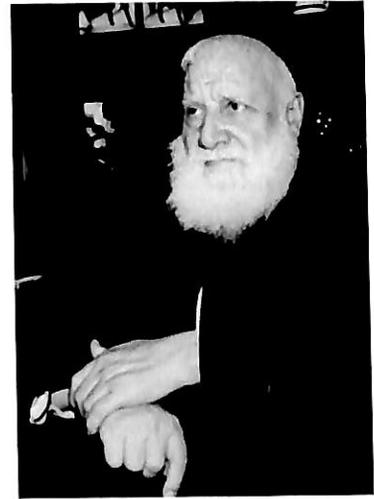
FIGURE XI:INJURED LEFT EYE



## **2. The imprint was created at the moment of resurrection, other witnesses: Padre Domenico da Cese and his perceptions during prayer**

Another way might be to believe in the attestations of others. For instance, P. Domenico da Cese (Pic. 47) reports that the Face of Manoppello is the Face of the Resurrected One. He has always defended this position and his spiritual sons and daughters bear witness to it: *This is the Face of the Risen Christ!* He incurred this experience during many hours of prayer and contemplation. He wanted to spread this knowledge within the Church, but unfortunately he didn't find many listeners. He therefore concentrated all his efforts to present the Holy Face of Our Lord at the Eucharistic Congress in Pescara in 1978.

At the same time Renzo Allegri first came in contact with the image in the Veil. He wrote the article, which I at first didn't want to read and which I had stowed away behind the linen closet. This article marked the beginning of my work with the Volto Santo.



Pic.47: Padre Domenico Da Cese

Today I am grateful to P. Domenico and am aware that it is thanks to him that I can do the work I am doing. I hope that he rejoices in heaven and intercedes for me with God. Soon he will be declared God's servant. God had already chosen him as a little boy when he rescued him from an earthquake in Cese in 1910. It would be an honour for me to witness his beatification.

P. Domenico invites us to remain silent before the Holy Face and to offer Him time, faith and love. Silence and prayer unravel the mystery slowly. Its secret discloses itself cautiously and invites us to open ourselves gradually.

Prayer offers the following perceptions: the Veil shows a restored, living Face beyond Passion; a Face that in spite of all His endured sufferings and injuries doesn't show any signs of distress but radiates with love, compassion, tender kindness and peace. The Face is shining and inviting and sometimes a loving smile appears on it. It is the individual Face of Jesus Christ who passed through death and who woke up to new Eternal Life. It is a transfigured Face that still shows the signs of passion yet is fully alive. Even though not everyone believes in resurrection, the imprint on the cloth forces you to acknowledge that it is the Face of a living person. The infinite beauty of this Face lies hidden within it. The heart has to be ready, open, and in peace to welcome this revelation. Every person is thus responsible for what he can or can't see. It depends on their heart's disposition. The burial Linen of Turin and the Veil of Manoppello complement one another, and bear witness to the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Veil of Manoppello is the mystery in which we can personally meet the Risen One. Pope Benedict XVI affirms that this encounter is preconditioned by love and faith.

## **5. The correlation between the Veil of Manoppello and the Sudarium of Oviedo**

The Veil of Manoppello is a mystery of faith and as such surpasses science. Even though the Veil can be examined scientifically, human intellect and science will not be able to grasp it entirely.

There is another fact, which could perplex scientists almost as much as the Veil itself; it is the

precise analogy between the blood traces and the injuries on the Sudarium of Oviedo in Spain with the visible injuries on the imprint of the Veil. On Holy Friday, the Sudarium of Oviedo was placed, in two layers, over the face of the Crucified-One whilst he was still on the cross. The remaining part of the cloth (the size of a towel) was put around his head and knotted at the top of the head. The cloth couldn't cover the whole head since it was tilted and resting on the right shoulder.



Pic.48: The Holy Head-dress of Cahors



Pic.49: blood and serum stains on the Holy Head-dress

In order to stabilise the head and offer it some support, the “Holy Head-dress of Cahors”, a sort of nightcap was wrapped around His head. The cap consists of several layers of very fine yet absorbing linen and presents large blood and serum stains on the right inside.

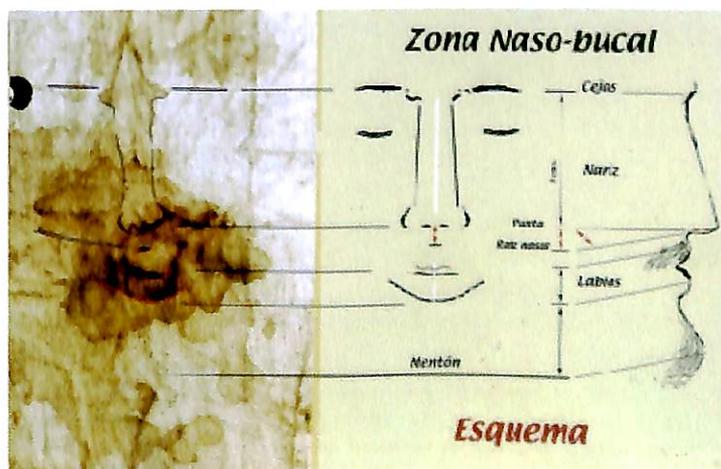
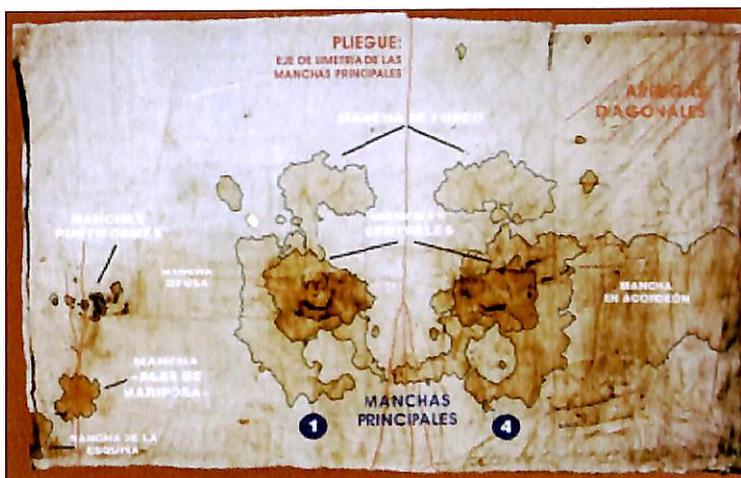
The various movements and rotations of Jesus' corpse provoked the blood and serum to pour out of his mouth. The Sudarium of Oviedo is witness to the successive stages of blood and serum secretion. The piece of the Sudarium, which was in contact with Jesus' face, shows distinctive traces of scratches, blows and strokes. We can also see the fingerprints of a hand that was covering the nose during the whole process. The blood and serum poured out in intervals, each time soaking the cloth and revealing the injuries upon it.

The injuries overlap exactly with those found on the Veil of Manoppello: in the middle of the face, alongside the nose you can see how the nose was broken; an open wound between the nose and the right cheek was probably due to a knock with a hard object, a diagonal line is visible on both cloths as well as a swollen upper lip and two teeth.

Pic.50: The drawing superposed on the Sudarium outlines the main congruent points between both linens. The 3 following pictures display the image obtained through the use of different photographic concentration levels of both initial pictures.



Pic. 50 a-d, congruent features between the Veil of Manoppello and the Cloth of Oviedo

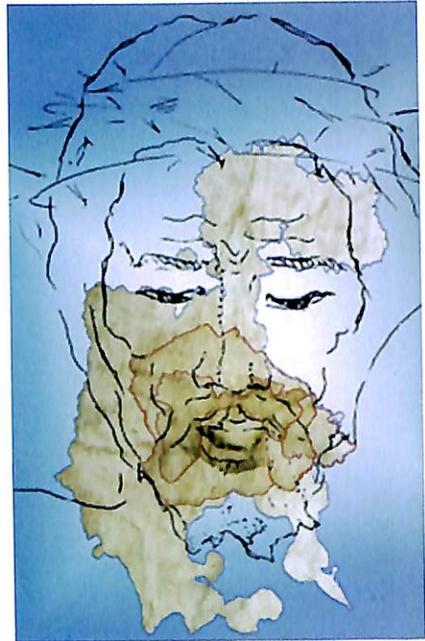


Pic.51 a-d: results of the Spanish research group EDICES

For the correct positioning of the Sudarium of Oviedo over the face of the Linen of Turin, I respected the technique worked out by the Sindologists of the Spanish research group EDICES. (Pic.51 a-d)

When you use the picture from the overlapping of the Turin and Oviedo cloths, you get very precise and fixed indications for the positioning of the Veil of Manoppello. This precise placement uncovers the close correlation between the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Holy Face of Manoppello. The three cloths Oviedo, Turin and Manoppello placed one on top of the other perfectly blend together and divulge into one congruent image. (Pic. 52, a-e)

The triple overlapping (pages 91-94 mirror side; 95 front side) shows that the blood and the serum stains contradict neither the anatomy nor the injuries apparent on the cloths of Turin and of Manoppello. The number of burial cloths used, respects the Jewish requirements to wrap a body covered in blood. The quality and the number of cloths reveal the disciples' need to honour the body of the dead Messiah.



All three burial cloths present horizontal lines on three different levels: on the forehead, on the middle of the nose and on the mouth. It is also possible that the very fragile Veil was attached to the Sindone by small stitches.

Traditional Jewish burial law recommended the following order of cloths: Firstly, the Sudarium to absorb the blood and the serum which had accumulated in the lungs. Secondly, the burial Shroud to cover the whole corpse, and finally as a sign of honour the very delicate veil made out of byssus, placed on top. Chiara Vigo as well as the tradition of the Sudarium Domini in Kornelimünster report that byssus was an extremely expensive and rare fabric used as a token of respect for the burial of highly important people.

Both not man-made imprints on the Shroud of Turin and on the Veil of Manoppello correspond exactly to the blood stained cloth of Oviedo. The use of the three burial cloths doesn't in any way contradict first century Jewish burial rituals.

The mere existence and harmony of the unexplainable imprints and their congruency with the blood marks on the Sudarium, imply that we are here in the presence of a supernatural phenomenon; the imprints didn't simply emerge but were created. This furthermore fixes the chronological, successive yet simultaneous order of creation of the imprints on the Linen as well as on the Veil. All this explains why they couldn't have been created in any different order. Therefore the Face on the Veil of Manoppello wasn't created prior to death, for example during Jesus' Passion, but at the exact moment of Jesus' passing from death to life bearing witness to the Resurrection.



Pic.52 a: mirror side according to the imprints of Oviedo



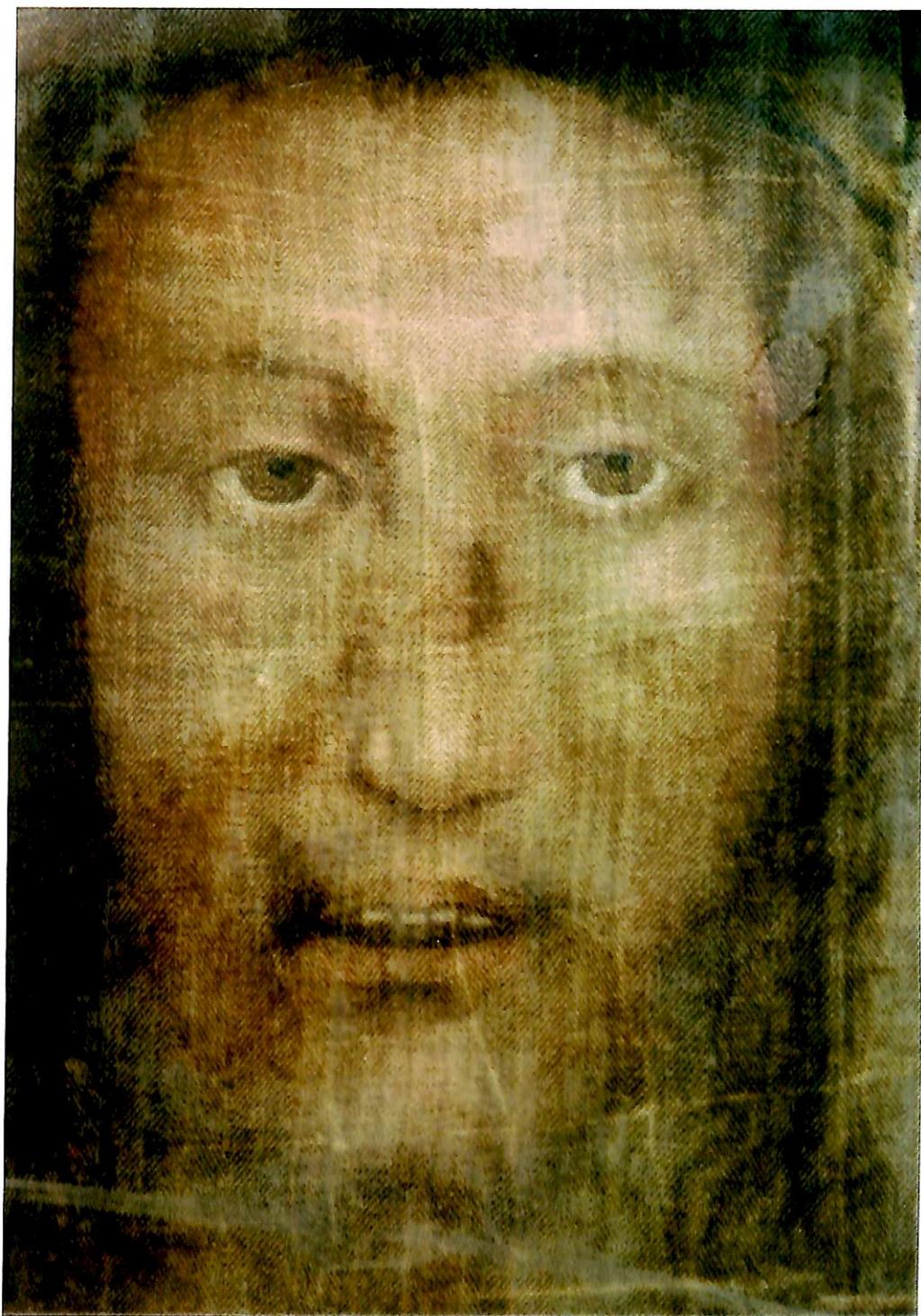
Pic.52 b: mirror side according to the imprints of Oviedo



Pic.52 c: mirror side according to the imprints of Oviedo



Pic.52 d: mirror side according to the imprints of Oviedo



Pic.52 e : front side according to the Shroud of Oviedo

## 6. Personal review

I consider that the Veil of Manoppello is a very special gift for our time. It is only today that we dispose of the adequate tools to study its nature and compare it with the other relics. Furthermore, we've only had the opportunity over the last few years to contemplate the Veil face to face. Photography and particularly digital photography permits to perceive more easily all the details and to reveal the correlation between the various cloths.

Tradition has known not-man -made pictures for a long time. Since the imprint of the Face of the Veil is very distinguishable the term was initially only used to describe the image found on the Veil, and not the blurred face on the Shroud. Nowadays, we easily recognize both cloths as documents left behind by the Risen Christ for our Consolation and the instruction about the event of our Redemption.<sup>6</sup> We should therefore study them carefully.

When Christ left these imprints behind, his main aim was not to trigger and nourish our intellect. He wants to meet every individual personally and establish a unique and lasting relationship.

I think "God who created man wonderfully in his dignity, renewed him even more wonderfully", how it is said during the offertory of the old mass. It is a personal encounter with his creature, with the person, whom He created after his likeness and image as a spiritually gifted creature.

Every single, healthy and honest individual who contemplates His Face admits that Christ is alive and that he comes to meet us. He is just as he was in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century and as He will be in the following millennia. He is and remains *God with us and for us, the Living One*. He is the Lamb and the Good Shepherd. He wants to look at us and be looked at by us. In this mutual contemplation He feeds our soul, which is a spirit like Him. He is Love.

## III. Early testimonies of the image in the Veil

### 1. The Lamb and the beautiful Shepherd; the paintings of Christ in the Catacombs

In 1980, after understanding the close relationship between the Veil of Manoppello and the Shroud of Turin, as well as knowing the authenticity of both imprints, I started to search for "veil – similarities" in all Christ representations. I immediately realized the fine line that exists between the Veil and the various Christ icons. Later on I heard from Prof. Pfeiffer about the existence of the Roman Veronica and discovered "veil resemblances" also in most Western representations.

After having been able to contemplate the original Veil, I tend to perceive the influence of the Veil on Christian first century frescos and sculptures of the Good-Shepherd. Something in those works always reminds me of the Volto Santo. Sometimes it may be the locks of curly hair that fall loosely along His face, the lengthy cheeks or just a facial expression. In his book "Das Antlitz Christi, Christ's Holy Face" Prof. Andreas Resch concludes that the proportions of the fresco of the Good-

---

<sup>6</sup> In the past, the Church venerated the Holy Veil and attributed to it a special place within devotion, the 6<sup>th</sup> station of the cross. That is how the Roman Veronica had been carved into the hearts of the faithful for over 8 centuries. Technical progress and photography allow us to recognize that the Veil comes from Jesus' tomb and that it is a living witness of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. It is a manifestation of the Glory of God's Son, who is triumphant over death. It is the "Sign of Jonas".

Shepherd in the Priscilla catacombs coincide with those of the Veil. He also proved the Veil's similarities with the fresco of "Christ and his Apostles" at the Saint Domitilla catacomb, and of the wall-frescos of the Cubiculum Leonis in the Comodilla catacomb.

The 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman frescos of Christ, as well as the Pantocrator-fresco dating from 340 found in the catacomb of Saint Petrus and Marcellinus, are Rome's oldest witnesses of the Veil.

In History of Art one is accustomed to consider the youthful representations of The Good Shepherd as purely symbolic and not as a portrait. Christ's youthful appearance in the Volto Santo always made me question that affirmation, and my doubts made me investigate into this topic.

Some authors asserted that the Greek word "kalos" has two meanings, good and beautiful. Therefore, Good-Shepherd could also be Beautiful-Shepherd. While contemplating Christ's face in the Veil in Manoppello, I often pondered whether the early Christians hadn't wanted to depict precisely this Good-Shepherd in their catacomb frescos.

In order to study the frescos of the Good-Shepherd I recently visited the Domitilla catacombs. I was shown at least five frescos depicting Christ carrying a lamb around his neck. While drawing the representations, I realized that the ancient artists had always used the same simplifications of my beloved Face.

The distinctive features of the frescos are the following:

1. A straight, flattened nose.
2. The accentuated centerline portraying a slightly open mouth.
3. The lower lip is emphasized by an underlying shadow
4. The prominent big eyes looking up and revealing the white of the sclera

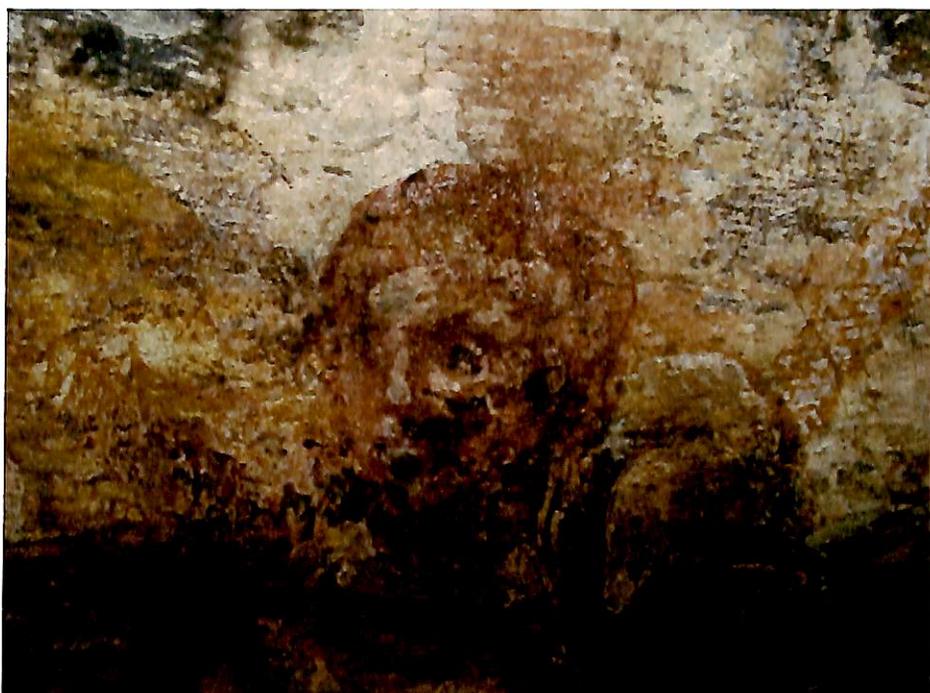


In my opinion these attributes reveal the artist's intention to somehow reproduce the image of the Volto Santo.

I had very revealing results when I covered the frescos with the Holy Face.

The "Good-Shepherd frescos" alone and covered with the Volto Santo







Christians of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century had a very solid relationship to Christ and wanted their deceased to remain close to him. These frescos ornate the burial chambers of their lost ones, and act as a constant prayer allowing the deceased to rest in peace surrounded by Christ's love. These representations are an expression of their faith: Christ is Lord over life and death.

The inscription on the grave "DEPOSITO" means that here lies the body of the dead person, but his dwelling here is only temporary. Early Christians were convinced that Christ is victorious over death. This truth comforted and strengthened them during their persecution and is probably a result of the contemplation of the Holy Face of the Risen Christ in the Volto Santo.

## 2. Early Christian Egyptian mummy portraits

Apart from the frescos of the Good Shepherd, the Roman catacombs display numerous Christian symbols such as turtledoves, fish, anchors and lambs. They all refer to Christ. The representations of Jonah, who spent three days and three nights in the stomach of a large fish and was then spewed out; or that of the mythological Orpheus playing his flute and who went into the underworld to liberate his beloved, foreshadow Christ.

The traditional 1<sup>st</sup> century Egyptian Coptic wood panel paintings found mainly in the Fayum basin depict portraits that don't bare any specific Christian symbols, yet in my opinion point to Christ. Those paintings are referred to as mummy portraits. A Jewish archeologist in 1960 identified them as Christian paintings because of the aliveness of the two dimensional faces. She saw in those portraits precursors of Christian icons.

Already in 1988 Paul Badde wrote a very interesting article on this topic published in 2009 in a compilation of his works, "Zwischen Himmel und Erde, Fe-Medien-Verlag".

Those images have continuously been on my mind and even if there is no further proof to support my intuition, I want to share my thoughts with you.

In the first century, eyewitnesses spread the news of the death and burial of Jesus Christ. They had reported the finding of the burial cloths in the otherwise empty tomb on Easter Sunday to their contemporaries. Christians knew the events very well as many had to flee from Palestine to Egypt and there build a Christian community in Fayum.

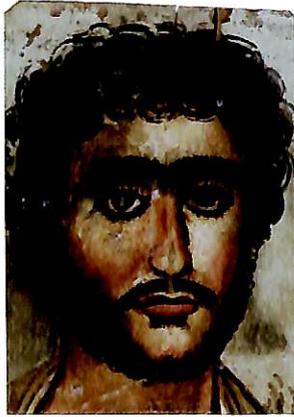
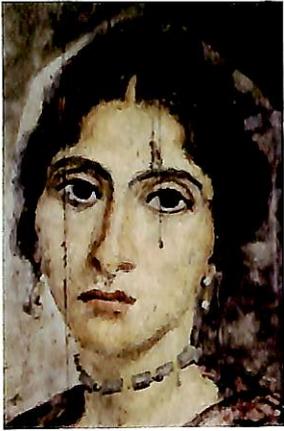
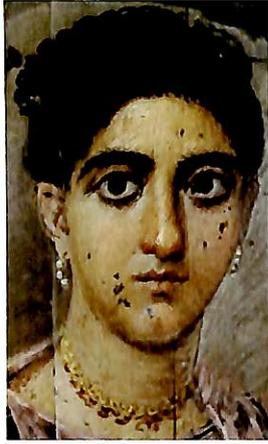
Egyptians mummified the corpses of their dead and placed a tri-dimensional death mask on their face, because they believed that this was the only way for the deceased to have an afterlife. Christians don't share this belief but since Christ's body had been wrapped in burial cloths this led them to mummify their corpses. Therefore, they decorated the mummies with two-dimensional portraits instead of tridimensional death masks. These portraits represented the living person, looking beyond, like they had seen Christ do on the Veil. They wanted to be buried like Him and even in death be witness to their faith.

I hung them on the walls of my painting-studio, encircling the Volto Santo. Thus I could study and compare them carefully and often I would think:

"What a wonderful idea to bury the deceased in this way." The portraits were not dead but alive! The Jewish archeologist claimed that these people had a completely new outlook on life. Here we find a visible break with the ancient Egyptian tradition of being trapped in a death cult.

On the contrary, these people believed in life and therefore must have been Christians. How beautiful! People from all nations, men from different social classes, women, children and teenagers all took part in this new life first revealed in the Risen Christ.





### **3. Emmanuel and Pantocrator: ancient mosaics and frescos**

I cannot finish my work on the Holy Face of Christ without mentioning once more the testimony of the Christian generations, who built the imposing mosaic Churches and Cathedrals especially here in Italy, but also in other Western countries.

Artists applied themselves carefully to hand down to future generations an accurate representation of Christ's features!

I remember well the moment I started my research on the Volto Santo. I was so excited! I had to speak about it constantly, to spread the good news. I wrote many letters to family and friends informing them of the Volto Santo. Whenever somebody came to visit me at the monastery I had the urge to talk about the Holy Face, to let the world know! I talked so much about it, that I might have bored some of my visitors.

One day one of my former students wrote me a letter from Sicily: "If only you could be here! We have seen so many wonderful and large Christ mosaics. They are everywhere, on the apsis, on the dome! Your Christ is everywhere!"

I knew some of the mosaics from books but I had never seen them in person.

After 32 years I finally had the opportunity to look personally at some of the most beautiful witnesses of our Christian faith. I saw the mosaics of the Cathedral in Monreale and found further examples in books (Palermo, Cefalu ...).

Christ's face always shows the same characteristics. In the Byzantine era He always looks a bit more severe, but his face has the same specific features.

The impressive size of the Monreale mosaic renders its expression soft and compassionate similar to that of the Volto Santo. The tuft of hair on the forehead and the strong gaze are never left out. Those characteristics are also represented on an Emmanuel mosaic on the dome of one of the side chapels. Like in all Christ-Emmanuel representations we see here a youthful face. These paintings are typical representations of the pre-existing Christ, the Son of God in all Eternity.

I guess that all over Europe you could find examples of these representations reminding us of the compassionate, loving Face of Jesus Christ. We should be thankful to our ancestors for their testimony.

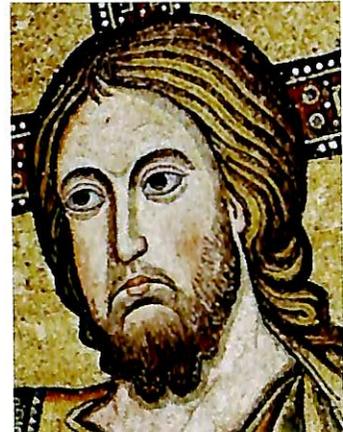
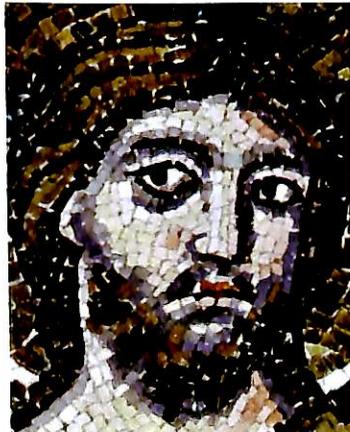
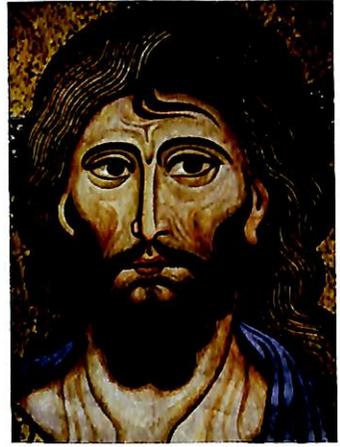
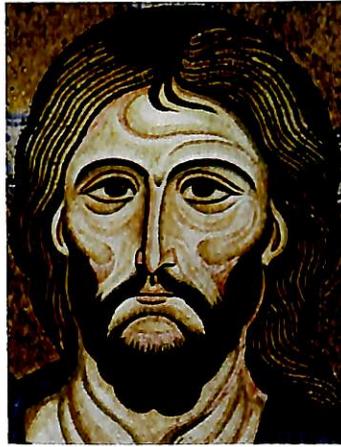
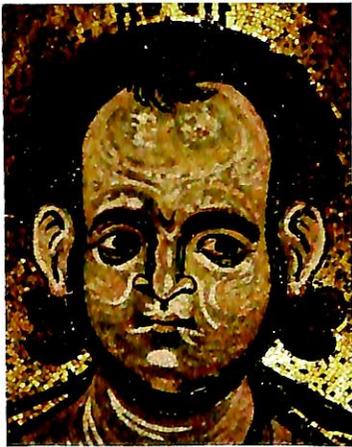
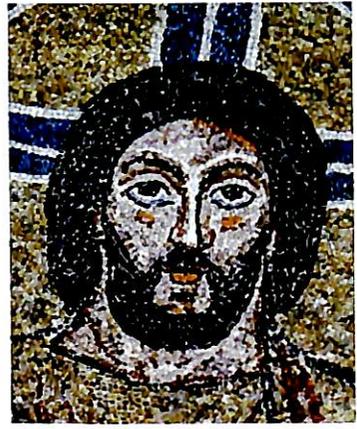
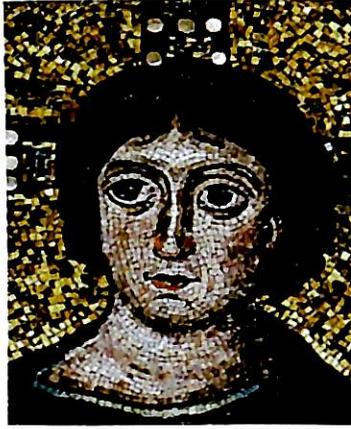


FIGURE XIV: "CHRIST'S MOSAICS"



The Capuchin Church in Manoppello as seen from the hermitage

#### **IV. FINAL CHAPTER: JESUS CHRIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

I don't know what we are waiting for! We should welcome Christ joyfully. In the past centuries He was always there, and today He is still here. He gave us the image of his Holy Face through which He meets every person individually. He outlasted time and a human lack of faith. He approaches us everywhere but He has chosen a very special place, where He is waiting for us both patiently and impatiently, where He wants to encounter us and heal us through His gaze: The little Church of the Capuchin friars in Manoppello situated on the Tarigni-hill houses for over 400 years, His Holy Countenance. It is written in scripture that for God a 1000 years are like one day, but one day is like a 1000 years. Here in Manoppello we can somewhat perceive His everlasting patient yet urging and all-encompassing love. God's essence is love and he chooses to be beaten up rather than to rob us of our freedom. He is waiting for us with extreme patience.

As a young sister patience was a hard skill for me to learn. "Wait, we shall! The skill of waiting is a strength of the heart!" I remembered this sentence from a religious movie, it was said by Nicodemus and gave me a lot of support during my endeavors. I realized that if the skill of waiting is a strength of the heart, Jesus' heart must have a never-ending strength to be waiting for so long for our love. God is so different from us! He is so profoundly wholeheartedly good.

Looking at the Volto Santo changes your heart completely. Nobody can remain indifferent.

All of Jesus' words are made alive in front of his Holy Countenance: "I am the Good Shepherd! I am the Resurrection and the Life. I am the way, the truth and life. I know my fellow beings and they know me."

In front of the Volto Santo you can simply experience Jesus' words: "EGO SUM LUX MUNDI"--"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness (John 8.12)!" (Pic.55)

The Holy Face is above all light, “light for the pagans and for the glory of the nation of Israel!” The Holy Countenance sheds its light upon all nations, upon all people and if they allow it, lightens up their faces: all those who belong to him, all his people, all those who believe in the Light (John 12.36) will be transformed by this Light into light; because the Lamb that was slaughtered and is standing on Mount Sion will bring light unto them.

“Et videbunt FACIEM eius – and they will see his FACE– full of grace and truth.”

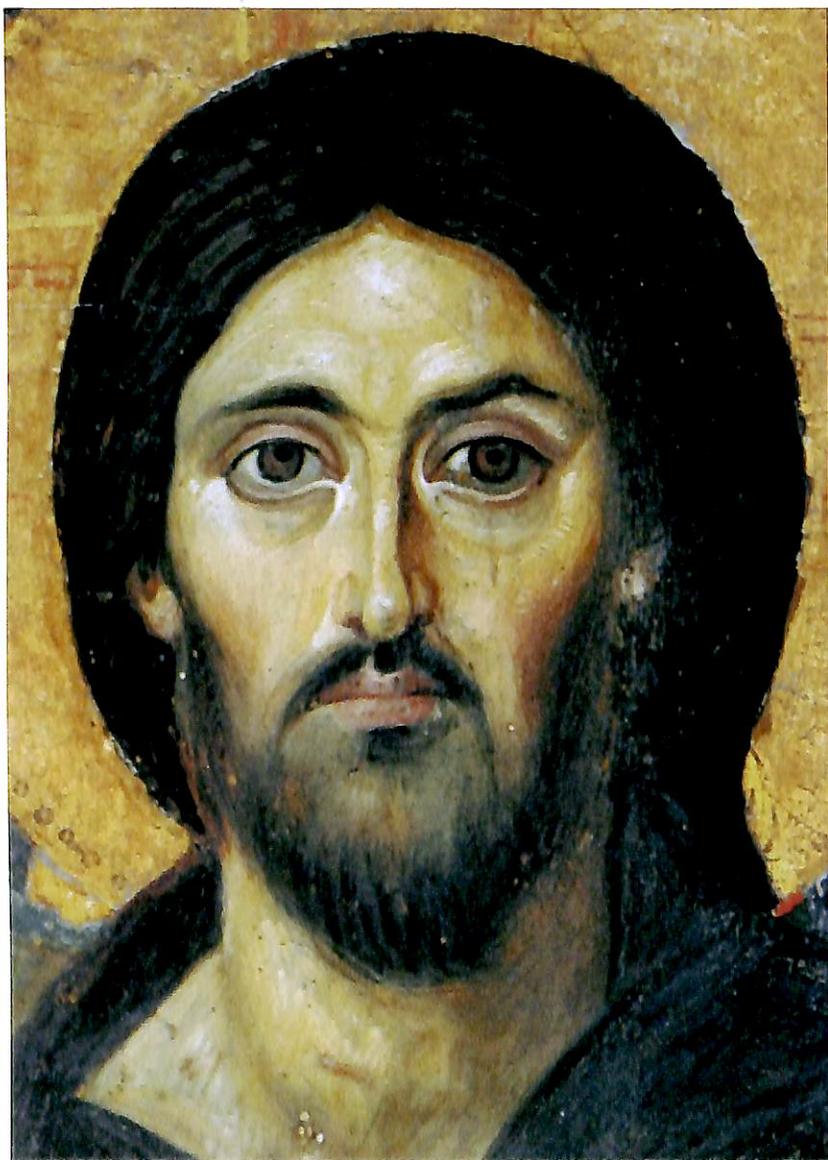
(Rev 22.4; John 1.14) (Pic. 58)





## PART 3:

**“A large crowd of witnesses” (Hebr: 12.1)**



Christ representations over the different centuries



FIGURE XI: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> century

Christ representations over the different centuries

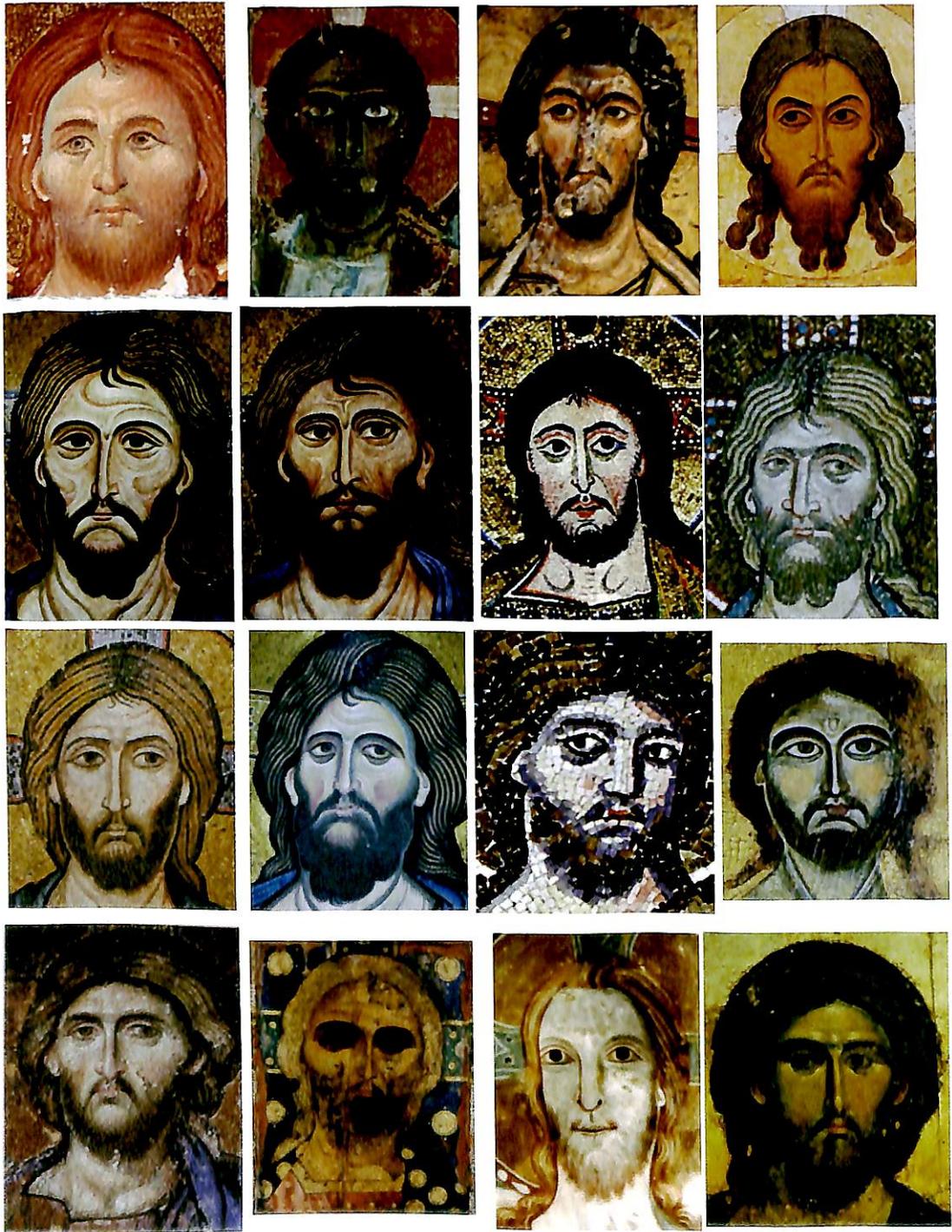


FIGURE XII: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century

Christ representations over the different centuries



FIGURE XIII: 13<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> century

Christ representations over the different centuries

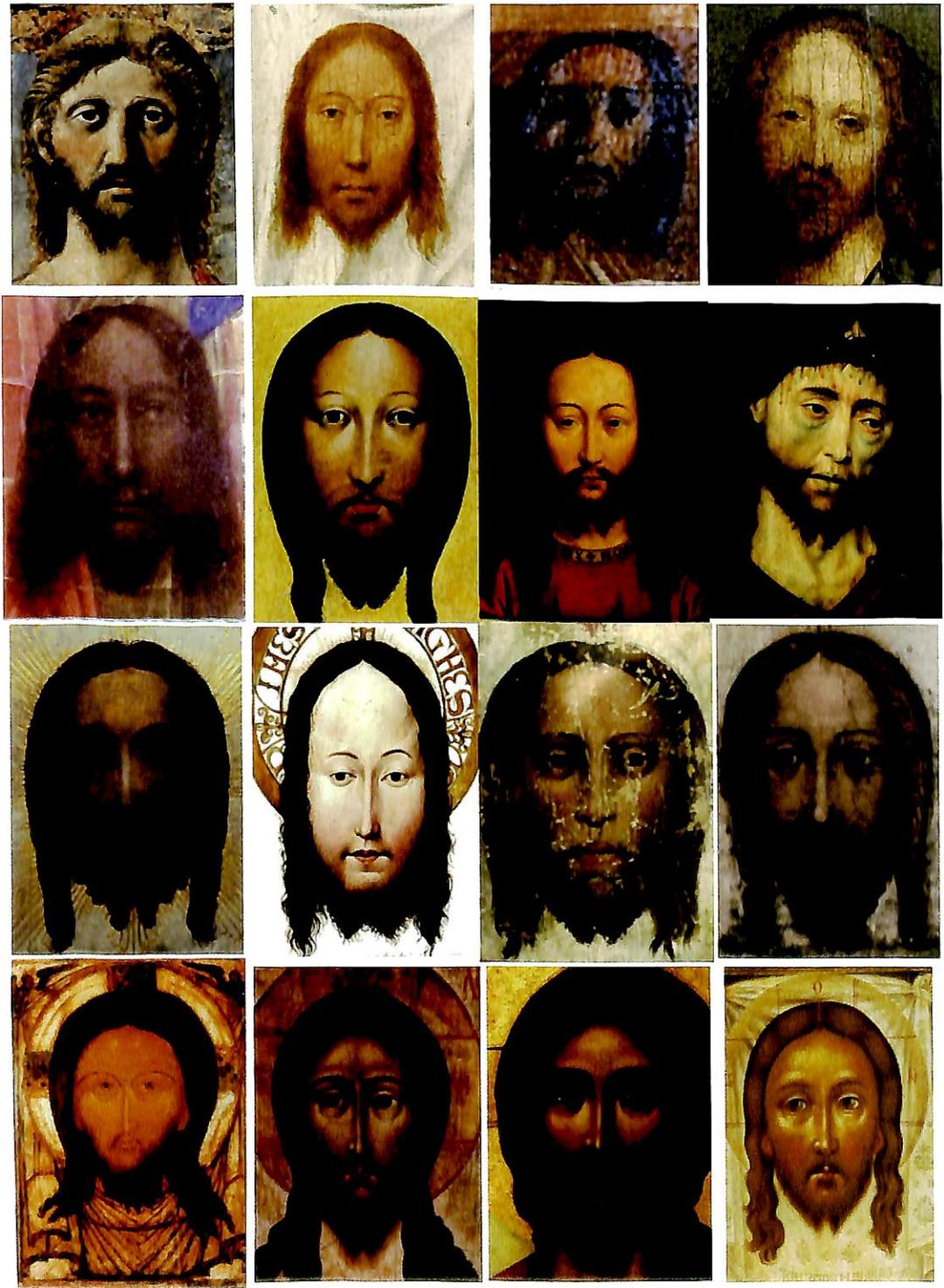


FIGURE XIV: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century



FIGURE XI:

- 1: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Catacombs, Rome
- 2: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Catacombs, Rome
- 3: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Catacombs, Rome
- 4: 4<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Constanza Church, Rome
- 5: 4<sup>th</sup> century, Catacombs, Rome
- 6: 5<sup>th</sup> century, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem
- 7: 6<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Vitale Ravenna Church, Rome
- 8: 6<sup>th</sup> century, Ravenna S, Appolinare
- 9: 8<sup>th</sup> century, Vatican grotto, Rome
- 10: 8<sup>th</sup> century, Godescalc Evangelistary
- 11: 8<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Peter Cathedral, Rome
- 12: 9<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Paraxedes Church
- 13: 9<sup>th</sup> century, Haga Sofia Cathedral, Istanbul
- 14: 10<sup>th</sup> century, Cathedral in Aachen
- 15: 10<sup>th</sup> century, Codex Egberti, Trier
- 16: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Rossano

FIGURE XII:

- 1: 11<sup>th</sup> century, Codex Aeriis, Speyr
- 2: 11<sup>th</sup> century, Lambach Abbey
- 3: 11/12<sup>th</sup> century, Ugento, South Italy
- 4: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Novgorod
- 5: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Palatina Chapel, Palermo
- 6: 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Cefalu
- 7: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Maria in Trastevere
- 8: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Monreale
- 9: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Christ the Compassionate, Rome
- 10: 12<sup>th</sup> century, Cathedral in Sutri
- 11: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Monreale absis
- 12: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome
- 13: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Deesis, Constantinople
- 14: 13<sup>th</sup> century, The Saviour, Moscow
- 15: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Giovanni in Venere, Chieti
- 16: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Chilandar

FIGURE XIII:

- 1: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Sienese school of painting
- 2: 13<sup>th</sup> century, San Damian, Assissi
- 3: 13<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Maria Della Croce, Casarano
- 4: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Liber Hospitalis, Santo Spirito in Sassia, Rome
- 5: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Caterina, Galatina
- 6: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Vera Icon, Selighintal
- 7: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Assissi
- 8: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Cecila, Rome
- 9: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Veronica d'oro, Prague
- 10: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Giotto
- 11: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Pantocrator, Middle Russia
- 12: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Pantocrator, Jaroslaw

- 13: 14<sup>th</sup> century, The Source of Life
- 14: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Pantocrator, Mount Athos
- 15: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Sophia Athens
- 16: 14<sup>th</sup> century, Hagia Sophia
- 17: end of 14<sup>th</sup> century, Roublov

FIGURE XIV

- 1: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Santo Pierodella Francesca, Florence
- 2: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Hans Membling
- 3: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Michael Wolgemut
- 4: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Matthias Grünewald
- 5: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Master of Flemalle, Belgium
- 6: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Bohemian Master
- 7: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Jan van Eyck
- 8: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Dierk Bouts
- 9: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Master of Köln
- 10: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Steirischer Master
- 11: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Master from Hallein
- 12: 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christ's Birth, Nürnberg
- 13: 17<sup>th</sup> century, Mandyllion Icon
- 14: 18<sup>th</sup> century, Mandyllion Icon
- 15: 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ushakov
- 16: 18<sup>th</sup> century, Mandyllion

On the following page I will show you how the Veil of Manoppello blends into the various icons all through the centuries, displaying one beautiful and harmonious Face.

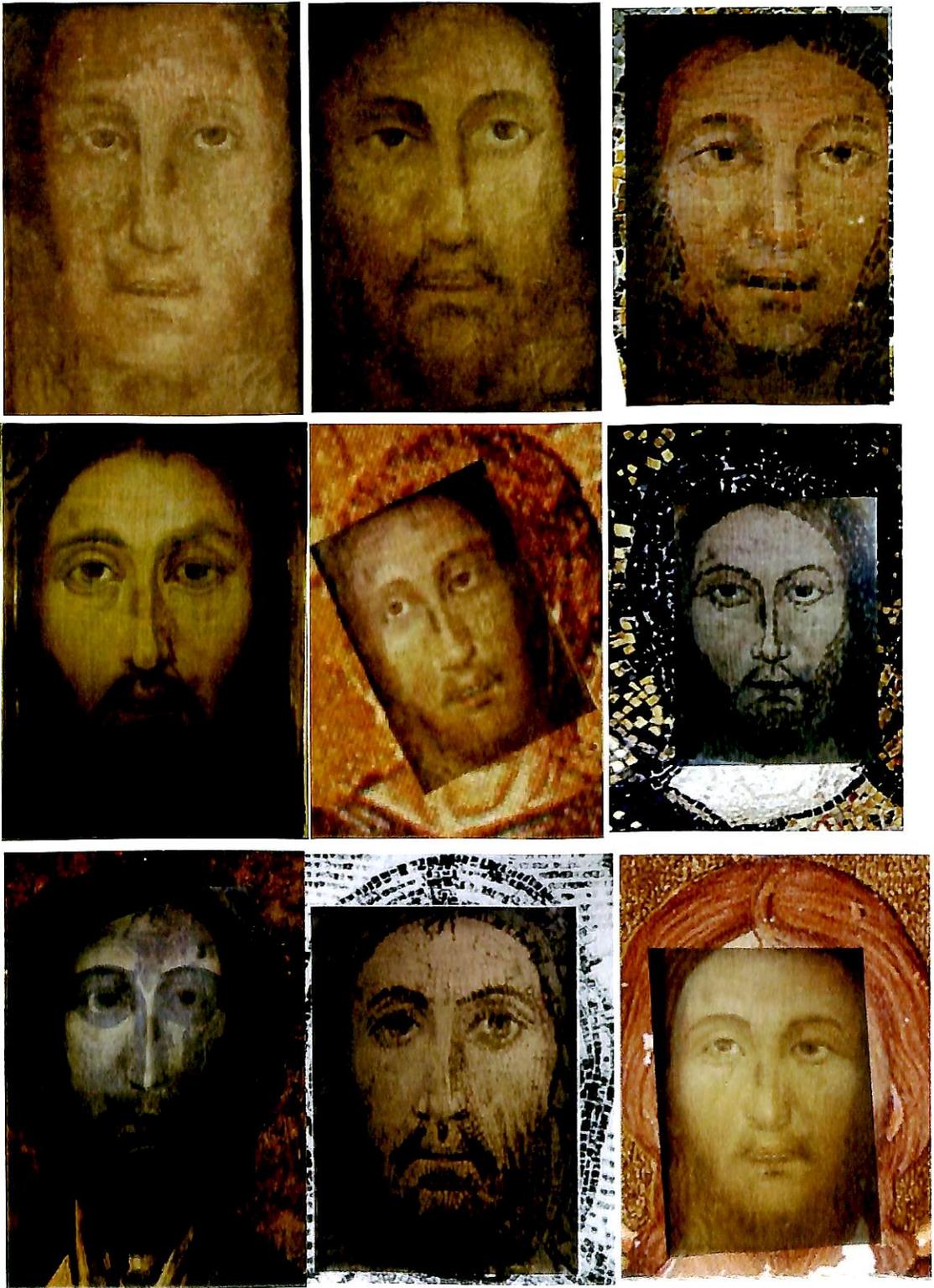


FIGURE XV: CHRIST IMAGES COVERED WITH THE VEIL, 2nd - 11th CENTURY

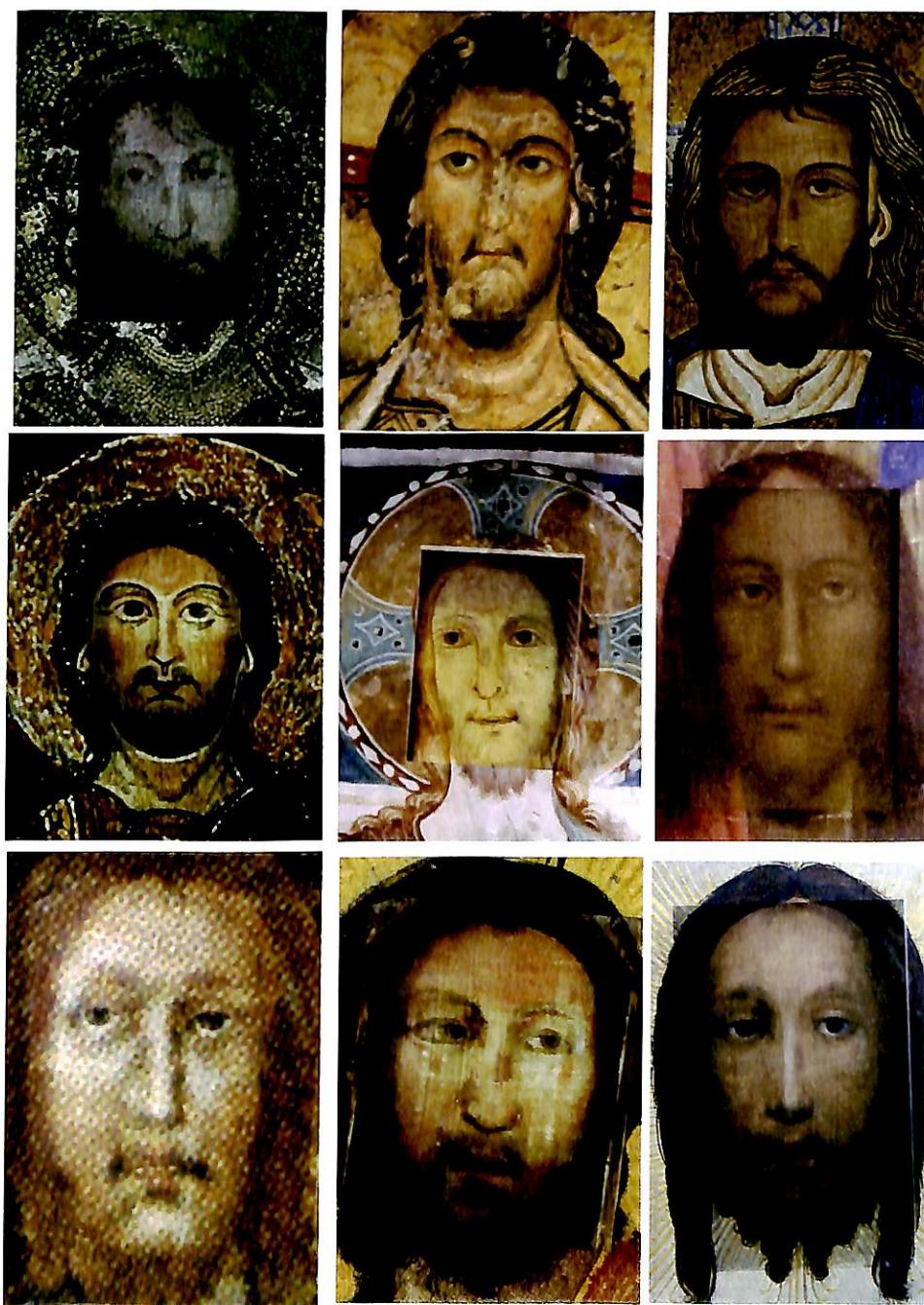


FIGURE XVI: CHRIST IMAGES COVERED WITH THE VEIL, 11<sup>TH</sup>-15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

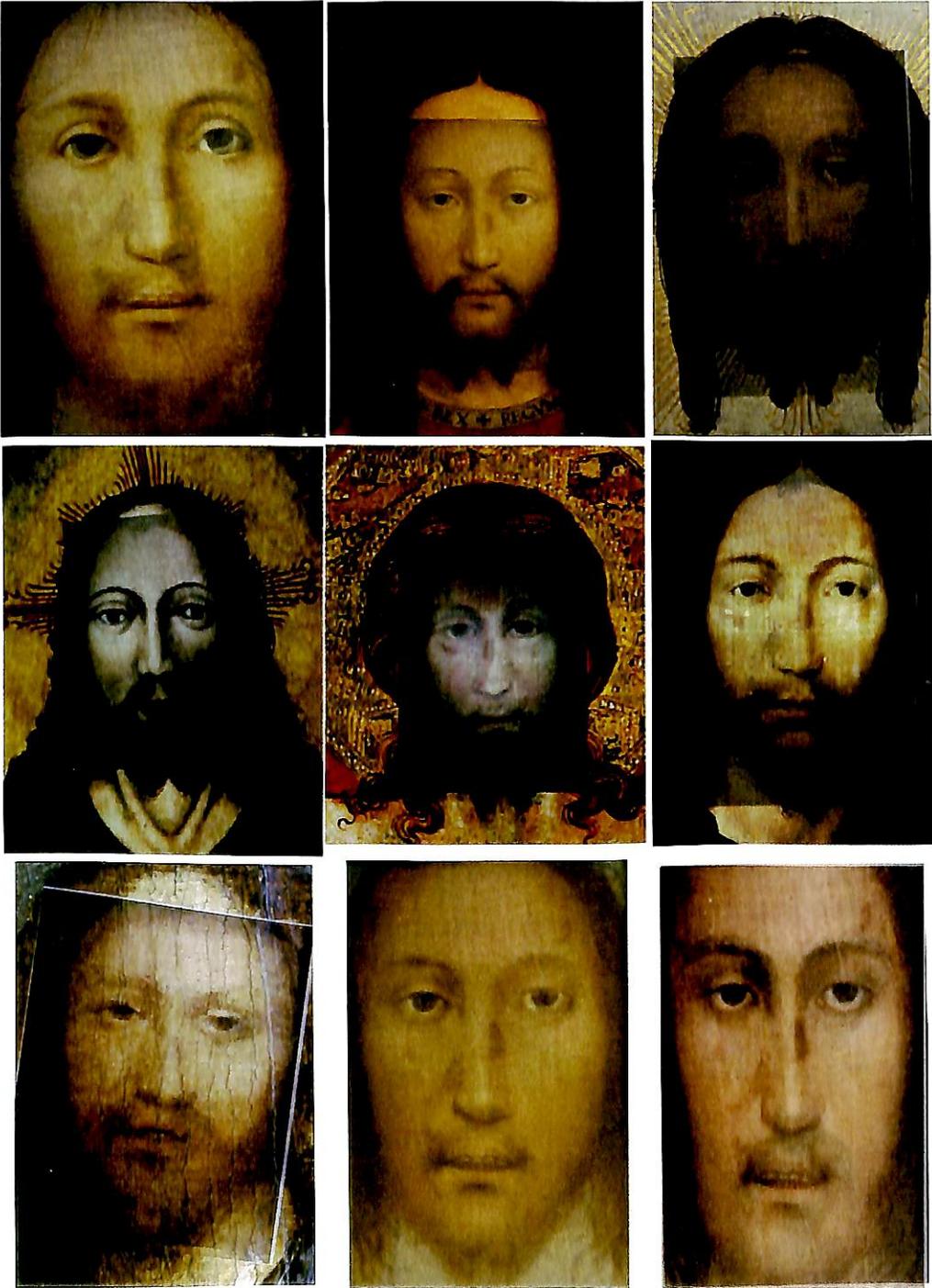


FIGURE XVII: CHRIST IMAGES COVERED WITH THE VEIL

## Epilogue – Acknowledgements

1999

This book is dedicated to the One, who Saint Gregory (+604) describes in one of his homilies of the Gospel, while commenting Verse 5, Psalm 68, as the One “that rises over the abyss”. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened (Eph.1.18) so that we might recognize Him here and now on our pilgrimage here on Earth. May His Face shine over all those who, under unimaginable almost impossible circumstances, rendered this work possible. I express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Andreas Resch, who made the first publication possible and who first realized on the computer the very tricky superposition of the Veil of Manoppello over the Shroud of Turin and other Christ icons; to Ursula Joerges for her proofreading and advice; to all the Friends of Jesus Christ’s True Countenance for their financial and moral support; to Prof. Dr. Heinrich Pfeiffer for his spiritual support and for helping me with the research; to my fellow sisters for their patience and encouragement and to my Superiors for their tolerance. I also thank the elderly and the sick, who have helped the publication of this book, through prayer and friendly encouragement

2014

After having dedicated over 34 years of my life to the study of the Veil of Manoppello, I can only proclaim how great, how magnificent and how “unfathomable”, according to Saint Paul, the ways of Our Lord are. God’s providence has shown many manifestations over the last few years around Manoppello. I am thankful to Paul Badde and to his wonderful wife Ellen for their friendship, for their devotion, and for spreading the good news about the Holy Face of Our Lord. I thank everybody who has written something about the Volto Santo or helped in some other way. I thank especially Saverio Gaeto for having spread the good news in Italy by publishing his book. I thank the translators of Paul Badde’s book who made it possible to reach Poland, Holland, France, Brazil and the United States. These translations always triggered interest and discussions about the Volto Santo. In Germany, I also have to thank Dr. Markus van den Hövel, present judge of the Provincial Court of Bochum, for his documentations, books and clear position on the Veil. In Poland I have to thank the publisher Polwen who helped to spread the knowledge of the Veil; the two professors Treppa and Jarowski for their publications on the Veil. The exchange with experts from different disciplines is crucial. I also thank all those people who have participated in some way through their thoughts and prayers. Pope Benedict opened the gates of the Sanctuary to the public and the love and devotion of the pilgrims is encouraging. I include them all in my thanks.

I finally express my gratitude to the workers of the last hour, to Francesca Paolino for her Italian translation of the first part; to Isabelle Schobinger for the French translation and to Cynthia Krystyna Simla for the English translation. The demanding design of the layout was started by Lidia Basti and Domenico Del Rosso, continued by Cornelia Schrader, the secretary of the Penuel Circle and polished and brought to end carefully and lovingly by Cynthia Simla. Cornelia Schader often encouraged me in difficult situations.

I want to express my gratitude to the Capuchin friars, who have been serving the Volto Santo since 1620, date when the monastery was founded on the Tarigni Hill, 3 km away from Manoppello city, in the vicinity of the former St. Michael Chapel, upon demand of the noble family de Fabrizii. Since 1906, they have been publishing a magazine and especially for the last 16 years, they have been serving the rising number of Pilgrims by celebrating a beautiful liturgy and giving explanations about the Holy Face. Padre Carmine Cucinelli is the rector of the basilica and provides a holy atmosphere in the Sanctuary. I am most thankful to my Bishop Bruno Forte, Archbishop of Chieti Vasto, for allowing me to live as a hermit in his Diocese and for introducing other Bishops from the whole world, especially Pope Benedict XVI to the Sanctuary. I thank the family of A. Colasante of Lanciano for offering me a house and land for my research on the most Holy Countenance. Over the last 2 years, Hermann Brunner and my volunteers offered their work or a donation for the Volto Santo. July 2012, an old cottage was renovated and is now used for the accommodation of pilgrims who desire to spend a couple of days meditating over the Volto Santo. The framed reproductions of the one Face, made of the superposition of the two cloth-relics, the Veil of Manoppello and the Shroud of Turin, was made possible thanks to the generous donation of the family of the brothers Simone and Danilo Iezzi. These pictures spread the veneration of the Holy Face. An increasing number of people know that the living Lord comes to meet us in this Veil. Everybody who makes this experience becomes an eyewitness of the Death and of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lord, ignite a sparkle and leave Your light in their hearts and in the hearts of all those who come to meet lovingly Your manifestation, Your Epiphany.

SISTER BLANDINA PASCHALIS SCHLOEMER

## APPENDIX

### The ten "congruent" marks

I invite the reader to experience with his eyes and hands the unity between both faces. He should therefore take a picture of the photonegative of Turin. The overlapping is facilitated with the use of the photonegative instead of the positive of the Shroud, since on the positive the color values are inverted. However, it would be more useful to have the Shroud's positive to compare it with ancient icons, since the artists of that time couldn't see the negative. In this chapter I would like to discuss the close relationship between the Shroud and the Veil and therefore the photonegative suffices.

I had been searching for a long time to find the adequate word to describe what is apparent and finally came up with the term congruency. In geometry, triangles are congruent when they have the same shape and size, when they are identical.

Here we also witness a form of congruency, the two images blend perfectly together to render one face, showing the features and the wounds.

What you need to overlap both images:

S = a negative of the Shroud's face (pic.16) taken by G. Enrie (1931)

V = a transparent front side picture of the Veil of Manoppello (pic. 17)

D = a drawing of the 10 distinguishing marks

#### a) Explanation of point 1-3: The Shroud

Step 1: the pupil of the left eye

If you want to overlap successfully both faces you should first find the Shrouds left pupil, (the right pupil from the observer's standpoint). Even though we normally perceive the eyes as being closed you can discover a clear, delimited black dot in the left eye area. A tiny cross, due to a crease in the fabric, serves as a guideline. In the picture of the negative, G, this cross is white. The crossbeam is more noticeable than the longitudinal beam and runs from the observer's viewpoint from up left to down right, a bit diagonal. At the end of the right beam you will find the "dark dot" attached to the arm of the cross (D1). This dark area is the left pupil. I invite the reader to continue even if he puts it into question, because this was how I understood how to overlap the pictures. This experiment takes a lot of patience and is done step by step, but I assure you that you will be very happy once you will discover the Face for yourself.

The drawing D1 is supposed to assist you on your journey.

On the drawing we search for the little cross and at the extremity of the crossbeam, you'll find attached the dark dot. Then try to superpose the cross and the dark spot on the Shroud with that on the drawing.

Step 2: the mouth area

You then search for a little circle or rather a half-opened ellipse, 7,9 cm underneath the crossbeam, 1 cm to the left of the longitudinal beam, in the area of the mouth. You should lift the drawing a little bit in order to see the rounded line.

Step 3: The "bloodstains"

Around the right eye, 5 cm to the left of the perpendicular line and 5,2 cm to the left of the center of the little cross you will find a little drop, a bloodstain. On the negative the bloodstain appears white and thus is more difficult to localize than on the Shroud's positive, where the dot is dark and easily recognizable. Once you've located the dot you overlap D3 with the corresponding dot on the Shroud's negative.

It is important to be well aware of these three marks. Slowly you will be able to understand and gradually see more the very complicated elements of the Shroud's face. I am sure there are other ways to guide the overlapping. I am sharing with you the method that I have been using for years and which works best for me. This method made it easy for me to see the congruency of Veil and Shroud and to reveal the Face created by the superposition of the two images. This process requires a lot of patience. The traces are very soft in both relics and vary depending on the shot you use.

b) Explanation of point 1-3: the Veil

Take the front side of the transparency of the Veil V and search for the 3 corresponding features.

Step 1: the left pupil

You can easily determine the left pupil.

Step 2: the mouth area

You will find a little stain on the upper lip and not a little circle like on the Shroud. This dot has to be positioned in such a way that the Shroud's open circle almost closes.

Step 3: the bloodstain

It is very difficult to localize this point on the Veil since there is no bloodstain on it. You will only see a somewhat darker point on the iris of the right eye. It depends on the shot of the Veil used, whether you will be able to define it or not. Let's consider that the pupil is the center of the circle of the iris, then you will locate this darker point on its radius, 45° to the left of the vertical line dividing the circle. You will witness a delicate change in the colour from the circumference to the center and this is your point V3 on the Veil.

c) First overlapping

Once you can distinguish these 3 points on both images you will try to place the transparency V of the Veil over the transparency A of the Shroud. First take D, search for the marks and then place V over S.

1. First you place the left pupil of V over the dark spot in S (you can use D for help). Immediately the eye seems open whereas the rest of the face remains still blurry.
2. Turn the transparency slowly, holding on to the pupil and using it as a pivot until you find the second point D2, the little dark dot on the Veil S and the circle on the Shroud S. Check whether the pupil D1 is still where it was.
3. Search for the bloodstain in S. Place it over the darker area you found on the right iris.

Now you will see quite clearly the ONE FACE. But you have to search for the remaining points and adjust them if you really desire to see both images perfectly blend together.

d) The distinguishable points 4-10: Shroud and Veil

With one hand hold on to the overlapping transparencies while with the other hand delicately lift the transparency V up, so that you recognize the remaining points in D but also in V. Sometimes you will have to adjust by turning or shifting.

Shroud / Veil: 4

A darker streak runs down the forehead on the exterior side of the big bloodstain, in the shape of a 3.

Shroud / Veil: 5

You will discover a U shape instead the left nostril. This shape is very visible in the Shroud and you have to adjust the lower line of the left nostril of the Veil to it, in such a way that this lower line covers the lower arc of this "U" shape, also discernible on the Veil. This requires highly trained eyes. The left nostril seems to be destroyed. (This explains the asymmetrical nose, the asymmetrical nostrils on Christ icons and is a feature handed down with a lot of faithfulness).

Shroud / Veil 6

On the Shroud move a bit upward from this point and you will find a darker area where corresponding lines will overlap. The dark spot is to be perceived as a whole, but you will also discover some common lines.

## Shroud / Veil 7

Let's go back to the left eye and consider the little hole in the eyelid. On the Shroud you will find a tiny V shaped angle. It can be a sort of incision. On the coloured copies of the Veil, this spot is white and not skin coloured (it is located approximately in the center of the eyelid, under the pupil).

## Shroud / Veil 8

This distinguishable mark on the lip is essential on the Shrouds positive. There are two dark strikes forming a "V" or "U" like shape. On the negative, the lines are white and thin; they surround the last visible right tooth on the Veil.

## Shroud / Veil 9

A strange little shape, looking like two kidneys, is located on the Veil's light crease line — cutting the Shroud's vertical crease line, extended downward, 2,2 cm underneath the left mouth corner. It is more easily observable on the Shroud's positive.

## Shroud / Veil 10

The last distinguishable point is the line of the Veil's left nostril. You can perceive it easily on the Shroud as well. You have to cover precisely the Shroud's line with that of the Veil. (If you cannot distinguish the little circle on the lower lip, Z2, you might as well use this line instead. You will have two marks in the upper part of the face, one in the lower area, thus revealing the Face).

When also those marks are overlapping correctly - which has to be constantly and meticulously checked, since the slightest slip has to be corrected – all distinguishable features overlap and perfectly blend in, creating a unity of both imprints, making a single Face "grow" out of the traces of the imprints in both cloth relics.

### **The vision of Saint Mechtild of Hackeborn (+1299)**

( book of Special Merits, book I chap.10)

#### Worship of the image of Jesus Christ and of Christ's bridal meal

On the Sunday "Omnis Terra" while the Holy Face was shown to the pilgrims in Rome, Mechtild received the following vision to trigger and renew the memory of the faithful, worshipping the glorious image of our Lord Jesus Christ:

She saw the Lord on a mountain covered with flowers, sitting on a chair made out of Jasper and furnished with red precious stones. The green Jaspe symbolizes God's eternal life, the gold is a symbol of Christ's love, and the red precious stones symbolize the Passion he endured for us, because of His love for us. Beautiful trees bearing many fruits surround the hill. The souls of the saints were resting beneath them. Every soul had her tent made of gold, and they all ate joyfully and eagerly from the fruits of the trees. The mountain represents the Lord's Incarnation on Earth, whereas the trees stand for his virtues: love, mercy and all the other ones. The saints were resting underneath the tree, corresponding to the virtue they had exercised during their earthly life. Those who followed the Lord out of love were resting and eating from the tree of love. Those, who excelled in the virtue of mercy, were refreshed with the tree of mercy. Likewise all the other saints were filled with the fruits corresponding to their virtue.

Now were added all those who through particular prayer had been made worthy of contemplating the solemn imprint of the Lord with a devotional heart. They were carrying their sins on their shoulders and put them down at the Lord's feet. There their sins were immediately changed into gifts of gold. The sins of those, who out of love felt more sorry for having offended the Lord than they were afraid of being punished and having to suffer, were transformed into exquisite golden jewelry. The sins that had been atoned through psalms and prayers were changed into golden belts as is customary at an engagement ceremony. The mistakes of those who resisted temptation were transformed into golden breast-shields. The sins that had been purged away through corporal chastisement were transformed into golden incense, since the mastering of the flesh has for God the smell of the most sophisticated perfume. After having seen all those gifts, God said: "What are we to do with all of this? Everything shall be burnt in love!" And he added: "Let's set the table!" Immediately a table with golden cups and bowls was dressed in front of the Lord. The face of the Lord, brighter than the sun, filled all the vessels with His light. It was His light and not the food nor the drinks that filled the

containers. All attendees went down on their knees, enshrouded with a coat made of the glare of the Lord's Holy Countenance. They enjoyed the meals and drinks. This is the delectable food of the saints and the angels. However the Lord, through Saint John the Evangelist, sent some of this holy food in little basins to those who on this day couldn't visit the Holy Sacrament, yet had joined in thoughts. Here on Earth, we should thus run with desire to contemplate the Lord's Holy Countenance. In Heaven, His most Holy Face will be all that a holy nature can dream of.

The servant of God recommended to her sisters to make a pilgrimage to Rome to venerate the most Holy Face of the Lord on the day of its exposition. They should pray as many Our Father's as there are miles between Rome and their convent (150 miles from Helfta to Rome, where it had been the custom since the order of Pope Innocent III to venerate the Most Holy Countenance of the Lord on the second Sunday following Epiphany). Upon arrival in Rome they should confess all their sins to the High Priest, to God. They would be granted the remission of all their sins, and on Sunday they should receive Holy Communion. They should spend their spare time contemplating the Holy Countenance and reciting the prayer, which Mechtild had written for them. Mechtild was granted the vision described above, while her sisters were worshipping the Holy Face in Rome.

Later on, on the same feast, she saw four rays coming out of His Face (1 Peter 1,12): the upper ray shone on everybody uniting them with God, so that all they ever want to do is to follow God's will. The lower ray illuminated the sinners encouraging them to ask for atonement of their sins. The right ray was pointed towards the preachers who were announcing the word of God. The left ray was directed at all those who served and loved God wholeheartedly.

Then she asked God not to withdraw His company from all those who had asked for her prayers and from those who were venerating His Holy Countenance. God replied: "No one of them shall ever be separated from me!" She saw a rope reaching from the heart of the Lord into her soul, thus allowing everybody who was in her presence to meet God. The rope stands for the love God had granted to this soul. Through her example and her teachings, this little soul drew many people to God. And the King of Glory extended his Omnipotent Hand, blessed her and declared: "May the clarity of my Countenance always be a source of joy for you" Amen.

### **The Herald of God's loving-kindness, Saint Gertrud of Helfta (+1302)**

*(The Herald of Divine Love, book IV, chap.7)*

About the worship of the Holy Countenance of Our Lord

On Omnis Terra, whilst the faithful worship the Holy Face in Rome, Gertrud prepared herself through confession for the contemplation and the worship of Jesus' Holy Face. She thought she was disfigured through her sins and therefore stepped in front of Jesus and knelt at his feet, so that He delivered her from her disfigurement; she begged Him to forgive all her sins. Jesus raised his Holy Hand and gave her a blessing, saying: "I forgive you all your sins from the depths of my love. For the atonement of your sins I ask of you, that for one year, whilst doing one good deed everyday you unite yourself to the love that has forgiven your sins."

She welcomed those words, but human fragility raised her doubts and she uttered: "But what shall I do, Lord, if I neglect your commandment?" The Lord replied: "Why should you neglect it? It is so easy to fulfil it! I am satisfied, if holding on to that intention you do only one step, pick up a straw from the Earth, say one single word, smile at someone, recite a "rest in peace" for a deceased or pray for a sinful person."

Finding comfort in these words, she started to pray for her friends so that they may be bestowed with God's love and mercy. In response to her quest the Lord said: "I will bless and forgive the sins of all those who want to repent with you." He stretched out His hand again and gave her His blessing and said: "I would generously bless the person who, during one whole year, would have freely distributed loving acts outnumbering his or her sins!" She said: "How is this possible since men are attracted to do bad deeds?" The Lord answered: "Why does this seem so difficult to you, since I am God Almighty? If men only apply themselves a little bit, I am willing to help them so that my godly wisdom wins." She replied: "What do you promise to him, who with your help, accomplishes what you are asking for?" He says: "No eye has yet seen it, no ear yet heard it, no human heart felt it! How happy would be the person, who before his death, would remain only for one year even only for one month in this delightful love! God would give him all that."

On the next day, God blessed her with His Holy Hand saying: "I will give the strength of my humanity and the vivifying shimmer of my deity to all those, who attracted by my love, celebrate the memory of my Holy Face. Clarity will guide them."

*("Exercitia Spiritualia chap VII, number 500-510, 525-540, 730-745, 775-780")*

“Oh, what a beautiful pasture this will be, where I will dwell close to your honey flavoured Face: already here on Earth, whenever my soul has the delight to be in your presence, be it for a little while, it melts and becomes one with you. To remain in your eternal Godly presence, will be like the most refreshing food: already here on earth, the waters pouring out of your insight replenish us, and are food for our spirit and for our soul’s marrow. God, my dear God, once you will have called my soul to you, let me see and feel nothing else but you; carry me out of myself and into you so that I don’t have to worry about me any more: lift me out of myself, conceal me in you.

What a joy, what a cheer, what a rejoicing for my soul when you will grant it to finally contemplate you, face to face! Nothing else will matter to me. I long to be completely free, freed from everything, in order to look at your Glory, to look at you my God, to stride around the altar, being in unison with you once again, and to offer you the marrow of my soul in shouts of joy and praise.”

“[...]You will be given the chalice from God’s beatific vision, and you will be inebriated; a chalice that makes you drunk and radiates rays of light wonderfully: the Chalice of Glory of the Holy Face. And you will drink from the torrent of Godly passion. He himself, the source of light, will quench your thirst forever. Then you will see the sky, filled with God’s Glory.”

“Oh my beloved! My heart thirsts for you in my longing prayers. Oh my beloved! Hurry, so that I may be united with you, you my God, that I may find in you Eternal Life. Oh hurry! Let your beautiful Face shine over me so that I can contemplate your Countenance face to face. Oh hurry! Reveal yourself to me so that I can rejoice eternally in Your presence. Don’t leave me! You’re my wellbeing and my help, but let me remain in your inner love, in your faithful kindness and mercy, so that I can contemplate your Holy Countenance face to face. You are the God who loves me, who created me for Him.

Over there my dear Jesus, gather my soul: there where I will see you clearly show me your Godly glory and allow my spirit, my breath and my soul to be replenished through praise and honour of You, and my heart to rejoice eternally. Oh you my sweet wellbeing!

I wish that those gifts you have bestowed me with, serve your house in communion with the other gifts: Looking at your beautiful Face is a very strengthening food for those gifts, and my soul is seized with joy that it has escaped the devil’s, the flesh’s and the world’s temptations and traps, that it has escaped the fear and the distress of death and that it found You, who are so sweet and who are my life. I wish that for all the good You have bestowed upon me, I will praise Your Name incessantly and forever: You are the God of my life, who freed and who loves my soul.”

*End of Chapter VI, 775-780:* “Whilst here on Earth my soul is disgusted of this life and slowly burns out, it is yearning for You: You are the love of my life and You will rejuvenate my soul. Rejuvenated like an eagle it will keep singing joyfully.

In the presence of your Holy Face, my soul seems to have found a treasure, soon it will hold on to your Face, and enter eternal blissful life, in You forever, God of love. Amen, and so be it!

### **The Newspaper article: The Volto Santo of Manoppello (Das Volto Santo von Manoppello)**

**“It is a very important relic”, says Father Luciano Antonelli, Rector of the Church, which houses the piece of cloth. “An ancient reverend tradition calls it, Christ’s Sudarium”. “The similarities between this cloth and the Shroud of Turin”. “Why it can’t be a man-painted picture”. “Mysterious, humanly inexplicable characteristics”. “Results of scientific research”.**

**Renzo Allergi and Paul O. Schenker**

September 1978, Manoppello (Pescara)

This image of Christ’s Face, venerated for over 500 years in this little Abruzzo town, is a very precious relic”, says Father Luciano Antonelli, Capuchin monk and Rector of the Shrine of Manoppello in the Province of Pescara. “It is a mysterious image imprinted on an extraordinarily

thin cloth, handed over by tradition as Christ’s Sudarium. It would be the little cloth, made of extremely fine linen, that Mary, according to an ancient custom, would have placed over the Face of her son, before wrapping Him with the burial linen. This little cloth witnesses an extraordinary event. Like the Shroud of Turin it contains an imprint of Our Lord. Not the Face of a dead person with closed eyes, as imprinted on the Shroud, but the face of a living person with open eyes and healed up scars. It seems to be the image of the just Risen Christ.

*A long destiny*

Christ’s “Sudarium” is mentioned in the Gospels as well as in numerous early Christian writings. We have precise testimonies of people who saw and venerated it, in the centuries after Christ’s death.

Tradition reports that after a very long journey, Christ's Sudarium ended up here in the Abruzzo region, where it is still venerated. There are many other mysterious Christ images all around the world. They are called "acheropite", not man-made, because it is assumed that they have a supernatural origin. The best-known acheropite are the Linen of Turin, the Holy Countenance of Luca, the Sudarium or (Veil) of Veronica, kept and venerated in the Saint Peter's Dome in Rome, the image kept in the Lateran Basilica and many more. However the most important one after the Shroud of Turin, is the Veil of Manoppello, offering many proofs for its authenticity.

Father Luciano Antonelli walks me to the Shrine's altar, where the relic is kept in a big silver Ostensorium (Monstrance) to be venerated by the faithful. We use a little staircase behind the altar; he takes the Ostensorium and brings it over, so that I can contemplate it from close up. The image of a Countenance, made of faint, shaded colours is imprinted on a piece of linen, 35 by 40 cm, with a wide weft. From so close up, it is impossible to determine the traits that seem absorbed by the fabric.

"The gauze is enclosed in glass", says Father Luciano. "The gauze is so fine that it is completely transparent. When you hold a newspaper behind the gauze, you can read it through the Veil." The Capuchin friar then holds up a book behind the Veil, and I can read it through the fabric. How it was possible to imprint on such fine and thin gauze, such a clear and defined image remains a mystery.

#### *A secret for everybody*

"Of course," says Father Antonelli, "many different hypothesis have been made to try to find a plausible explanation. Some assumed that it was the work of a highly gifted artist, but painters, scientists and scholars from varied fields exclude this possibility. The Swiss architect Walter Zach writes: "If the Veil of Manoppello was man-made, we would be in the presence of a real technical wonder." Many scholars share his opinion. One has also desperately tried to reproduce the image. Various artists were commissioned to reproduce the image on a similar fabric to the Veil's, however the result was far from being satisfying. Nobody has ever been able to reproduce an image with the same qualities as this relic. Indeed the Veil of Manoppello bears puzzling characteristics, leaving clueless everybody who tries to explain them. Apart from its transparent characteristic, the Veil has no face and reverse side, it is completely identical on both sides.

"Observe carefully", says Father Antonelli. He takes the relic, and shows me one side then the other side of Christ's Face. This phenomenon was

studied carefully and no difference has been made between both sides. Experts affirm that if it was a painted image, you could identify traces of paint on the reverse side (a slight leakage of paint on its borders). The described characteristics and many more I didn't mention, give this image its unique, inimitable specimen."

#### *"Do historical documents mention this relic"?*

Faher Antonelli says: "The presence of the Veil in Manoppello is documented since 1506." "Even the story of the Veil's arrival is mysterious." Giacomo Antonio Leonelli, scholar and physicist was on the square in front of the Saint Nicholas of Bari Church, on a Sunday afternoon, when a stranger gave him a package and urged him to take good care of it, since it was something extremely precious. Dr. Leonelli opened the package and saw the Veil with the unique, mysterious imprint. Jesus gaze touched him. He turned back wanting to get some information from the stranger, but he no longer saw him. He searched for him everywhere, but couldn't find him. Nobody has ever seen this foreign pilgrim in the county.

#### *The incredulous Pankrazius*

"Giacomo Antonio Leonelli kept and venerated the image in his house. Immediately it became a charismatic object of veneration, producing many wonders and healings. After his death, Dr. Leonelli left the image to his heirs, who continued the veneration of the relic. Around 1600, the image was handed over to Pankrazius Patrucci, husband of Marzia Leonelli.

Pankrazius was an unfaithful man and stored the relic away in the granary, preventing the public to venerate the image. He had to regret his act. Within a couple of years, misfortune spread in his whole family, while he himself lost all his goods and ended up in prison. He begged his wife Marzia to take the Veil and sell it to the faithful.

Dr. Donato de Fabritius bought the relic and offered it to the Capuchin friars in Manoppello. The Veil was in a very bad state. It still had its initial shape of a little towel, but while the image was intact the sides were ragged. Father Clemente da Castelveccchio cut the worn sides with a pair of scissors and placed the Veil behind glass and displayed the Holy image on the altar of the church. This happened in 1638, the relic has been in this Shrine for over 340 years.

The worship of the relic spread rapidly. Pilgrims came from neighbouring cities as well as from other parts of Italy. In 1703, Father Bonifacio thought that the relic merited to be placed in a worthier frame than the plain wooden frame it was in. He decided to order the production of a

silver frame. But the imprint disappeared when he wanted to take the Veil out of the wooden frame. This phenomenon was observed by many witnesses and lasted for a couple of days. To the great astonishment of everybody, the imprint only reappeared when it was given back its original wooden frame. The same mysterious phenomenon happened again 11 years later, when one tried to change frames again and to place it in the worthier silver frame. Once again the image completely disappeared to reappear only when the gauze was placed again in its original wooden frame. Many years later, it had been decided to create a big silver reliquarium in order to place the imprint with its wooden frame in this new silver frame. The imprint didn't disappear then under the eyes of the faithful."

### *A feast for the Veil*

I am asking myself: "What is the position of the Church authorities on the Veil?"

"The Church never gave an official verdict, but authorized the veneration of the relic through various interventions: in 1646 she authorized the public cult of the Volto Santo, in 1690 she allowed a religious feast, a solemn procession in the streets of our little town, in honour of the Holy Countenance, in 1718 Clemens XI stated that every pilgrim to the Holy Face would be granted a plenary indulgence. Nowadays there are still two solemn feasts of the Holy Countenance, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of May and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. Many pilgrims come to Manoppello on those days. There are many reports of graces and healings obtained by praying in front of the Holy Face. We have a large room in our monastery filled with Ex Votos."

"Is there reliable proof that this Veil could be the Sudarium spoken of in the Gospel?"

Father Antonelli says: I don't think that it is possible to find any concrete proof. Furthermore, no concrete proof can be offered in the case of the Shroud as well. Everything is based on transmission. The four Evangelists and the Church Fathers speak of the "relics belonging to Jesus Christ", when they recall Christ's Passion. In the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century we find eye witnesses of the linens that covered Jesus' corpse in the grave. Those linens have been handed over ever since and certify to Jesus' resurrection.

Most of the witnesses use the plural form to speak of the linens, other specify that they speak of the Sindone or of the Sudarium. In 670, the Frankish bishop Arculfus went to Jerusalem and reported to have adored and seen the Sudarium. In the following centuries we can find very specific descriptions of the Sudarium, which is found first in Jerusalem, then in Memphis, Egypt, then in Turkey.

In 1240 the Sudarium was reported to be in Rome. The Relic had been brought by pilgrims to different locations in order to protect it and secure it from the unfaithful and from war. We can't be completely sure that the Veil of Manoppello is the Sudarium, which has been described over the centuries by different pilgrims. Indeed there are other acheropite images, but this one, because of its properties, has the most probability to be the Sudarium."

*"Is there a relationship between the Veil of Manoppello and the Shroud?"*

At first, there seems to be no relationship whatsoever. The Face on the Shroud is that of a dead person, whereas the Face on the Veil is that of a living person. However, when one analyses both images carefully many similarities pop up. The eyes, the nose, the mouth, the height and the width of the face have the same proportions in both cloths. The external features are identical. Furthermore, we find in exactly the same place on the Veil and on the Shroud, little signs of ecchymosis, edema, wounds on the forehead and on the nasal septum, blood clots in the deep skin layers."

*"The light from wood"*

"Has the Veil been dated scientifically?"

"We live in a little isolated town", says the Capuchin monk. "So far, not a lot of research has been conducted on it. A couple of years ago, however, scholars conducted an experiment called wood-light. Wood-light emits ultra-violet light produced by a mercury-vapour lamp and filtered through nickel-oxide glass. It is used to analyse various substances. The presence or the absence of fluorescence, differentiates between pure and impure, between natural and synthetic substances. The Wood-light provoked an intensive colour and luminosity on the silver monstrance and on the wooden frame, but no reaction at all on the Veil, as if there was nothing there. The scholars said that this reaction of Wood-light was completely inexplicable and suggested that the experiment be repeated under controlled circumstances. Nevertheless, the results observed are undoubtedly meaningful." Renzo Allegri





The icon of the Holy Face painted by Sr. Blandina and exhibited in the parish church San Nicola of Manoppello

“Your Face, my Lord, I search, don’t hide your Face!” (ps 27,8-9).

This is the spirit that has always guided Sister Blandina in her studies and her research of the Holy Face of Manoppello.

A study and research that are before all a continuous contemplation of Christ’s Face. It is this contemplation and the prayer that are the right approach with which to come close to the sacred Veil of Manoppello, so leaving him to reveal all his splendor and mystery.”

(Don Nicolino Santilli, parish priest of San Nicola di Bari of Manoppello.)