

# BYZANTINE FRESCOES AND THE TURIN SHROUD

by Lennox Manton\*

## Introduction by Rex Morgan\*\*

E. Lennox Manton has spent the last twenty five years systematically recording and building up a large archive of colour slides of the major Rupestral Churches and their associated frescoes in Cappadocia in the fascinating area of Asia Minor. He has been assisted in this task on a number of occasions by the Turkish Government who also sponsored and mounted an exhibition of Manton's work in London. This was eventually transferred to the Edinburgh Festival and from there to Coventry Cathedral. It was then followed by a series of Epilogue programmes on Southern Television entitled "The Cones of Cappadocia".

In 1983 he was invited to give an illustrated paper on the major frescoes to a Symposium held by Edinburgh University in the Royal Scottish Museum on "Turkish Culture through the Ages". The presentation was repeated at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, at Durham University, to the Anglo-Turkish Society in London and to the Philosophical Society in York. He is scheduled to speak at a meeting of the British Society for the Turin Shroud in London in April 1994.

In recent times Manton has associated the features of many of the Cappadocian frescoes with those of the image on the Shroud of Turin, as have other scholars, especially in relation to the Sakli fresco, now inaccessible, but photographed by Manton during his numerous expeditions into these precarious and little-known sites. At the 1993 Shroud Conference in Rome Lennox Manton shared with me his views and some of his exceptional collection of illustrations of these remote examples of early Christian art. Both of us lament the fact that no book records the finest of these frescoes in colour since many of them are now deteriorating from misuse, neglect and lack of interest.

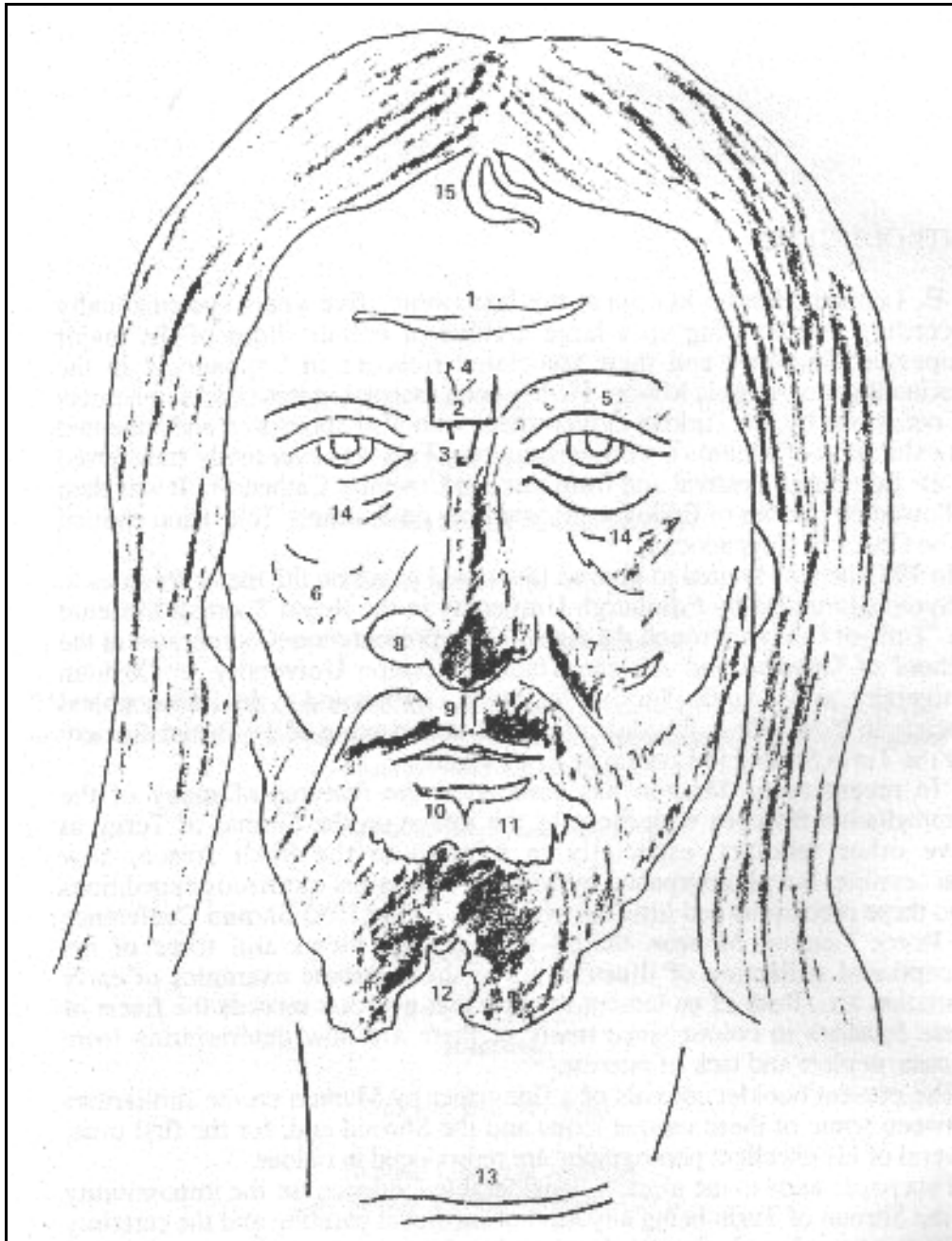
The present booklet consists of a fine paper by Manton on the similarities between some of these unique icons and the Shroud and, for the first time, several of his excellent photographs are reproduced in colour.

This paper adds to the already considerable evidence for the impossibility of the Shroud of Turin being any kind of medieval painting and the certainty of its existence long before the fourteenth century.

---

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

\*\* General Editor Rex Morgan - The Runciman Shroud Monographs No 2 - Copyright © The Runciman Press 1994 - This book is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher to whom enquiries should be addressed. First published in Australia, 1994, by The Runciman Press, POB 86, MANLY, NSW, 2095 Australia, Fax No: 61 2 99829956. National Library of Australia, card number and ISBN 0 85890 027 0.



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

**The significance of the Byzantine Cave Churches of Cappadocia, when comparing the images of Christ in their early frescoes with that of the Turin Shroud.**

When reviewing the evidence that has accumulated and is still being researched by many authorities in efforts to substantiate the authenticity of the Turin Shroud, it does not seem apparent that the early Byzantine frescoes, to be seen in the Rupestral Churches that litter the hidden valleys of Cappadocia, have been taken fully into account.

From the latter part of the first century A.D. Cappadocia played a part in the life of the early Christians. Even today strong traditions linger on in the valleys maintaining St Paul spent some time there in the furtherance of his missionary work. This is not beyond the bounds of possibility for little or nothing has been recorded in the Gospels regarding Paul's activities during the ten years or so that elapsed between his return from Arabia and his joining Barnabas in Antioch, prior to the first missionary journey. Part of this time could have been spent in the Cappadocian region only some 125 miles from Tarsus through the Cilician Gates, a route that was well known to Paul.

The valleys in the first centuries A.D. were very remote and difficult of access. They were still so some twenty years ago, for the roads even then were just dirt tracks which often turned to quagmires in wet weather; it was this remoteness that made the region ideal in affording protection, solitude, and quietness for anchorites. By the time St Basil the Great, one of the three Cappadocian Fathers who was educated in Caesarea (today's Kayseri) became its Bishop in A.D. 370, the region had become well known for its religious fervour. St Basil, before he was appointed the Bishop of Caesarea, spent some of the earlier years of his life in the monasteries of Syria and Egypt, and on his return to Cappadocia he organised many of the anchorites into small monastic communities for their own protection.

Throughout these valleys there are today over 350 recorded chapels and churches and more that must still remain undiscovered, one that has not been recorded is, I know, now being used as a village midden. However there is little evidence of decoration in them that could date before A.D. 723, the beginning of the Iconoclastic period when countless Ikons and other images of Christ and the Saints were sought out and destroyed whenever possible.

There were a few cases though where the image did survive and in this respect Dr Whanger has shown, by using his polarised image overlay technique on Byzantine coinage dating from A.D. 692-695, that the similarities between the coin images and that of the Shroud brooks no dispute. He has also shown that the sixth-century Ikon of Christ kept in the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai, must also have been inspired from the Shroud image. At that time St Catherine's was isolated and remote enough to preserve it from destruction by the Iconoclasts. The concept of these depictions must therefore stem from the time when the Shroud was discovered in A.D. 525 and kept subsequently for a period in the Sancta Sophia built by Justinian in Edessa.

The supposed profile image of Christ discovered by Heaphy on the ceiling of the Orpheus Chapel in the Roman catacombs was conclusively proved by Rex Morgan, at the International Symposium on the Shroud of Turin, held in Rome in 1993, to date to the late first century, thus vindicating Heaphy's original hypothesis. In this respect Heaphy appears to have been accurate in spite of his suspect copies of the Veronica. It is significant that the image is in profile and this could indicate the fact that the exact features of Christ were not known by the painter at the time. One cannot assert that this image derived directly from the Shroud when it was openly kept in Edessa during the lifetime of Abgar, that is between A.D. 30 and A.D. 57; furthermore Edessa is some considerable distance from Rome thus it seems very unlikely that this image was painted before A.D. 57. However, it more possibly belongs to the last half of the first century, around A.D. 67 or later, and it could have derived from some eye witness recollections. Is it too much to contemplate that they came from St Peter or St Mark who were both in Rome till A.D. 67, the year of St Peter's martyrdom? It is not conclusive that St Paul actually saw Christ in the flesh, though he does hint at it in 1 Corinthians, IX, 1, but it is a fact that the features of Peter and Paul, as we accept them today, were well known to the early Christians of Rome who had their images in gold leaf put on glass tablets to be buried with their dead in the catacombs.

Between A.D. 723 and A.D. 825, the year that marked the end of the Iconoclastic period and brought in the edict of the Restitution of Images, the churches and chapels of Cappadocia were embellished with simple linear decoration and in many cases beautiful and complex designs in colour: many of these can still be seen. From A.D. 825 onwards the monastic communities increased and flourished, as did the associated chapels and churches throughout the Goreme, Solagne and Ihlara valleys. In fact they flourished to such an extent that the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas A.D. 963-969, a Cappadocian, became perturbed at the degree of

religious fervour that then epitomised the way of life throughout the valleys. It was a period that saw whole communities and families following the monastic traditions but even so, and in spite of the Emperor's reservations, relations between Cappadocia and Constantinople were close and cordial.

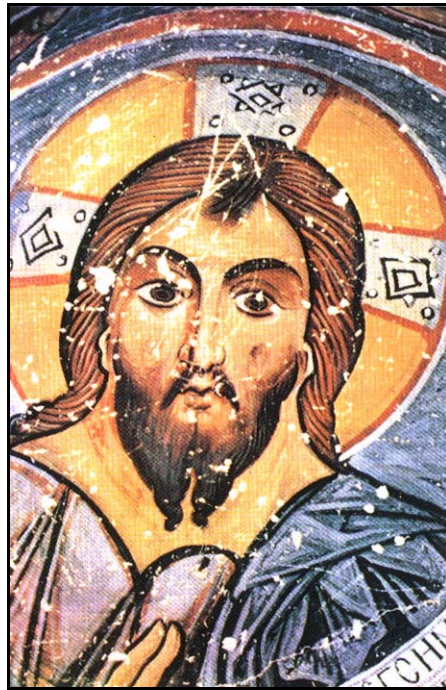
Early frescoes in some of these churches date to the ninth and early tenth centuries. The Lapin Church, dating to 916, that lies isolated in the remote hills has a Coptic influence, whilst others relate more to the East and Armenia. The New Testament scenes decorating the vault of old Tokali church are laid out across its entire expanse like a strip cartoon, and date to the time of Nicephorous Phocas. There is little doubt that the upsurge and extent of religious painting in the valleys took place in the late tenth and first half of the eleventh centuries when the face of Christ Pantocrator, as it appears in these frescoes, must certainly have been influenced by the Mandylion after it arrived in Constantinople in 944.

From this date onwards many churches with Iconoclastic designs painted directly onto their tufa walls had them plastered over before being redecorated with frescoed scene from the New Testament, in accordance with the Iconographic guidelines laid down by the Byzantine Church. On numerous occasions this redecoration was commissioned by wealthy patrons who had themselves included in attitudes of supplication, but where this painting has fallen away the underlying Iconoclastic decoration can still be seen. The expertise shown in the decoration of some of these churches could indicate the frescoes being the work of artists from the ateliers of Constantinople, brought into the valleys by their wealthy patrons.

Constantinople had long been a centre for religious works of art in the form of mosaics, carved ivory plaques, or painted Ikons, and their products, very justly, were so much in demand that they were exported to the East and the West. Examples are still to be found in the treasury of San Marco in Venice, in Palermo, Cordova, Kiev, Moscow, and St Catherine's, Sinai.

In view of the softness of the Tufa a mosaic technique could not be employed in the decoration of the Cappadocian churches, and many authorities have considered the resulting frescoes to be primitive and of little importance in the overall realm of Byzantine art. However, in spite of the fact that much of the decoration was carried out by local artists with varying degrees of competence, as distinct from those from Constantinople, they have a sincerity, a directness of feeling, and a freedom of expression that is distinct from the later constrained Byzantine style. The medium of the frescoes later became more popular in Constantinople as a result of the escalating cost of mosaic work, but sadly frescoes that date from this period have not survived, the most important now being those in Chora Camii that date to the fourteenth century. It is very noticeable in the Cappadocian frescoes that the images of the Apostles, the Saints, and those of Christ as Pantocrator, have a benevolence not to be seen in the Pantocrators that figure in the mosaics of Cefalu Cathedral, Hosias Lukas, and especially Daphne in Greece, all of a similar period. Here they are far more intimidating: you sin if you dare!

The frescoes in the so called Apple Church and the Karanlik Monastery church are of such a quality that they must be the work of one Constantinople workshop, for they have the same scheme and a flamboyant style of decoration that could date between 1006 and 1021. The fine Pantocrator in the Karanlik church clearly shows the three main Vignon markings viz. 15, 12 and 13 the quiff of hair, the forked beard and the fine across the neck (fig 1). The Pantocrator in the Apple church, though much more damaged, is clearly of the same period and style and it too shows these Vignon markings, as do those in Cefalu, Hosias Lukas and Daphne, all of a similar date but from a different school.



*Fig. 1 - The Pantocrator in the dome of Karanlik Church*

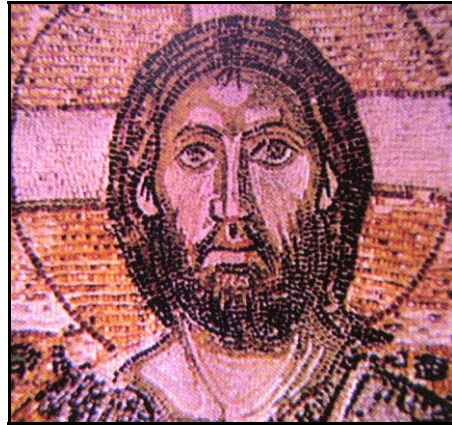
In the Karanlik frescoes of the Betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane Christ is depicted in a full frontal pose and again the face shows clearly these same three markings (fig 2). By this time the artists of Constantinople must have been well aware of these specific characteristics in the Shroud image, just as we are today. By then it had been in Constantinople for a considerable number of years, and at that time it is possible that the image was more definite.



*Fig. 2 - The betrayal in Gethsemane*

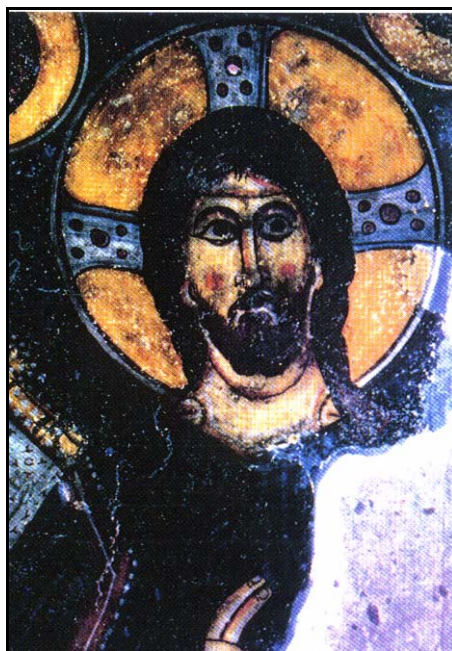
The Vignon marking 15 is the only one apparent in some frescoes of the Pantocrator that date to the middle of the ninth century, about the end of the Iconoclastic period. In these images of Christ the beard is rounded and not forked, as found in the churches where the decoration has an Eastern influence, and it is also noticeable that the image of Christ on early Byzantine coinage has too the rounded contour of the beard. The Mandylion was still in Edessa during this period and the artists concerned with the decoration of these churches must have overlooked the forked nature of the beard on the Shroud image, which is not so distinct as Vignon marking 15, a marking which is very clear and known in fact to derive from a blood stain, but interpreted as a fallen lock of hair (usually indicated by two or three oblique lines falling over the forehead). Similarly, in the mosaic over the West door of the Sancta Sophia in Istanbul in which Christ appears with the Emperor Leo VI (c. 886-912), the lock of hair is apparent but the beard has a rounded contour and is not forked (fig. 3). In the main it is not until after the Mandylion arrived in Constantinople in A.D. 944, where it was kept in the Pharos chapel, that all three markings appear very clearly and become the norm in all the

images of Christ, and thus remain until the late thirteenth century.



*Fig. 3 - Detail of Christ with Leo in the Sancta Sophia, Istanbul*

A very fine painting of the Pantocrator in the aspe of the monastery church of Eske Gumus near Nigde not only shows Vignon markings 15, 12, and 13, but also clearly Vignon marking 1, and possibly 4, the line across the forehead and the position of the Phylactery (fig. 4). This is the only instance, as far as one knows, in the Cappadocian churches. However, the mosaic of Christ with Leo VI in the Sancta Sophia in Istanbul, also has this mark but it appears to join the general contour of the face fig. 3. Dr Whanger has identified this Vignon marking across the forehead of the Shroud image as that of the band that held in place the Phylactery (an essential item worn by the Jews of the period) and the box-like marking below the line, markings 2 and 3 of Vignon, being the shadow of the desecrated Phylactery itself, having been torn open. This could well be the case and originally have given rise to these particular markings. However, in some of the images it is possible that the markings 1, 2 and 3 denote the supraorbital ridge and the dip at the base of the nose where it joins the forehead. Vignon marks 1, 2 and 3 appear clearly in the images of Christ in Daphne, in the Ikon in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin, in an eleventh-century Ikon in St Catherine's, Sinai, and in the Pantocrator of the early twelfth-century church of Panagia Theotocus Trikaros in Cyprus. These markings together with 15 and 12, both of the latter being very pronounced, and sometimes 13, are also a commonplace in the twelfth to thirteenth century frescoes in Georgia, especially in Svaneti.



*Fig. 4 - The Pantocrator in the Monastery Church of Eske Gumus*

Comparison of certain aspects of the Eske Gumus frescoes, which were the work of three hands over a more or less uninterrupted period of time, with those of the Virgin church in the Soganli valley and the

Direkli church in the Ihlara valley, suggest a date between 1025 and 1060 for Eski Gumus, for it is known from an inscription in the Virgin Church that its frescoes date to 1060.

One of the most interesting images of Christ, however, is that which shows Him as a somewhat mature child in the arms of the Virgin in the Flight into Egypt frescoes in the Kiliclar church in the Goreme valley, frescoes that date to the late tenth or early eleventh centuries and are the work of one painter (fig. 5). Here the infant Christ also has the Vignon mark 13 and very clearly 15 the quiff of hair. The beard has obviously been omitted, but it illustrates the commitment that the artists had at this time to depict this salient feature on all the images of Christ.



*Fig. 5 - Head of the infant Christ in Kilicar Church*

A fresco of a seated Christ giving the Eastern blessing, the thumb touching the third finger, decorates an arch in the Virgin church situated in the cliffs above Goreme, but unfortunately now sealed owing to the danger of it falling some hundreds of feet into the valley below. Dating this church is difficult for the frescoes show possible Armenian and Eastern influence and could belong from the mid ninth to the early tenth centuries. Here the artist has depicted the Pantocrator with the quiff of hair and the line round the neck but has given the beard a rounded contour (fig. 6). Not unlike that of the Christ in the mosaic over the West door of the Sancta Sophia; but he is shown seated in a pose that is similar to that of the Pantocrator in the Yilanli church in the Peristrema gorge in Ihlara. One must assume that the artists, for the fresco of the Virgin appears to be the work of another hand, responsible for the decoration in the Virgin Church did not come from Constantinople. The frescoes in the Yilanli church in the Peristrema gorge could be of an even earlier date for Thierry has argued that they have an iconography markedly distinct from that of the later tenth and eleventh century churches, in that they show features comparable with the Syrian and Coptic style. Here the seated Pantocrator shows only the quiff of hair, the neck line is absent and the beard is also rounded, features that could date the frescoes to the very beginning of the Iconographic period (fig. 7).



*Fig. 6 - The Pantocrator in the Virgin Church, Goreme*



*Fig.7 - The Pantocrator in the Yilanli Church, Ihlara Valley*

The sixth-century Ikon of Christ in St Catherine's, which is considered to have been the work of the Constantinople school, also shows Christ with the rounded beard and the distinctive neck line, but without the quiff of hair. The absence of the quiff of hair in a work of this period is very unusual, but it could possibly be one of the very early works of the Pre-Iconoclastic period that, as has already been said, escaped destruction during the Iconoclastic years, being hidden in the depths of Sinai. However, if it is a work that came from one of the Constantinople ateliers it is odd that the fallen lock of hair has not been shown for this appears to have been an essential feature in even the earliest painted images.

In a small church hollowed out of a single cone in the Gulu Dere valley in Goreme there is another little known fresco of the Pantocrator. The church today is in private hands and is used as a pigeon-house, their dropping being a source of manure (fig. 8). But luckily the frescoes, being in the apse and away from the pigeon roosts, are still in good condition. Here again the Pantocrator is seated in a lyre-shaped chair and is giving those who come before Him the Eastern blessing (fig. 9). These frescoes have very good quality and colour, and the seated Christ has very much in common with that in the mosaic over the West door of Sancta Sophia in Istanbul. This fresco has the quiff of hair, the neck line and also the rounded contour of the beard, and its similarity with the Sancta Sophia mosaic could also date it between 886 and 912.



Fig. 8 - The Pigeon House Church, Goreme



Fig. 9 - The Pantocrator in the Pigeon House Church, Goreme

Another indication as to the date of these particular frescoes lies in the splendid figure of the Archangel Gabriel who holds a staff and carries an orb in his left hand. This figure is almost identical with two similar figures of the Archangels Arche and Dynamis dated to A.D. 850 that were once in the church of the Assumption in Nicea, unhappily destroyed in the Greco Turkish war of 1922.

Frescoes of the Mandylion can be seen in Sakli church in the Goreme region, but the church is very difficult of access for the entrance can only be reached by negotiating a descent of some feet down the steep side of a cliff. In his paper given to the International Scientific Symposium on the Shroud of Turin, held in Rome in June 1993, Professor J. Jackson convincingly confirmed the premise of Ian Wilson that the Mandylion was, in fact, the Shroud folded on a wooden frame before being kept in a case with a lattice decoration, so arranged that only the facial image was exposed.

Furthermore, Professor Jackson was able to demonstrate the lines of the fold on the Shroud itself and the manner in which it was originally folded.

The frescoes of the Mandylion painted over the top of an arch in Sakli Church is a part of a larger scheme. Owing to the narrow space between the ceiling and the top of the arch, the face of Christ has had to be depicted more rounded than elongated, but even so it shows clearly the markings 15, 12, and 13. On the right support of the arch is the fresco of St John and on the left support that of the Virgin. On either side of the Virgin are representations of two independent buildings, one a tall tower, and the other a rectangular building with a tiled roof (figs 10, 11). Frescoes of independent buildings as such do not appear in any other



frescoes in Cappadocia; they only appear as a background to the Virgin in scenes of the Annunciation, or in those with St Simeon in the Presentation in the Temple. Apart from this depiction of the Mandylion another has been painted above the small arch of the Piscina, but this is now almost unrecognisable from the effect of the damp that has seeped through the wall.



*Fig. 10 - The Mandylion in Sakli Church, Goreme.*



*Fig. 11 - Detail of the Mandylion, Sakli Church*

It is speculation that the frescoes of these buildings could relate to the Sancta Sophia built by Justinian in Edessa to house the Mandylion, and to the Gate House where the Mandylion came to light during the flood of 525. The general decoration of lattice work on the building and over the ceiling of the church is another feature that could link the church with Edessa, for this decoration was the royal prerogative of the Abgars and a feature of their ceremonial robes. It also appears in other representations of the Mandylion such as those in Gradac, Novgorod, and Alexandria. Furthermore the images of the Saints Cosmos and Damian, the two physicians born and subsequently martyred together with their mother in Edessa, are in a prominent position facing each other. Other Saints wear military costume in the shape of a poncho-like garment worn over the back and chest and covered with a series of overlapping scales of either metal or leather, and the figure of St Helena has the device of a Crusader shield. This particular design of shield, as seen in the Bayeux tapestry, became obsolete a little after 1100 A.D. when it was truncated by having the top section removed.

It is these features that could link the church with the First Crusade that passed through Constantinople in A.D. 1097 under Baldwin of Boulogne and his brother Godfrey de Bouillon. Godfrey went on to Jerusalem and Baldwin to Edessa where he eliminated Thoros, the Armenian ruler, to proclaim himself the first Count of Edessa. The Baldwin family remained the Counts of Edessa till A.D. 1144 when Zengi of Aleppo finally displaced them and their followers and destroyed the Basilica, by which time the Mandylion was in Constantinople.

When passing through Constantinople in 1097 it is hard to believe that the leaders and those of the First Crusade did not avail themselves of the opportunity to see the Mandylion, and they could have been the patrons responsible for the decoration of the church between that date and their expulsion from Edessa in 1144. However the quality of the decoration in Sakli is not of the high standard of the Elmali and Karanlik churches and it is problematical that it was the work of artists from Constantinople. On the other hand, however, the artist responsible for the frescoes of the Mandylion over the arch and the piscina must have been well acquainted with the original which by now had been in Constantinople since A.D. 944. In Asia Minor it is only in the Cappadocian region where frescoes of the Mandylion are to be found and it is significant that Edessa is only some three hundred kilometres distant from what was then an intensely religious community.

Interestingly enough there is an Ikon in St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, depicting the Mandylion being presented to Abgar by Thaddeus. On the grounds that the portrayal features of Abgar are those of the Emperor Constantine Porphryogenetos, who was instrumental in having the Mandylion brought to

Constantinople, the Ikon is thought to date to a little after A.D. 944, however, there is a query as to whether it is a work from a Constantinople atelier. The image of Christ is not well drawn and has thick lips but it does show the fallen lock of hair and the neck line; the contour of the beard, however, is hard to determine.

## Conclusion

From the history and chronology of the Mandylion, as detailed by Ian Wilson, it appears that it remained on view from the time it was presented to Abgar around A.D. 30 to the time it was concealed in the West gate in A.D. 57, some 27 years later. A tablet depicting the Mandylion was also set up at the West gate to Edessa, in place of an erstwhile Pagan image, for travellers to acknowledge before entering the city. During the relatively few years it was on view in Edessa the image must have become well-known locally and also by those who visited the town. Between A.D. 57 and A.D. 525 when it came to light, a period of some 460 years, the Mandylion became a legend of the distant past, the possible truth of its existence discovered only by Bishop Eusebius who was capable of reading the Syriac records of Edessa. By this time all visual details of the image had been forgotten.

Evidence that the image of Christ was something that had been completely forgotten over the centuries that had elapsed since A.D. 57, lies in the fresco of the Good Shepherd, c 260, in the Catacomb of St Callistus in Rome, and in a similar statue that dates to around A.D. 300 in the Vatican. It was a theme that also featured in mosaic decoration of the fifth century. There is too in the Vatican a bas relief of the Entry into Jerusalem dating to the fourth century in which Christ has been given Hellenistic features (fig. 12). This too is interesting for its design and concept of the event predates by more than a hundred years the Byzantine iconographic treatment of the same scene, only the features have been changed. During these centuries Christian art in the Catacombs and elsewhere was Greco-Roman in style.



*Fig. 12 - The ride into Jerusalem, Vatican Museum*

As Ian Wilson has pointed out, the image of Christ changed dramatically after the Mandylion came to light in A.D. 525. Even so, it is apparent that, during the time the Mandylion was kept in Edessa, the images of Christ are apt to show only the Vignon markings 15 and 13. This is very evident in the images of Christ as they appear on the early Byzantine coinage, where the beard consistently has a rounded contour. It seems that the artists of Constantinople did not generally become aware of the forked contour of the beard till after the arrival of the Mandylion in 944. It then became the norm and appears in conjunction with the features 15 and 13 -- and often with 1, 2 and 3 -- in all the images of Christ that date from A.D. 944 to the late thirteenth century. From the Constantinople ateliers there are some fine examples of this period, amongst them one depicting the raising of Lazarus dating about 1150 and kept in St Catherine's Sinai. Many more are to be found from the Balkans to Georgia, and though they date to around the thirteenth century and have

completely differing styles they still show these markings, an impressive example being that in the church of St Barbara at Khe, Svaneti.

After the thirteenth century these markings begin to fade out and this is noticeable in the later frescoes of Cyprus and elsewhere. It is especially apparent in the West, for they are not to be seen in the Romanesque frescoes of the late thirteenth to fourteenth centuries depicting Christ giving the Western blessing in the churches of Pontigne, St Gillies, and others in the Loir, as distinct from the Loire valley from Vendome to Angers and Nantes in France (fig 13).



*Fig. 13. - The Pantocrator, Pontigne Church, Loir Valley, France*

What then does all this leave us with? It leaves us with the fact that some of the peculiarities of the Shroud image, as seen today, were noticed as early as A.D. 525, when the Mandylion was discovered after the Edessa flood. It was only after it arrived in Constantinople in 944 that all the markings began to be appreciated by artists working at that time in the ateliers of the capital.

The forked contour of the beard, Vignon mark 12, then became the norm in conjunction with the markings that were a feature in the images of Christ that date from 525. Even after the disappearance of the Shroud from Constantinople in A.D. 1204 after the sacking of the City by those of the Third Crusade, the images of Christ that date between 1204 and the late thirteenth century still bear some or all of these markings, for they had, by now, become a traditional feature, and often more in the East than the West.

If, then, today's Shroud with the Vignon markings is a copy of the fourteenth century it is fair to assume that it, and the markings, must derive directly from an original. And if so, what happened to the original after any copy was produced? And if there was an original at the time of the copy, why the copy?

Secondly, if the Shroud is a skilful forgery that was not done directly from the original that disappeared in 1204, and even allowing for the formidable expertise of medieval forgers of relics, it is difficult to imagine how the Vignon marks, let alone the others that have been identified, could have been so incorporated into the Shroud image; the absence of these markings in the frescoes of Christ's image of a comparable date in the churches of the Loir valley is significant. To postulate the theory that the forger could have placed these markings on the Shroud, and in the form of a negative image, in order for it to

conform with the image of Christ that were then widespread (but not in France) in ikons, mosaics and frescoes is quite untenable.

In this respect it is noticeable that the images of Christ to be seen in the Cappadocian churches and in the work of the Constantinople schools of artists that date to the tenth, eleventh and early twelfth centuries, is less divorced from the actual Shroud image than the numerous later copies. The copies of the Veronica are obviously inaccurate and of a much later date, and the actual nature of its image cannot be determined owing to its inaccessibility: in the past only the hierarchy of the Catholic Church being permitted to see it on rare occasions.

Two enigmas still remain. If the Shroud is a copy, how was it done? The use of any paint or pigment was decisively ruled out by Mme Isabel Piczek at the 1993 Rome Symposium. If the Shroud is not a copy but dates to the time of the Crucifixion, in what way was the image imprinted on the cloth?

In this respect it is worth taking particular account of the two Vignon lines 13. The clearer of these two lines comes from a fault in the weave of the cloth that appears as a tight string-like band adjacent to the one that is of the same density as the image. Whatever mechanism produced the image on the cloth it apparently affected only the surface elements of the weave, and this tight faulty weave was not affected to the same degree. The hypothesis put forward by Professor J.P. Jackson as to how the image might have been produced could also explain this phenomenon.

When taking into account the accumulating circumstantial evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Shroud, the history and situation of the Cappadocian churches, together with their important frescoes, must not be overlooked.