

THE VEIL OF VERONICA: FACT OR FICTION?

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"Your Face, O Lord, will I still seek; hide not your Face from me."

Psalm 27: 8-9

Introduction:

In Churches around the world we find an early practice formalized much later in the Medieval period called the Stations of the Cross (14 of them) which depict visually various incidents during the passion and death of Jesus until His entombment. The Church dedicates the Sixth Station to *Veronica Wiping The Face of Jesus*. The legend says that Jesus, as a reward to Veronica for wiping the sweat and blood from His face with her veil, left His imprint miraculously on the linen.

Is this an actual event or just a pious story? And what do we know of this Veil on which Jesus is believed to have left His image?

We will divide this question into two parts.

In the first part we will discuss whether there is any historical or traditional basis for the Legend of Veronica.

In the second part we will examine two claims. One claim is that the Veronica is, today, in Rome. The second claim is that the Veronica is in the town of Manoppello, Italy in a Capuchin Monastery approximately 150 miles East of Rome since the early 17th century.

PART I:

Is There An Historical or Traditional Basis for The Core Legend?

The Veronica Veil is often confused with the Sudarium Christi. However, the Veronica Veil is an imaged cloth that allegedly touched Jesus during His walk to Golgotha while He was still alive. The Sudarium, on the other hand, is the Face Cloth wrapped around His head from His death on the Cross to His entombment when it was folded and put to one side. The Sudarium does NOT have an image - only bloodstains and serum as well as pollen.

Veronica: Vera Icona (True Image - Latin) or Eikon (Greek)

The Story of Veronica's Veil is *not found in the New Testament*. It appears in early Christian history. This was not the real name of the woman alleged to have wiped Jesus' face, but rather a name ascribed to her. The name given was Veronica from the Latin *Vera* (true) and *Icona* (image) or Greek *Eikon*. Her name was Bernice in the Greek literature. Later legend, which we will examine shortly, says that Veronica brought the Veil to Rome where the Veil cured the Emperor Tiberius from an unknown malady. In addition, she is said to have given the veil to Pope Clement - the 4th Pope.

However, other historical texts take the Veronica in a different direction, as we shall see. Veronica was also identified with the woman with the hemorrhage who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed (Mark 5:29) of a 12 year problem of bleeding. Jesus stopped and asked who touched Him. He stated that power (*dunamin* in Greek) went out from Him and healed her. The New Testament story is worth repeating here:

"And a great crowd followed Him and pressed around Him. And a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had had a great deal of treatment from various doctors and had spent all that she had and had not been benefited at all but had actually grown worse, had heard about Jesus. And she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His robe, for she said, 'if I can only touch His clothes, I shall get well.' The hemorrhage stopped at once and she felt in her body that she was cured. Jesus instantly perceived that healing power had passed from Him and He turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to Him, 'you see the crowd pressing around you and yet you ask, Who touched me?' But He still looked around to see the person who had done it. The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came forward frightened and trembling and threw herself down at His feet and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'my daughter, it is your faith that has cured you. Go in peace and be free from your disease.'"

Mark 5: 24-34. See also Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56

This woman healed by Jesus came to be identified in early Christian history as Veronica.

Early Sources of the Evolving Legend:

The Veronica Veil, as indicated above, does NOT appear in the New Testament, although the story of the woman with the hemorrhage DOES appear when she touches the hem of Jesus' garment and is cured. She is later identified as Veronica.

EUSEBIUS (Church Historian circa 325 A.D.)

Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote the *History of the Church* during the reign of the Emperor Constantine, does NOT mention Veronica or the Veil, but does talk of the woman with the hemorrhage. (Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History*: V11-18, 325 A.D.) mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke. At this time, the woman is not named by Eusebius.

ACTS OF PILATE (ACTA PILATI).

It was not long before a name was given to this woman in a work called the *Acts of Pilate* - an apocryphal writing also called the *Gospel of Nicodemus* - around 380 A.D. In this work, mention is made for the first time (that we know of) of the name of Veronica. She is named and associated with the woman healed of the hemorrhage by Jesus. No mention is made of the Veil or Legend yet. However, it should be noted that, since the term Veronica means Vera Icona or True Image, it is possible that the Legend was known earlier but not reiterated in this work.

Further, the *Acts of Pilate* dating from approximately 380 A.D. are considered by historians to be a work which grew over the centuries allegedly from the records Pilate kept at the Praetorium at the Fortress Antonia when he was Governor. He, however, was not the author. The text, according to scholars, contains multiple parts which are "uneven in style and would seem to be by different hands." The oldest section called the *Report of Pilate To The Emperor Claudius*, added as an Appendix, may have been composed in the late 2nd century (or earlier).

The *Acts of Pilate*, Chapter VII state:

"And a certain woman named **Bernice** (**Veronica** in the Latin) crying out from afar off said: 'I had an issue of blood and touched the hem of His garment and the flowing of my blood was stayed which I had twelve years.'"

Now, for the first time in our known literature we see the woman with the issue of blood in the New Testament, and mentioned in Eusebius, given the name Veronica.

Justin Martyr - 160 A.D.

Justin, an early Church Father, who wrote *The First and Second Apology* (Apology here means defense of the faith) in Chapter 35 mentions the *Acts of Pilate* around 160 A.D. in two letters which he wrote to the Roman Emperor Pius and the Roman Governor Urbicus. All three of these men lived between 138 and 161 A.D. In his letter he indicates that:

"And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the *Acts of Pontius Pilate*."

While no mention is made of Veronica or her veil in Justin's letters, it is possible that this early version to which Justin refers might have been circulating and included some information about the Veronica Legend since the *Acts of Pilate* was known to Justin as well as to Roman authorities.

Tertullian:

Tertullian, an early Church Father, also mentions the *Acts of Pilate* toward the end of the Second Century but does not mention Veronica. Likewise, Epiphanius refers to an *Acta Pilati* in 376 A.D. but the extant Greek texts show evidence of later editing. Noted scholar Joannes Quasten in his *Patrology* believes that it is likely this legend was known at an earlier date.

St. Irenaeus of Lyon:

St. Irenaeus of Lyon, a Bishop living in what is now France, was one of the great theologians of the second century. Fr. Heinrich Pfeiffer, a world renowned scholar of early Christian art, makes an interesting statement:

"St. Irenaeus of Lyon (130-200) recounts in his work '*Against Heresies*' that the followers of the Egyptian Gnostic heretic Carpocrates (2nd century), possessed and venerated *images of Christ* '...some are painted images, others made of other materials and are made according to the model executed by Pontius Pilate 'during the time in which Jesus was among men.'"

Francesco Barbesino, *Cristianita* n. 311 (2002)
The Holy Face of Manoppello

It is possible that even in the time of Pilate (when Veronica would have lived) the image referred to as "the model" could have been the Veronica which Pilate or his soldiers possibly saw. They could refer to the Veronica Veil since soldiers were present when Veronica wiped Jesus' face and would have reported this to Pilate.

While modern historians say that the *Acts of Pilate* around 380 A.D. was a later, complete edition, it is very possible

that the Veronica Legend was contained in the earlier, less developed work around 163 A.D. which continued to evolve to the fourth century - making the legend much earlier in Church history.

The Avenging of the Saviour:

In the late 7th Century (680 A.D.) mention is made of the name of Veronica and, for the first time, the Legend of the imprinted cloth which healed the Emperor Tiberius is outlined. The work is also referred to in the *Cura Sanitatis Tiberii - The Cure of the Emperor Tiberius* and identifies Veronica as the woman with the issue of blood as well as mentioning the imprinted cloth. (Matthew, Mark and Luke).

In the *Avenging of the Saviour* we read:

"...and another woman named Veronica, who suffered twelve years from an issue of blood, and came up to Him behind and touched the fringe of His garment, was healed."

Later in the text we read:

"Then they made a search about the face or portrait of Jesus, how they might find it. And they found a woman named Veronica who had it."

"Then they made a search with great diligence to seek the portrait of the Lord; and they found a woman named Veronica who had the portrait of the Lord. Then the Emperor Tiberius said to Velosianus: How hast thou it?"

The story goes on to say that:

"Velosianus spread out the cloth of gold on which the portrait of the Lord had been imprinted. The Emperor Tiberius saw it...and his flesh was cleansed ...and all the blind, the lepers, the lame, the dumb, the deaf and those possessed by various diseases, who were there present, were healed and cured and cleansed."

From all this we see that the Gospels talk of the woman with the issue of blood. Eusebius mentions her again in 325. The *Acts of Pilate* around 380 gives her the name Veronica (true image) and the *Avenging of the Saviour* (680 A.D.) identifies her as Veronica who had the imprinted cloth with Jesus' face.

Egeria - a 4th Century Christian Pilgrim:

Egeria, a woman from Gaul who traveled to the Holy Land in the 4th century (approximately 381-384 A.D.), recalls in her legendary *Diary* how she joined Christians from all parts of the Roman world walking westward on Holy Thursday from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where they celebrated Jesus' death and resurrection. We don't know if they were aware of or honored this aspect of the passion (Veil of Veronica), but they may have been aware. As one writer noted:

"It is...impossible to say with confidence what Egeria did NOT describe, since we now have only a fraction of what she wrote."

Over the years the route of pilgrim processions - beginning at the ruins of the Fortress Antonia (the Praetorium where Jesus was scourged) and ending at the church of the Holy Sepulcher was accepted as the way that Jesus went to his death. Today the procession winds through the crowded areas of Jerusalem's Old City.

Pilgrims contributed to European development of the Stations. Returning from the Holy Land, they brought oil from lamps that burned around Jesus' tomb as well as soil and relics from the holy places. They also brought memories of the liturgies, devotions and shrines they experienced. Model shrines were built in imitation around Europe. Since the Veronica was added to the Stations at this time, it is possible that they brought this custom and information back from the Holy Land. In the 1500's villages all over Europe started creating "replicas" of the way of the cross with small shrines commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem.

Sometimes European artists created works depicting scenes of Jesus' journey to Calvary. The faithful installed these sculptures or paintings at intervals along a procession route, inside the parish church or outdoors. Performing the devotion meant walking the entire route, stopping to pray at each Station

The Moslem conquest of Palestine in the 7th century contributed to the building of replicas of the holy places in Europe, as Christians, finding access to the holy places more difficult, sought places of pilgrimage nearer home.

cf: www.comunitiyofhopeinc.org

The Importance of Legends:

While the Veronica Veil is considered a legend transmitted down through time, it does not imply that it is not true. We simply do not know all of the information on which these earlier legends were based. They are like pieces of the puzzle that are missing to us but likely *known in the ancient world*. We must remember that legends - often embellished with time - likely have a kernel of truth from written or oral tradition.

Historian Steven Runciman, author of "*Some Remarks on the Image of Edessa*" (Cambridge Historical Journal 111, No. 3, 1931), a highly respected scholar, once said that:

"Historians should not be so much victims to their skepticism as to dismiss a legend as false unless they can suggest how it was that the false legend arose."

There is often a kernel of truth which may be embellished with time but this does not invalidate the tradition on which the story was based. When dealing with early sources we need to keep in mind that earlier writers (of the first few centuries) *likely had access to information from both literature and oral tradition* which may easily have disappeared later. Great works and smaller ones (manuscripts, legal documents, letters, etc.) go through many dangers including:

1. Being hidden, lost and never found in the desert sands. Consider that the Nag Hammadi Library of Gnostic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in modern times and give great insight into the early Jewish and Christian faith.
2. Being suppressed by authorities in disagreement with various groups or hidden by those fearing persecution.
3. Being destroyed - by accident or on purpose. The tragic burning of the famous Library of Alexandria in Egypt was a great loss of early source material. This Library, built by the successor of Alexander the Great in 283 B.C. was destroyed in 48 B.C. by fire, blamed by some as started deliberately by Caesar. Often in history, authorities (civil or church) sometimes had book-burnings to destroy unwanted literature that did not agree with their thinking. They say that history is often written by the victorious who efface the unwanted material of the past.
4. Suffering disintegration and deterioration due to age and climate if not properly stored.
5. Being stolen. Many manuscripts are kept in private archives by Collectors, etc.

It is safe to assume that this legend which appears later in time was based on a valid tradition alluded to by Eusebius, *The Acts of Pilate, The Avenging of the Saviour* and carried into Medieval tradition as a Station of the Cross. We know that many religions treasure oral traditions passed down by their leaders and shamans.

The Journey of the Veronica Veil:

Historically, Professor Heinrich Pfeiffer, Professor of Early Christian Art at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, traces the movement of the Veil from Jerusalem to Ephesus with the Apostle John and then to Camulia (Kamulia) in Cappadocia in eastern Turkey, (near Edessa). While Pfeiffer does not explain how the Veil was in the hands of the Apostle John, this is still possible. Peter and John were the first to see the Shroud in the tomb. Peter went to Rome and we know that the Shroud went to Edessa in Turkey and not with him to Rome. The Sudarium, or Face Cloth, remained in Jerusalem until 614 A.D. John went to Turkey - Ephesus - and the Veil may have been with him, working its way to Camulia near Edessa. However, we do not have clear proof of the involvement of the Apostle John.

The Veil In Camulia (Kamulia) in Ancient Turkey:

We do know that it was in Camulia, a city near Edessa (home of the Shroud) in eastern Turkey. A later Byzantine Historian, Cedronos, writing during the reign of Emperor Alexios Comnenos (1081-1118), noted that the Veronica moved from Camulia to Constantinople - the seat of the Byzantine Empire - by order of the then Emperor Justin II around 574 A.D. It was referred to as an "*acheiropoietos*" or image not made from human hands, a title also ascribed to the Holy Shroud.

Veil In Constantinople:

In Constantinople, the Image of Camulia became a "palladium," that is, the protective image of the capital guaranteeing protection to the city and victory to the imperial army.

"It is said that the relic was received with enthusiasm in Constantinople and was raised up during the battle of Constantina in Africa in 581 and also at the battle of the Arzaman River in 586 and that it was present in many other battles. The Emperor Eraclio (575-641) on his departure for a military campaign in Persia, held in his hand a standard on which was carved the Image of Camulia. Later, in 626 during the attack on Constantinople by the Avars, the holy image

was displayed on the walls of the city in order to defend it."

Francesco Barbesino, *Christianita* n.311 (2002) *The Holy Face of Manoppello*

While the battle standard may not have been the original Veil, it was likely made as a copy of the Veil in Constantinople.

Professor Pfeiffer points out in an article "*The Holy Face: From Jerusalem to Rome*," three other references referring to the Veronica related to Constantinople:

"Theofilatto Simocatta in a praise-poetry written to celebrate the victory of the Byzantine troops in the battle near the river Arzamon (586) obtained thanks to the presence of the Image, described it: 'not painted, not woven, but made with divine art.'"

"Giorgio Piside defined it as: "a prototype written by God."

"Theofane (758-818), even after the disappearance from Constantinople declared that: 'no human hand could have drawn this Image, but only the creative and everything-forming Word produced the shape of this divine-human figure.'"

(see also: H. Pfeiffer, "*But the 'Veronica' is in Manoppello*" 30 Days Magazine, No. 5, May 2000, pp 78-79.)

The Patriarch Germanus I Sends The Veronica To Rome:

Barbesino relates that:

"One day the image disappeared never to be seen again in Constantinople...In the *Vita* of Germano I, Patriarch of Constantinople (715-730) it is narrated that he saved the Acheropite by throwing it into the sea. Miraculously the image reached the shore of Ostia where it was pulled from the water and brought to Rome. Despite the legendary aspect of the narration, there are other documents which seem to confirm the substance of what happened, namely the sending of the relic to Rome."

Pfeiffer places the date of this transfer between the first and second reign of Justinian II (679-711) between 695-705.

Barbesino notes that:

"The same information, stripped of its legendary characteristics, is furnished by the Byzantine chronicler Giorgio Monaco in his *Chronikon* published

in 842. In this document it states that Saint Germano I, patriarch of Constantinople...exiled by the Emperor Leo III Isaurico (717-741) for his firm opposition to the Iconoclasts, carried the relic with him into exile and later sent it to Rome to Pope St. Gregory II (715-731). These facts are related also in some Greek codices of the Vatican dating from the 11th century, copies of a document which is judged to be not more than 130 years removed from the events narrated."

It appears, however, that the Veronica was received a few years earlier by Pope John VII in 708 A.D.

The Second Council of Nicea (787 A.D.):

It wasn't until 787 A.D. that the Second Council of Nicea, as mentioned earlier, ruled in favor of the veneration of icons. Until that time, the Veil was considered to be in danger in Constantinople from the Iconoclasts who wanted to destroy images.

The Council declared:

"One can and one must be free to use images of our Lord and God, in mosaics, paintings, etc."

Pope John VII Receives The Veronica in Rome:

Later history confirms that, during the Iconoclastic debates in the 8th century when Icons were threatened with destruction, the Veronica was sent to Rome in 708 A.D. by the Byzantine Patriarch Germanus for temporary safe-keeping but remained there with the fall of the Byzantine Empire. The assumption is made by later writers that the Veronica Veil was present in the Old St. Peter's (built by Constantine the Great circa 325) in the papacy of John VII (705-708). Pope John VII had a Chapel (or Oratory) called the *Oratory of St. Mary of the Veronica* built and the Pope had placed the precious relic received from Constantinople in this Chapel during his reign.

Pope Stephen II:

In 753, the Lombard King Aistulfo besieged the city of Rome. When this happened, a procession was recorded with Pope Stephen II carrying an "Acheropsita" - that is, an icon on which a veil was placed. It was known at the time as the Holy Face of the Sancta Sanctorum Chapel in the Pope's Lateran Palace - likely, according to Pfeiffer, the Holy Face now in Manoppello. It is thought that the Veil was hidden after its arrival in Rome, perhaps attached, as noted by Bianchi, on top of the icon called the "Acheropsita" in the Sancta Sanctorum of the Lateran and

then, under Innocent III (1198-1216), taken off and removed to Saint Peter's with the name Veronica.

Pilgrims in Rome in 1199 A.D. Mention Veronica:

Recording of Veronica's presence in Rome is attested to in 1199 A.D. when two pilgrims, Gerald de Barri (Giraldus Cambrensis) and Gervase of Tilbury made two accounts at different times of a visit to Rome which made direct reference to the existence of the Veronica Veil. In 1211, Gervase of Tilbury called it:

"Est ergo Veronica pictura Domini vera."

"The Veronica is, therefore, a true picture of the Lord."

Gervase of Tilbury: *Otia Imperialia* (iii 25)

From the 12th Century until 1608 the Veronica was kept in the Vatican Basilica as it was a popular destination of pilgrims. In 1297 by order of Pope Boniface VIII, the image was brought to St. Peters. In 1456 its veneration was established by Pope Innocenzo III who called it "Veronica."

Veronica Veil as a "Mirabilia Urbis":

In the Holy Year 1300 the Veil was publicly displayed and became one of "Mirabilia Urbis" (wonders of City) for pilgrims. Dante Alighieri mentions the Veronica in *The Divine Comedy - Paradiso*, Canto XXXI (verses 103-111) - "the people coming to Rome to see the Veil." During the fourteenth century it became a central icon in the Western Church - in the words of Art Curator Neil Macgregor:

"From the 14th century on, wherever the Roman Church went, the Veronica would go with it."

The Veil Is Taken from The Vatican:

Then, during a rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica between 1506-1626, at one point involving Michelangelo who designed the Dome, Professor Pfeiffer says *the Veil was stolen from the Vatican* and brought, eventually, to Manoppello. The claim is made that in 1506 during construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica, as recorded in the *Capucine Provincial Archive* - a mysterious stranger brought the Veil to Manoppello and gave it to a gentleman of the place, Dr. Giacomo Antonio Leonelli.

The precious veil was kept in the Leonelli family for over a century. Then, in 1608, it was included in the nuptial gifts for Maria Leonelli for 400 scudi (an old Italian unit

of currency), but the gift was never delivered. In 1608 Maria's husband, Pancrazio Petrucci stole it from his father-in-law's home. Later, in order to have her husband released from prison in Chieti, she sold the veil to Dr. Donato Antonio De Fabritis who placed it in a Walnut Frame adorned with Silver and gold between two pieces of glass and presented it to the Capuchins in 1638 as recorded between 1640 and 1646 by Padre Donato da Bomba who wrote a "Relatione Historica" (Historical Report).

The Veil Stolen From Rome In 1606 or 1608:

We note that historical research found that in 1608 during St. Peter's restoration under Paul V's papacy (1605-1621) the Chapel where Veronica's veil had been kept was demolished. Pfeiffer thinks it likely that on this occasion (the demolishing of the old chapel) the veil was stolen and brought to the Capuchin Monks at Manoppello. However, it may have been in 1606 as we will see shortly.

In the *Relatione Historica* of Padre Donato it states:

"Taking the scissors Father Clemente himself cut away all the hanging threads and cleaning the most sacred image well of dust, moths and other filth, made it in the end just as it is now. The above-mentioned Donat'Antonio, eager to enjoy the sacred image with greater devotion, had it stretched in a wooden frame with glass on both sides, embellished with little frames and walnut work by one of our Capuchin monks named Brother Remigio da Rapino (not trusting other lay masters)".

It is noteworthy that in 1618, the Vatican archivist Giacomo Grimaldi made a precise list of the objects held in the Old Saint Peter's. On his list was the reliquary containing Veronicas' veil. He writes that the reliquary's crystal glass was "broken". Pfeifer notes that the veil in Manoppello has, on its bottom edge, a small piece of broken glass.

(See Antonil Gaspari: *Has Veronica's Veil Been Found?* www.catholic-forum.com).

PART 2:

Is the True Veronica In Rome or Manoppello?

Pfeiffer announced recently, after years of research, that he believes that the true Veronica is not in Rome but rather in the Capuchin Monastery of the Sacred Face in Manoppello, Italy which lies approximately 150 miles to the east of Rome on a mountain top near the Adriatic Sea. The Sanctuary of the Holy face was built between 1617 and 1638.

He made this announcement after years of study. But why does he believe the Veil is not in Rome, but rather at the Santuario del Volto Santo (Sanctuary of the Holy Face) in Manoppello?

The case against its presence in Rome:

The case against the Veil's presence in Rome after 1608 stems from some information that Pfeiffer and others have noted:

1. The Veronica that was kept in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome no longer shows any image. Lorenzo Bianchi notes that:

"The few scholars of the past who were able to see it close up, such as DeWaal and Wilpert ...saw only a few brown stains. The people who have been able to observe it recently (including Pope John Paul II) found no trace of the image."

2. Pope Paul V (1617) ordered that no reproductions of the Veronica in the 1600's (after the cloth was allegedly stolen in 1608) were to be made unless by a "Canon of St. Peter's." Pfeiffer believes the Pope made this statement because the Veil was stolen. They had no reason to give this order if they were in possession of the Veil in Rome.

3. The eyes on the reproductions of the cloth BEFORE the theft were OPEN. AFTER the theft, the eyes on reproductions of the Veronica are CLOSED. The original Veil showed the eyes open since Jesus was alive at the time Veronica wiped His face.

4. Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) not only prohibited reproductions of Veronica's veil but also ordered all existing copies to be destroyed. Pfeiffer believes that these orders by Pontiffs of no duplication and destruction of reproductions indicates that the Vatican no longer possessed the original.

5. As noted by Lorenzo Bianchi in his article "The Veil of Manoppello":

"The cloth currently in Rome is not transparent, while the 1350 reliquary that contained the Veronica in Rome, kept in the treasury of the Vatican Basilica, consisting of two panes of rock crystal, was evidently intended for an object that could be viewed from both sides. This reliquary, square in shape and of a size compatible with the veil of Manoppello than which it is slightly larger (but we have seen that the veil was trimmed) was replaced by another in the mid 16th century (now lost), itself replaced by the current one. A document testifies to the solemn installation

of the new relic, that is, as one assumes, by a forgery - on 21 March 1606, in a niche cut into the pillar of the dome called 'of the Veronica.'"

The Vatican cloth in Rome is only on view one time per year - the Sunday before Palm Sunday - for a very brief time from a balcony high up in St. Peter's. People do not see an image. Renowned artist Isabel Piczek once relayed to me that she had the honor of viewing the (purported) veil in Rome as a young girl and claimed she saw no image, only some stains. Other scholars noted above confirmed this same thing.

Further, the Vatican will allow no study of its possession. Vatican custodians have steadfastly refused all requests for any photographs to be taken.

It is interesting to note that Pope Benedict XVI visited Manoppello Sept. 1, 2006 recently after taking his office and prayed before the Image. Some interpret this as a possible concern by the Holy Father that the true image may not in Rome but rather in Manoppello. This is, however, conjecture.

Describing the Veil:

The description of the Veil at Manoppello is that it is 6.7 x 9.5 inches (17.5 x 24 cm) after having been trimmed in the early 1600's by the Capuchins. There are 26 warp by 26 weft threads in a square centimeter not always at a regular distance from each other. The Veil is white, almost transparent, and is kept on a high altar in a silver monstrance. The fabric is made of a rare silk called Byssus - a precious thread woven from a fine, yellowish flax referred to as "sea silk" and used by ancient Egyptians and Hebrews. It is a kind of fabric found in the graves of the Egyptian Pharaohs. The Face is displayed in a walnut frame adorned with silver and gold between two pieces of glass. This Manoppello image has two panes of glass with broken chips on bottom which the Vatican archivist Giacomo Grimaldi in 1618 indicated was true of the image that was believed to be in Rome.

Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlomer, a German Trappistine nun and iconographer living now in Manoppello, claimed that the image of the Shroud of Turin and that of the Veil are super-imposable. There are tufts of hair on the forehead as found on the Shroud. The face on the Veronica reflects a high forehead, long, shoulder length hair, a beard and moustache with a long nose that appears to have broken

cartilage like the Holy Shroud image. There are dark red features and open eyes and the face is asymmetrical like someone beaten and swollen. The mouth appears slightly open and the eyes are looking upwards.

Pfeiffer notes that the cloth is so thin one can read a newspaper through it. The image appears on both sides of the cloth like a photo slide. There are similarities to the Image on the Holy Shroud as noted by both Pfeiffer (an expert on the Veil) and Fr. Werner Bulst (an expert on the Holy Shroud). Pfeiffer carried out systematic studies of the main works of art which represent Veronica's Veil before the image imposed by Pope Paul V in 1617 when Pope Paul prohibited copies of Veronica's veil being made unless made by a canon of St. Peter's Basilica.

In Pfeiffer's study of the main works of art representing the Veil, several details of these works of art all reflect a single model: they were copies of The Image in Manoppello. Similarities include:

...The cut and flow of the hair (shoulder length).

...The blood traces.

(Note: there is a claim of clotted blood on His nose and one pupil of the eye is slightly dilated. We note that the blood has not yet been directly tested as has that of the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium Christi, so we must reserve judgment as to whether this is, in fact, an ancient human blood.

...The shape of the face.

The cheeks are dissimilar: one rounder than the other and appear considerably swollen((John 18:22: 19:1-3). It is consistent with the reality of an asymmetrical face of a beaten man. The lack of symmetry could support a claim of authenticity.

...The beard's characteristics and size match those of the Shroud.

...The cloth's folds all reflect a single model - the Image in Manoppello.

...The tufts of hair on the forehead.

Pfeiffer notes a point recognized in Medieval times:

"The fact that the face appears and disappears according to where the light comes from was considered a miracle in itself in medieval times."

In the judgment of Pfeiffer:

"When all different details are assembled in one image, it means the image must have been the model for all the others. So, we can say that the veil of Manoppello is nothing other than the original Veronica Veil."

However, judgment must be reserved until further testing is done to include microscopic examination; infrared and ultraviolet fluorescence; blood studies and pollen studies, chemical analysis - to name a few.

Is There Paint or Water Color on the Veil?

As noted by Roberto Falcinelli in his excellent article "*The Veil of Manoppello: Work of Art or Authentic Relic?*" in 1999 the Friar responsible for the Monastery of Manoppello contacted Professor Donato Vittore, a traumatologist at the Medical Center of the University of Bari (Italy). Vittore utilized a digital scanner and a photographic optical machine to obtain high-resolution images of the Veil. As Falcinelli notes:

"The first impression he (Vittore) got when he stood in front of the Holy Face was as if looking at a painting. After having photographed it, he studied the images rendered at the computer and said that no traces of residual paint were visible in the spaces between the threads in the fabric. He also ruled out the possibility that it could have been watercolor, as the image's outlines are extremely precise around the eyes and the mouth, while watercolor paint would have unevenly soaked the fabric causing fuzziness in the details."

Falcinelli notes that "this affirmation of the Professor Vittore remains to be verified."

Lorenzo Bianchi notes in his article "*The Veil of Manoppello,*"

"In 1998-1999 some initial investigation of a scientific nature was conducted on the Holy Countenance of Manoppello by Donato Vittore, a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Bari. The Veil was digitally scanned at high resolution. Vittore found that the interstices between the weft and the warp of the thread show no paint residues. This allowed him to rule out the possibility that the Holy Countenance was produced by oil

painting, given the lack of paint deposit, nor by watercolor painting, since the outlines of the image are very sharp in the eye and mouth and there are no smears in the lines as would have occurred had the fabric been soaked by painting."

However, Bianchi also mentioned the work of Professor Giulio Fanti of the University of Padua. Fanti did further scientific studies and noted:

"Further microscopic and spectroscopic examination was carried out by Giulio Fanti, professor of Mechanical and Thermal engineering at the University of Padua. Ultraviolet analysis using a Wood's lamp confirmed the results of a test done in 1971: neither the tissue nor the image of the Countenance show appreciable fluorescence, to be expected in the presence of an amalgam of colors, whereas there is considerable fluorescence where there are signs of restoration, at the top right and left corners. Yet traces of substances (pigments?) seem present on other parts of the Veil. Infrared analysis, however, has also shown the absence of preparatory drawing below the image, and the absence of corrections. A 3-D construct shows more points of correspondence between the image of the Veil and the Shroud. It was noted in conclusion that, contrary to appearances, the two images (front and back) on the veil do not perfectly mirror each other: there are unusual differences in some details between front and back, difficult to explain, and so subtle that the idea that we can speak of painting is technically very problematic."

The absence of a "preparatory drawing" is noteworthy. Artist Isabel Piczek, talking about the Holy Shroud, once noted the same thing and mentioned that the lack of outline, which she called the "horizon event in art" would not be how an artist would have worked.

Professor Fanti does note that:

"The image of the Holy Face on the other hand seems to carry different actual shades of color. No chemical tests have yet been carried out on the image of the Holy Face, which makes it impossible to draw certain conclusions; however, in some areas, like around the pupils and the hair, the presence of pigment has been ascertained: the paint is possibly due to some Middle Ages retouch. For the moment we cannot rule out that the whole cloth was painted in watercolor technique... In some spots, due to possible retouches in Medieval

times, some of the fibrillae of the Holy Face image clearly appear clinging together as if cemented."

In summary, the coloring on the Veil could be representative that the Veil was a painting or that the Veil is authentic and affected by a Medieval touch-up.

A Painting or Authentic Veil with Medieval Touch-ups?

Along these lines, Roberto Falcinelli believes that this is likely a watercolor painting by Albrecht Durer which Durer gave to the Renaissance master Rafael. However, Fr. Pfeiffer maintains that the Roman Veronica was taken in 1608. Durer was born in 1471 and died in 1528 while Raphael was born in 1483 and died in 1520. While Falcinelli makes an interesting case, we would have to consider:

1. Why such a great object as the Veronica was not credited by historians of the period to Durer or Rafael.
2. How the work of this German master arrived in the small village of Manoppello (or) how it got to Rome before 1608? An image was already in place in Rome for centuries up to this point. If Rome believed it had the authentic Veronica since 708, why would authorities replace it with Durer's work?
3. Does Durer have other works in watercolor on Byssus and are these two-sided? Note: Prof. Fanti writes of an image of the head and possibly of the hands on the Holy Shroud after analyzing the back side of the Shroud on pictures taken after its restoration in 2002. He refers to this find as a "*double superficiality of the frontal image of the Turin Shroud.*"

The image may appear on both sides - similar to the Veronica.

We would need to explain the appearance of an Imaged Cloth representing the Veronica for several centuries in Rome before Durer or Rafael lived.

Scientific Notes:

...The image clearly appears on both sides of the transparent cloth like a photo slide.

...The Veil is believed to be made of Byssus, a sea silk, and extremely fine, rare and valuable fabric produced from the long silky filaments or Byssus secreted by a gland in

the foot of several bivalve mollusks by which they attach themselves to the sea bed. The shell of the mollusk is almost a meter long, adheres itself to rocks with a tuft of very strong thin fibers, pointed end down in the intertidal zone.

The hypothesis about the fabric being marine Byssus was supported in 2004 by Chiara Vigo, one of the last weavers of this material. Final confirmation will come from direct tactile examination or other studies. It should be noted that marine Byssus is a smooth and impermeable fiber and is considered technically not paintable because the paint, as Bianchi notes, "would tend to slip forming crusts which do not appear on the cloth."

...Image is claimed to be super-imposable with the face on the Holy Shroud. Fr. Enrico Sammarco and Sister Blandina Paschalis Schlomer have demonstrated that the dimensions on the face of the Holy Shroud are the same as on the veil of Manoppello.

Need for Further Study:

Pollen studies have not been done on the Veronica Veil and this would help greatly. It would be revealing if there is evidence of "Gundelia tournefortii" pollen (the thorn thistle pollen prevalent on both the Holy Shroud and the Sudarium Christi) or other pollen of the Jerusalem area. It would also help greatly if there was the spread of pollen from Turkey (Camulia and Constantinople) and Italy.

Blood studies would help to determine if the blood is Type AB found on both the Shroud and Sudarium. Also, the presence of the bile pigment "bilirubin" (found in Shroud blood studies) indicating high trauma and stress would greatly support authenticity. Finally, the DNA testing, if this is real human blood, could reveal, as it does on the Holy Shroud, whether or not this is a male blood and contains "a degraded DNA consistent with the supposition of ancient blood" as Dr. Victor Tryon of the University of Texas DNA labs noted of the occipital blood sample (at the back of head) of the Holy Shroud.

The Veil Lacks Three-Dimensionality:

It should be noted here that Professor Fanti indicated that the Manoppello Veil does not show as three dimensional under the VP-8 Image Analyzer, as does the Shroud photographic images. This is interesting but does not of itself indicate that the Veil may not be authentic. We must

be careful not to mix apples and oranges. If the Shroud was created, as we suspect, from a form of radiant energy emanating from within the body and creating vertical relief reflecting a cloth-to-body distance and three dimensionality, this does not mean that the Veil was created in the same manner.

The body in the tomb was deceased and, Christians believe, came to life in the Resurrection. The face in the Veil, on the other hand, is believed to be of the living Jesus whose face is being wiped as He carried His cross on the Via Dolorosa. A cloth is pressed onto His face by the alleged Veronica and leaves an imprint. The process of the creation of the Veronica, which admittedly we do not yet understand, was one that differed from the radiant energy believed by many involved with the creation of the Shroud images. It may be likened to the image of Mary on the Tilma of Guadeloupe - a mysterious imprint not yet understood.

The Value of Christian Tradition:

Today, the Church honors the Veronica Legend in the Sixth Station of the Cross: "Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus." There is some credibility added to the Veronica Veil Legend by the fact that Church tradition from earliest times honored the story of the woman who met Jesus on the path taken in His crucifixion and wiped His face of sweat and blood, imprinting His image on the cloth.

Promotion of the devotion to the Stations began in earnest with the Franciscans who were given custody of the Holy Places in the Holy Land in the 1300s. During the time of the Crusades (1095-1270) it became popular for pilgrims in the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of Jesus to Calvary. However, after the Moslems recaptured the Holy Land, pilgrimages were too dangerous. As a result, the Stations became a popular substitute for the Holy Land pilgrimage by bringing these practices to Europe. The Stations were originally done outdoors but the Stations were allowed inside churches in the mid-18th century.

However, the origins of the Stations (and possibly the Veronica) go back even earlier to 4th century (and likely 1st century) Jerusalem when pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land from all parts of the world to seek the path of Jesus during His passion. The path was not clear and became complicated because the Jerusalem of Jesus' day was almost completely destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 A.D. with

the fall of the Second Temple and Jerusalem. The pilgrims often had to guess where some incidents took place. The most popular site was the Church of the Holy Sepulcher which had been built by the Emperor Constantine in 335 AD atop Calvary and the tomb of Jesus. Processions of pilgrims to the church were common.

Conclusion:

We do have a line of references to this early legend of Veronica and a credible historical path leading from Jerusalem to Camulia, then to Constantinople and Rome and possibly to Manoppello. There are likely other references lost or not yet found that can fill the gaps.

We have also the tradition of the Church which has revered the Veronica from earliest times to the contemporary presence of the Veronica in the Stations of the Cross. While many do not yet place the Veronica on the same level of credibility as the Holy Shroud or the Sudarium, we continue to fill the gaps and hope that the authorities who possess the Veronica will allow careful scientific study of the Veronica to determine if the blood stains are comparable to those of the Shroud and Sudarium or whether the pollen tells a tale of the Veil's journey.

I draw four conclusions from these studies:

1. There is credible early historical and traditional support for the existence of the Veil of Veronica.
2. The Veil is NOT to be confused with the Sudarium Christi (Face Cloth) which has its own proven independent historical and scientific validity.
3. The original Veil is NOT currently in the Vatican in Rome.
4. The Veronica Veil MAY be in Manoppello. This will require further historical and scientific analysis especially with regard to blood and pollen studies.

We encourage the Capuchins to allow further non-destructive studies by a team of experts as was permitted by the Vatican on the Holy Shroud and by Spanish authorities on the Sudarium in Oviedo.

These are truly emerging treasures of our Christian heritage. As with the Holy Shroud, Jesus may have chosen to leave His mysterious images on the Veil of Veronica for all generations to ponder. If so, as with the Holy Shroud, there is a reason that He did this and we need to continue to study these treasure of our Christian heritage to seek to understand why the Images-on-Cloth visually support the

words of the Gospel as to who Jesus really is and what He accomplished for us.

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For comments and constructive criticism please feel free to contact the author, John C. Iannone, at jciannone@gmail.com or view his website at www.northstarproductions.org for his latest book: "**The Three Cloths of Christ: The Emerging Treasures of Christianity**" covering the latest information on the Holy Shroud, The Sudarium Christi and The Veil of Veronica.