

THE SHROUD OF TURIN: IS IT A PAINTING?

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It is eminently clear why this paper was presented in the Scientific Program of the Rome conference, rather than the section dealing with history and art. Isabel Piczek demonstrated with impressive authority that the artist is, first of all, a scientist.

She began her talk by giving her credentials: examples of her work in practically every known historical style and technique. The first question she addressed is whether the Shroud would qualify as a forgery or as an invention. Imitation, copy, falsification are distinguished and examples shown. But the prerequisite of a copy is an original, so the Shroud does not fit this category because no original ever existed. Nor can the Shroud be an invention, for "how far into the future can invention go?"

A more perplexing question concerns the submicron paint particles found on the Cloth. Pigments and liquid media are described, as well as the "laminated structure" of a painting; that is, the support, a ground, and layers of paint. The presence of paint particles on the surface of the Linen is no mystery to the readers of *Spectrum*. The capital studies by Luigi Fossati ("Copies of the Shroud", *Spectrum* 12 and 13, 1984) refer to the custom of laying painted copies upon the Shroud, rendering them "True Copies", as attested by accompanying documents. Miss Piczek describes her experiments to verify that particles could be transferred from a painted cloth to a clean cloth.

A riskier experiment was conducted from atop a 15-foot ladder. Miss Piczek is accustomed to high ladders and scaffolds in her work on murals and mosaics, but this time from her perch the artist, looking down upon a supine male in the curved Shroud position, wants to make a drawing true to the foreshortening seen on the frontal Image. Foreshortening was not understood until the XVth century.

The lack of outline on the Shroud Figure is impossibility in art; "Even the pointillists, who tried to dissolve it, still depended on it." Nor is there any light focus on the Image, although paradoxically the Figure is foreshortened; and no artist would be capable of this effect without light focus.

It is a very professional examination of the Shroud characteristics by a practicing artist whose first European mural, in Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute, was executed when she was 14 years old.

In conclusion, Isabel Piczek remarked: "The professional arts therefore must solemnly state that the Shroud of Turin cannot be, nor is it, a painting. Therefore it should not be conserved as a painting, or else we may destroy the only object on earth which is the blueprint of the future of our cosmos."

