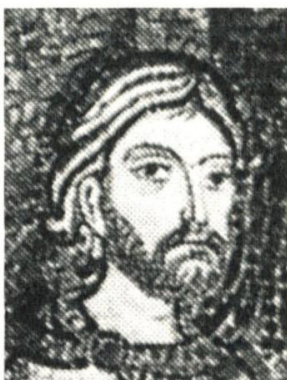


Two Locks



Shepherd; *Nativity*; mosaic, ca. 1143; Palermo



Unidentified; late XI<sup>th</sup> c.; St. Angelo in Formis

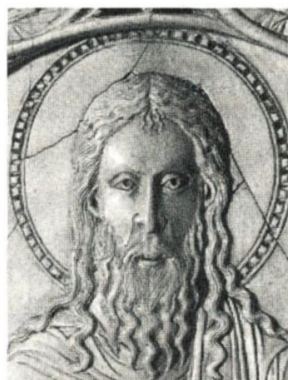


God; *Creation of Birds and Fishes*; mosaic, XII<sup>th</sup> c., Monreale, Sicily

Three Locks



Man in crowd; *Entry into Jerusalem*; fresco, 1164, Nerezi, Jugoslavia



St. John the Baptist, ivory relief, late XI<sup>th</sup> c., from Constantinople



Head of Christ, mosaic, VII<sup>th</sup> c., Church of St. Sophia, Salonica

Sweeping Locks



Man in crowd; *Entry into Jerusalem*; fresco, 1164; Church of Nerezi



Christ Pantocrator; mosaic, ca. 1155; Cefalu, Sicily



Unidentified; probably Zoe. Byzantine, XI<sup>th</sup> c.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

The most distinctive feature on the Face of the Holy Shroud is the epsilon bloodflow on the forehead. Distinctive because of its puzzling shape, unlike any ordinary flow, radically different from the thin straight trickles painted by artists; because of its uniform color and density, dark and opaque; and because of its location, there where it cannot be missed, starting out darkly from the shadowy imprint of the forehead to stop above the left eyebrow, like the mark of the chrism on the Divine Visage. It is often called the "Sign of Authenticity", for what artist could ever have imagined it?

When he asked, "Did not the top of this furnish a pretext for the short locks which often appear on the forehead?", Paul Vignon was referring, not to a bloodclot but to a vertical shadow in the middle of the forehead (*Le Saint Suaire*, p. 130 and illustrations, *The Holy Face of Laon and the Christ of Meliore Toscano*, 1271). Later, it was surmised that the forelock on so many "traditional" portraits of Christ was a misinterpretation of the bloodflow; and the idea bounces from book to book, although no one has brought forth any evidence that it is true.

It is significant that this forelock is seen only in Byzantine art, in the West as well as the East. While it is by no means a constant feature, it is fairly common from about the IX<sup>th</sup> to the XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a few examples spattered into the XIV<sup>th</sup>.

Baby Jesus; *Nativity*;



ca. 1143; Palermo

From the center part at the hairline, the forelock grows from a sort of tuft to two short "stray" hairs to the sweeping curve across the forehead, more menacing than majestic.

Indeed, it would seem to be nothing more than a stylistic affectation of the Greeks since it adorns the foreheads not only of many holy people—virgins, saints, prophets, angels and archangels, even the ancients in Limbo: yes, even God the Father, for "who sees Me sees the Father": but also ordinary people in a crowd, humble people such as the shepherds of Bethlehem, blind beggars as well as fashionable women of Constantinople....

If the forelock were a feature from the Shroud, one might expect to find it on the "Edessa Images" of Genoa or the Vatican, or the "Veronica" of St. Peters. One might expect that some of the artist-copyists of the Renaissance might have indicated it in some way; but that is not the case.

Perhaps this Question only seems to be Without an Answer simply because this is the first time it has been asked?