

Holy Shroud Guild

ESOPUS, NEW YORK 12429

Affiliated to the *Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia*, Turin, Italy.

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February 21, 1981

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Dr. Walter McCrone
McCrone Research Institute
2508 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Ill. 60616 - USA

Dear Dr. McCrone:

I was ever so pleased to receive your February 5 letter with welcome enclosure. Thank you very much indeed! Just hearing again from you and Mrs. McCrone is a joy!

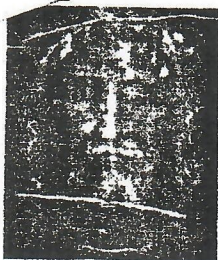
I took time to read very carefully your valued study in two parts "Light Microscopic Study of the Turin Shroud." As you know, I have never questioned the method and efficiency of your work, and I accept the data you uncovered in the Shroud without reserve. Where we part the way, as you know, is in the interpretation of those data.

In your Study there are to my mind contradictions which are more than just apparent, and I will be grateful to you if you can clarify them for me. Incidentally, it is unfortunate your printer did not number the pages. I numbered them myself for easy reference, Part I from 1 to 10, and Part II from 1 to fourteen.

On page 2 of Part I you state: "We now believe that the image is made up of uniformly stained fibers plus an iron oxide pigment. The latter may have been added (applied on the cloth?) to form the image or to enhance an earlier uniform yellow stain."

On page 8 of Part II you speak of "finely divided iron oxide pigment dispersed in a tempera medium," which you say "must account for a very large proportion, if not all, of the visible image."

How do you reconcile what you wrote on page 2 of Part I with what you have on page 8 of Part II?



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(Letter to Dr. W. McCrone - Feb. 21/81)

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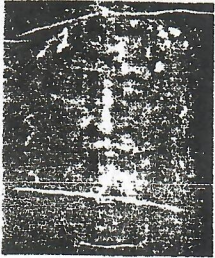
Permit me now to call your attention to your ambivalence on the issue of image formation. Is it or is it not the entire image the pigmented tempera is responsible for? And if it is responsible for only part of the image (as you seem to think), what could be responsible for the other portion? You say: "Possibly an earlier authentic image." I assume that by "authentic" you mean an image due to causes other than an artist's hand. But if you are sure of your findings, what makes you think that the pigmented tempera you found is not itself sufficient to explain the entire picture? If you are not sure of your findings, and if you cannot prove the presence or absence of an earlier authentic image, are you justified, as a scientist, to conclude: "I believe the entire image has been applied to the cloth by a highly skilled, well-informed artist?"

And now the crucial question: Is the finely divided iron oxide dispersed in a tempera medium actually responsible for the image on the Shroud?

On page 8 of Part II of your Study, you make an amazing statement. You write: "The macroscopically visible image today shows microscopically that it can be explained as a paint medium with dispersed iron oxide pigment." I am not sure physicists and art experts will readily subscribe to that statement. Invisible (to the unaided eye) deposits of iron oxide in invisible tempera can hardly be expected to result in the extraordinarily visible image we have on the Shroud, all the more remarkable when photographed and seen on the negative. The jump from microscopic to macroscopic leaves a great deal to explain. If the iron oxide is invisible to the unaided eye, what makes the image visible?

I have in front of me an oil painting of my late father. It is done in extremely light, refined brush strokes, yet I can clearly detect the pigmented tempera responsible for the image. Am I right to say that, if I see my father's likeness at all, it is because of the visible pigmented tempera? Were this pigmented tempera invisible to the unaided eye, I would certainly not be able to see my father's likeness. Or am I wrong?

I now ask: What is it I see on the Shroud? Indeed a visible image! But you tell me that the components of this image (the iron oxide pigment and the animal collagen you found on the Shroud) are not visible at all to



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the unaided eye, that it takes a microscope to detect them. What then makes the image visible? Why is it I see the pigmented tempera on my father's portrait, but need a microscope to detect it on the Shroud? And why would I not need a microscope to see the image on the Shroud if the pigmented tempera that causes it is visible only with a microscope? Do these questions make sense? How do you answer them?

You further state (page 9, Part II) that if the components of the image on the Shroud, visible only microscopically, could be removed from the cloth, you believe the image would disappear from the cloth. But how can that be when these components are invisible while the image is visible? Since the visible image does not, in fact cannot depend on invisible components (when and how does microscopic become macroscopic?), removing its invisible components would in no way affect it. Again, do these questions make sense? If not, would you, Dr. McCrone, explain to me why they do not?

Forgive me for saying this, but the tendency to rush to the conclusion that the Shroud is "the work of an artist" seems to have plagued you from the onset of the research. It will not help you to say now what you write in your letter to me. I quote: "I have never said the Shroud is a fake because I can't be sure from what I know. I can say, and have said only, that I believe it to be the work of an artist...My work only proves it to have been at least partly the work of an artist. There is no way anyone can prove it is wholly the work of an artist." Your quote on page 9 of Part II of your Study is in glaring contradiction with the words I just quoted from your letter. You write in your Study: "Although I cannot prove the presence or absence of an earlier authentic image, I believe the entire image has been applied to the cloth by a highly skilled and well-informed artist." If the word believe has any meaning at all, this means your work has convinced you the entire image on the Shroud

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is the work of an artist, quite simply a fake.

In spite of your self-assured statements, such as the one I have just quoted, I can readily appreciate the fact that you seem to be haunted by the possibility that "an earlier authentic" image (other than an artist could have produced) may have been on the Shroud after all. I believe you must realize that the invisible, microscopic deposits of iron oxide pigment and of animal collagen you claim to have found on the Shroud may neither quantitatively nor qualitatively explain the image on the Shroud. In other words, your clear-cut statement that "the macroscopically visible image shows microscopically that it can be explained as paint medium with dispersed iron oxide pigment," may have to be revised.

But, dear Dr. McCrone, why not say so clearly and unequivocally? Forgive me if I say that your STUDY is a study in verbal seesawing. Your conclusion does prove it again. "That an artist either enhanced an earlier image or created the entire image is inescapable." What makes you say that it is "inescapable" that an artist enhanced an earlier image when you cannot prove there was such an image? And what makes you say it is "inescapable" that an artist painted the entire image when in the very letter you wrote to me you stated once again: "There is no way anyone can prove it is wholly an artist's work"?

And so, with respect, I must refer you to the questions our Shroud Center people here ask: "What is Dr. McCrone trying to prove? What is he trying to disprove?" The feeling among them is that your MICROSCOPE STUDY has in no way clarified your position. I must add that your position has been getting a great deal of attention here at the Center, and it is possible that the international SINDON magazine may soon present an article on your article in MICROSCOPE.

Trusting I will hear from you soon, and with warm regards to yourself and Mrs. McCrone,

Cordially,

Fr. Peter M. Rinaldi, S.D.B.
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