

The Shroud of Turin – Dr. Alan Whanger Interview

The Shroud of Turin is perhaps the most enigmatic artifact that is on our planet. It is the source of endless controversy as to its authenticity. It has undergone numerous tests and is the subject of countless books and articles. It remained an artifact that, although treasured by those in charge of its keeping, was not fully realized until it was photographed in the early part of the twentieth century by Secondo Pia. What he discovered was that the image on the Shroud – that of a crucified man – was a negative image and that when photographed became a positive image on the film. Needless to say this started the ongoing research and vast speculation regarding how and when the image was made. Dr. Whanger has spent decades researching the Shroud and has discovered artifacts on it that have been overlooked by other researchers. I have included this interview, which has nothing to do with the alien agenda as such but has everything to do with the supernatural, or paranormal, as some prefer to label phenomena that are outside our realm of science and understanding.

I have saved it for last in order to offer an alternative view in regard to the phenomenon of UFOs. Keep in mind that we are dealing with supernatural forces that may have been responsible for the creation of the image on the Shroud. First, let's read the interview about the Shroud. Afterward, I will weigh in and give you my thoughts and tie this in with what we have learned from our other interviews.

(Note: because of the extensive biography of Dr. Whanger, I have inserted it at the end of the interview).

L.A.: Thank you for taking the time to talk to us about the enigmatic Shroud of Turin. Would you please give us a short description of what the Shroud of Turin is?

Dr. W.: The Shroud is a piece of fine, herringbone twill, yellowed linen fabric measuring 14' 3" in length and 3' 7" wide with the faint front and back images of a young Middle Eastern male

who has been beaten, scourged, and crucified in exactly the way that Jesus was, as described in the Scriptures. There are visible blood flows indicating that a crown of thorns was placed on his head and that he was speared in the right side of the chest after death. The Shroud has been located in a cathedral in Turin, Italy, since 1578.

L.A.: I find it interesting that the nail holes are in the wrists instead of the usually depicted palms of the hands as seen in most paintings. I have read that this positioning of the nails is the only place that would support the weight of a crucified man. Can you elaborate on this for us?

Dr. W.: A nail wound is quite plainly visible in the left wrist, and detailed studies show that a half-inch wide square nail was put through the only spot in the wrist that a nail could be driven without breaking any bones. The tissues in the hand are not strong enough to support a crucified person without the nail tearing out. The Romans, who did thousands of crucifixions, knew that the individual had to be nailed either through the wrist or between the bones of the forearm to hold the victim on the cross.

L.A.: Why do you maintain that the Shroud is not a painting?

Dr. W.: Detailed scientific studies have shown that there is no dye, pigment, stain, or artistic medium of any kind on the Shroud that have anything to do with the images. There are a few scattered short loose threads on the Shroud, which have pigments on them, but these came from artistic copies of the Shroud which were made in the Middle Ages and then laid directly on the Shroud, thus transferring pigment fragments from the copy to the Shroud. No pigment, no painting.

L.A.: When was the first photograph of the Shroud and what startling details did it reveal?

Dr. W.: The Shroud, with its faint, rather ghostly images, was photographed for the first time in 1898 by the Italian photographer Secondo Pia. He was startled to find that on developing his negative that he had a very vivid, normal human-appearing positive image. In other words, the Shroud image has characteristics of a photographic negative.

L.A.: Why, if as skeptics claim it is the work of a fourteenth century forger, would that "artist" know about positive and negative photographic imagery and work that into his "hoax?"

Dr. W.: It is preposterous to consider that any artist, medieval or modern, could produce a fourteen-foot long, anatomically and physiologically correct human image in the photographic negative by a still unknown process, especially centuries before the principles of photography were known.

L.A.: Can you tell us about the cloth itself? It's origin?

Dr. W.: The Shroud fabric is fine linen with an unusual herringbone 3-in-1 twill weave, and probably originated in Syria or Egypt. Fine linen in Scriptures is often associated with gold and silver, and in Israel at the time of Jesus was used mainly for hangings in the Temple and the robes of the high priest. It was purchased new for the burial Shroud of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea, a very rich man and a secret disciple of Jesus.

L.A.: You made a recent discovery of newly found images on the Shroud. Can you tell us what you found around the area of the eyes?

Dr. W.: A significant amount of our research has been the detailed analysis of faint images on the Shroud in addition to the body itself, largely based on over 30 extremely high-grade photographs of the Shroud that we have made from the excellent photographs taken by Guiseppe Enrie in 1931. There are circular images over each eye, and these turn out to be the images of Jewish coins (the prutah or lepton or "widow's mite") both struck under Pontius Pilate in AD 29. The clearer image over the right eye can be seen using our polarized image overlay technique on our website at <http://www.shroudouncil.org>.

L.A.: Why is the carbon-14 dating so controversial? What new evidence has come to light that for the most part has been suppressed by the mainstream media?

Dr. W.: In 1988 the Shroud underwent a radioactive C14 carbon-dating procedure, and the result apparently showed that the Shroud dated from between AD 1260 and 1390, thus indicating that the Shroud is a medieval fake. This result delighted the skeptics, and was announced in the media worldwide. Since we had previously dated the Shroud by other means to the spring of AD 30 in the vicinity of Jerusalem, we did not believe the C14 result for a moment. The question was how such an erroneous date could have come about. A group of 24 carbon-dating experts had met in 1986 to set up the protocol or procedures for doing the dating, which involved taking multiple samples, using seven laboratories, using two different techniques, and studying the samples very carefully before the testing to see if contaminants were present. For reasons unknown, the entire protocol was dumped, and a single sample was taken from a repaired corner, a piece of which was sent to three laboratories that did the same test on the same sample. We observed on viewing the video of the sample taking that there were abnormal threads running through the sample. Multiple, more recent chemical and microscopic tests, and observations on the x-rays made of the Shroud, have shown that indeed this area had been meticulously repaired and rewoven, probably after the fire damage of 1532, and so much of the fabric tested was actually dyed cotton fibers used in the repairs. This totally invalidates the results of the C14 test. The general media has suppressed this information, and skeptics continue to cite this test to "prove" that the Shroud is a fake.

L.A.: There has been reference by skeptics who point out the disparity of the Gospel accounts of the Shroud particularly between John and the others. Why are there no traces of the more than 100 pounds of spices that John alludes to in his account on the Shroud?

Dr. W.: The quantity of the burial spices had to do with the honor given to the deceased. They were not used to try to preserve the body, since the Jews did not practice any type of embalming. Rather, most of the spices were used either to paint the walls of the tomb to cover the odors of the decaying body, or were burned as a final offering to God. On the Shroud are the images and pollen grains of many flowers that were put inside the Shroud, mainly for aesthetic reasons, and images of many berries of the Pistacia plant, which is a spice, scattered in the Shroud. Minor differences of details between the Gospel writers are really inconsequential. John was an eyewitness and, we think, generally gives the best account.

L.A.: There has been a recent discovery that the Shroud is in fact a holographic image; can you explain?

Dr. W.: Within the past couple of years, Dr. Petrus Soons, a retired specialist in medical imaging who was studying the Shroud face, thought that there is additional information in the image. He took a photograph of the Shroud face to colleagues at the Dutch Holographic Laboratories, who, after considerable work, produced some holographic, or 3D, images of the Shroud, first of the face and later of the whole body. These images, which require special lighting to see them, are stunning, showing the body in vivid detail and as though it is lifted about a foot off of the Shroud itself.

L.A.: What would you say to skeptics who dismiss the Shroud without looking at the preponderance of evidence that seems to authenticate it?

Dr. W.: It has been said that for the true believer, no evidence is needed; and for the true skeptic, no evidence is sufficient. The Shroud is good news to most people, but bad news to those who wish to deny the reality of Jesus or the Crucifixion or the physical Resurrection. Rather than to look at the evidence or consider its implications, the true skeptics would rather ignore or deny the Shroud and the extensive scientific tests that have been done on it.

L.A.: In your book you have discovered other images that are on the Shroud. Can you give us a brief explanation of what these are?

Dr. W.: The image of the body of Jesus of course is the principle and crucial feature of the Shroud, but there are very faint and fragmentary images of many other objects on the Shroud. This includes hundreds of flowers, many of which can be accurately identified, and all of the implements involved with the Passion and the Crucifixion, including a crucifixion nail, the Roman spear, the sponge on a reed, a hammer, two Roman scourges, two Crowns of Thorns, a pair of sandals, a brush broom, a set of dice, and, for mocking, an amulet of Tiberius Caesar hanging around the neck and two desecrated Jewish phylacteries or prayer boxes. By Jewish custom, anything that had the life blood on it, or was in touch with the body at the time of death, was buried with the body, thus accounting for many unusual objects.

L.A.: There is a theory put forth that the Shroud was made by a "new type of physics." Can you explain?

Dr. W.: The fact that the Shroud image is produced by at least two types of vertically directed radiation coming both from within the body and from its surface, with the body abruptly disappearing from within the folded Shroud between 30 and 36 hours after death, leaving a unique image encoding three-dimensional information, indicates that there are processes illustrated by the Shroud which go beyond the ordinary laws of physics and nature. This opens new areas for study and reflection.

L.A.: Your closing thoughts?

Dr. W.: While we were long ago convinced that the Shroud is indeed the actual burial Shroud of Jesus, with the image produced by a still unknown means at the moment of the Resurrection showing in the single image the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our approach is

to encourage and enable others to thoughtfully look at the evidence for themselves and draw their own conclusions and inferences. It is as though Jesus left the Shroud for modern-day Doubting Thomases who need to see the evidence for themselves.

Biographical Information

Alan D. Whanger, M.D. and Mary W. Whanger

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Alan D. Whanger, M.D.

1993 - Professor Emeritus, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, N.C.

1968-70 - Fellow in Geropsychiatry, Duke University Medical Center

1965-68 - Residency in Psychiatry, Duke University Medical Center

1960-61 - Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, University of London

1957-60 - Residency in General Surgery, Crile VA Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio

1956-57 - Medical Internship, St. Luke's Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio

1956 - M.D. Degree, Duke University School of Medicine

1952 - A.B. Degree in Pre-Medicine and Sociology, Duke University

Chapters or sections of professional books: in 28 books.

Articles published in professional journals: 16.

Co-editor, one professional textbook.

Mary W. Whanger

1951 - A.B. Degree in Religion, Duke University

Also trained in domestic science, secretarial skills, and elementary education.

Dr. & Mrs. Whanger returned from four years of medical and educational work in Zimbabwe in 1965 and have lived in Durham, North Carolina, since then. They have two children and seven grandchildren. Dr. Whanger was a member of the faculty of the Duke University Medical Center from 1970 until the time of his retirement in 1993. Mrs. Whanger has held volunteer leadership positions in the United Methodist Church on local, conference, and jurisdictional levels. She has edited most of Dr. Whanger's writings, both professional and relating to the Shroud of Turin. They were members of the Association of Scientists and Scholars International 1983-1993. They have been members of the research team of the Centro Español de Sindonología (Valencia, Spain) since 1994. They are founding members of Council for Study of the Shroud of Turin, 1994. Dr. Whanger is chairman of the Board of Directors; Mrs. Whanger is secretary.

Books

1. Mary and Alan Whanger, *The Shroud of Turin: An Adventure in Discovery*, Providence House Publishers, Franklin, TN, 1998. ISBN 1-57736-079-6.
2. Avinoam Danin, Alan D. Whanger, Uri Baruch, Mary Whanger, *Flora of the Shroud of Turin*, Missouri Botanical Garden Press, St. Louis, MO, 1999. ISBN 0-915279-76-2.

3. Arthur Tucker, Robert Naczi, Susan Yost, Alan Whanger, & Mary Whanger *The Botany of the Shroud of Turin: A Floral Crime Scene Investigation*, Claude E. Phillips Herbarium, Delaware State University, Dover, DE, 2004.

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2. Alan Whanger, "Pollens on the Shroud: A Study in Deception," *Shroud News* (newsletter, widely distributed but not found in libraries) 97 (September, 1996): 11-19.
3. Alan & Mary Whanger, "Polarized Image Overlay Technique: A New Image Comparison Method and its Applications," *Applied Optics* 24:6 (March 15, 1985): 766-72.
4. Alan & Mary Whanger "Comments on the C14 Carbon Dating Results on the Shroud of Turin," *Shroud News* 50 December, 1988): 57-61.
5. Alan & Mary Whanger, "New Research Findings on the Origin and Date of the Shroud of Turin," *Shroud News* 58 (April, 1990): 9-13.
6. Alan & Mary Whanger, "Floral, Coin, and Other Non-body Images on the Shroud of Turin," *Shroud News* 59 (June, 1990): 10-20.
7. Alan & Mary Whanger, "Evidence of Early Origin and Nature of the Shroud of Turin by Image Analysis and Optical Comparison," *Shroud News* 65 (June, 1991): 8-18.
8. Alan & Mary Whanger, "A Quantitative Optical Technique for Analyzing and Authenticating the Images on the Shroud of Turin," in A. Berard, S.J., ed, *History, Science, Theology and the Shroud. Symposium Proceedings* 303-4 St. Louis, MO. June 22-23, 1991. Privately Printed. And *Sources for Information and Materials on the Shroud of Turin* (November, 1991: 6-8. And *Shroud News* 69 (February, 1992): 7-11.
9. Alan Adler and Alan and Mary Whanger, "Concerning the Side Strip on the Shroud of Turin," in Proceedings of C.I.E.L.T. international symposium on the Shroud in Nice, France. May, 1997.
10. Alan Whanger, "Radiation in the Formation of the Shroud Image - The Evidence," in M. Minor, ed., *The Shroud of Turin: Unraveling the Mystery. Proceedings of the 1998 Dallas Symposium*. Alexander Books, Alexander, NC, 2001: 182-189.
11. Mary Whanger, "Non-Body Images on the Shroud," in M. Minor, ed., *The Shroud of Turin: Unraveling the Mystery. Proceedings of the 1998 Dallas Symposium*. Alexander Books, Alexander, NC. 2001: 239-246.
12. Alan and Mary Whanger, "The Real Date of the Shroud: The Visual Evidence," in B. Walsh, ed., *Proceedings of the 1999 Shroud of Turin International Research Conference, Richmond, Virginia*. Magisterium Press, Richmond, VA, 2000: 69-77.

13. Alan Whanger, "Evidence for Radiation from the Shroud Image Itself in the Formation of the Shroud Images," in S. Scannerini, ed., *An International Symposium, Turin 2000*. Effata Editrice Press, Turin, Italy, 2000: 189-205.
14. Mary W. Whanger, "The Tunic of Argenteuil – Summary Excerpts from 'The Shroud and Related Relics,' A Paper for the Second International Dallas Shroud Conference, in *CSST NEWS*, Nov. 2001, P.O. Box 3190, Durham, NC 27715-3190.
15. Mary W. Whanger, "Crown of Thorns, Sudarium, Nails – Continuation of Summary Excerpts from 'The Shroud and Related Relics,' A Paper for the Second International Dallas Shroud Conference, in *CSST NEWS*, March 2002, P.O. Box 3190, Durham, NC 27715-3190.
16. Alan D. Whanger, M.D. and Mary W. Whanger, "Two Crowns of Thorns on the Shroud, Part 1," in *CSST NEWS*, July 2002; "Two Crowns of Thorns on the Shroud, Part 2," in *CSST NEWS*, Nov. 2002; P.O. Box 3190, Durham, NC 27715-3190.

Many additional articles, letters, correspondence and citations can be found in *CSST NEWS* and in the excellent website