

Manoppello, Shroud and Durer. Short presentation.

By O.K.

Background: Roberto Falcinelli's in the paper [The Veil of Manoppello: Work of Art or Authentic Relic?](#) (from the 3rd International Dallas Conference on the Shroud of Turin in 2005) claims (by citing some ambiguous references about Dürer's biography from the book of Giorgio Vasari, 16th century painter and architect) that Manoppello Image may be Dürer's self-portrait (or portrait of Raphael), instead of image of Christ.

In the thread [Matching Faces. Is it possible?](#) on Shroudstory, David Goulet commented:

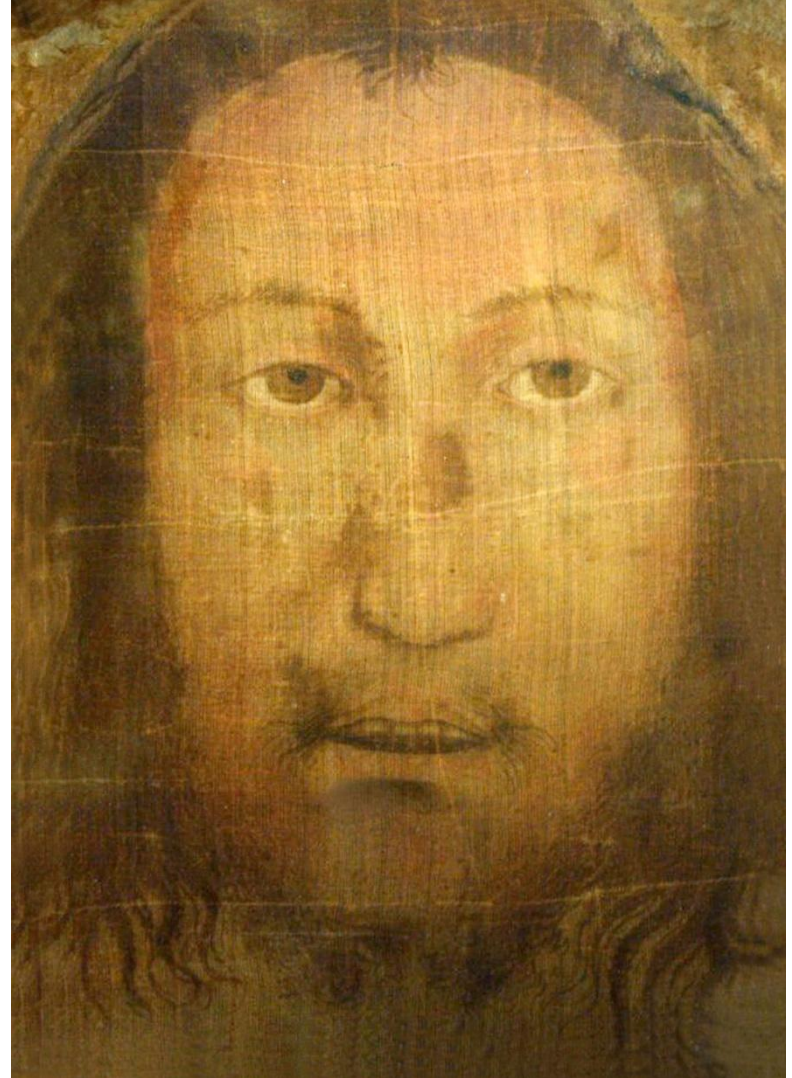
OK, it would be a interesting experiment to use Dave Hines imaging overlay with the Manoppello image and the Albrecht Durer painting.

So let's do it.

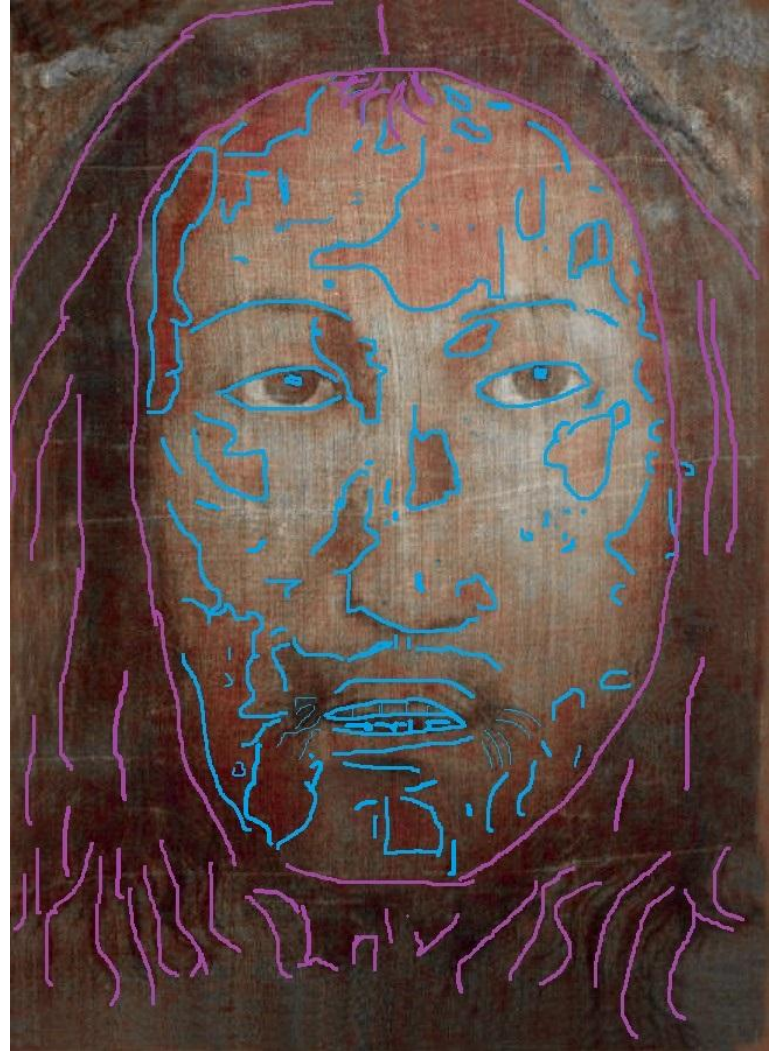


Here we have the famous self-portrait of Dürer (painted around 1500). From [Wikipedia article](#):

The self-portrait is most remarkable because of its resemblance to many earlier representations of Christ. Art historians note the similarities with the conventions of religious painting, including its symmetry, dark tones and the manner in which the artist directly confronts the viewer and raises his hands to the middle of his chest as if in the act of blessing



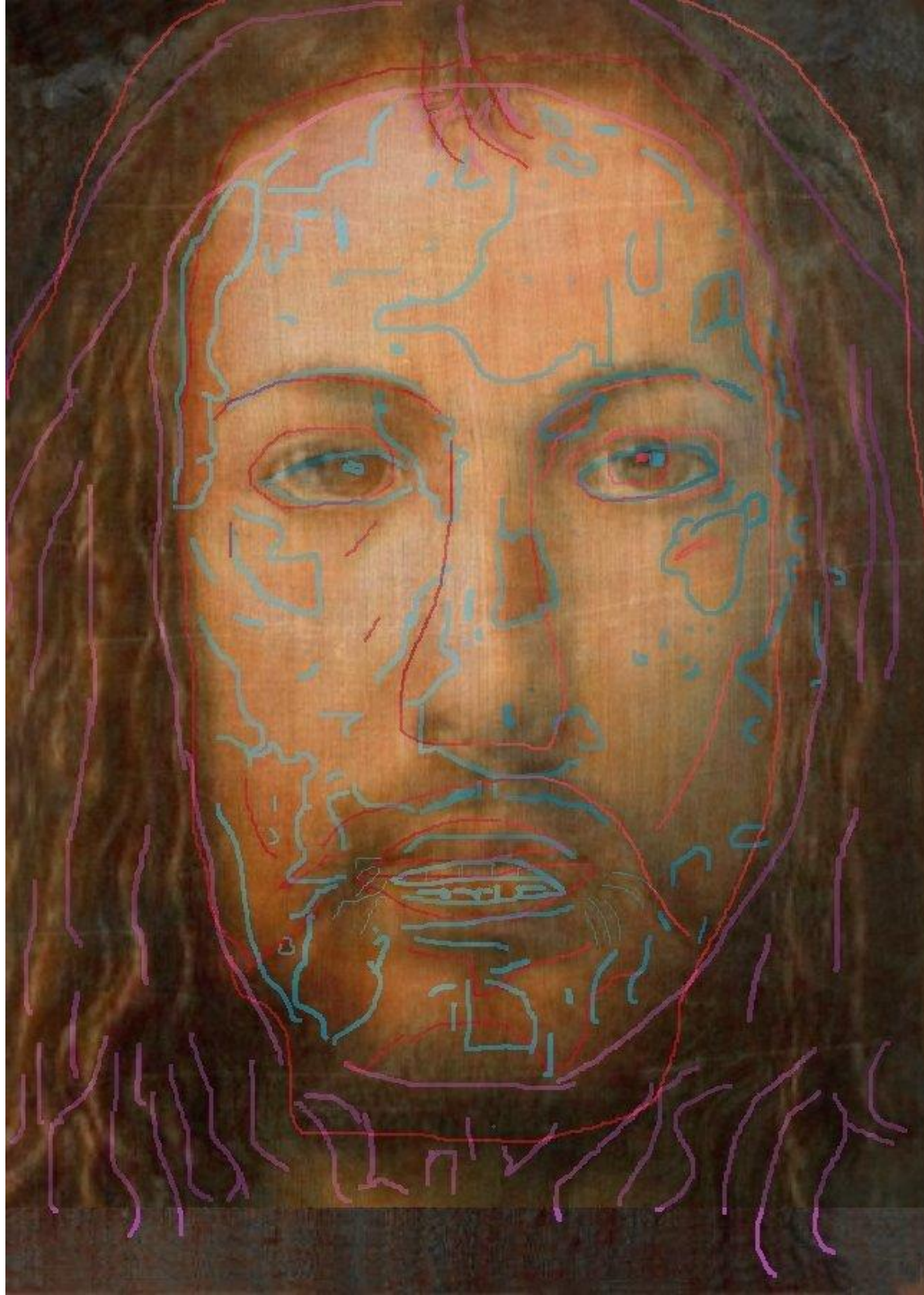
Let's get the key area and perform visual comparison with Manoppello Image. First without any markings.



And now let's mark the most prominent features on both Dürer and Manoppello (the latter has RGB adjusted to pronounce Passion wounds – borrowed it with permission [from Juliusz Maszloch site](#) , for comparisons with the Shroud).

Here we have
overlay:

(it took me
about 10
minutes to
make it)



At first glance, the correspondence is (not surprisingly) striking. Does it prove Falcinelli's theory that Manoppello Image is in fact lost self-portrait by Dürer?

Despite obvious similarities, the answer is

NO!

In fact, it should be stressed that similarities between Manoppello and Dürer's self-portrait are actually a **double-edged sword**.

We have quite a sort of chicken-egg dilemma: which came first?

Falcinelli's theory:

- Falcinelli bases his hypothesis on several conjectures:
- First, he writes: *In December 1999 I went for the first time to the Sanctuary of the Holy Face to observe and photograph the veil [...] On 27th October 2001 I went to Manoppello once again [...] On this occasion I took shots with colour film, slides and black and white film in 6 by 6 format. I was also allowed [...] to observe the Holy Face through a portable microscope [...] In some spots the presence of pigment-like material was quite evident. After analyzing my photographic shots and observing the veil upclose I was convinced that the Veil of Manoppello is probably a pictorial artwork of 1500.*

- Then he writes: *As my essay examined the connection between Christ's iconography and Dürer's self portrait dated 1500, I sought information on this specific topic (ph.17-18). One of the most interesting pieces of information I managed to find was in a chapter of Giorgio Vasari's book on Raphael Sanzio's life. There he tells of Raphael sending some of his drawings to Dürer, who promptly reciprocated: "By these and other works the fame of Raphael spread to France and Flanders. Albert Dürer, a remarkable German painter and author of some fine copper engravings, paid him the tribute of his homage and sent him his own portrait, painted in water-colours, on byssus, so fine that it was transparent, without the use of white paint, the white material forming the lights of the picture This appeared marvellous to Raphael, who sent back many drawings of his own which were greatly valued by Albert..."* After reading this passage I felt quite surprised as the description of the self-portrait which Dürer gave to Raphael matched in an amazing way the image on the Veil of Manoppello.

- Following: *Knowing the organoleptic uniqueness of the Holy Face, which according to current studies appears to be the only one in the world, I was rather astonished. Nevertheless, after this initial clue, I kept looking for more detailed information on the subject. As I needed the authoritative support of an expert, I sought the advice of Professor Rosella Gallo of the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, and I informed her about my findings. She got back to me after a couple of days telling me that there was a further mention of the selfportrait in the second edition of Vasari's "La Giuntina" in the chapter on the life of Giulio Romano. Here is the text:(ph.20) "Among the numerous treasures in his house there was a portrait of Albert Durer, by himself, on fine cambric, sent by him to Raphael, diligently executed in water-colours, and finished without using white lead, the fabric itself serving for the whites and the fine threads being used to represent the hairs of the beard, and when held up to the light it was transparent all over. Giulio, who valued it highly, showed it to me himself as a miracle once when I was on business at Mantua"* This new passage by Vasari strengthened my belief that the object he described was none other than the Holy Face of Manoppello.

- Also: *Carrying on with my research, I came across an essay on Dürer by Wolfram Prinz. Here there is a paragraph about self-portraits in the introduction, where I found this rather interesting passage: “The importance that Dürer gave to self-portraits as a statement of his own personality is also proved by the numerous accounts on the portrait that went missing. Vasari claims to have seen it in Mantua at Giulio Romano’s, who inherited it from Raphael. Raphael was in turn given it by Dürer and later sent him his drawing of the Battle of Ostia in exchange. According to Vasari, Dürer’s self-portrait was painted in watercolour on a canvas so extremely fine that it could be seen from both the front and the back side. It was truly a piece of virtuosity, which beside immortalizing the artist’s features was clearly intended to show his painting skills. Dürer presumably painted it between 1510 and 1515. Assuming that Raphael wanted to portrait Dürer (ph.22-23) as one of the Pope’s porters in the Eliodoro Room, and supposing he used Dürer’s gift as a model, we could restrict the date of that self-portrait to sometime around 1514”*

Criticism of Falcinelli's theory:

- Persuasive as it seems, the Falcinelli's theory about lost portrait of Dürer (or Raphael), nevertheless have several weak points which in my humble opinion, make it bogus.
- First, contrary to what Falcinelli (and many others) wants to make us believe, several researchers are not convinced that the Manoppello is an artwork:
- According to [Donato Vittore's article](#): *The Relic of Manoppello is not an oil-painting because there is no deposit of colours among the threads; it is not a water-colour painting because the outlines of the eyes and of the mouth are so clean while the water-colour would have soaked the threads in a not definite way with blurs and smudges in every particular; it is not a print because the image is perfectly visible before and behind: the Veil is very ancient and in times past the utilized technique was not so sophisticated.*
- In a paper [3-D Processing to Evidence Characteristics Represented in Manoppello Veil](#), Jan Jaworski and Giulio Fanti claim: *Some scientists however excluded the use of different painting techniques on the basis of microscopic and spectroscopic studies. Thus, for many scholars not only the mechanism of formation but also the nature of the image is completely unclear.*

Fragment of the interview for the daily „Polska” with prof. Jaworski (10th April 2009, reprinted [here](#)):

Q: Włoski badacz Roberto Falcinelli, który od lat zajmuje się welonem, uważa, że jest to autoportret Albrechta Dürera. Co Pan o tym sądzi?

A: Falcinelli wspomina także, że równie dobrze to może być portret Rafaela namalowany przez Dürera. Notabene dokładnie pod koniec jego życia chusta z Bazyliki św. Piotra zaginęła. Niektórzy historycy sądzą, że została skradziona w czasie przebudowy.

Q: Czy Dürer mógł jednak namalować ten wizerunek?

A: Musiałby zostawić jakieś ślady. Nawet akwarela daje widoczne na materiale cząsteczki.

Q: Falcinelli twierdzi właśnie, że są.

A: W 2001 r. Giulio Fanti, profesor Uniwersytetu w Padwie specjalizujący się w różnych technikach pomiarowych, przeprowadził obszerne mikro- i spektroskopowe badania welonu. Były to pomiary absorpcji światła. Dzięki zdjęciom mikroskopowym można zobaczyć, że na materiale rzeczywiście znajdują się ślady barwników. Jest ich jednak bardzo niewiele, tylko w okolicach źrenic i włosów, i w żaden sposób nie tłumaczą, jak powstał cały wizerunek. W podczerwieni widać, że nie ma żadnych śladów pociągnięć pędzlem. Drobiny o rozmiarach rzędu 15 tysięcznych mm widoczne w kilku miejscach da się wytłumaczyć śladami po jakichś zabiegach restauratorskich. Także naświetlając welon światłem ultrafioletowym, Fanti nie zaobserwował widma fluorescencyjnego, które mogłoby świadczyć o tym, że użyto jakiegoś nośnika malarskiego pochodzenia zwierzęcego.

My translation:

Q: Italian researcher Roberto Falcinelli, who has been studying the veil for years, believe that it is a self-portrait of Albrecht Dürer. What do you think about it?

A: Falcinelli also mentions that it might as well be a portrait of Raphael painted by Dürer. Incidentally, exactly near the end of his life the veil from St. Peter's Basilica went missing. Some historians believe that it was stolen during the rebuilding.

Q: Could nevertheless Dürer have painted this image?

A: He would have to leave some traces. Even watercolor gives particles visible on the material.

Q: Falcinelli claims they are there.

A: In 2001. Giulio Fanti, professor at the University of Padua specializing in various measuring techniques, conducted extensive micro- and spectroscopic studies of the veil. These were the measurements of the light absorption. With microscopic photographs you can see that on the material there are indeed traces of dye. There is, however, very little of them, only in the vicinity of the pupils and hair, and it does not explain in any way how the whole image was created. In the infrared you can see that there are no traces of brush strokes. Particles with a size of the order of 0.015 mm visible in several places can be explained as traces of some restorations. Also by irradiating the veil with ultraviolet light, Fanti had not observed fluorescence spectra, which could have indicated that some paint of the animal origin could have been used.

Further criticism of Falcinelli's theory:

- There are several other arguments showing that it was rather that Dürer (or Raphael) portraits (made by conventional technique) were based on Manoppello, then opposite, that Manoppello was lost masterpiece of one of those two.
- As Falcinelli himself admits: *Dürer was born in 1471 and died in 1528, while Raphael was born in 1483 and died in 1520.*
- While the first direct mention of Manoppello can be dated to 1645 (Donato da Bomba relation) it is nevertheless suggested (with serious arguments) that the Manoppello is the original Veil of Veronica that can be tracked back to at least 12th century, if not the 8th.
- There are several representations of Veronica as transparent Veil, before both *Dürer* and Raphael were born.
- Those facts were inconvenient for Falcinelli's theory:



Left to right: *St. Veronica* by Robert Campin (1375-1444), the so called Master of Bruges (late 15th century), Manoppello Image with perpendicular illumination.

The Shroud-Manoppello link.

- Furthermore, we have seen ([in my previous paper](#)) that there is a direct correspondence between Manoppello and Shroud faces.
- The correspondence refers not only to the general features and proportions of the face, but also to the minute details like half open mouth with teeth visible, and wound marks of the Passion portrayed in exactly the same locations.
- It should be stressed that analysis was performed with the images processed by modern technologies (photographic negative in case of the Shroud, RGB-adjusted picture in case of the Manoppello). **These tools were non-existent around 1500.**
- For the Dürer /Raphael autorship of Manoppello theory to be maintained, one should assume that the purported author **knew the Shroud and it's characteristic feautres, and represented them exactly on Manoppello.**



Blood flow directions & congruence points on both faces

End notes and conclusions:

- Falcinelli's theory seems untenable. Some may even consider it as a weak attempt to discredit Manoppello.
- Nevertheless the questions about relation between Manoppello and Dürer's self-portrait, as well as his mentioned by Vasari, another portrait, this time transparent and made on byssus remain.
- It seems unlikely that he portrayed himself on Manoppello as suffering Christ's Passion in exact way, using Shroud as a model. The purpose for such literal imitation remains mystery, although theoretically it is not unimaginable.
- The similarities between Manoppello and Dürer's self-portrait can be explained easily, the latter being probably modelled on first (not *vice-versa*), in Dürer's stylised manner of imitating Christ.

- Then what about transparent portrait on byssus mentioned by Vassari? Assuming the whole story is not a bogus, there may be an explanation. Paul Badde in his book (Boskie Oblicze, Całun z Manoppello, Polwen, Radom 2006, pg. 150-155) quotes fragments of 2-pages report by Isabel Piczek who claims that there existed in 14th-15th centuries now-lost technique of painting on transparent fabrics.
- Of course we don't know the characteristics of paintings executed with such technique in comparison to Manoppello. Based on the examinations of the Veil itself, and opinions of researchers excluding various paintings techniques, we should expect such paintings to differ significantly to Manoppello.
- It may be conjectured that if true, the story of lost transparent portrait of Dürer may correspond to the attempt to make a Veronica/Manoppello style transparent self-portrait, instead of making Manoppello itself.
- All of this remains ,of course, only conjectures, so far.

Final remarks:

When making image overlays/comparison, always keep those two rules:

1. Be aware what actually you want to show/determine.
2. Maintain common sense.