

The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano

Historical, Theological, Scientific and Photographic Documentation

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Lanciano, March 31th, 1979

The Archbishop of Lanciano and the Bishop of Ortona

Reverend Father,

On Wednesday, March 28th, 1979 at the close of the general audience granted in the Hall of Nervi to 15.000 pilgrims present from all over the world, I was fortunate, indeed, privileged to have been able to converse for a few minutes with the Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul II.

During our conversation, the Holy Father, while recalling His visit to the Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Miracle, November 3rd, 1974, asked me to pray for His Holiness and for His intentions for the Sanctuary at Lanciano which has the privilege to house the precious Eucharistic Relics.

In response to His express desire, that constitutes a proper duty for us, I call upon you, Reverend Father, to proclaim a Solemn Eucharistic Triduum in the form of "Forty Hours-Novena", on the days which you judge to be appropriate, inviting the faithful to offer their prayers to the Lord for our most beloved Pontiff.

I myself will also take this opportunity to pay my own religious homage.

Yours Faithfully
LEOPOLDO TEOFILI
Archbishop

Rev. Fr. Luigi Della Zizza O.F.M. Conv.
Superior of the Eucharistic Shrine

PRESENTATION

I am pleased to add my contribution to lend support to this new editorial initiative by the S.M.E.L.

I am giving my personal endorsement, not only as the Minister Provincial who cannot help but rejoice for the zeal with which the Friars active in the Sanctuary lavished in spreading the knowledge of the Eucharistic Miracle, but also as a Franciscan who has to welcome with joy any action tending to promote a healthy devotion towards the Eucharist which the Miraculous Sign directs to.

The contemplation of the Miraculous Event should help us commit ourselves to a more active, conscious and fruitful participation in the Eucharist, the source and the summit of the whole Christian life.

Thomas from Celano, one of the first biographers of Saint Francis from Assisi wrote: "Francis was burned with a love that came from his whole being for the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, and he was carried away with wonder at the loving condescension and most condescending love shown there". (Omnibus of Sources p. 522).

When we want to spread the knowledge of the Miracle through mass media, we not only do a promotional service but we also fulfil a real missionary action.

While invoking the blessing of the Almighty on all those who are engaged in the present publication as well as those who will read it, I encourage them at the same time with the words of our Seraphic Father "Dear brethren, while there is still time, let us do good".

Father Gabriele Iacovozzi
Minister Provincial

Pescara, June 5th, 1995

INTRODUCTION

Dear Pilgrim!

The lovely hillside city of Lanciano, on the banks of the Maiella Mountain near the beautiful Adriatic sea, guards within its walls, in the Church of St. Francis, the oldest and most complete Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church.

Your encounter with this Miracle will compel you to become "miracle" yourself.

The Shrine is a hospital, or rather, a healing place of the spirit.

Do not depart unless you have been blessed and healed!

Here, you will find a heightened sense of a precious and privileged moment, nourished by piety and by faith.

God is voice, word and dialogue. You are the fortunate recipient of that communication.

God always speaks, God still speaks.

His voice is sometimes gentle and silent, sometimes overwhelming.

The Miracle is a welcome echo of the Eternal. It is a lamp that suddenly enlightens the hushed heaven of your soul.

With the Miracle, unbelief turns and becomes a passageway into the human spirit.

Wonderfully, the human heart is refreshed and returns to the right rhythm of the Eternal Dialogue, communication with God is restored within the depths of life of the person.

Pilgrim, you are that person!

At Lanciano, the Lord's words: "*Take and eat...this is my Body*"; "*Take and drink...this is my Blood*", find recognition, meaning and clarity.

The Extraordinary Prodigy that you can see with your own eyes is this: the Eucharistic species of bread and wine have been rent and their veil has given way to reality.

The entire Host, the large one traditionally used by the priest, has turned into Flesh; the wine in the chalice has turned entirely into Blood. The Miracle is real, perceptible and visible.

You need only to look and to allow your heart to bend its knee and to give God time to speak to you. Then, nourished by this word, you can continue on your way.

Pilgrim!

You have come, you have seen, and now you live. This has been handed on to you.

And this is our wish: that the Lord be always with you!

The cognitive approach to the Miracle moves along three lines: the historical, the theological and the scientific one.

Since I am aware of the deep interest and sensitivity of modern men and women for historical and scientific facts, I am going to pay a particular attention to these two aspects.

The theological approach which I may set as a hinge between the two most stimulating and involving chapters, is supposed to be an attempt to place the matters regarding all the Eucharistic Miracles in their rightful terms, namely: are we facing a Real Presence such as to justify the worship of an absolute cult or are we in front of simple but however remarkable "Relics" to which we have to pay an only relative homage?

As for the two above-mentioned chapters that will certainly give higher qualification to this work, I feel like stating precisely what follows:

Firstly: when I draw the historical lines of the Miraculous Event at Lanciano, I am going to stick scrupulously to the sound bases of the oral tradition and to the written evidences.

My duty is to refer to sources and let them speak for themselves without adding, subtracting or changing anything.

I shall simply sew together the different and, at the same time, converging historical proofs.

Secondly: as regards the scientific report, I am honestly obliged to hand over my pen to the author of the scientific investigations that have been carried out in laboratories on some specimens drawn from the Holy Relics of the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano.

His name is Odoardo Linoli who, at that time (in 1971), was the head physician at "Spedali Riuniti" in Arezzo and fully established University lecturer in Anatomy, Pathologic Histology, Chemistry and Clinical Microscopy.

At this point, it only remains for me to take the reader's hand and help him, with the amazement and wonder of the first witnesses, run through the still-open case concerning a Supernatural Event that occurred in a particular historical period (we are in the Eighth Century AD) but which, in accordance with the eternal design of the Almighty, was destined to reproduce some divine vibrations over all the antennas in future times. Consequently, the "nostalgia" for the Divine and the supernatural desire of God, the only One who is able to satisfy the human spirit tending toward the Eternal, would be awakened even in the conscience of the contemporary man, narcotised and alienated because of the "secular ferments".

"O Lord, you created us for you and our heart is restless until it finds rest within you" (Saint Augustin of Hippo).

The pilgrim-reader is invited to approach this extraordinary Miraculous Sign not with a detached and indifferent heart of a tourist, but one that is burdened with all the weight of his own soul, structurally tending toward God who is the only musical key, according to which the notes of his soul harmonise and dance.

As for the conclusion, there will be a set of photographs proving and explaining the various passages or tests with regard to the scientific recognition.

Fr. Nicola Nasuti O.F.M. Conv.

THE VOICE OF HISTORY

Ten years since its recognition: that is nothing compared to the 1200 years of history of the Miracle (Dr. Odoardo Linoli)

Tracing the history of the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, I will try to respect the basic tenets of modern communication: brevity and thoroughness.

Perhaps it is better to start with the five classic questions: Who? Where? When? What? Why?

The main figure involved in this age-old and incredible Episode was a Basilian monk, a priest of the Greek rite who found himself at Lanciano as a refugee.

We know neither his name, nor what he looked like, nor his age when the Miracle took place. It is as if his personal history has been eclipsed by the exceptional circumstance of the Miracle.

Perhaps it was meant that way so as not to draw attention away from the Miracle itself. In any case, the mystery of God does not need the distracting propaganda of its witnesses.

Based on an unambiguous oral tradition, on successive unanimous testimonies, on tardy but converging documentation, we can say with solid certainty that the Event took place in the Eighth Century, and more precisely in the mid-Eighth Century, around the year 750 AD.

We have a detailed narration of this Episode from an anonymous but not uninformed chronicler in the year 1631. He writes:

“In this city of Lanciano, around the year 700 of our Lord there was, in the monastery of St. Legontian which was under the custody of the monks of St. Basil (today the monastery is renamed St. Francis') a monk who, although learned in the sciences of the world, was ignorant in those of God, and therefore not strong in his faith. He was plagued by a doubt as to whether the consecrated Host was truly the Body of Christ, and the consecrated wine truly His Blood.

However, he constantly prayed that God would take this wound from his heart, and divine grace did not abandon him, because the all-mighty God, Father of mercy and consolation, was pleased to raise him up from the depths of his darkness and to grant him that same grace that he had shown to the Apostle St. Thomas.

One morning, as he was celebrating Mass, after he had already said the most holy words of consecration, his doubts and errors weighed upon him more heavily than ever. By a most singular and marvellous favour then, he saw the bread changed into Flesh and the wine into Blood.

He was so confused and terrified by such a Stupendous Miracle that he stood utterly dumbfounded as if by ecstasy for a long period; but eventually, his fear gave way to the spiritual happiness that filled his soul, and he turned his joyful yet tearful face to those around him and cried out:

‘O fortunate friends to whom the Blessed Lord has deigned to reveal himself in this Most Holy Sacrament and to make himself visible before your eyes and to dispel my own unbelief.

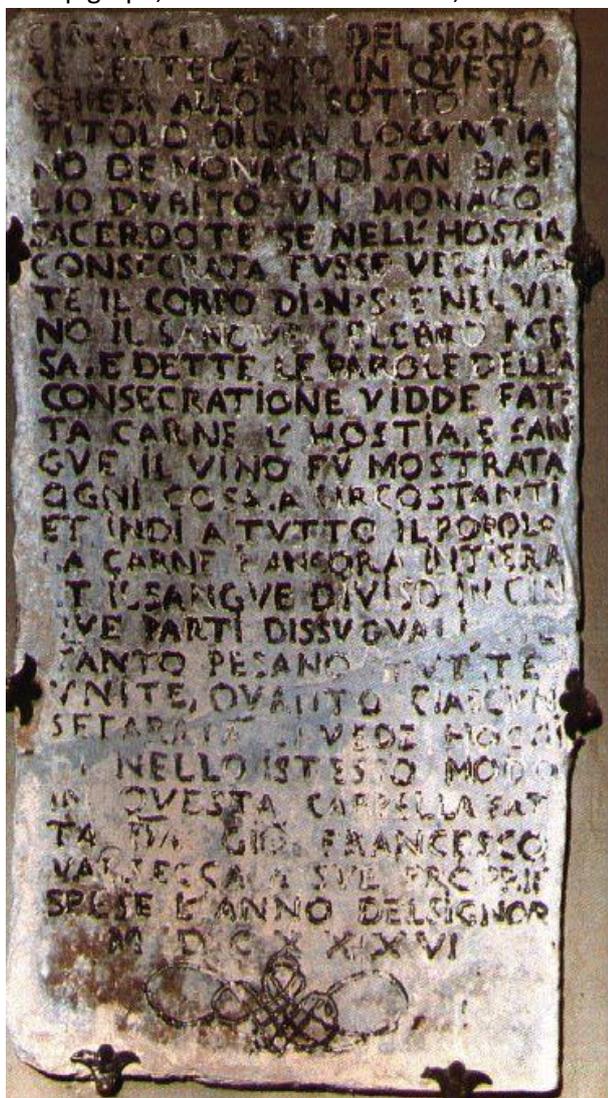
Come, brothers, and gaze at our God drawn near us. Behold the Flesh and Blood of our most beloved Christ’.

At these words, all people hurried avidly to the altar with deep devotion, and there upon witnessing the Miracle, they began to cry out with tears for divine mercy.

As the news of such a rare and peculiar Miracle spread through the city, who could describe the acts of piety that the great and the small performed as they hurried to see the Wonder with their own eyes: some cried out with devout voice for divine mercy; some beat their breasts and confessed their guilt and sins; others with subdued voices and sighs admitted their unworthiness to gaze upon such a precious treasure; and others still, in a state of rapture and reverent silence admired, marvelled, praised, and thanked the all-good God who deigned to place before our mortal senses His immortal and incomprehensible Majesty."

It should be noted that the narrative of the text is based upon an earlier written text of Sebastiano Rinaldi in 1611. In support of the validity and credibility of the record, there exists a marble inscription from 1636, presently found on the right hand side of the Church of St. Francis before the Valsecca Chapel. This epigraph announces the canonical recognition of the Holy Relics on February 17th, 1574, by Rodriguez Gaspere, Bishop of Lanciano and a man with a strong historical consciousness.

The epigraph, still visible to the visitor, reads as follows (in translation):



"Around the year of our Lord 700, in this church then under the title of St. Legontian's, of the monks of St. Basil, a monk doubted if in the consecrated Host there was really the Body of our Lord, and in the consecrated wine, His Blood.

He celebrated Mass, said the words of consecration, and saw the Host turned to Flesh and the wine to Blood.

He showed it all to bystanders and it was announced to all people.

The Flesh is still in one piece and the Blood is divided in five unequal parts, which, when weighed together, are equal in weight to each separate piece.

This can be seen today in the same way in the Chapel built by Giovanni Francesco Valsecca at his own expenses in the year of our Lord 1636".

This text adds one important detail not found in the previous text: "The Blood is divided in five unequal parts which, when weighed together, are equal in weight to each separate piece".

This significant phenomenon concerning the weight of the Miraculous Blood was not verified in successive tests made by the bishops (in 1637, 1770, and 1886). The written accounts, however, are in complete agreement on the substance and the nature of the Miraculous Event.

For the sake of completion, a point noted in the Chronicle of the historian Fella (1550-1629) needs to be taken into consideration. He claims to have received confidential information in 1620 from two Friars, Antonio Scarpa and Angelo Siro, to this effect: "In 1560 two Basilian monks came to the Convent of St. Francis ; they stole from us a parchment codex, written in Greek and in Latin, hidden between two tablets", which contained the complete narration of the Eucharistic Miracle. This codex had been given to them to read one evening by the Franciscans, but they made off early the following morning, taking the manuscript with them.

Two points need to be made here.

First, it seems quite unlikely that the Friars did not know the contents of the codex by heart; by repairing the damage, they were thus able to reproduce its substance and thereby mitigate its loss to posterity.

Second, for this reason it seems as if the narration of the Event transmitted in its double version reproduces and conveys faithfully the historical truth of the Extraordinary Miracle.

More to add.

The historian Antinori when alluding to Fella, notes that in 1566, while the Turks were raging on the Adriatic seashores, Father Antonio da Mastro Renzo, fearing a sack and a possible desecration of the Miracle, wisely placed it in a safer place.

On August 1st, together with some local young people, he fled away with the precious load. But after a twenty-four-hour journey, he found himself in front of the very door where he had departed from the morning before. Confused and surprised, he addressed his young companions by exclaiming: "Dear friends, do not attribute this coincidence to evil luck, but instead, do impute everything to the Divine Providence for its secrets are impenetrable and unfathomable. Therefore, we must dwell here and if necessary, we must be ready to shed our Blood and sacrifice our lives, just like a true soldier of Christ ready to offer his life for the same Christ".

To conclude: an important and significant detail is handed down to us by Migne, in his monumental work called Patrology.

On page 1428 in the volume CXLIX of this work, we find a theological dialogue entitled "The Truth of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist" which involves as partners a certain Guitmundo, archbishop of Aversa (Caserta) and an art expert named Rogerio.

They both lived around the years 1000 and 1100 AD and belonged to the Benedictine Order. Their debate has been divided in three volumes and was meant to confute Berengarius's heretical dissertations.

The theological dialogue was intended to support and reaffirm the traditional and abiding catholic doctrine on the Real Divine Presence. At a particular point, the story of the Eucharistic Miracle, which took place in Italy, was introduced to confirm the Catholic position.

Guitmundo said that he had learned from his master D. Lanfranco, a person above any suspicion, what follows: "In Italy, a priest, while celebrating Mass, noticed real (human) Flesh on the altar and real (human) Blood in

the chalice. At that sight, he began trembling and refrained from consuming them. At once, he reported the unusual event to his bishop and sought his advice as to what should be done. The bishop, after convening a meeting with many other bishops, recorded of the Miraculous Event and decided to take a delicate care of the chalice containing the Flesh and Blood. Eventually, everything was sealed at the centre of the altar so that all would be perpetually preserved as Extraordinary Relics".

At a first glance, the tale seems to relate to a Miraculous Event without any precise and explicit reference. However, given its historical period, about the 11th century, nothing can prevent us from seeing in it an implicit, genuine and established relationship with the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano of which it sounds like the faithful echo.

In the first mentioned text dating to 1631, we can easily discern the inner aspect of the monk who happened to be the protagonist of the Incredible Event.

He was a person dedicated more to science than to wisdom, interested more in the world than in the Absolute, trusting more in reason than in contemplation.

He found himself tormented by doubt, tossed about and disoriented by various currents of thought, devoured by a daily anxiety.

We can recognise in him a person of our own times: he resembles each of us to an extraordinary degree.

The spark that caused the explosion of the Miracle needs to be seen in the doubt that the monk suffered in his own heart, more than in his mind.

In His immense tenderness the Father responds to our weakness in ever new ways. God responds to the doubt of his children with an ever-increasing love and fidelity.

The Miracle occurred during the celebration of the Mass, at its summit of the consecration.

The bread and the wine, empowered by the Word which was pronounced by the monk, were transformed totally and visibly into Flesh and Blood, on a cold and grey morning that probably did not appear any different from any other. The veil of the sacramental species, was removed giving way to reality.

The bread, the large Host, became Flesh. The wine in the chalice changed into Blood. The Eucharistic Mystery, the very heart of the Church, was as if laid bare, unveiled, and made evident.

In the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano faith was married to sight.

The actual spot of the Miracle is located beneath the present-day Church of St. Francis, where a modest church dedicated to Saints Legontian and Domitian had been built.

This church (known also by the name of St. Legontian or St. Longinus) was given by the Senate and the people of Lanciano to a group of refugee Basilian monks during the time of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III the Isaurian, under whose reign the iconoclast persecution against religious images broke out in 725.

The martyr-saints Legontian and Domitian are unknown in the earliest hagiographic sources.

Their first biography dates from the middle of the seventeenth century, and portrays them as brothers, sculptors from the Italian city of Chieti, who were killed around the year 1000 for refusing to carve statues of pagan gods.

That information is not very trustworthy, but more certain information shows their cult dating from 1059 in the village of Aterno (modern day Pescara). It is held that they were not Chieti natives, but rather foreigners venerated and localised there.

This underlines the fact that they were almost certainly not western martyrs, despite the attempts by later legends to Italianize them.

Adjacent to the Church of St. Legontian and Domitian, the Basilian monks built a small monastery, which like all monasteries constructed till the 10th century, bore the name of the church to which it was attached and not of the Founder of the monks, i.e., St. Basil.

In that church the Miracle occurred, which remains to this day an eloquent witness of faith to the Eucharist and a drawing point for an ever increasing number of pilgrims who are searching God with the same sense of urgency with which one would try to light a fire at the North Pole or would strain to look for water in the desert.

The Basilian monks remained in custody of the Miracle until their departure in 1175. They were succeeded by Benedictine monks whom Alexander III with a papal decree dispatched from Anagni, Italy, on March 25th, 1176 entrusted the Church of the Holy Relics to their care.

This decree was later reconfirmed by Pope Innocent III on October 2nd, 1204. The Benedictines had their principal monastery in the area at St. John of Venus, near the Adriatic sea on the river Sangro, which had been built around the year 973.

Difficulties at this Abbey, from which the Monastery of St. Legontian depended, caused the monks to leave both places around the year 1250.

The Franciscan Order, formed in 1209 and officially ratified by the Church through Pope Honorius III with the Papal Bull "Solet annuere" on November 29th, 1223, in a few decades, spread quickly all over Europe.

In the General Chapter of the same Order held in 1230, Abruzzo became an autonomous Franciscan Province called "Pennese Province".

In many towns and villages of the region, the Friars built their convents, esteemed and appreciated by the people. They also reached the city of Lanciano between the years 1240 and 1250.

In 1253 they were entrusted with the custody of Saint Legonziano's little church, by the bishop of Chieti and with the solemn approval of Pope Innocent IV on April 20th, 1252 and Pope Alexander IV on January 13th, 1254.

In 1257, with the consent of Landulfo and the confirmation of Alexander IV, the Friars received every right, including parochial ones, that the Church of St. Legontian had originally possessed. In 1258 work was begun on a new church with high facade, Gothic portal, and Romanesque bell-tower, which was to bear the name of St. Francis from Assisi. A Baroque interior was added in 1736.

The Sacred Relics were transferred to the new church of the Friars, where they remained continuously since 1258.

Today that church is known either as the Church of St. Francis or the Church of the Eucharistic Miracle. The Friars were forced by Napoleon's suppression order of October 1st, 1809, to leave both the church and their convent.

The convent passed into the hands of the township, while the church was given to the clergy of Santa Lucia on December 14th, 1814.

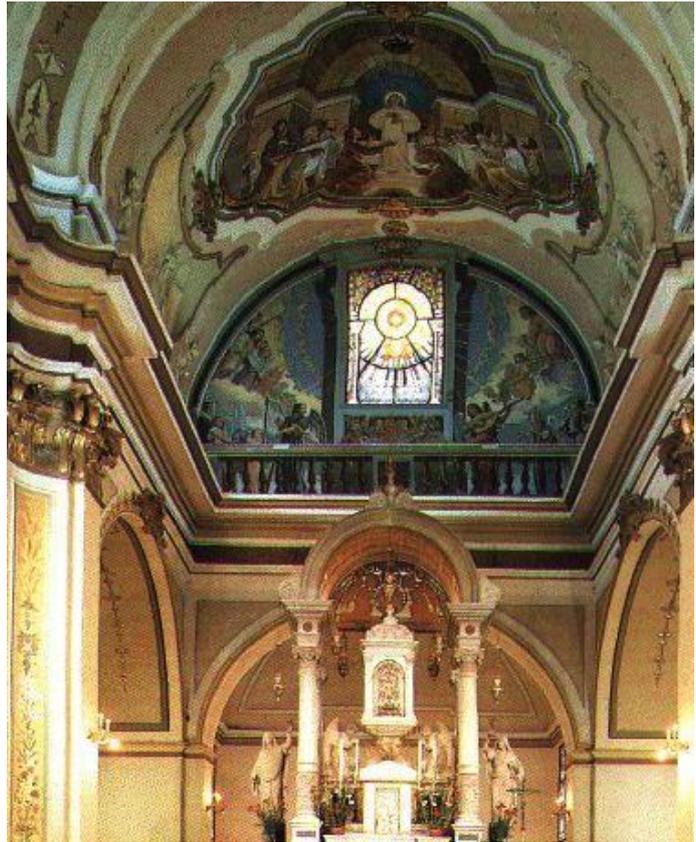
The Conventual Franciscan Friars were called again to the church on June 21st, 1953, by Archbishop Migliorini of Lanciano, amid the popular joy and celebration.

On that occasion the Papal Pro-Secretary of State Gianbattista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, telegraphed: "On the occasion of the re-entry of the Friars Minor Conventual of the Province of Abruzzo in their Eucharistic Shrine at Lanciano, His Holiness wishes them fervent renewal of Eucharistic worship and apostolic works, and sends them heart-felt blessings of an outpouring of grace and divine help".

The actual marble shrine in the centre of the presbytery that contains the Precious Relics was blessed on October 4th, 1902. It is the work of Angelo Rocca from Carrara, based on a drawing by Filippo Sargiacomo.

The two statues that flank the altar, Faith and Charity, are the work of Giovanni Scivo from Naples (1904).

The Miracle itself is preserved in the second tabernacle, which is found in the middle of the high altar.



The Host now changed to Flesh is contained in a silver Monstrance, the work of Neapolitan craftsmanship dating from 1713.

The wine now changed to Blood is contained in a crystal chalice from Rocca dating from the 17th century.

On account of the several historical episodes, even the ancient and wide monastery was confiscated and used for military and evil purposes with the unavoidable adaptations contributing to its defacement. In recent years, thanks to the patient and constructive dialogues between the Religious and the local Authorities, the cloister has been recovering its complete, natural and primary function, that is, being a focal point of religious life, of spirituality and hospitality for the pilgrims often coming from every corner in the world and gathering before the Eucharistic Miracle.

The "Miracle" effect has also greatly aided the recovery of the architecture of one of Plebiscito Square's corners.

At present, the area surrounding the Bell-Tower has been freed from some disordered buildings and consequently, the adjacent Square is able to breathe again and the passers-by, at its sight, can feel uplifted.

The vertical hurl of the Bell-Tower, silently and mightily, invites them to rediscover the joy springing from the inner freedom, to recover the taste for spiritual heights and to dream about a world reconciled with the Almighty. Time has come now, when a wise and functional redistribution of the many different services is imposed in order to avoid any undue commotion and confusion.

In other words, it is necessary to create, to plan and to accomplish some typical open spaces which could be suitable to the numerous needs of the Sanctuary. The aim of that project is to foster a quiet, beneficial and healthy stop for pilgrims.

A shrine should be what it is intended for, that is: an oasis of peace, a hospital for souls, a place for hospitality, a home for prayers, a "gymnasium" for reconciliation and a monument to charity.

Along the course of the centuries the Miracle has been the object of particular veneration on the part of the faithful and the object of thoughtful attention on the part of the successive Archbishops who ensured the state of its maintenance and promoted its devotion.

The periodic ecclesiastical examinations, from 1574 to 1886, underline the care of the local church for this exceptional Gift of God from heaven.

Temporal and chronological course of events

On February 17th, 1574, bishop Rodriguez carried careful examination and, as it is certified by the marble epigraph dated 1636, it was discovered that the whole weight of the five pieces of clotted Blood, was exactly the same as each one of them separately taken.

In 1636, to coincide with the transfer of the Relics into the Valsecca Chapel, the Guardian of Saint Francis cloister, Father Serafino from Scanno, carried out a second recognition before a large crowd.

A third examination took place on October 23rd, 1777 thanks to Bishop Gervasone who ordered the Reliquary be cleaned again. The last examinations goes back to October 26th, 1886.

On that date, bishop Petrarca, archbishop of Lanciano, before a committee made up of Canons and other clergymen, unwelded the seals and the little silk strings fastening hermetically the chalice containing the Blood whereas the seal of the Flesh remained untouched.

At a close and immediate visual analysis, the commission seemed to single out over the Flesh tissue, some whitish spots which were mistaken for fragments of bread.

We are deeply deceived by the scientific examination which took place in the years 1970-71 and 1981 and which classified those stains as "mouldy spores".

Because of the peculiarity of its results, we are going to deal with that unusual scientific analysis in a separate chapter.

More resounding and solid historical as well as ecclesiastical testimonies lend support to the official examinations and here we are able to mention only some of them.

- Father Tossignano in his work "Historiarum Seraphicae Religionis, Libri Tres, Venice 1589" writes: In Saint Francis church at Lanciano "reperitur Hostia carnis miraculose conversa in Corpus Christi, reperiuntur quoque Reliquiae sanguinis miraculosi".
- On June 7th, 1593, the Marchioness of Vasto came to Lanciano where she attended a Mass being celebrated by Bishop Paolo Tasso at Saint Mary del Ponte's. The lady saw the Flesh and Blood, usually kept

at Saint Francis shrine, but it had been previously brought into the cathedral by the Conventual Friars (Bocache, book 7 p.56).

- The historian Ferdinando Ughelli (1594-1670) speaks about the Miracle: In the monastery of Saint Francis, many relics are being preserved but the one that exceeds all the others, is the Holy Eucharist Sacrament turned into Flesh and five drops of wine transformed into Blood a thousand years ago" (F. Ughelli, Italia Sacra, tome VI, p.56).
- On August 16th, 1631, Bishop Andrea Gervasio sent in a report to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars where it is declared that at Saint Francis church at Lanciano, people worship a Host changed into Flesh of Christ together with some clotted Blood miraculously preserved for more than four hundred years.
- His Excellency, Bishop Alfonso Alvarez Barba Ossorio (Oct. 18th, 1671) speaks about the Miracle at Lanciano as: "Maxima et stupenda Reliquiarum Reliquia" ("the greatest and most stupendous of all relics") (Vatican secret Archives).
- On June 25th, 1672, Pope Clement X declared the Holy Relics' altar as "privileged altar" during the Octave for the dead and all Mondays throughout the year (Bocache, book 7, p.343).
- Abbot John the Baptist Pacichelli in the year 1685, writes: "Inside Saint Francis's temple already belonging to the Benedictine monks, people deeply worship the Holy Host transformed into Flesh and some small drops of wine into Blood.
- On April 18th, 1743, Charles Cinerimi, the city magistrate of that time, by means of the Notary Francis Madrigale, writes: "After being invited we walked into the venerable Saint Francis's Church and approached the altar over which the well reknowned, unique and remarkable Our Lord Jesus Christ's Holy Relic had already been exposed"(Notary Act found in the Sanctuary's Archives).
- On May 19th, 1799, Archbishop Francis Amoroso, at the request of his good citizens, allowed a penitential procession in the presence of the Chapter, that is to say, Secular and Regular clerics and Confraternities. The precious Flesh-Blood Relics which were usually brought out for very important and urgent needs, were offered for veneration in that procession as well (L. Coppa Zucca, vol. I, p. 265).
- On July 9th, 1868 the grieved population asked the General Vicar for a special procession with the Holy Relics in order to obviate and ward off the rain that had been flooding the countryside for forty five days. In spite of the heavy rainfall, the procession left Saint Francis church, but as soon as it reached the near main square, an impetuous "mistral" (a cold northern wind) dissipated and dispelled every cloud in the sky (G. M. Sanna Solaro, the Great Host miraculous conversion into Flesh, Milan 1950 p. 33)
- In 1887 Archbishop Francesco Petrarca requested and obtained from Pope Leo XIII a perpetual plenary indulgence, to be gained by all those who visit the Church of the Miracle in occasion of the Solemn Octave of Prayer, which is celebrated each year the last week of October.
- On October 1904, Monsignor Angelo Della Cioppa founded the Daily Adoration Association stating that the Holy Relics's altar had to be regarded as the Altar of Adoration (Sanctuary's Archives).

From 1636 to 1902 the Sacred Relics were kept in the Valsecca Chapel - given by a gentleman from Milan - in a beaten-iron tabernacle, a work of local artisans that is still visible. Previous to that date the Relics were kept on the right side of the high altar near the sacristy, in a chapel located underneath the Bell-Tower, as reported by the historian Fella.

While proceeding forward, we encounter the important date of November 3rd, 1974 when the Cardinal and Archbishop of Cracow (Poland), Karol Wojtila, in His visit to the Shrine, paused in an intense and deep prayer in front of the Holy Relics.

The present Supreme Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, in His note on the famous Pilgrims' Register, expressed His sentiments of piety by those inspired and poetic words of the "Adoro Te devote" the well known hymn composed by Saint Thomas of Aquinas: "Fac nos Tibi semper magis credere, in Te spem habere, Te diligere" ("O Lord, let our Faith in You, our Hope and Love for You increase more and more").

With the return of the Friars Minor Conventual and their renewed work of promotion and revival of the cult, the Miracle was again the target of special attention, culminating in the scientific examination of the years 1971-81, initiated by the Friars, supported by Archbishop Pacifico Perantoni and under the direction of Professor Odoardo Linoli of Arezzo, Italy.

In this way the Extraordinary Happening of an obscure day in the faraway Eighth Century has come down to us.

Time, the apparently witness of History, that knows and keeps secret from the curious the hour of this Great Happening, cannot resist from reaching the four corners of the Earth.

THE VOICE OF THEOLOGY

"Mystery is not a wall against which our intelligence smashes. On the contrary, it is an ocean where our understanding gets lost" (Gustave Thibon).

Later on we shall deal with "the voice of Science" which, for the contemporary man immersed as he is in an admittedly scientific and technical world represents the strongest and most stimulating interest.

Presently I am setting up this chapter on the theological aspect in order to contribute and attempt to answer to the recurrent question that could be expressed like the following: "When facing extraordinary signs such as the various and different Eucharistic Miracles, do we have to envisage them as simple calls, pure Relics, however venerable they may be or are we entitled to recognise in them the Real Presence of God?"

Furthermore, this theological digression acting as a buffer and a link between the two main chapters, is neither an escapism nor an academical device.

The matter, I may repeat, is not idle since the authentic practice of Christian devotion is being directly called into question.

Catholic Church has always and clearly separated the cult of "latria" or worship from the cult of "dulia" or veneration. Between the two devotions, an essential distinction flows.

Adoration, the main act of religious practises, is only and exclusively due to God. On this matter, the Catechism of the Catholic Church at number 2096, recites: "To worship God means to acknowledge Him as God, the Creator and the Saver, the Lord and the Master of every existing object, the everlasting and merciful Love".

"You will prostrate and worship only God, our Lord"(Luke 4,8) Jesus says when citing the Book of Deuteronomy(6, 13).

Veneration, the inferior kind of worship, appeals to the Holy Virgin Mary, to Saints and holy objects; it differs essentially from the cult of adoration and finds its justification in the communion of Saints.

Saint Dominic, while dying, said to his Friars: "Do not cry, I shall be more useful and helpful after my death than I was in my lifetime".

Saint Theresa of Child Jesus echoes his thought when writing: "I shall spend all my life in heaven while doing good things on earth".

As a matter of fact, the Church with its three ranks (Militant, Purificatory and Triumphant) establishes in Christ one single family being united in Charity and praise to the Trinity.

We grant the cult of "latria" to the Almighty, that is, to the Trinity and to the Word Incarnate. To Saints and to the Virgin Mother of God, we give respectively the cult of "dulia" and "hyperdulia" because of Her unique dignity as the mother of God.

Between the Creator and His creatures, there is always an unbridgeable however lofty gulf. Moreover, in some dogmatic treatises, a further distinction has been brought in, to better explain those concepts.

One speaks therefore of an absolute or relative cult of latria and dulia. The absolute cult is acknowledged directly to the Divine Persons or to the faithful servants of God whereas, the relative one is granted to objects (that is to images and relics) referring, pointing to or representing someone whose excellency they uphold or share

If the object refers to Divinity, we can talk about relative cult of latria, on the contrary, if it deals with Saints, we have a cult of dulia.

I am about to apply these mental categories to the Eucharist and, in particular, to the Eucharistic Miracles that are our specific and major concern.

In the Catholic Church, Piety, as regards the mystery of Eucharist, is unmistakably and unconditionally expressed through the cult of "latria" or absolute adoration.

Saint Augustin, in gathering the unanimous voice of the apostolic and patristic tradition, poignantly writes: "Nobody can eat that Flesh without first worshipping It, therefore, we do not sin doing so, but we sin if we do the contrary".

Such cult of worship is fully justified in that conviction of Faith affirming that in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, there is the Real Presence of the Son of God who became man, died, was buried and rose again for us all. This belief found its dogmatic formulation in the Council of Trent through some clear and unchangeable articles of faith.

They are:

1. The Eucharist, truly, really and substantially contains the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ together with His soul and divinity, therefore, the whole Jesus Christ is really there
2. The presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the altar, is made possible through the conversion of all the essences of bread and wine into His Body and Blood.
3. The two species of bread and wine still exist after their consecration.

Therefore, we have three very solid affirmations of principle:

1. The absolute cult of worship, because of the mysterious personal Presence of the Word Incarnate, is due to the Eucharist.
2. The Real Sacramental Presence of the Lord is indissolubly linked to the permanency and endurance of bread and wine species.
3. When the species cease to exist, the Real Presence also does so.

In the light of this evident and ever-sound teaching of the Church, its pursuance to the Eucharistic Miracles, seems to take the following direction: if the Eucharistic species of bread and wine still remain, we can sin not worshipping them with the cult of absolute "latria" (because of the Real Presence).

Otherwise, if the presence of the two species ceases to be so, we are allowed to worship only through the cult of relative "latria" (the true presence lacking).

If we wish to exemplify the above concepts and practically apply such theological principles, we may argue like this: the cult of absolute latria is due to the Eucharistic Miracle of Siena for the permanence and wholeness of the two species. The cult of relative latria is due to the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano since the Sacramental species are totally absent (such is the response given after laboratory testing).

We would like to better clarify the idea. To the Eucharistic Miracles, where we surely know no trace of bread and wine species is missing, we should grant the same cult we bestow to the Relics of the Holy Cross (relative latreutical cult).

In order to throw a brighter light over this subject, I may suggest a specific text by the Dominican Theologian P. Tito S.Centi. In his works "The True Presence in the Eucharistic Miracles" in "The Eucharistic Treasure" in the year 47deg., n.4, Siena 1979, he wrote: "When some people get to know of the various Eucharistic Miracles and details concerning them, they always wonder about how a good Christian should behave in front of the Relics which , at present, are still being preserved".

Once a Miracle has been recognised as such, the analysis shifts from the phenomenological aspect to the substantial one, which obviously raises a theological problem, common, however, to all the Eucharistic Miracles; the problem, which does not seem to be popular, nowadays, among the modern theologians but has, up until not too long ago, attracted the attention of the specialists, is: should the Holy Flesh and the Holy Blood be considered as simple shrines, though most venerable, or, is the Real Presence hidden in them? Being this the last case, the worship due to them should be nowadays that of "latria" or worshipping.

Theologians have always debated on the matter, bringing forward contrasting reasons and solutions. The Dominican Tito S. Centi had his own opinion on the matter, which, we think is worth exposing to the readers: "Some people who happened to know about the several Eucharistic Miracles and the prodigious manifestations, wonder what is the right behaviour towards those shrines kept until today".

Should we worship the "Flesh" of the Miracle venerated in Lanciano or the Sacred Corporal in Orvieto?

Being true the principle according to which "the Presence" is strictly bound to the Eucharistic species under the form of the "bread" and "the wine", in which way does the Real Presence of Jesus last in such Miracles?

The problem is not at all new: Any theologian would know how Saint Thomas Aquinas in his "Summa Teologia"(III,Q.76, a.8) explicitly dealt with it. "If, when by miracle the Flesh or a real child appears in such Sacrament, the Body of Christ is really present in it". Following the prince of theologians, commentators and opponents have, for centuries, kept on arguing on the matter.

Before producing a whatsoever explanation, it will be right to remember that the Eucharistic Miracles may assume different shapes. Making a list of them we find first the consecrated Host and wine turned into "Flesh" and "Blood" as it happens in Lanciano in the Eight Century and at Alatri in 1228.

Secondly, we find the bleeding Host; then the Host miraculously kept uncorrupted by external agents, as in the case of the Miracle in Siena; display and suspension in the air of consecrated Hosts; Jesus appearing in the Host as a child; miraculous recovery due to the Eucharist; terrifying punishments of sacrilegious profaners of the Holy Sacrament.

At the moment we are interested only in Miracles of the first and second kind as in the list above; it is, however, necessary to keep an over-all view of these preternatural events in order to provide a well articulated solution to the problem. Anyway, before going deep into the matter, we feel we have to be reminded that the prodigious events, object of this discussion, are strictly connected to the "Mystery" which is to believe by faith and venerated more than being investigated.

Moreover, the colloquial way of speaking reveals the tendency to confuse the two terms, Miracle and Mystery, which are instead to be rigorously distinguished in their theological content. Though it is well believed by all the faithful that an event which overpasses any natural forces, takes place during the consecration, that is, the transformation of the substance of the Body and the Blood of our Lord, still we cannot speak of a true Miracle. Such a change or transubstantiation does not fall under our senses and is not, therefore, made object of human experience: it is only to be believed by faith.

To our senses, the consecrated Bread is not different from the bread before being consecrated. When a Miracle takes place, it is essential that the preternatural event is clearly perceived in its most immediate effects, such as, the resurrection of dead or the recovery of an invalid.

Enough clarifications have been given so far on this matter of Miracle; we shall now go through the answer given by Saint Thomas to the question on the miraculous events- the well visible ones- concerning the Eucharistic Mystery that occurred in the past centuries.

"Such extraordinary events may happen in two ways. Sometimes the event affects the single onlooker whose eyes are so impressed as if they really saw the Flesh, the Blood or even the child without any change being produced in the Sacrament".

"Such impression is produced by God in the eyes of human beings, in order to reveal a truth, to make manifest the Real Presence of the Body of Jesus Christ in this Sacrament... No mutation of the Sacrament having occurred during such apparitions, it is evident that Christ does not cease to be present while such apparitions are taking place.

"Whereas, some other times, such phenomena or apparitions are sensorially perceived not only by an individual observer but they take a real and objective existence equally experienced by everybody and lasting in time".

Saint Thomas relates the opinions of some theologians according to whom, in Miracles like those of Lanciano, Alatri and others like them, there was the physical presence of the Flesh and Blood of our Lord "under their own species" and not under the sacramental form.

He firmly opposed such opinions : "first because the Body of Christ can be seen in his own features only where He is located, that is, in Heaven"; second, because the Glorious Body appears and disappears as He likes, which is evident from the apparitions of the Resurrected. "What appears as Flesh in this Sacrament stays long; we also learn that sometimes, it was locked and kept into pyx by the wisdom of the Ecclesiastical authority. The only thought of which sounds absurd if Christ were there in His--Own features". - "We have, therefore, to come to the conclusion that, when the Eucharistic species remain of the same size, in such case mutations have occurred by Miracle, in the other "accidents" or in external qualities of the bread and wine (eg. shape or color) so as to appear as Flesh, Blood or a figure of a child.

This phenomenon occurs without any deception because, as it has been said before, it takes place in order to reveal a truth, namely the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ.

In this case it is obvious that, remaining the above mentioned dimensions as the basis to the other accidents, the Body of Christ remains really and Sacramentally present under such features.

After giving an accurate account of the thought of the Angelic Doctor, though, through an amplified and paraphrased translation, many difficulties may find their solution on the basis of the inspiring principle of his discourse according to which the miraculous shrine of an Eucharistic Miracle keeps the Real Presence as long as the dimension or other physical characteristics of the consecrated species remain as they were. In fact, the presence which is assured and represented by them is the "Sacramental" Presence of Christ in His entirety, and not just the physical presence of His glorious Body or any of its parts.

On account of this, those "shrines" are given the cult of "latría". An example may better clarify it. From a scientific study on the Eucharistic Miracle in Lanciano, it has emerged that the darkened Flesh which the Host of the Miracle turned into, appears as the Flesh of a human heart.

This does not mean that there is contained only a fragment of the adorable heart of Christ as part of the Miracle under discussion.

We should rather think that God used the Miracle to reveal the Sacramental Presence of the Incarnated Word: it is thus, the presence of all His glorious Body together indissolubly with His Soul and Divinity, due to the consecration and preservation of the eucharistic species, which, in this case, have been kept in small, white fragments typical of the bread made of wheat.

The Eucharistic Miracles so far mentioned, are evidence of rare prodigies which, perhaps, occurred to state the primary duty of "worshipping", since we are faced with the Sacrament par excellence, or better, the "Mystery of Faith".

In the past, theologians often neglected this aspect and got stuck in debating arguments about the technical nature of such prodigies, starting from their cosmological and philosophical ideas, which, to us, sound all rather strange and curious.

We are, nowadays, more cautious in drawing the limits between the possible and the absurd, even about natural phenomena. Nevertheless, such arguments did not mean a lack of the deepest faith on the part of those theologians.

We, therefore, hope that our readers, though perhaps having a tint of pious curiosity, would rather approach this Supernatural Event with a heightened sense of piety and veneration so as not to waste their time.

Before making some conclusive considerations, I take the liberty of making a remark to the above mentioned text where it tells us about the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano: "in that specific case, species have been preserved even into small fragments which are typical of wheat bread".

The scientific and medical test (we shall deal with it later on) have found out that there is no trace of white fragments that could be related to bread. At this point I am able to gather and synthetise the final considerations as follows:

1. It is allowed and appropriate, according to our given truth of faith, to honour Relics and Images of Christ and of His Saints.
2. The assertion affirming that Relics and Holy images have to be honored only with the relative cult, is commonly sustained and shared by the Catholic doctrine.

The Council of Trent, verbatim, says: "The honour or homage attributed to the Images (and Relics) ultimately go back to the models upon which the former are reproduced". Some people think or imagine that, in the Eucharistic Miracles where the Sacramental species are totally lacking, we may grant or could grant a "higher Real Presence" and, in a sense, superior to the Sacramental and Mysterious one that is proper to the Eucharist. For these, I would like to make three points:

1. Catholic faith does not acknowledge a "Sacramental" Presence of the Word Incarnate that could be alternative, parallel or adding to the one which is steadily linked to the permanence of the species.
2. A similar hypothesis would end up in introducing a disturbing element inside the believing and praying devotion of our Church.
3. Such an intellectual process really runs the risk of sliding into a physiscistical and materialistic vision of the Eucharistic Miracle which, as a consequence, might become incomprehensible.

Let us not disturb the enchantment of the mystery; otherwise, we would end up not understanding anything and missing the whole point.

Job reminds us: "We shall never reach the Almighty, the Sublime in power and righteousness, the Great in justice" (Job 37,23).

We should be neither more Catholic than the Pope, nor creating more "Real Presences" in addition to the one that has always and unanimously been acknowledged and proposed to the piety of believers by the Holy Scriptures and Tradition.

If we kneel before the Signs of the Eucharistic Miracles, we do not mean to push a case for a Real Presence of a special kind. People can worship while standing and venerate when kneeling. We all bend our knees before the image of the Great Mother of God, but none of us, has ever thought, we have been worshipping the Holy Virgin Mary.

Faith can bend our knees but knees must not bend our faith.

Faith resides in our heart not in the position of our knees.

"For, if you confess through your lips that Jesus is our Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. In fact, in our heart we believe and gain justice and through our lips we profess our faith and obtain salvation" (Rom.10, 9-10).

Nevertheless, the Tradition relating to the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, speaks unanimously and exclusively about Relics. That is an attribution nobody would dare to relate to the Sacrament of Eucharist since it would sound untrue if not blasphemous.

I do not think that I should add anything more, I only hope to have given my little and modest contribution in making clear an issue concerning all of us.

Together with Saint Francis, let us ask our Lord the true Faith, the sure Hope and the perfect Charity.

We do not wish to divert either to the right or to the left, above or below.

Faith is balance, and spiritual and ecclesial discernment.

Fideism is not a good ally of our Faith.

IN PERPETUAL MEMORY



In the year of the Lord 1972 in the ninth year of the Pontificate of Paul VI, in the tenth year of the Episcopate of the Most Eminent Lord Pacifico Mary Aloysius Perantoni O.F.M., Archbishop of Lanciano and Bishop of Ortona, on Friday, May 5th, after the scientific investigation conducted from Nov. 18th, 1971 to March 4th, 1972 by the most illustrious Prof. Odoardo Linoli, an expert in histology and human anatomy, has been completed, in the presence of D. Giuseppe Castiglione, the delegate of the Most Eminent Archbishops, Rev. Bruno Luciani, Minister Provincial of the Province of SS. Bernardine and Angelus in Abruzzi, Fr. Antonio Ricciardi, Postulator General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, Fr. Giuseppe Antonino, the Guardian of the Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi in Lanciano, the renovation of the Ostensorium in which the Holy Relics of the Eucharistic Miracle are preserved was entrusted to Mr. Francisco Scarmigliati of Rome, a skilled silversmith. In the meantime the Holy Relics were placed in another Ostensorium to be again exposed for the veneration of the believers.

On Saturday which is the first day of July of this same year, before well-known witnesses the Holy Relics were enclosed in a new lunette, perfectly sealed, which was placed in the renovated Ostensorium.

In faithful testimony of the above

*Fr. PACIFICUS M. PERANTONI O.F.M. Archbishop
L. S.*

Given at Lanciano, July 1st, 1972

VOICE OF SCIENCE

"Science does not remove Mystery, it comes to affirm It". "A little bit of science averts people from God, a lot of it, takes us back to Him"(Louis Pasteur).

In a world dominated by science and technology, in which science seems to inevitably encroach upon the space of the sacred, a paradox emerges: science proves the sacred, recognizing with loyalty and dignity that scientific truth is not the only truth.

There are facts that go beyond experimental data. Man is more than a natural phenomenon. God is more than man.

There is an immense space available for the divine imagination.

Unconsciously or not, we all breathe an air of reflexive trust in science. The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano has been firmly grounded in medical science, a fact testified in the most solemn and public of manners.

Called upon to give its cold and clinical analysis on the Blood and on the Flesh known as the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, medical science, after rigorous and exact testing, confirmed the voice of historical and religious tradition, lending its further credibility.

The examinations took place between November, 1970, and March, 1971, and continued in part in 1981. The examination revealed great historical and scientific interest. Basically, the analysis excluded any possibility of historical falsification or manipulation, and proved the extraordinary nature of the phenomenon.

The Eucharistic Miracle thereby was recognized even by science as an unexplainable "Fact". And with that scientific support the news of the Miracle assumed even greater and more pressing importance today.

The recognition for technical reasons took place in two phases: the first consisted in the removal of some specimens of the Sacred Relics that Dr. Linoli would take to his laboratories in Arezzo for examination; the second involved scientific proceedings and research.



Dr. Odoardo Linoli: Chief Phycician of the "Ospedali Riuniti" of Arezzo

At 10.00 a.m. on November 18th, 1970, Archbishop Pacifico Perantoni opened the seals on the case and the chalice containing the Sacred Relics; the seals were authenticated by Mons. Francesco Petrarca.

It was immediately noted that the case containing the Flesh had not been hermetically sealed, and this explained the presence within it of mould and other unrelated material, which microscopic examination would make visible....

To an analytical scientific eye the material known as the Miraculous Flesh appears to be of yellow-darkish brown colour, with a uniformly hard consistency that required a considerable effort of a scalpel for the removal of fragments.

In his first observations on the material, Dr. Linoli expressed concern about not being able to find in laboratory analyses sufficient elements to achieve scientific conclusions, and hypothesised that the material of the Flesh by now had no single element of individuation for analysis.

Nevertheless, he extracted two small fragments that together weighed 20 mg.

The coagulated Blood appears to be in the form of five clots. Each of them is uneven in shape with rough surface and a hard substance.

Dr. Linoli extracted fragments from the internal areas of the clots with the hope of finding more individual elements for analysis. The weight of the fragments extracted from the Blood amounted to 318 mg.

Laboratory examinations took from November 18th, 1970, until March 4th, 1971.

Four months of tests, research, study and analysis, done with methodological precision and proverbial patience, brought the work to its official result. The exciting news was anticipated by two telegrams that the doctor sent to the Friars.

The first, dated December 11th, 1970, stated: "In principio erat Verbum et Verbum Caro factum est: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made Flesh".

The second, dated February 11th, 1971, stated: "Further testing allows us to confirm the presence of striated cardiac muscular material. Alleluja".

On March 4th, 1971, Dr. Linoli issued his public scientific report in the Church of St. Francis to an interested group of admirers and experts.

In 1981, on the tenth anniversary of the recognition, the Friars Minor Conventual of Lanciano requested another external analysis of the Miraculous Flesh, as well as another microscopic analysis, using the fragment of cardiac material that had not been consumed in the 1971 test and which had been preserved in the Shrine at Lanciano.

We can now pass to a synthesis of what the analyses of 1970-1971 and 1981 discovered.

Histological, immunological and biochemical investigation on flesh and blood of Eucharistic miracle in Lanciano

THE BACKGROUND

The results of first scientific recognition of the Eucharistic Miracle Relics in Lanciano (1971), were published on the same year in "Quaderni Sclavo di Diagnostica, vol. 7"; since then many critical considerations lead to new investigations which are reported in 1982 by "Osservatore Romano" and here summarized and updated as 1991 version.

We can say, that, when an investigator comes in contact with the "Invisible World" in the presence of Miracle Relics, he feels on one hand inclined to express his highest mental capabilities; on the other, he feels dismayed, since he can't find in his cultural background, the strength to face such a spiritual experience .

At the same time, the investigator must exert his strongest self-criticism not to be misled by false influences. This series of reasons make difficult the investigation of the Holy Relics.

In this context, I have recently observed some morphological characteristics, a macroscopic aspect of the Miraculous Flesh in Lanciano which I had neglected before and I would like now to underline:
It clearly appears indeed that in the Miraculous Flesh sample, the cross section of the heart can be seen with preminence of the right and left ventricle seriously damaged and shrunk during the centuries elapsed.
In this way, another particular feature of the Relics has been elucidated: that is a contribution of modern scientific development to the Eucharistic Miracle in Lanciano.

INTRODUCTION

An ancient Christian tradition told us that in the VIII century, a Monk of Basilian Order, while celebrating the Mass in St. Legontian and Domitian's Church in Lanciano (Chieti), doubting about the authenticity of the holy rite, together with all the people attending to the Mass, was witness of the Host to become Flesh and the wine to become Blood.

We never lost the memory of such an Event through the centuries and the history (Sanna Solaro).

The Miraculous Flesh and Blood, always kept in Lanciano, were submitted for recognition by ecclesiastic authorities in 1574, in 1637, in 1770 and in 1886. The present scientific recognition was performed at St. Francis' in Lanciano on November 18th, 1970.

The Relics handed down to us are kept into a silver fine workmanship reliquary, 63 cm. high and 44 wide, which contains on the top, a round monstrance, where, between two glasses, Flesh is kept; below, between two Angels praying, there is a covered goblet, where the Blood is kept, deeply changed because of the age of the sample.

Eucharistic Miracle Flesh in Lanciano has a round shape with 55-60 mm of diameter, its colour is yellow-dark-brown, with some shadows of high brightness. The tissue sheet looks thinner and badly ripped in the middle, as the tissue retracts towards the periphery, where it appears raised in circular bundles.

In the Miraculous Flesh at Lanciano an internal hollow organ is recognizable, through a transverse section, histologically considered as heart, whose left ventricle appears thicker while above, the right ventricle, is thinner as a rule.

At last, the action of long centuries on the Miraculous tissue, provoked the loss of anatomic pieces and consequently only one cavity was formed. Therefore, it is evident that without any cover, all the fluid phase inside the tissue was lost, making it mummified and reducing its size, that results lower compared to a normal heart. The surface is smooth, never raised or chapped or carved. We can widely notice little white spots strewn sometimes chapped, or like millet-seed, often flowing, soft, detachable, not belonging to any tissue trace, hardly diluted into a physiological solution (the microscopic investigation, revealed hyphomycetes colonies, from evident contamination). On the peripheral side of the tissue round sheet there are little holes, ancient signs of nail crossings. The tissue consistency is regularly ligneous-strong, in fact, it is necessary to press the layer in order to remove two little fragments for the following investigations.

The Blood of the Eucharistic Miracle is contained into an ancient glass goblet closed with a lid and appears under the shape of five fragments of g.15.85 weight, yellow-brown coloured, with little white dots.

The fragment shape is completely irregular, the surface is rough, variously raised; the consistency is normally hard so that, only by a strong pressure with a blade, some little pieces can be torn. Below the goblet there is a small quantity of brown coloured powder.

This investigation, performed between November 18th, 1970 and March 4th, 1971, had the following aims:

- a) to check the histological structure of the ligneous - hard tissue, left as Flesh;
- b) to define if the hardened stony - cretaceous substance left as Blood has the same characteristics of this;
- c) to point out what biological species Flesh and Blood belong to;
- d) to find out the Blood group in both tissues;
- e) to investigate on the protein and mineral components of the Blood.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

1. For the histological study of the ancient Flesh in Lanciano Lenzi's method was used, which is well adapted to mummified tissues. Microtomic sections, (hardly obtained since the tissue was extremely strong) were treated with eosine-emallume dyes, Mallory, Van Gieson, dyes Ignesti's method for muscle tissue and Gomori's silver impregnation.
2. For Blood, identification was tried on a small fragment of tissue, according to the technique used for the Flesh. In addition Teichmann's micro chemical reactions have been used after adaptation by Bertrand with chloride-hematine, Takayama's test with hemochromogen, Burton and Stone's test with orthotolidine used for oxidases, thin layer chromatography of haemoglobin according to Franchini's technique, modified for this specific test.
3. to find which species belong to the ancient Blood and Flesh in Lanciano, very small fragments have been soaked into distilled water with micro-potter. The zonal precipitation test by Uhlenhuth using the elution liquid has been performed, due to difficulties to perform immuno-diffusion reaction according to Outhcherlony's because of the limited amount of sample available.
4. The Blood group of the Eucharistic Miracle Blood and Flesh in Lanciano was defined by Fiori and others.
5. After five times condensation of the elution liquid against carbowax in Calover's micro diffuser an electrophoretic run was performed on acetate-cellulose coloured with Ponceau S and then read on a Cromoscan photometer.
6. Mineral research in the elution liquid of the ancient Blood, was carried out on the photometer in SP 90 Unicam atomic absorption for magnesium and calcium, on photometer EEL fired for sodium and potassium, with Shales' and Shales' method (1941) for chloride, with Goldam- Fernandez's colorimeter method (1968) for phosphorus.

Results

I. HISTOLOGICAL STUDIES ON THE ANCIENT FLESH.

The tissue structure appears markedly abnormal due to the lack of histochemical detectability of nuclei and to some degree of global homogenization.

However, in different microscope campuses and microsection levels the mesodermal origin of the tissue appears clearly; most fibers with longitudinal orientation ([Fig.1] [Fig.2]), but some also in different directions can be observed ([Fig.3] [Fig.4]).

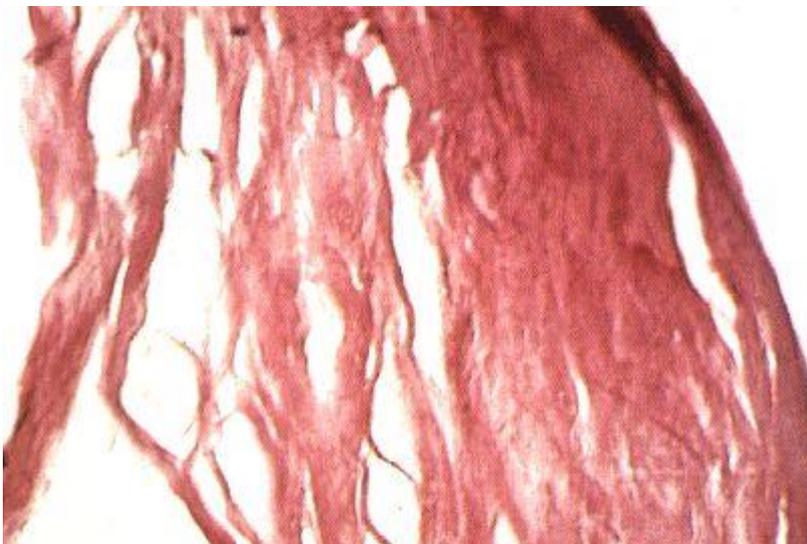


Fig. 1 - Eosine x 200. Overall histological aspect of a Flesh sample with fibres collected in bundles with longitudinal orientation as it occurs in the outer surface layers of the heart.

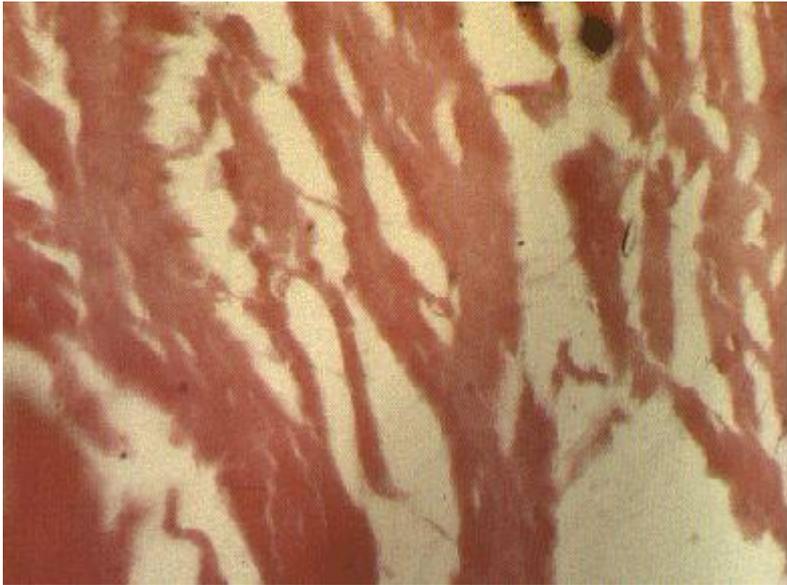


Fig. 2 - Eosine x 200. Fig. 1 detail. Muscular cells with longitudinal orientation.

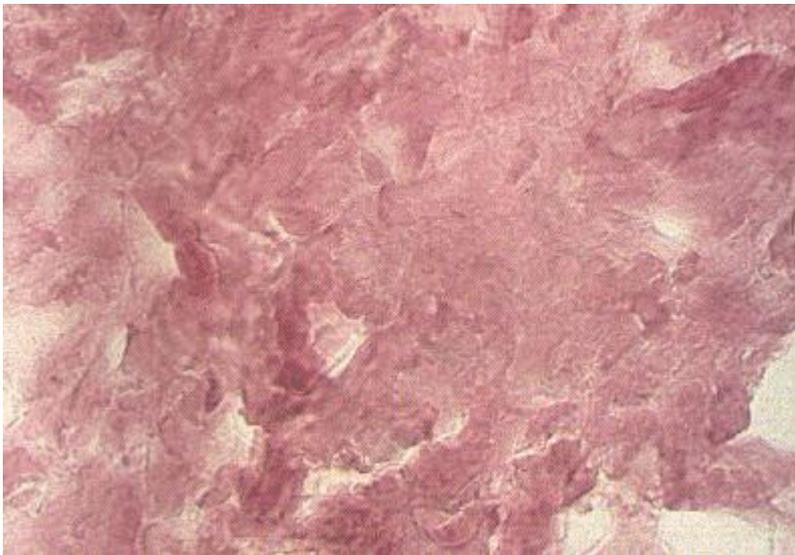


Fig. 3 - Eosine x 200. Myocardial tissue cells with various orientation.



Fig. 4 - Eosine x 200. Anastomosis bridges among myocardial cells.

The fibres have different length (as can be better appreciated where they are dissociated) have even thickness and look assembled in bundles of different size.

In particular, at higher magnification, the fibres reveal a longitudinal fibrous structure ([Fig.4]) and all the above mentioned data lead us to the identification of a striated muscular tissue even if the striation is lacking because of the age of the sample. Indeed, this tissue typically consists of syncytial aggregates formed by the fibres through bifurcation and end-to-end junctions ([Fig.5] [Fig.6] [Fig.7] [Fig.8] [Fig.9]); this is visible in all the districts studied in this wide screening which has lead to the identification of myocardial tissue.

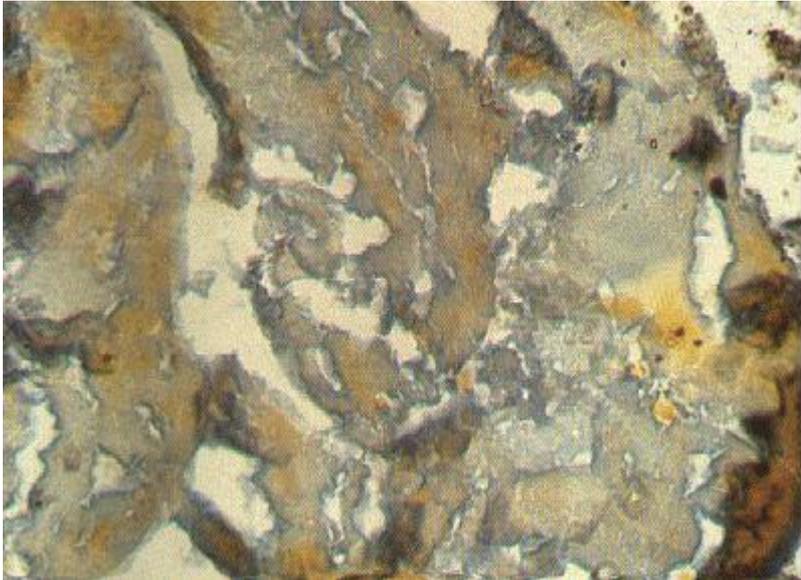


Fig. 5 - Ignesti's Method x 200. Anastomosis bridges among myocardial tissue cells.

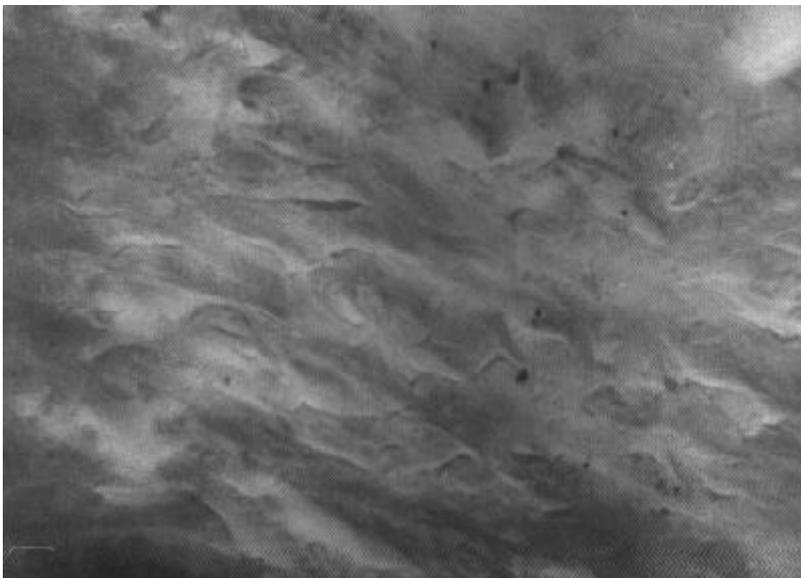


Fig. 6 - Eosine x 200. Overall picture showing the striated muscle structure of the tissue with fibres which bind to each other with a syncytoid aspect.

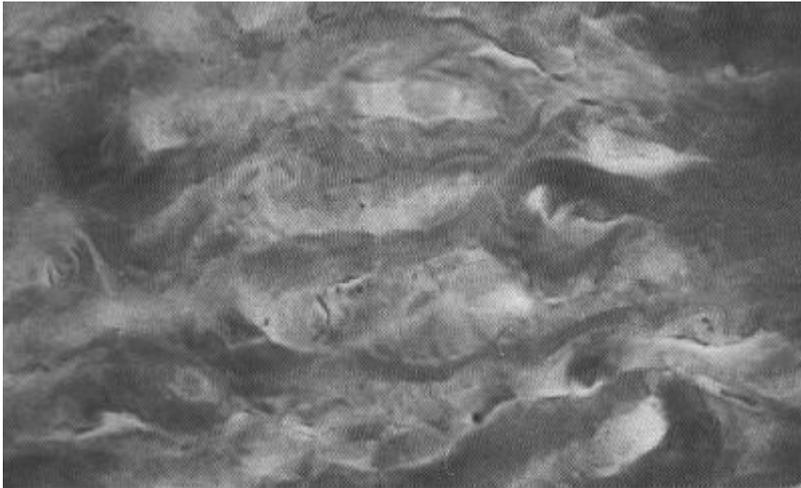


Fig. 7- Eosine x 500. This magnification shows a tissue structure crowded with fibres, which resembles a syncythium.

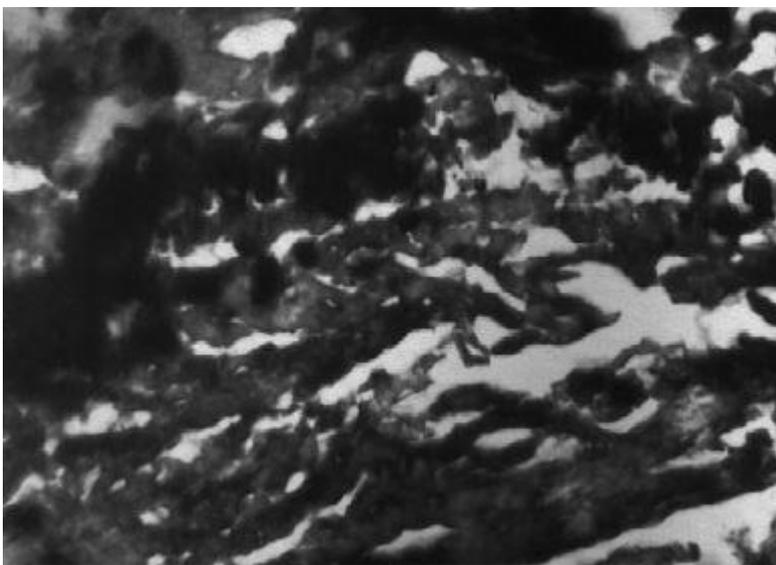


Fig. 8- Ignesti's technique x 200. Although the tissue is ancient, it is composed of muscular fibrocells separated or in bundles. In many points the fibrocells join each other. The tissue, of a syncytoid type, is clearly evident. Despite some artefacts due to the age of the tissue, it is evident that the tissue consists of cardiac muscle cells isolated or in bundles.

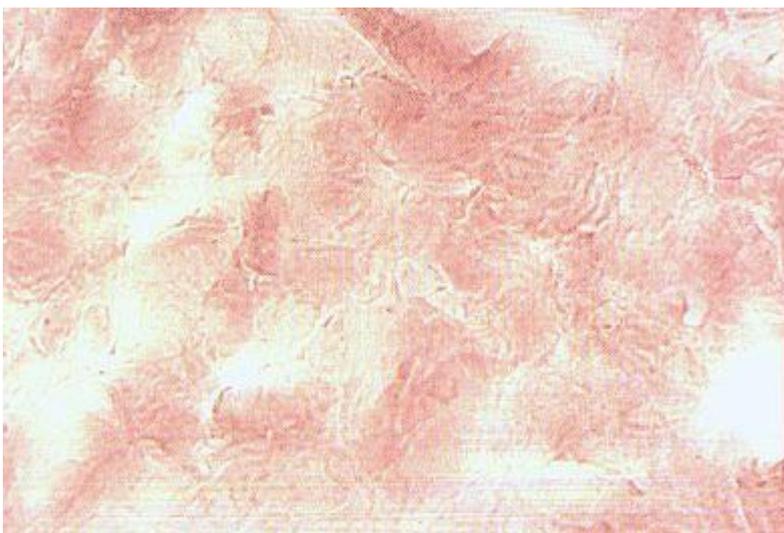


Fig. 9- Eosine x 200. Syncytial arrangement of myocardial cells.

The syncytial aggregation of the fibres is a consistent feature of the tissue with sometimes transversal junctions ([Fig.6] [Fig.7]) also where fibres are more crowded and form a dense body. Moreover, a lobule of adipose tissue was found in the interstice of striated muscle and intersected by fibres scattering around ([Fig.10] [Fig.11] [Fig.12]).

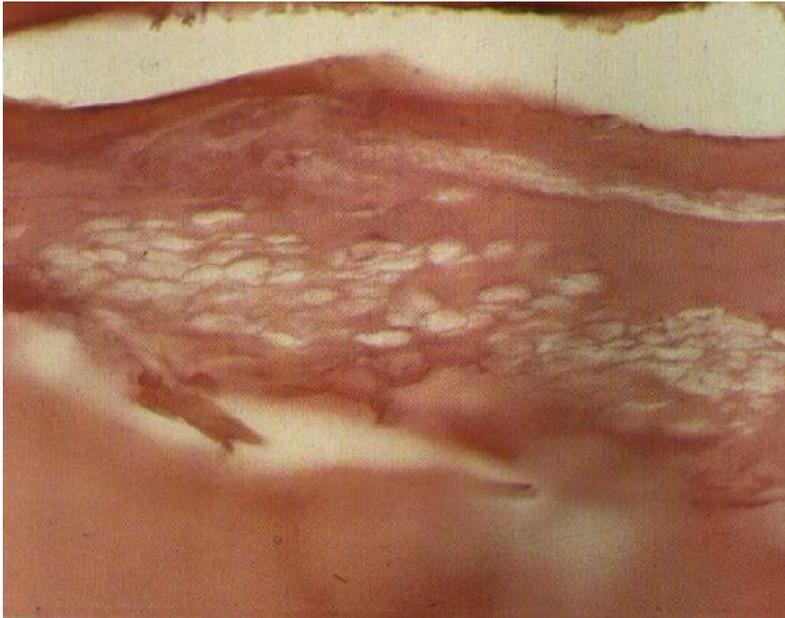


Fig. 10 - Eosine x 200. A lobule of adipose tissue in the interstitial space of the striated muscle. Muscle cells are dissociated and intermingled with fat cells within myocardial tissue.

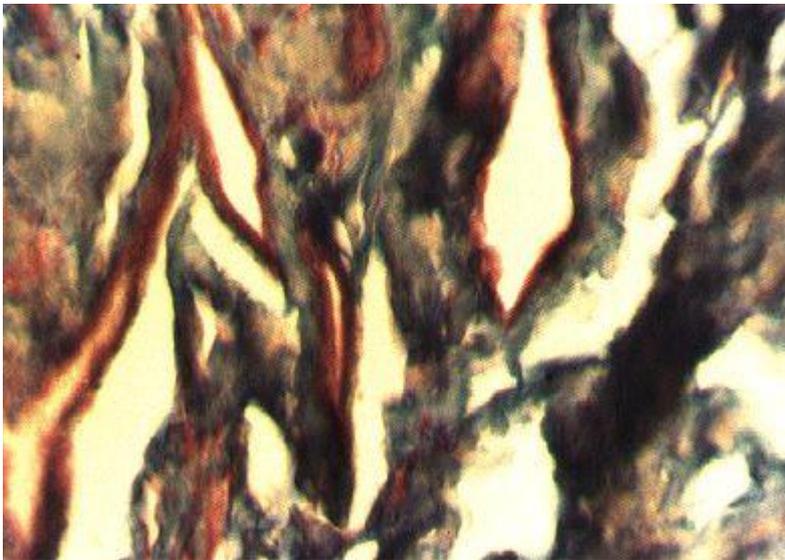


Fig. 11 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 400. Blood vessels (arteries and veins).

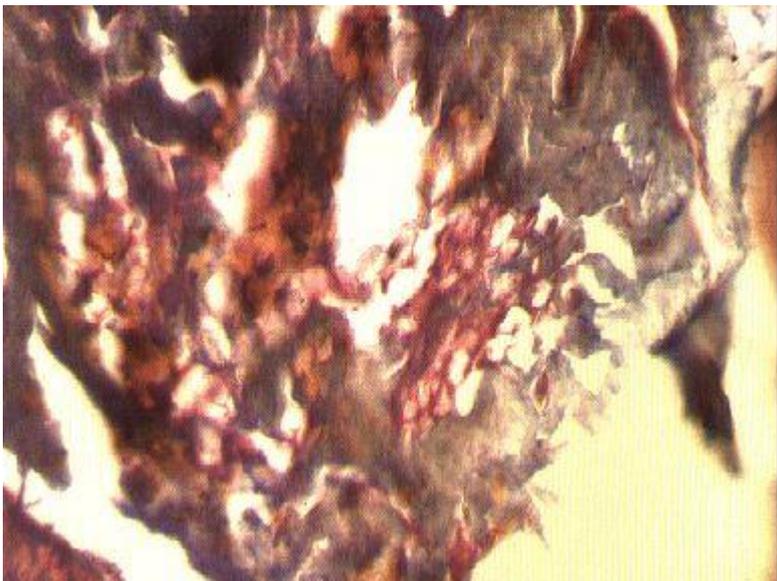


Fig. 12 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 400. Blood vessels (both arteries and veins) within the myocardial tissue. A nodule of adipose tissue is intermingled with the myocardial tissue.

A network of vessels can be seen, both of arterial and venous type. In one site, close to the vessels, a nervous structure can be seen, to be ascribed to the vagal nerve ([Fig.13]). The latter can also be seen as an isolated structure with a thin fibrous coat (perinervium) ([Fig.14]).

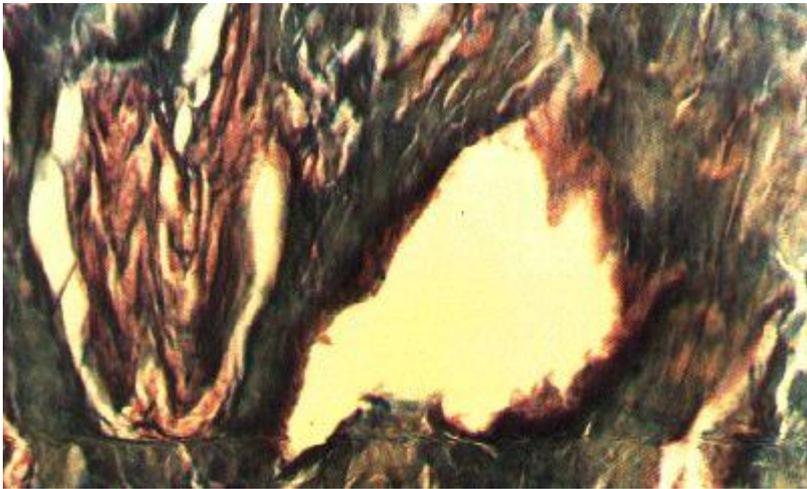


Fig. 13 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 250. An artery and, very close, a branch of the vagal nerve.



Fig. 14 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Eosine x 350. A branch of vagal nerve. The thin perinervium and the well preserved fascicular structure.

Last, endocardial structures can be seen, well detectable due to a "lamina" of fibrous tissue with papillar 'hills'. In the deeper areas the myocardial tissue can be seen with a clear syncytial structure ([Fig.15] [Fig.16]).

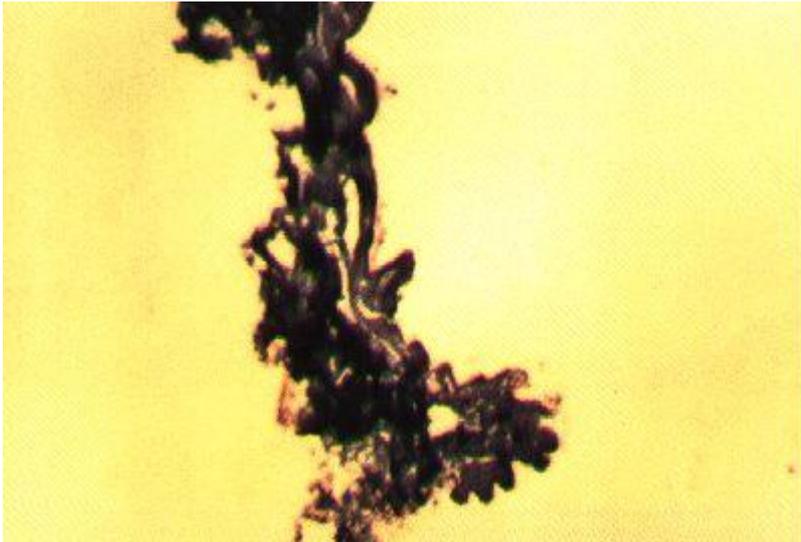


Fig. 15 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 110. Endocardial structure with papillary shaped "hills".

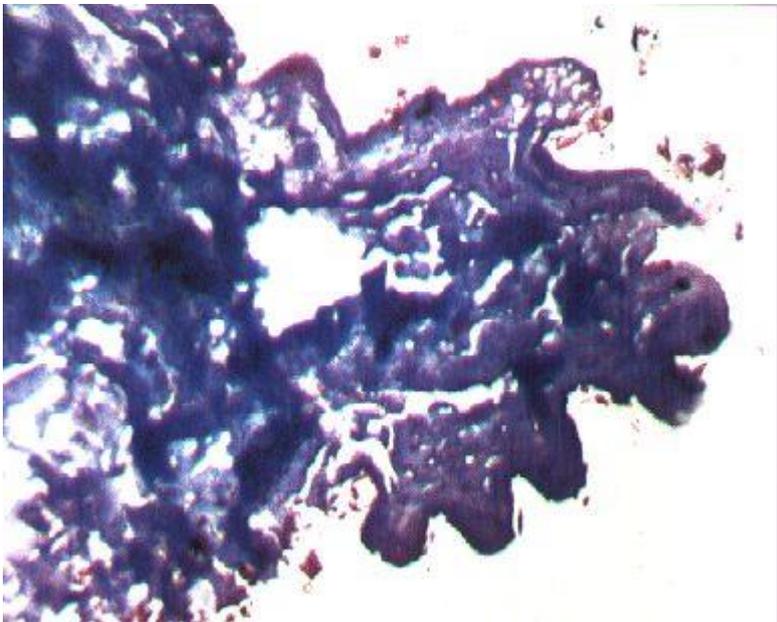


Fig. 16 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 400. Evidence of the "Rough" aspect of the endocardium; the syncytoid structure of the myocardial tissue, below.

These data are confirmed also at higher magnification, even if the endothelial coat is missing due to the age of the tissue ([Fig.17] [Fig.18]).



Fig. 17 - Eosine x 160. The endocardium, as a continuous connective layer, and below the myocardial tissue with blood vessels.

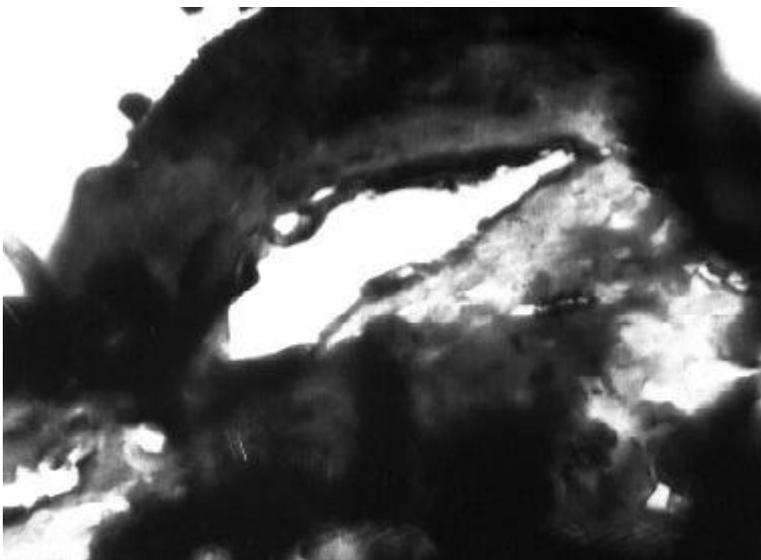


Fig. 18 - Mallory x 160. A fragment of endocardium shaped as a fibrous layer, with even thickness, blood vessels in the subendocardial tissue and myocardial tissue.

It may be underlined that in no histological section any picture appears which could suggest a previous treatment of the tissue with mummifying substances such as those used in the past for the preservation of tissues.

CONCLUSION (I):

From the study of the ancient Flesh of Lanciano it appears clear that we are dealing with a striated muscular tissue which for its diffuse syncytial junctions among the fibres, appears to be of myocardial origin, with arterial and venous vessels and two thin branches of the vagal nerve.

This identification is made on the basis of the scattered orientation of the fibers, their consistent end-to-end syncytial aggregation, the presence of some transversal connections and the penetration of muscle fibers within some interstitial adipose lobules; all these observations are not compatible with the aspect of a skeletal muscular tissue.

Finally, the endocardial layer is visible, with "rough hills" on the cavity surface; in the subendocardial district, normal myocardial tissue is visible.

II. MICROSCOPIC STUDIES OF THE ANCIENT BLOOD OF LANCIANO

A minute Blood fragment has been included in paraffin according to Lenzi's technique.

At the Emallume-Eosine staining, no cellular element can be detected, with the exception of a yellow-dark-green granular material with foreign bodies of vegetable origin.

III. MICROCHEMICAL STUDIES ON BLOOD

Teichmann's reaction modified by Bertrand with hydrochlorate hematine and Takayama's reaction with hemo-chromogen, have been carried out on the ancient Blood in Lanciano with negative results, together with human Blood samples normally dried, which gave positive results.

Oxidase research (Stone and Burke's tests) gave highly positive results on the test sample and on control human normally dried Blood.

IV. THIN LAYER CHROMATOGRAPHY STUDY OF HAEMOGLOBIN FROM THE ANCIENT BLOOD

Haemoglobin and alkaline-haematic standards prepared according to Dacie's technique, were run on silica gel, in parallel with eluted liquid of the Blood in Lanciano, transformed also in alkaline-haematin according to the already mentioned technique, being this the best suited preparation for chromatographic goals.

The liquid used in the running reaction was methanol-acetic acid-water, in the ratio 90:3:7. After 90 minutes, the sample (ancient Blood in Lanciano) had migrated similarly to the standards thus showing the same Rf (0,88). [Fig.19]

The test was highly reproducible as shown by the results of triplicate experiments and of different running conditions.

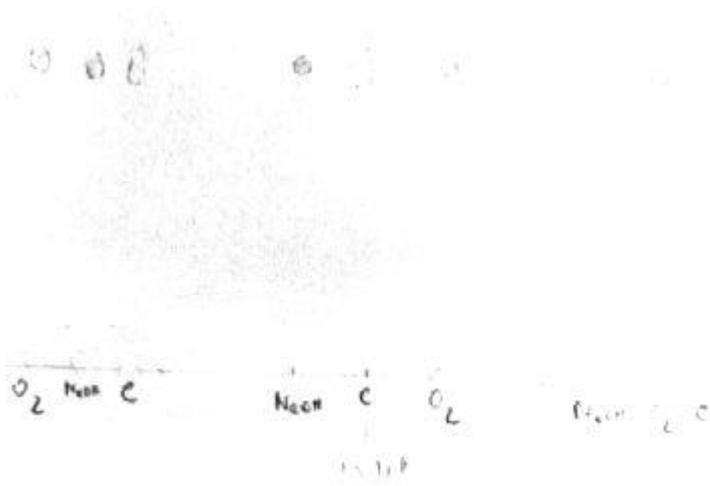


Fig. 19 - Thin layer chromatography of a blood sample with oxyhemoglobin (O₂) and alchalin hematin (NaOH) standards. The experiment has been carried out in triplicate. The blood has the same Rf as the standards, therefore suggesting the material has biochemical characteristics of a real Blood sample.

CONCLUSIONS (II. III. IV.)

The negativity of Teichmann-Bertrand's test and Takayama's test does not exclude the presence of Blood, as these tests can become negative due to sample denaturation.

A positive oxidase test, generally indicating the presence of Blood, can occur also with organs contaminated by vegetable extracts or metal traces.

Paper thin layer chromatography (Franchini) is a validated test to identify the presence of Blood even in badly preserved samples which are not positive for haemoglobin.

This study confirms the real hematological nature of the ancient Blood in Lanciano.

V. IMMUNOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF THE SPECIES TO WHICH THE ANCIENT BLOOD AND FLESH IN LANCIANO DO BELONG

The elution fluid of Blood and Flesh in Lanciano has been employed in the zonal precipitation - reaction by Uhlenhuth, a recognized technique in modern laboratory methodology (Gradwohls).

Antihuman protein antiserum from Behringwerke has been used for testing samples and controls. [Fig.20]

The zonal precipitation reaction has given a positive result in 5 minutes in the test-tube n.1 (Blood) n.2 (Flesh) and n.3 (human serum), but it was negative in the test-tube n.4 (elution liquid of Blood and rabbit serum), n.5 (elution liquid of Flesh and rabbit serum) n.6 (ox serum and human antiprotein serum), n.7 (isotonic saline and antihuman protein serum).

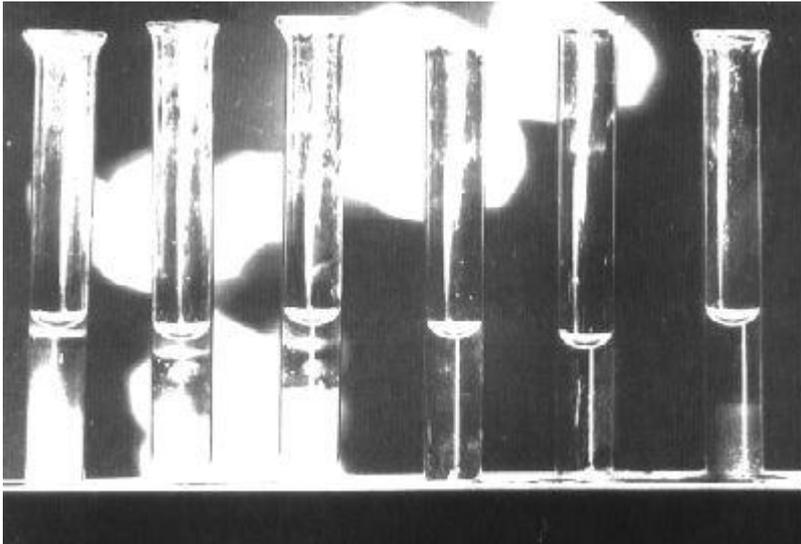


Fig. 20 - Uhlenhuth's zone precipitation reaction. From the left, tube n. 1 (Blood) and n. 2 (Flesh) show the positive zone precipitation reaction. The subsequent tubes act as controls.

CONCLUSION (V.)

The results of the zonal precipitation test according to Uhlenhuth, based on appropriate controls, confirm that the Eucharistic Miracle Blood and Flesh in Lanciano belong to the human species.

VI. DETERMINATION OF BLOOD GROUP IN THE ANCIENT BLOOD AND FLESH IN LANCIANO.

The absorption-elution reaction proposed by Siracusa and standardized by Fiori and coll. has been used to define the Blood group (ABO) in the elution fluid of the ancient Blood and Flesh in Lanciano.

The method has been widely accepted as fully valid to define the blood group in those cases which do not allow to perform classical tests, such as tissues, biological fluids, dried Blood spots.

It has been found that Blood and Flesh in Lanciano have both A and B agglutinogens; therefore, they belong to AB blood group. [Fig.21]

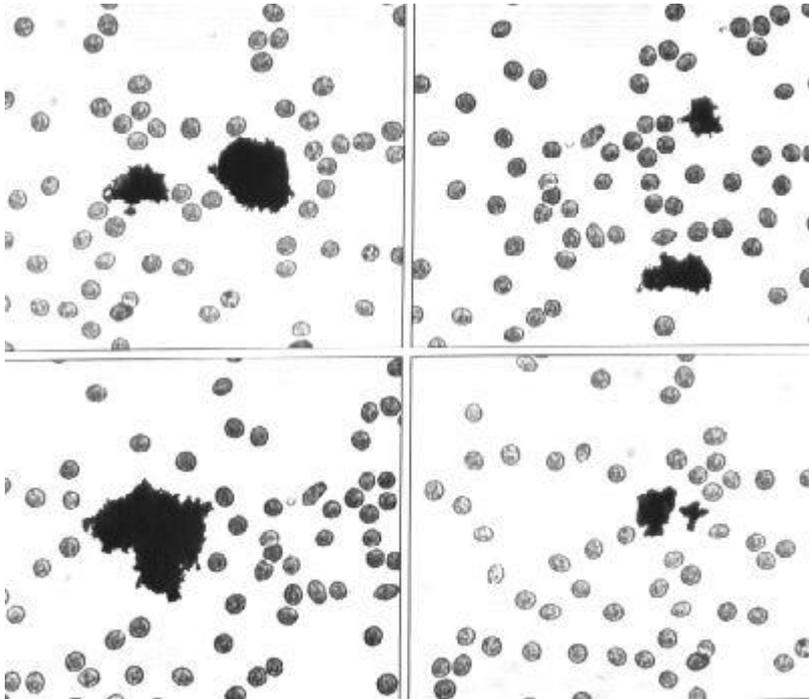


Fig. 21 - Elution-absorption test x 80. Above: Hemagglutination test on blood sample in Lanciano: on the left, anti A serum used; on the right, anti-B serum. Below: hemoagglutination test on a Flesh sample in Lanciano: left, with anti-A serum, right, with anti-B serum. It appears thus that the Flesh and the Blood in Lanciano belong to AB blood group.

VII. ELECTROPHORETIC ANALYSIS OF THE PROTEINS OF THE ANCIENT BLOOD IN LANCIANO.

After dialysis in Colover's microcells against carbowax, the elution fluid of the ancient Blood, concentrated five times, gives an electrophoretic tracing in cellulose-acetate (Veronal buffer, ph 8.6; power: 0.5 ampère for 30 minutes, Ponceau S stain, Cromoscan photometer recording. [Fig.22]

The percentage composition of proteins in the liquid tested is similar to that known for human normal Blood serum (Henry).

The protein content is as follows: albumin 61.93 % (normal values 52-68%). Alfa 1 globulin 2.38% (normal values 2.4-5.3%), Alfa 2 globulin 7.14% (normal values 6,6-13,5%), Beta globulin in 7,14% (normal values 8.5-14.5%), Gamma globulin 21.42% (normal values 10.7-21%).

Globulin-albumin ratio is of 1.62 the normal value being 1.13-1.73.

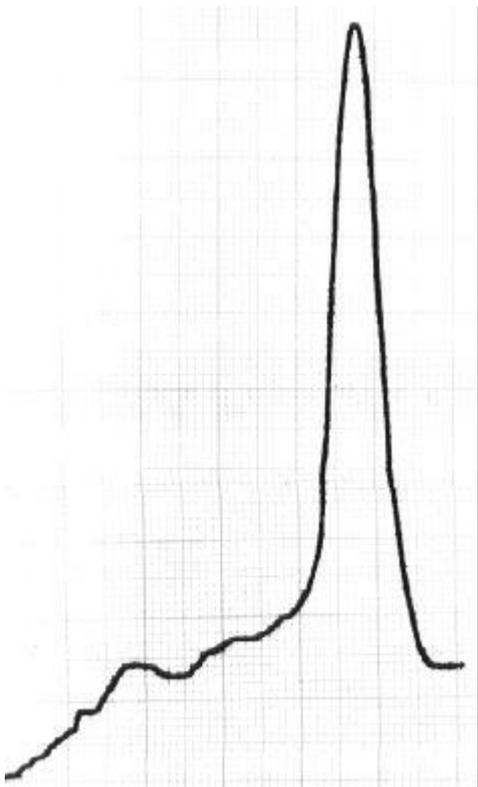


Fig. 22 - Electro-phoretic pattern of Blood proteins (Cromoscan photometer). The profile of serum fractions is normal and superimposable to that of a fresh serum sample.

VIII. DETERMINATION OF MINERAL CONTENT (CALCIUM, CHLORIDE, PHOSPHORUS, MAGNESIUM, POTASSIUM, SODIUM) IN THE ANCIENT BLOOD IN LANCIANO

Table 1 shows the levels of minerals (calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, sodium) found in dried samples of normal human Blood compared with those of the Ancient Blood in Lanciano.

The levels have been evaluated in comparison with those present in whole Blood (in: Tables Scientifiques Geigy, VIth edition pag 582-590, 1960).

SAMPLE	Ca mg%	Cl mEq\1	P mg%	Mg mEq\1	K mEq\1	Na mEq\1
Blood in Lanciano	114,29	4,25	1,99	0,96	5,76	46,44
Blood n. 1	4,42	31,8	8,42	1,57	12,80	55,04
Blood n. 2	3,96	30,75	8,37	1,52	12,16	48,16
Blood n. 3	3,73	31,50	8,75	1,15	14,08	48,16
Blood n. 4	4,66	43,20	8,10	1,39	5,12	116,9
Blood n. 5	3,73	37,70	9,72	1,39	4,80	99,76
Blood n. 6	3,26	31,76	8,42	1,54	3,84	79,12
Blood n. 7	4,89	35,2	9,07	1,82	4,00	65,36
Blood n. 8	3,96	36,00	10,00	1,66	4,16	68,80
Blood n. 9	3,82	34,40	9,55	1,34	4,00	79,12
Blood n. 10	3,35	32,80	9,47	1,64	3,84	73,96

Arithmetical average of 10 samples	3,97	34,51	8,98	1,50	6,88	73,43

Whole Blood normal values	9-11	77-90,6	28-48	1,7-3,4	43	85

Table 1. - Mineral quantitative values (calcium, chloride, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium) in the Ancient Blood in Lanciano and in 10 human Blood normally dried samples.

From Table 1 the following conclusions can be drawn:

a) During the slow drying process of 10 human normal whole Blood samples, in open glass tubes, kept at 50deg.C, at 37deg.C or at room temperature during three months, a loss in phosphorus, calcium, chloride, potassium, and, to a lesser extent, in magnesium and sodium can be recorded;

b) The Eucharistic Miracle Blood in Lanciano showed markedly decreased levels of chloride, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and sodium as compared to human blood samples, normally dried. On the other hand, calcium levels were highly increased in the Blood from Lanciano (mg. 114, 29%).

Final comments

- The Eucharistic Miracle Blood in Lanciano, was identified as real Blood, as demonstrated through haemoglobin detection by thin layer chromatography.
- Flesh comes from muscular tissue, belonging to myocardium as shown by the syncytoid arrangement of fibres.
Arterial and venous vessels have been detected, as well as a double thin branch of the vagal nerve. Furthermore, endocardium has been found with its typical "rough" surface and with its sub-endocardial tissue containing blood vessels as in normal myocardial tissue.
- Flesh and Blood belong to the human species, as discovered through Uhlenhuth's zonal precipitation reaction.
- Blood group tested through elution absorption method, was the same in both Flesh and Blood.
- In Blood elution fluid the protein fractions found are in a relative distribution very close to that of normal fresh blood, with only slight changes due to the age of the sample (for this test the sample cannot normally be kept more than 2-4 days at 4deg. C) and to the fact that serum, not total Blood, is normally used.
- While calcium was markedly increased, in the blood we found reduced levels of phosphorus, potassium and sodium. This mineral reduction can be ascribed to ageing processes or the progressive loss of tissue contents during the centuries, or to exchange of minerals between the tissue and the glass tube wall; to avoid this, in modern times, inert material containers are used for precious solutions. The increase in calcium levels (mg. 114,29%) in the ancient Blood in Lanciano can be related to falling into the goblet of building powder enriched with calcium salt, or to the vegetable fragments (flowers) found during the histological study of Blood.

The histological diagnosis of myocardial tissue, founded on real objective elements, makes unacceptable the hypothesis of an ancient "false". Supposing that the heart was taken from a dead body, we have to consider that only a trained hand in anatomic dissection could have obtained, with no difficulty, from a cave organ an "even and continuous slice" considering that the first anatomic dissections on human body, have been made after the 14th century (Diagnosis is fully confirmed by Prof. Ruggero Bertelli, Professor of Human Normal Anatomy at Siena University, whom I gratefully thank).

On the other hand, it is evident that in the Miraculous Heart only a surface part has been studied, as indicated by the longitudinal course of fibrocells (Chiarugi), shown in figures 1 and 2 of this study.

Altogether, we have considered a transversal section, containing cardiac ventricles, and the wide central laceration presently seen, is due to the retraction of the organ towards the external side, as shown by the circular marks on the marginal section.

Considering the nail holes in many points of the frame, we must conclude that the Miraculous Heart fragment which appeared on the altar of the little Church in Lanciano consisted of living material therefore tending, due to subsequent "rigor mortis", to concentric retraction; the Basilian monks tried to prevent it, by nailing the Heart Fragment on a wood piece, and this, already small, retracted again in centrifugal direction, finally tearing up (Linoli).

The wide empty space observed inside the Miraculous Heart represents the cardiac cavity, with the retraction of the tissue towards the external space, as mentioned above.

During the elapse of many centuries, dispersion of some Miraculous tissue pieces occurred; this appears as only one cavity.

This study confirms the possibility that organic material (such as proteins) may be kept for a very long period, as if the fatal destiny of Flesh could be overcome.

The discovery of blood group AB proteins and antigens in the ancient Flesh and Blood in Lanciano after 1200 years, is in agreement with the discovery of proteins in Egyptian mummies dated since 4000 years (Hansemann), and since 5000 years (Meyer), even if we must recognize that the situation is very different in a body mummified with a well defined process and shielded from external contacts, as compared to the condition of a myocardial tissue sample or blood clot left for many centuries without any particular preserving treatment and exposed to environmental and microbial/parasitic contamination.

Summary

LINOLI O. - HISTOLOGICAL, IMMUNOLOGICAL AND BIOCHEMICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON EUCHARISTIC MIRACLE FLESH AND BLOOD IN LANCIANO (VIIIth CENTURY).

A description has been given of the macroscopic aspects of the Flesh and the Blood of the Eucharistic Miracle which happened in Lanciano back in the eighth century.

Histological studies have been carried out with the following results: Flesh is composed of mesodermal tissue and recognizable as heart tissue, myocardium and endocardium.

Several studies on Blood, in particular thin layer chromatography, allowed to recognize it as belonging to Blood.

The human nature of the ancient Blood and Flesh in Lanciano was identified immunologically by Uhlenhuth's zonal precipitation reaction.

The Blood group in elution fluids of the ancient Blood and Flesh is the same in both tissues (AB group).

The electrophoretic tracings of serum proteins of the ancient Blood show quite superimposable pattern to those obtained with a fresh serum.

In the ancient Blood low amounts of sodium, potassium, chloride, non organic phosphorus and magnesium were found while calcium levels were increased.

This is the hard core of results to which science has brought us. Today, with modern scientific equipment great progress has been achieved in the field of anatomy and pathology.

The techniques might possibly be modified, but not the essence of the piece of knowledge obtained by those techniques. Appended is a declaration by Dr. Ruggero Bertelli, Professor of Normal Human Anatomy at the University of Siena (Italy), on the objectivity and validity of the testing process performed by Dr. Linoli.

The objectivity of the laboratory results goes along with the professional competence of the man who conducted the research and analytical work with scientific care, with the enthusiasm of a true investigator, and with the humility of a believer.

It is true, the stupefying scientific results simply record a fact, but man, since he is a man, is called to read and understand the facts and understand their meaning, their meaning for his life.

In this way, the fact becomes a sign. The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano is a sign of God.

The sign stands on this side of faith. The leap of true faith is done only with free adhesion of the conscience.

Faith is like love: either it is free or it is nothing.

The Miracle does not bring faith, which remains a free gift of God that man welcomes. But even if it does not grant faith, the Miracle is like a lamp that lights up the horizon. With it, God opens a path into the human heart. But it is up to humanity to either open itself up to Eternity or to close itself within its own dark little world.

Prof. Ruggero Bertelli with this document confirms the reliability of the researches made by Professor O. Linoli.

UNIVERSITY OF SIENA

Prof. Odoardo Linoli, Head of the Laboratory of Clinical Chemistry and Pathological Anatomy of "S.Maria Sopra i Ponti" Hospital in Arezzo has submitted to my evaluation a series of histological preparations obtained from a fragment collected by the same Prof. Linoli, according to his formal declaration, from a piece of a Holy Particle preserved in a church of Lanciano.

The examination of the glass slides has suggested to me that the microscopic sections, thereon contained, are constituted by a tissue that is mesodermic in origin and, more precisely, by a striated muscular tissue.

Even though in the preparations the nuclei and the transversal striation of the histological elements are not visible, the particular positioning of these, juxtaposed and so grouped as to constitute tiny columns, leads us to this diagnosis.

Wishing to proceed to a deeper analysis, the course of the muscular bundles, which intersect on different layers and in diverse directions, the presence of anastomotic areas between the fibres would lead to the identification of a myocardial muscular tissue.

Faithfully,

Prof. Ruggero Bertelli
Visiting Professor of Normal Human Anatomy

CONCLUSION

Dear Pilgrim!

The world of today is tossed around at the mercy of countless contradictory currents. He is dismayed in the midst of thousands of conflicting opinions.

The spectrum of its ideas, from right to left, does nothing but hide a deeper level of delusion, emptiness and profound uneasiness.

Why?

Because the spirit needs certitude, stability and height. In the height there is only the Father of eternity, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Only He is capable of keeping the world in peace and in goodness.

With the Miracle God returns and with Him, man, this small but great pilgrim.

The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano is the seal of this mysterious, discreet, yet very real presence of God.

You have to come to see, to contemplate, to adore. The way of the pilgrim is long and hard.

Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is the only light for difficult pathways, the only strength in our moments of weakness, the only hope for our fragile dreams, the only warmth for our needy hearts.

Pilgrim!

Do not stop.

Keep going.

God awaits you.

Trust Him!

Use well the time remaining before your great meeting with Him.

You will not be disappointed.

At the end, the only disappointment you will have, is to realize not to have trusted Him enough, not to have loved Him enough as He always did and taught to us.

Dear Pilgrim, after all, the Miracle of Lanciano is for you and for everyone a powerful invitation to fill your personal freedom with a radical Yes to Christ, Who rose from dead.

In the Eucharist, which the Miracle recalls and to which it invites you, we find the greatest and most generous offer of love that the world has ever known.

APPENDIX: USEFUL INFORMATION

PARTICULAR FEASTS

The Holy Relics are solemnly exposed for veneration twice a year:

- Easter Monday
- The Octave of Prayer ending on the last Sunday of October

HOURS OF THE SHRINE

Winter: From 7.00 AM until 12.30 PM
 From 3.00 PM until 7.00 PM

Summer: From 6.30 AM until 1.00 PM
 From 3.00 PM until 8.00 PM

STAFF OF THE SHRINE

The Franciscan Friars Minor Conventual of Abruzzo Province.

ACCESS TO THE SHRINE

By train: The Lecce-Bologna line, getting off at the San Vito-Lanciano station, and proceeding either by bus or commuter train.

By highway: Highway A14 (Bologna-Canosa), exiting at Lanciano exit. 7 Km to Piazza Plebiscito, left on Corso Roma. The Shrine is 50 meters on the left.

By local roads: N. 84, from San Vito Marina or Fossacesia.

ADDRESS OF THE SHRINE

Santuario del Miracolo Eucaristico
Fratelli Minori Conventuali
66034 Lanciano (CH) Italy
Telephone: (0872) 713189

DIOCESE OF LANCIANO

HOURS OF MASS

Weekdays: 8.00 AM, 9.00 AM, 6.30 PM (winter), 7.30 PM (summer)
Sundays and Holy Days: 7.30 AM, 9.00 AM, 10.30 AM, 6.30 PM (winter), 7.30 PM (summer)

APPENDIX: THE CITY OF LANCIANO



Memory of the origins of the city of Lanciano is lost. The legend ascribes its foundation to one of the companions of Aeneas. In ancient times it was known as Anxanum and was inhabited by the Frentans, with the Picenians to the north, the Daunians to the south and the Adriatic Sea to the east. The ancient city lays further to the east of modern Lanciano, one of the most important cities of the Abruzzo region.

It is principally known for the Eucharistic Miracle, but also for its industries, festivals, handicrafts and cultural centers. Its main street, Corso Trento e Trieste, leads to the spacious Piazza Plebiscito, site of the Basilica della Madonna del Ponte (Church of Our Lady of the Bridge), so-called because it is built upon the arches of a bridge built by the Roman Emperor Diocletian, and within which, during reconstruction in 1099, a miracle-working statue of the Blessed Virgin was found.

Modern Lanciano contains a number of examples of Burgundian-Romanesque art. The facade of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore with its principal door and rose windows, is outstanding. Within this church, there is the processional cross of Nicola da Guardiagrele of gold-plated silver, one of the masterpieces of local goldsmiths.

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