

The Shroud of Turin: Myth or Miracle?

By Mike King (April 2023)

What follows is a summary of the history and the hard data points which have been established by secular scientists to our satisfaction. Nothing more.

THE BACK STORY OF THE SHROUD

The iconic Shroud of Turin is a 14-foot linen cloth bearing front & back images of a severely beaten and crucified man who stood 5' 10" (tall for that era). It is believed by the faithful to be the actual burial shroud of Jesus Christ. In the West, it was first presented to a local church during the 1350s by a French knight. There is no record of where the shroud was during the 1300 years since Christ's burial outside Jerusalem -- though the best theory (based on forensic analysis of pollen particles from the shroud) would be that it was kept in Constantinople until the Catholic army's "4th Crusade" sack of the Eastern Orthodox city -- and before that, located in Jerusalem.

Worried that the shroud could turn out to be fake, the official position of Pope Clement VII and the Catholic Church at that time was to declare it to be an artistic relic, but not a holy icon -- a fact which debunkers will often cite, but which fails to take into account the fact no one then, nor to this day, has been able to explain how the haunting image and blood stains got into the fabric.

In 1532, a fire broke out (or was set?) in the chapel where the shroud had been moved to. It melted part of the silver in the container housing the shroud -- dripping molten metal on the sides of the cloth. Some of the damaged area was replaced and stitched together by nuns, but the burn marks and the extinguishing water stains remain visible on the shroud today.

In 1578, the shroud was again moved -- to the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in the city of Turin -- which later became part of Italy. It has remained there ever since, with the exception of World War II, when it was relocated to protect it from

American bombardment. There was another fire in 1997 which required the shroud to be saved (Satanic arson, I bet).

Going on seven centuries now, the debate about its authenticity continues -- especially since an accidental discovery in 1898. That year, an Italian photographer was shocked to discover that the negative image of the shroud yielded a much clearer positive (possibly indicating that the original image itself is the photographic negative). Ever since, both deniers and believers have sought to bolster their arguments with intensive scientific studies utilizing forensic technologies not available in centuries gone by.

1. A portrait of the unfolded shroud from 1578 -- when it was first brought to Turin. // 2. Cautious Clement wasn't quite buying it -- and in fact, the Catholic Church has always taken a surprisingly objective and non-dogmatic position regarding the question of authenticity.

1 & 2. Oddly, the faint image on the shroud is better seen and appreciated (and in 3-D) in the negative. // 3 & 4. Attorney and amateur photographer Secondo Pia was stunned when he developed his photos in 1898. Subsequent photos some 30 years later again confirmed that the image is much more detailed and revealing in the negative.

An Honest Summary of Objective Observations

1. There are neither paint, nor oil, nor scorch marks anywhere on the shroud. The source of the image, which only affects the tippy-top microns of the fibers, remains of unknown and inexplicable origin.

2. All attempts at replication -- even with modern technologies and even on just on a small scale -- have failed.

3. The blood on the shroud is real -- type AB with the DNA of a male human.

4. The pattern of the blood stains is consistent with those of a man who was crowned with thorns and flogged mercilessly by two men with spiked whips -- one taller than the other.

5. Some of the blood which stained the shroud had previously bled out onto the body from a still-living man -- and some of the blood oozed out after death.

6. The properties of the blood samples reveal the presence of a trauma-induced chemical released from the liver -- indicative of someone who had been tortured and terrorized.

7. There are dirt remnants on the face area -- consistent with a man falling down face first, perhaps while carrying the heavy cross to his place of execution.

8. In 2019, it required a lawsuit and a court-order for a team of secular Oxford scientists to finally access the original 1988 data compiled by an earlier team of scientists whose work led to the publication of a much-publicized "debunking" article in the journal, Nature. After the British Museum was forced to release the data, the Oxford team scientifically ruled out the 1988 findings.

9. The carbon-dating "debunk" of 1988 turned out to be hasty (if not rigged) conclusion based on contaminated and repaired (from the 1592 fire) samples of the cloth. We have learned of many cases of erroneous carbon-dating -- such as a known 1000-year old Viking artifact dating back only to the 1980s.

10. In 2013, a more advanced procedure known as spectroscopic dating confirmed that parts of the shroud could indeed be dated back to the days of Christ.

In 1978, the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) assembled a "dream team" of non-religious forensics experts to intensely study the burial cloth. Without drawing conclusions as to whether the resurrection occurred or not, the team concluded that the photographic image on the ancient shroud is indeed that of a man who had been tortured and crucified. How it got there, they could not answer.

Based upon the 1988 carbon-dating study -- since proven to have been wrong -- the "paper of record" -- and the rest of the anti-Christ media wasted no time in front-paging the shroud as a fake.

The scientists lied. But why?

1. The smug atheist scientists of 1988 had declared -- with great media fanfare -- that the shroud was woven during the middle ages. Note the exclamation point in "1260-1390!"

2. Thirty years and a lawsuit later, their biased and manipulated work was discredited by a team of Oxford researchers, as even elements of both the "mainstream" and scientific media have since reported.

After the faulty Carbon-14 dating "debunk" was itself debunked, recent debunkers have shifted to an analysis of the pattern of the bleeding -- which they say "suggests" that the shroud is "probably" or "likely" a fake. But even this minor unproven point has been countered by other forensics experts.

11. The blood stained the fabric first. The superficial image of a tortured man happened afterwards. This is known because there are no lines of imagery beneath the blood stains. Why would -- and how could -- an alleged artist create real blood stains before creating the image of a body?

12. The image was not drawn by strokes nor by dotted art techniques.

13. The image is extremely superficial -- yet, when photographed, the negative comes into full focus with much more detailed realism. An artist would have had to anticipate the invention of photography -- many centuries later -- for viewers to fully appreciate the artwork.

14. The embedding of this image -- one theory posits -- could be consistent with a burst of intensely bright UV light. A divine Polaroid picture? The location of the tomb was measured to have unusual levels of electromagnetic activity.

15. The image -- when photographed -- has 3-dimensional properties.

16. Pollen samples (pollen gets into everything!) -- removed from the fabric by tape -- indicate that the shroud contains pollen types indigenous to Europe, Turkey (Constantinople) and Jerusalem.

17. Advanced technology used to analyze negative images revealed the presence of ancient Roman coins used to weigh down the body's eyelids. (**This particular point is disputed*)

18. The particular weave of the shroud is consistent with a weaving pattern popular in Egypt and Judea 2000 years ago -- but not known in Europe.

19. The experts on the "debunk" side of the case -- as well as the media -- clearly manifest an emotional bias, and hostility toward the hypothesis that the shroud could be the result of something supernatural. The negativity is so strong that it has driven them to manipulate and then hide data. What Satanists have not been able to accomplish by arson, the debunkers have sought to achieve by Fake Science instead. Why?

20. The scientifically-based believers (many of them non-religious and some Jewish) as well as the "still undecideds" -- on the other hand -- do not reveal any such dogmatic prejudice or cognitive bias.

21. Every single claim of "debunk" or "duplication" to date -- after a period of predictable media hype -- has later been exposed (by scientists, not the Church) as shoddy science -- or at least been credibly challenged by other experts and rendered inconclusive.

22. In April, 2022, the film producer David Rolfe publicly offered the British Museum a \$1 million reward if they can successfully fake this iconic artifact. Rolfe:

“They said it was created by a medieval fraudster, and I tell them, well, if he could do it, you should be able to do it too. And if you can, I have a \$1 million reward for you.

I encourage them to repeat this thing by creating something similar today. Because of all the evidence that I have seen, if it is a fake, it is the most ingenious fake in history.”

So far, no takers for the reward.

THE BOTTOM LINE

After much intensive analysis, no forensics expert or scientist has been able to honestly explain away these mysteries -- nor figure out by what unusual means this blood-stained image of a terrorized man was embedded upon and within the shroud. Not. Even. Close.

Indeed, to this day, the entirety of the debunk case amounts only to a continuing "Appeal to Incredulity" fallacy -- nothing more. Now, that in and of itself does not prove that the shroud is the product of a miracle, of course. It simply means that -- contrary to breathless media reports -- the well-funded and well-equipped teams of crack forensic scientists who have studied the shroud have never been able to debunk it. This sets up a logical "either or:"

The shroud is EITHER the most cleverly sophisticated artistic and technological hoax in human history -- with the artist having had the foresight and forensic knowledge to use the real human blood of a terror-stricken live, and then dead, "volunteer" -- perpetrated 1800 years before the most basic photographic technology was even invented ...

OR ... it is a supernatural forensic sign of God's handiwork.

There's no "in between" scenario here. -- And that's all we care to say about the matter.

In addition to the 1352 fire which damaged the shroud, there was another horrible FIVE HOUR fire which -- were it not for the heroic efforts of an Italian firefighter -- would have destroyed the cloth in 1997. Anti-Christ Satanists and "the usual suspects" have been known to torch churches and cathedrals.

1. The NY Times did note that the fire was "curious," and that Turin is home to "a proliferation of Satanic cults."

2. Mario Trematore -- the hero firefighter who, in 1997, saved the shroud from its second church fire in 600 years.

1. Barrie Schwartz -- a Jew and originally a shroud non-believer -- is an expert on imaging. He was a member of the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project and, as a result, came to believe that the shroud is authentic.

2. Alan Adler (now deceased) was also Jewish. A blood expert, Adler discovered the presence of bilirubin in the blood stains -- indicating that the man in the shroud had been terrorized and tortured.