

hands. This contradicts all iconography of medieval and pre-medieval periods. This is evidenced by both the image and the bloodstains.

Nailing a crucifixion victim through his wrists is more historically and medically plausible. Early in the 20th century, medical experts first realized that nails driven through a man's palms would not support his weight even if his feet were nailed or supported. The nails would tear out. That the Romans did crucify victims by driving nails through the wrist area of the forearm has been confirmed by the 1968 archeological discovery of a crucifixion victim, named Johanan ben Ha-galgal, found near Jerusalem at Givat ha-Mivtar.

The bloodstains that accompany the images of wounds are from real human blood. The stains are from real human bleeding, from real wounds on a real human body, that came into direct contact with the cloth.

The Shroud in the Catholic Church

The Shroud was given to the Pope by the House of Savoy in 1983. As with all relics of this kind, the Roman Catholic Church has made no pronouncements claiming it is Christ's burial shroud, or that it is a forgery. The matter has been left to the personal decision of the faithful. In the Church's view, whether the cloth is authentic or not has no bearing whatsoever on the validity of what Christ taught.

The late Pope John Paul II stated in 1998, "Since we're not dealing with a matter of faith, the church can't

pronounce itself on such questions. It entrusts to scientists the tasks of continuing to investigate, to reach adequate answers to the questions connected to this shroud." He showed himself to be deeply moved by the image of the shroud and arranged for public showings in 1998 and 2000.

Because the image itself is a focus of meditation for many believers, even a definitive proof that the image does not date from the first century would likely not stop devotion to the object, which would then become something of an icon of the crucifixion. In any case, Catholics meditate on the events of the Passion, not on the object itself, "... in immediate forgetfulness of the object," as St. John of the Cross put it. And in that sense, any image of Christ's shroud has a universal meaning. Pope John Paul II called the Shroud of Turin "...the icon of the suffering of the innocent of all times."

The Shroud of Turin



Photographic negative of the face on the Shroud of Turin

The Shroud (burial garment) is a single piece of linen cloth about 14 feet long by 3½ feet wide. The twill is a 3 over 1 herringbone weave. It is blood-stained and shows faint front and back images of a man who, by the visible wounds appears to have been crucified. He seems to be resting in burial repose.

Understanding the nature of the Shroud of Turin's images

All medical indications are that the image on the Shroud of Turin is of a crucified man.

- The "blood" stains are indeed human blood.

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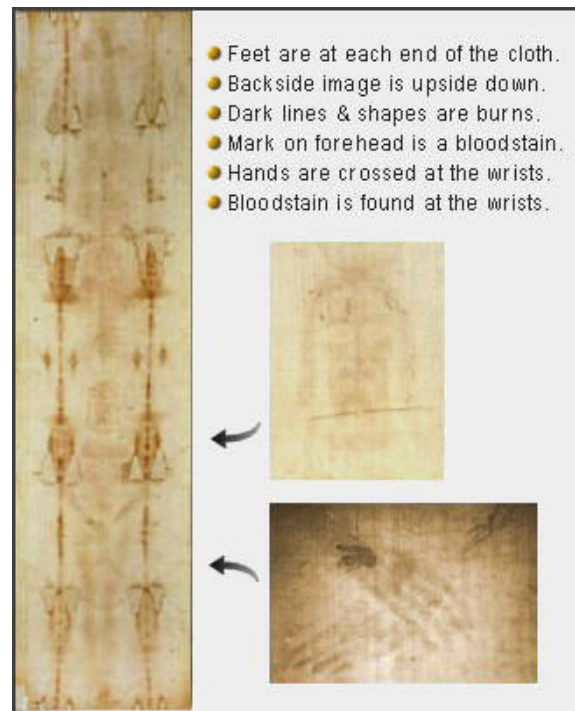
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- Spores from plants around the Dead Sea during Christ's era are on the shroud.
- The cloth's weave is from Christ's era.
- There is both post-mortem and pre-mortem blood stains on the cloth in the logically correct locations indicating death had occurred just prior to the man's having been wrapped in the shroud.
- No thumbs are visible on the shroud--a physiological truth that the thumb is drawn into the palm of the hand--a reflex action--as a spike rubs the median nerve when driven into the wrist.
- Serum albumen surrounds the scourge marks--a byproduct of traumatized and broken skin--visible only under ultra-violet light (which of course technology did not provide access to in the 13th and 14th centuries).
- The image shows no signs of capillarity: evidence that a pigment was not used on the shroud.
- The scourge marks reveal that the weapon used was common in Christ's era.
- The blood flows are physiologically accurate and are concurrent with the positions induced by crucifixion.
- The right arm and shoulder are slightly more developed as a right-handed carpenter's would be as a result of pounding nails.
- There is physiological evidence that a heavy object was carried across the man's shoulders after he had been given over 90 lashes by two men.

- All wounds evident on the man of the shroud are concurrent with the description in the Gospels.

The images as they appear on the Shroud are said to be negative because when photographed the resulting negative is a positive image.

No evidence for pigments (paint, dye or stains) or artist's media was found anywhere on the Shroud. Nor is any photographic emulsion found on the Shroud.



The Shroud of Turin

The Forensic Pathology of the Images on the Man on the Shroud of Turin

We see in the images of a man on the Shroud of Turin a pictorial testament to the passion story from the

Gospels. We see indications of scourging and beating. We see the unmistakable wounds of crucifixion. Pathologists who have studied the image say that this is a man in rigor mortis: He is dead.

The man of the shroud was savagely flogged. Whatever was used, it is consistent with a Roman flagrum, a whip of short leather thongs tipped with bits of lead, bronze or bone which tore into flesh and muscle. There are dozens upon dozens of dumbbell shaped welts and contusions, the type of wound that the flagellum would have caused. There is blood from the flagellation within the imaged wounds. From the angles of attack – the way the marks fall on the man's back, buttocks, and legs – it seems that man was whipped by two men, one taller than the other, who stood on either side of him.

At some time the man may have been forced to wear a crown of thorns. That seems to be a logical explanation for the numerous small puncture wounds about the top of his head. But from the wounds and many drops of blood, the *crown* seems to have been a rough bunch of thorns and not the wreath shaped crown of thorns so common in artistic depictions.

Many details on the shroud that suggest both a beating and falling: a severely bruised left kneecap, a dislocated nasal cartilage, a large swelling near the right eye socket and cheekbone.

It is particularly interesting that the man of the Shroud was crucified with large spikes driven through his wrists rather than through the palms of his