

## SECRETS OF THE DEAD - THE TURIN SHROUD

The Turin Shroud is the most famous relic in the world. Millions believe that it is the burial cloth of Jesus Christ bearing his crucified and bloodied image. The cloth is kept at Turin in Italy. The cloth is an enigma. Many say it is a miracle. Is the Turin Shroud the burial cloth of Jesus or a forgery as shown by carbon dating and many experts?

In March 2004 and 16th April 2006, the British Television channel, Channel 4, aired a documentary for Secrets of the Dead series on the Turin Shroud titled Shroud of Christ?.

Nicholas Leigh Allen was the only sceptic who was given a hearing. He argued that if there could be silver found on the Shroud it would indicate that it is a medieval photograph.

Mechthild Flury-Lemberg claimed that the weave of the Shroud which is the three to one herringbone pattern meant a cloth of great quality in ancient times and that the same pattern is found on a 12th century picture indicating that the artist knew the Shroud. She saw the stitching pattern in which a piece of the same material was attached on to one of the long sides of the cloth. She says it is surprisingly similar to the hem of a cloth found in the tombs of the Jewish fortress at Masada. This cloth dates from 40BC to 73 AD. She claims that there is nothing that indicates that the Shroud was not woven in the first century.

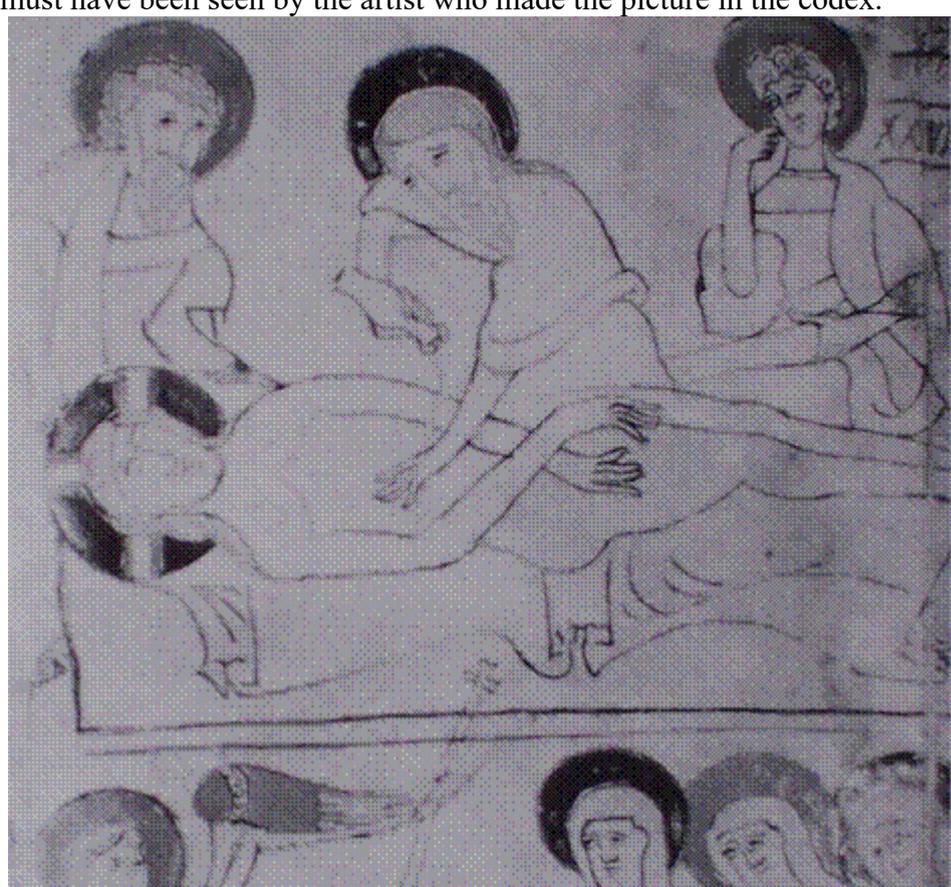
Here are my observations.

So the stitching is similar not the same. Interesting.

Why did the Shroud need a bit to be sewn on to it when it was so professionally made? How could professionals make such a mistake? Did somebody do research in Palestine and look up stitching techniques so as to advise the forger of the Shroud? Was the Shroud really from Palestine but blank and did the forger put an image on it much later?

The pattern used to weave the Shroud was wrinkle and curl free and makes the cloth long lasting (page 16, The Turin Shroud is Genuine). This may indicate that the image was forged for this weave might have been chosen so that the image could be displayed for a long long time.

The programme says the Hungarian codex from 1192-5 AD before the time the carbon dating says the shroud cloth was made depicts a cloth with the same weave as the shroud. From this its said that the dating must be wrong for the Shroud must have been seen by the artist who made the picture in the codex.





To get to that conclusion, believers presume that the item in the second picture is the Shroud though it cannot be. The shroud is lying on top of it messed up. The item is a lid and is rigid. It has holes but holes are depicted on the sarcophagus too. The stepped pattern is just a pattern and yet they say it is the herringbone pattern of the Shroud. It only superficially looks like the Shroud pattern. There is no image of Jesus imprinted. The picture is not meant to be taken too seriously as there would have been no crosses on Jesus's tomb. Jesus in the picture above it lies in a tiny shroud and has no blood. There is more reason to deny that there is any link to the Shroud than to say there is.

The water stains on the Shroud apparently can show that the Shroud was folded into many sections and put into a jar of the style used in the first century. Water leaked in and stained one corner of the bundle leaving patches of stain when the Shroud was unfolded. This effect has been successfully replicated. But the cloth should have rotted and moulded where the water stained it. The water was in contact a long time. Either the water contained some chemical that made it stain faster meaning the cloth was forged and it may have been an ingredient or the water is a miracle! But the cloth in the jar is only a hypothesis anyway.

The program went too far in saying that the blood on the Shroud was the same rare blood type as that of the Sudarium of Oviedo, the cloth that was allegedly put over Jesus' head after he expired. The Shroud blood would have been contaminated by the DNA and biological matter and cells of the many people who handled it over the years.

Stephen J Mattingly who is Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Texas Health Sciences Centre in San Antonio was consulted by the programme makers. He argued that the image of the Shroud was caused as follows. He believed that as the Shroud man was dying, bacteria colonised in his wounds and when he was washed they were put all over the body. They absorbed the water and turned into a kind of glue and made the cloth stick to the body. Over time the imprints left behind as the microbes rotted turned into a photographic image. He has managed to duplicate the effect using his own cells and bacteria. He has created images of his face and hands on linen cloths like you have on the Shroud.

This experimentation does not lead us to the conclusion he wants us to take. Did somebody experimenting with dead bodies and linen discover this effect? If so, he could have mixed the bacteria and cells with paint and painted an image on the cloth. As the paint faded away the other image was left behind. Forgery is still the most plausible answer because if there had been a body in the cloth there should have been distortion in the image.

In his experiments, Mattingly, puts the biofilm or the "glue" on his hand and then the cloth sticks to it. This would mean there should be smudging on the Shroud as the body was being moved inside it, it should have been sticking here and there and leaving traces. The image is just too good to be true. Another problem is that Mattingly finds the hand the best to use for it is skin and bone and faces don't come out right for they have fat and muscle. He argues that since the Shroud man's face came out clear he must have been skin and bone. He explains this by saying the man lost his muscle mass by dehydration and the loss of blood. If that is true the man is not Jesus Christ. Why did the man keep his bulk elsewhere? His chest is defined and muscular. And Jesus was not suffering long enough for his face to change so it seems the Shroud man had been starved and tortured for days and had nothing to drink but this contradicts the good condition of his body. The body and the face cannot belong to the same person.

Even more importantly, if the Shroud man was washed before he was put in the Shroud then he couldn't have been dead when he started bleeding again inside the cloth.

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The programme is biased and unprofessional. It is terrible to use experts who exploit their aura of authority rather than the facts to get people to accept their thesis, namely that the Turin Shroud is the winding sheet of Jesus Christ!