

THE SHROUD COULD BE A PAINTING

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. Many say it is a painting of some kind. Many say it does not matter what it is for it is NOT A CONTACT PRINT FROM A BODY.

BRUSHMARKS

They say there is no evidence of brushmarks or any artist interference. Fading and time are the reasons the image is so poor right now. And where one person finds a possible brush mark another says there is another explanation.

You get brush marks with paint but only if you use the typical brushes. Or if paint contains some surprising ingredients and takes ages to dry there might be no trace of brush marks. So don't see a miracle in the absence of brush marks like the Shroudies do. Remember too that the cloth is very coarse so brush marks made in paint with with the right brush would be unnoticeable plus the paint would have to have disintegrated and come off a good bit too over the years meaning the brush marks, if any, would be impossible to make out. It is not even important with regard to the question of whether or to the image is fake. But it serves Shroudies well to exaggerate its importance. If there are marks the Shroudies will happily imagine they are something else maybe dessication or damage.

The Shroud need not have been painted using brushes nor need it have been created using pure paints. It could have been created with paint mixed with something else. Perhaps the paint came off and left oxidation on the cloth to make the body image. The blood was mixed with something else for it has remained red over the centuries.

BLOOD PAINTED ON

STURP, the main researchers of the Shroud, say they think the whole image is not a painting. But they tell us they are not ruling it out once and for all and many researchers believe that the pigment that makes the image goes around the fibres like a kind of watercolour. If the image is a painting the blood is possibly paint as well - perhaps mixed with blood.

The bloodstains are too tidy and you would expect a lot of smearing and there isn't. And why are they positioned on the body image as if it were a painting? They should not be on the cloth as if they were put there by design. You would expect them to be more disorganised and random. The believers ignore these errors and insist that a dead body lay in the cloth.

Perhaps the blood being put on by sponges or whatever led to the Shroud being classed as a painting in the mid-thirteenth century when it seems to have first appeared. So the various natural theories about how the image was made fit what the sceptical bishops back then said about the cloth being a painting and that they knew the artist. The blood is the most visible part of the image and it would have been daubed or dribbled on and would classify the cloth as a painting.

The blood would have been washed out of the hair by the heavy rain gushing out of the heavens when Jesus was on the cross. The gospels say there was climatic upheaval at that time such as earthquakes and darkness so we can safely infer that if we asked the gossellers if there was rain they would say there was. The blood blots around the head are not watery from the rain at all which adds weight to the cloth being a forgery. The hair would have been tossed by the wind. It is just too tidy. The blood if it is blood or paint, was painted on. Period.

TOO VAGUE

The body image is very subtle unlike the blood. It seems that the cloth does not look like a painting for it is too subtle and nobody paints what can hardly be seen. But many in medieval times would have been sick of shrouds and prints of the face of Jesus that were too obviously painted. This would have made the artists among them go for a subtle image if they wanted to forge a shroud and say it was that of Jesus. The emphasis was on the blood. An image that contained blood would be expected to be revered more for its blood than its picture. The shroud could have been meant to be taken to be a vague image of Jesus caused by his dirty sweat. It could have been intended to be revered for what it supposedly was rather than what it looked like. You don't try to create the supreme relic that contains fluids from the Lord's body and make it look like a painting. Those who say there is no painting like the Shroud so it's not a painting of any kind are missing the point. Its meant to be a forged relic not a work of art.

People say the cloth is not a painting for it does not look like one. But think of this. The cloth was meant to pass for what came from Jesus' tomb. A portrait of Jesus would give it away as a fake. If it is a painting then it is a painting of blood and

sweat. There was more to worry about than blood and sweat. The artist did not paint mud on for it would not stick and brown and black paint would be too artificial. They complain that the image is too light and on the surface of the cloth and only looks okay from a distance. It has been found that using diluted paint means the image can go on the surface fibres while the water just goes through the cloth leaving no trace. A forger wanted the image to pass for a print from a body which is why this technique was necessary.

The artist of the shroud perhaps made the image vague so help avoid detection or to prevent sceptics in the Church from ruling the day. A fraud has to be rigged up to survive being exposed. Many do. The cloth is really about appealing to ghouls who want an image of death and blood and gore. It gives no indication that Jesus miraculously rose from the dead.

NOT A CONTACT PRINT

The imaging technique for making the shroud was determined by the desire to make it look like a contact print from a body.

Read Joe Nickell's book, *Relics of the Christ*. It tells us that image making vapours have been suggested. The vaporography explanation for the Shroud image became fashionable for the simple reason that even believers in authenticity, STURP, officially admit that "the densities at presumed contact points on both frontal and dorsal images do not differ significantly. These characteristics along with the superficial nature of the image would suggest that the contact transfer mechanism is pressure-independent." The report calls attention to this "apparent contradiction" (Schwalbe and Rogers 1982, 33-35; Nickell 1998, 78-81). If you put a cloth over an object for printing you will get an image. If you set the object on the cloth you will get a heavier image. Despite being portrayed as lying in the cloth, shroud man has no sign of anything pressing into it at all. His buttocks are not flattened. There is no evidence of pressure or weight or spices sticking.

Also, no pro-shroud or pro-paint argument can change the fact we should worry more that there are no mud, snot, fecal or urine stains on it.

Whatever it is, the image is dull and the blood is picturelike. It is baffling that the Church never got somebody to touch it up a bit. If this has happened and there is no proof of overpainting then that explains that the shroud is an oddity. The medievals did have a lot of religious tricks up their sleeves. Consider how there are too many liquifying blood miracles in and around Naples which are suspected as fraud by even most devout Catholic researchers. As we will see there is evidence that even if the original image was not a painting the cloth was tampered with by artists. Researchers were in a position in the past to check for evidence of painting and remove it. A good but careful rub could deal with those as can certain chemicals. It is certain that as the relic was dogged with rumours since its first appearance that an artist made it that is one of the first things it would have been checked for.

The Turin image shows parts of Jesus' body that would not have touched the cloth. And there is a light yellow substance that sits on the fibres making the image on one side and it sometimes appears on the other as well without passing through the cloth. This happens mostly with the face image which is another indication that the cloth really just cares about Jesus' face the most as it would if it were a forgery. It is not a contact print for parts of the body that would have been inches away from the cloth and could not have touched it show up clearly. And there would be tell-tale creases. So the cloth has no hard or soft evidence that it involved a real body or depicts a real man, as opposed to a statue or something, never mind Jesus. The cloth is meant to appear as a contact print but it fails. It is meant to fool the untrained eye of pilgrims.

MC CRONE

Walter McCrone investigated the Turin Shroud and concluded it was a faded painting. Catholics were outraged for they are determined to argue that the cloth is the cloth that Jesus was buried in and in which he left the imprint of his body and his blood marks following his crucifixion.

McCrone has shown that the cloth is a painting and that the blood is really just paint but it seems that McCrone MAY have been too keen to refute the authenticity of the Shroud. His tests showed the presence of a lot of paint on the cloth. He found the blood to have the pigment red ochre and could not find it outside the image proving that the claim of believers that this pigment came of pictures and paintings placed on the Shroud to make them relics is nonsense (page 27, *Looking for a Miracle*). The poker holes on the cloth proved that it was not immune to damage. There was no way then that people would have been allowed to put damp pictures on the cloth and the practice of the Church usually was to create relics just by touching a cloth or item to a holy object. Relics of St Padre Pio are just touched to his tomb.

There was no need for laying out the Shroud on an altar and putting something all over it. Painted copies of the shroud that were touched to it didn't have enough paint on them to come off to leave a significant reading of the presence of paints on the Shroud. You can see snaps of them in Ian Wilson's *The Blood and the Shroud*.

It is a fact that the entire cloth has traces of iron oxide. The biggest concentration is where water used to put out the fire in

1532 stained the cloth. Believers argue that a pure form not the form used by artists which is a blatant lie. It contradicts the fact that the impure form is found on the cloth and put down to devotees trying to bless paintings by laying them on the cloth.

McCrone also found evidence that people had been working on the image to preserve it and make it seem more miraculous during the previous two hundred years (page 48, *The Turin Shroud is Genuine*). He found that iron particles were being added to make the blood. We will see that this idea of interference with the Shroud is backed up by other pieces of evidence. It may be possible that the Shroud was originally a faint painting but was turned by time into a kind of negative when the nineteenth century came around. We must remember that it was never photographed until 1898 when its properties as a negative were first discovered.

A MONK CALLS IT A PAINTING

The Benedictine monk, Cornelius Zantiflet, said that he saw the Shroud and that he admired it as an excellent picture of Jesus and agreed with his bishop that what he saw was a painting. This happened in Belgium in 1449. He wrote that it showed the outline of the whole body and showed that it showed the outline of the whole body and showed the wounded hands and side with red blood (page 336, *The Blood and the Shroud*). Wilson accepts that this is his beloved Turin Shroud despite the fact that the monk says the picture is a painting. But nobody would think that of something that had no sketch or brush marks and was faint. Also, the Turin Shroud looks like its man was nailed through the wrists and only one wrist is visible. Turin Shroud is right to say that the vague image on the cloth would not be called remarkable or admirable (page 109) suggesting that this was not the Turin Shroud though it was supposed to be. It was obviously a painting which was why it did not take the world by storm like a blood print of a body would have. That superstitious age was mad for Christ's blood and would have just adored the Shroud if it existed then in the form we know today.

NO SKETCHING

One more try. They say the image is not a painting for there was no sketching on the cloth. But sketching is not everything and we must remember the Turin image is better than what it seems to be. It is still ghostly and that does not need any sketching. And what if the substance used to make the image was used to do the outlines? They would not be seen once the image was finished.

It has been established that Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, *The Last Supper*, and another, his *John the Baptist*, show no evidence of sketching being done before the painting which has been verified by tests involving x-rays. Leonardo painted them without guidance and without brushstrokes being visible. That is why they cannot be copied. Thus we see Leonardo by unknown and yet natural means managed to stamp these pictures with the three very reasons that the Turin Shroud has been taken seriously as the cloth of Christ. When he could do that it is only nonsense to worry about the Turin Cloth just because it has no brush marks and if it cannot be replicated (this is a matter of dispute) and if the image was put down without sketches being done to help guide the artist.

BLUE PRINT FOR SCULPTURE?

The book *The Sign* states that the shroud is more like a blueprint for a sculpture than a painting. But I don't think the two ideas are mutually exclusive. The idea of the artist being a sculptor who used blueprinting techniques to make the image is very attractive and possible.

STYLE OBJECTION

Believers make several excuses for denying the image is a painting. One argument is from the style which shows no thumbs and very elongated fingers.

There was a tradition of painting shrouds in Egypt and some of these revealed the fashion of not showing thumbs and making the fingers longer just like we have it in the Turin Shroud. Plus there are loads of ancient images that have a strong photographic negative effect despite the claim that the Shroud having this effect is a miracle. The precise truth about the negative image on the Shroud is that it is a quasi-negative. It's like a bad negative. Its not a miracle when it was an attempt to be a good negative but fell short. It is easier to forge a bad negative than a good one.

ICONOGRAPHY

The *Jesus Conspiracy* pages 152-153 accidentally proves that the Turin Shroud is a forgery (as two bishops of Troye said when it seems to have appeared first) when it finds 15 similarities between Byzantine iconography and the face of the Shroud man. The similarities include a horizontal stripe on the forehead and a three sided square on the head. These characteristics are so hard to see on the Shroud even in the clearer negative image of it that they didn't have that it is

tempting to hold that they were inspired not by the Shroud but the Shroud was inspired by them. We have no evidence that any of these artists saw the Shroud. It is easier to believe that the Shroud artist copied the icons and that it wasn't the Byzantine artists copying the Shroud. The Byzantines showed Jesus as glorious. They didn't depict his suffering. Yet in many icons Jesus has an enlarged left nostril. So does the Shroud man. This clearly indicates that the Shroud came after these paintings and didn't predate them.

MULTI-PROCESSES

The Shroud need not have been created by one process which is something that all the people arguing about it forget. For example, there are those who point to things they say indicate that the image is not a painting and so they say it is not a painting. But what about the things that make it possible that it was at least partially a painting?

STURP WON'T TEST PAINT ON LINEN

STURP dismisses the shroud being a painting but what right has it to do that when it admits not to testing and examining how you paint on linen? The paint if any will not make fibres cement together or show any sign of a flow if the linen is sealed with gesso. This concoction dries and is what the paint sticks to not the fibres. It had to be put on carefully to avoid making the cloth too stiff. The Libro dell'Arte from the 1600's says it has to be put on with a knife and any extra can be scraped off. STURP did find a layer which seems to be the gesso. Chalk was found on the cloth along with gum (found in 2005 but we need evidence that the whole image tests positive for gum). Too much chalk was present for it to be anything else. These are indicative of the presence of gesso.

FINALLY

We conclude that the shroud could be a painting. The painter did something out of the ordinary that is for sure. The signs of scorching could mean the shroud had been painted and baked in an oven. Reason says we must favour the most natural explanation if something unexplainable happens. We are not saying the explanation is the correct one but that it is possible. What then is more likely? That the cloth is a miracle or that it is a painting? If it can miraculously bear the image of Jesus' corpse why can't it miraculously be a painting? The most important thing is what the image could be not what it is.