

## BOOK REVIEW: WILCOX, THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SHROUD OF TURIN: SOLVING THE MYSTERY

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. But in fact the greatest mystery is who the cloth depicts for the man whose face is on the Shroud is not Jesus Christ.

Of the book it is said, "In *The Truth about the Shroud of Turin: Solving the Mystery*, journalist Robert K. Wilcox investigates every aspect of the shroud's history, from the ancient Egyptian weave of the cloth to the possible role of radiation in forming the image on its surface. Drawing on evidence collected over thirty years of travel, interviews with experts, and painstaking research, Wilcox presents the full story of the shroud in astonishing detail. The shroud of Turin—a clever hoax or the authentic burial cloth of Jesus Christ? Read this reporter's journey and discover the truth."

There is a gulf between believers and unbelievers. The undecided are another group of outcasts. The anger and rage over this cloth is caused by the clear propagandist outlook of the believers. What does the book have to say about the debate?

Interestingly the book quotes a line from Catholic publication, *The Tablet*, which says the figure on the cloth strongly resembles the Jesus depicted by the old masters!

The book discusses how the shroud shows Jesus as tall even though the average and normal height of a man in his day in Palestine was under 5 feet 4 inches. Of Jesus, "the shroud showed him to have been 6 feet 1 or 2 inches tall, and to have had the lithe limbs of an artist." This was the conclusion of Lorenzo Ferri the professor and sculptor from the University of Rome. And also the belief of Dr Luigi Gedda an anatomist.

Linen from 4000 BC is to be seen in Egyptian museums thus confounding those who say the preservation of the linen is miracle!

The book admits there are no ancient proofs that herringbone twill was used at the time of Jesus. It assumes that a loom with the sophistication to do the job "could easily have been invented by the time of Christ". This is too major of a thing just to treat it like that. Its a guess. Where are the cloths that must have come from one of those sophisticated looms?

We need evidence that the twill did exist in those days otherwise the idea that Jesus got one of the first herringbone twill shrouds is too far-fetched.

The shroud fits the legend that Jesus was pierced in the side and his legs were not broken to hasten death by the Romans. But the breaking of the legs was not an act of kindness but a visual deterrence. The violence of the act and its finality was meant to say something to the people. So even if Jesus was cut in the side that was not enough. Jesus would have had his legs broken dead or not. The Romans were just going to break the legs to keep things simple. They could not be checking to see if any of the victims were still alive and then decide to break the legs. Victims would have been in a coma anyway before dying.

Willis is quoted as saying that if Jesus was stabbed in the side it was a coup de grace. It was not meant to ensure he was dead or to kill him.

Bishop d'Arcis of Troyes did not regard the shroud as real when it first appeared at Lirey in the middle ages. The book admits that at the time of the d'Arcis affair there was nobody there to tell anybody where the shroud came from. The book points out that the clergy at Lirey would have been puzzled at how a modestly wealthy family among thousands in the back end of the country could have such an amazing relic.

The documentary evidence that the Shroud did exist before that time is not given to us. We have hearsay from Wuenschel that information does exist in the archives at Troyes related to the issue.

Wilcox covers the research of Vignon that the shroud blood looks so realistic. There is no mention of how you cannot really call it realistic unless you know the full circumstances of how it got on. And it is too realistic. There is such a thing! It is realistic in the wrong way!

Vignon assumes the blood might have been poured onto the cloth except that would absorb into the linen and get in between the threads. He gave himself away here for blood coming from a body would be poured on in a sense. The cloth gives the impression that happened for it tries to look as if blood poured out when the body was laid on its back. There is a "chain" of blood along the lower back. There is a good pour underneath the foot.

Vignon with a straight face says the blood would have spread unevenly along the threads but did not. Incredibly, the book tells us that if you bandage a wound that is the way the blood travels. This is complete contradiction. Vignon wants to say the blood was not poured on but went on the clean way it did by a contact print. Then we are told how blood travels on the contact print of a gauze bandage! Vignon explains that sweat was one reason the dry blood transferred to the cloth. The book then says that Vignon did tests and found it is impossible to get transfers done to the standard of the Shroud. A here and there success on the small scale is no match.

Vignon argued that the blood mark on Jesus' head was interrupted by a wrinkle on his forehead. So much for wrinkles going smooth on dead people!

Vignon thinks the nail wound is in the wrist not the hand. But that is unprovable. So nobody should say the cloth shows knowledge that crucifixion was done through the wrists for body weight tears the palms and the person will slide off the cross.

We are told that the research of Professor Romanese and Professor Judica-Cordiglia made good attempts at a shroud image with spices, turpentine, olive-oil and animal blood. They used the faces of corpses. The faces turned out smudged but they did manage some features such as the diffusion of the image.

This problem where "the faces appear smudged and unreal, but they did not show the tiny recesses of the body" like the shroud does is actually proof the shroud is not real. They tried to make a contact print like the shroud pretends to be and that is what happened.

These things show that the case for the shroud is fraught with problems. In fact it only takes one of them to refute the whole thing.