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## Shroud of Turin

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The Turin Shroud, detail. Head in negative. (Print of a corpse on a linen cloth, 436 × 110 cm; reversed as the imprint of Christ's body.) Turin, Cathedral

This linen cloth located in Turin, Italy, measures 14 feet 3 inches by 3 feet 7 inches, revealing both the front and back image of a crucified male. Whipping wounds cover virtually the entire body, along with major punctures in the wrists, feet, and a larger wound in the right side.

Driven by discussions about whether the cloth could be the actual burial garment of Jesus of

Nazareth, this artifact has been subjected to many specific scientific tests and historical studies during the last few decades. Potential historical connections to Jesus are made from the similar circumstances and wounds, but also because Jesus' crucifixion was rather atypical. Yet abnormal details such as the severity of Jesus' whipping, his crown of thorns, side wound, and individual burial seem identical to those on the cloth.

The shroud has existed since at least the Middle Ages, located in Western Europe. Yet it is often argued that features like pollen and limestone from Israel, as well as leptons (coins) of Pontius Pilate placed over the eyes, point to a Jerusalem location at a much earlier date. A trail of paintings and coins that seemingly copy the shroud's facial image date from the 6th century CE onwards. The most popular view is that the body images were caused by an X-ray like process.

However, this traditional view was challenged severely by carbon-14 tests performed in 1988, which dated the cloth to the Middle Ages. For many, this is still the last word on the subject.

A subsequent chemical study indicated that threads taken during the 1988 testing differed significantly from testing threads taken a decade earlier. The study concluded that the carbon-14 dating material was not part of the original cloth. Still, polarized conclusions regarding the shroud remain.

SEE ALSO: Cross, the

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