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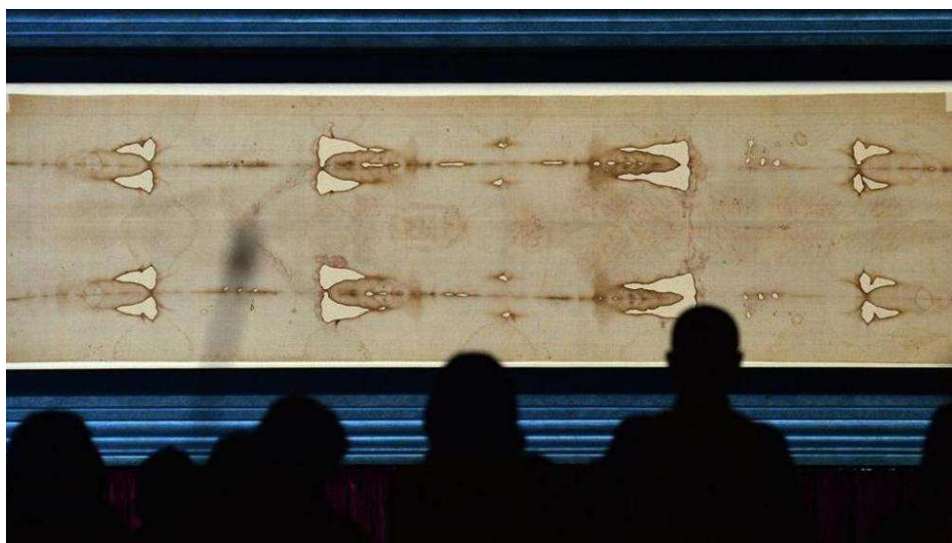
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Doubts about the age of the Shroud. Experts re-open case

New study challenges Radiocarbon Examination dating the Linen to the Middle Ages



Faithful in line for the Exposition of the Shroud, in 2015, in the Cathedral of Turin



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Pubblicato il 03/05/2018

Thirty years after the carbon 14 testing that dated the Shroud, new doubts emerge about the reliability of that result, according to which the linen that bears the image of the body of a man scourged and crucified as Jesus, is actually a fabric dating back to medieval times. A topic that will be discussed by the scientific committee of the International Center of Sindonology at their annual meeting, May 5 and 6 in Chambéry, Savoy, which gathers doctors, physicists, chemists, historians and international biologists. Among these, **Paolo Di Lazzaro**, research manager of the Aeneas of Frascati, who in his speech will remind how "the calculation that transforms the number of C-14 atoms in the age of a fabric" presents "greater uncertainties than in other solid samples (bones, artifacts, etc.) because of the greater permeability of the textile sample to external agents (bacterial digestion, mold, dirt).

It is no coincidence, Lazzaro explains, that Beta Analytic, one of the most renowned companies for **C-14 dating**, is now cautious about the reliability of **dating fabrics with this technique**, "recognizing that textile samples need more precautions than other materials". In particular, Beta Analytic states that "fabric

dating can be done only as part of a multidisciplinary research”, and that **“samples taken from fabric treated with additives or preservatives generate a false radiocarbon age”**. In the past the Shroud has been in contact with preservatives and moth repellent materials, which may have distorted the dating.

The scientist of Aeneas also challenges the resolution with which at the time, the three laboratories involved in the dating, from the columns of “Nature” magazine presented their research as “definitive evidence”: such unusual words for a scientific article, given that “over the centuries, science has progressed questioning the results acquired previously”. The number of questions has increased, Di Lazzaro explains, also because the **three laboratories that dated the Shroud 30 years ago “have always refused to provide the exact distribution of raw data**. This is the only case I know of authors of an article refusing to provide data that would allow other scientists to repeat the calculation and verify whether it was done correctly”.

Here comes into play a second significant research, that of Marco Riani, statistician and professor of research techniques and data processing at the University of Parma. **Analyzing the data published in “Nature” he had discovered that an age behaved in an anomalous way**, as it “constantly increases as you move from one piece to the one right next to it”, a fact that “suggests the presence of a contamination that may have distorted the results”. Riani had also discovered that statistical analysis **“provides consistent results only by distributing data on three of the four strips of cloth delivered to the laboratories”**. This means that only three linen strips were dated in 1988, and one of the two strips delivered to Tucson’s laboratory was never actually dated. “As a result - Lazzaro explains - we learn that Nature’s article makes false statements: it is not true that all the strips have been dated”. In December 2010, Riani’s research forced Professor Timothy Jull, head of the Tucson laboratory, to show for the first time the photo of one of the two Shroud strips received from his laboratory 22 years before, that had never been used.

“This fact alone - Di Lazzaro concludes - demonstrates more than a thousand words **the lack of transparency and the insufficient professional ethics” with which the dating was performed**. The Shroud of Turin, that image that no one has yet managed to reproduce, therefore remains a mystery.



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