

## Shrouded In Mystery

# Burial Cloth of Jesus?

(Featured last Sunday on NBC's "Search For the Historical Jesus" the Shroud of Turin has exerted a fascination on viewers for the last 600 years. The following article by Cullen Murphy originally appeared in Harper's Magazine and the Washington Post. It is condensed below by View staffer Blankenship. The Editor.)

By Edwin Blankenship  
View News Staff

"I believe the Shroud is a fake, but I cannot prove it," says Walter McCrone. His co-worker Bob Dinegar disagrees. "As an unbiased scientist I cannot state that the Shroud is authentic, I know of no way anyone could prove it. Personally I have the gut feeling it is the real thing."

Dinegar and McCrone (until his resignation last year) are members of the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP), which for the past three years has investigated the Shroud's authenticity as the burial cloth of Jesus. Located at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the atomic bomb was developed, the group includes professional scientists, engineers, and photographers. They number Baptists, Lutherans, Mormons, Episcopalians, Jews, Catholics, and agnostics. Their disagreement is a continuation of the dispute begun in 1357, the year the Shroud was first exhibited publicly in Livey, France.

The Shroud is a 435 cm, 170 inch, by 110 cm, 43 inches strip of linen. It has lain in Turin since 1694. It bears on its surface the image of a crucified man.

Both the back and front images are present, as if the victim were lain on a long strip and the other end folded his head and body. There are "nail marks" in his wrist and feet, a "lance wound" on the left side of his chest, rivulets of blood about the head and the wounds of a scourging on the man's back and legs. Anatomically and Biblically all these details are correct. STURP scientists have estimated this man's height to be 181 cm, 70 inches and his weight to be 77 kgs, 170 pounds.

permission to perform a series of nondestructive tests on the Shroud. They scanned and photographed the Shroud using all parts of the spectrum, including X-rays, and took microscopic samples of debris and fiber with adhesive tape for chemical and microscopic tests. The Church has refused to allow carbon 14 dating tests because a portion of the cloth would be destroyed in the process.

Walter McCrone, director of the McCrone Research Institute, bases his disbelief in the Shroud's authenticity on microscopic analysis of particles taken in Turin. He reports finding more iron oxide in the "blood areas" than elsewhere. He believes this iron

conclusions have too narrow a basis and to a man contest McCrone.

The image is only on the topmost ends of the fibers and penetrates no further into the cloth. It is also so pale that it is invisible close up and is only visible at a distance.

The Shroud is also a perfect photographic negative, a fact accidentally discovered in 1898 by Secondo Pia, an amateur photographer. The negative reveals a clear lifelike form.

Dr. Robert Bucklin, a forensic pathologist, has analyzed the wounds on the image and concluded that they are consistent with an actual crucifixion. More than a hundred scourge marks are present, made by a flagrum (a whip used to punish slaves). From the angle and direction of these marks Bucklin deduced that the victim was whipped, while nude, by two men, one of whom was shorter than the other. The victims legs are unbroken and he had died of congestive heart failure before a Roman lancina pierced his chest between the fifth and sixth ribs and entered the right ventricle of the heart.

John Jackson one of the men responsible for the 3-D discovery says "Somewhere along the way, you'd expect a forger to make some mistake. But there aren't any, and some of the little touches are very nice. There's a bit of dirt near the soles of the feet. The blood from the lance wound runs along the side of the body and onto the back. Some of the Scourge mark structures are so fine you can only pick them up under UV. As for whether the image is Christ's all I can say is that the wounds are consistent with the gospel accounts. I mean this was no ordinary execution. Look at the guy! Somebody really wanted to do him, not just kill him but torture him to death."

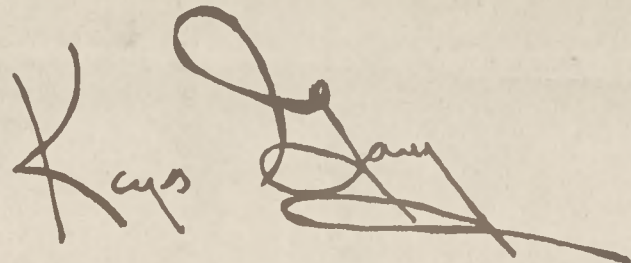
*"Somewhere along the way, you'd expect a forger to make some mistake. But there aren't any, and some of the little touches are very nice."*

The Roman Catholic Church has for 600 years declined to make an official ruling on the authenticity of the Shroud, but in 1978 STURP obtained

oxide is from a pigment painted on by a "highly skilled and well-informed artist".

The rest of the STURP team think that these

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## Kays Gary, Columnist

Foreword by  
**C.A. McKnight**



A collection of his writings compiled by his friends