

Shroud already present in the Byzantine era: found traces of coins

VATICAN

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Vatican City - The mysterious linen cloth that tradition wants wrapped the body of Christ, the most precious relic of Christianity, returns to be talked about. This time traces of Byzantine coins were found on the [Shroud](#) and this proves that the relic is of a lower age than that established in 1988 by international tests carried out in three laboratories on the recommendation of the Vatican and then Cardinal Ballestrero, archbishop of Turin, the city of the Savoys who are responsible for conservation in the cathedral. The test results stated that the dating of the sheet dated back to a date between 1260 and 1390, a period compatible with the first certain historical evidence of the existence of the Shroud.

Today's announcement of traces of possible Byzantine coins (made with an alloy of gold and silver) effectively refutes the radiocarbon result by opening up new questions and demonstrating that the relic was known well before the medieval period and that (this would be the new) the C14 tests were not precise at all, just as a group of scientists, according to which the radiocarbon would not have taken into account the presence of carbon monoxide due to the disastrous fire in Chambery in 1532, in the chapel of the castle in which at the time the relic was kept, inside a solid silver casket.

The work of researchers from the University of Padua and the United States, published in the Journal of Cultural Heritage, and presented at the Conference on the Shroud in Canada, now suggests the possibility that, even before the year 1000, various Byzantine gold coins with the face of Christ have been rubbed with the Shroud. The hypothesis is that with this gesture the relics were guaranteed by contact. The study by Giulio Fanti and Claudio Furlan identified the Electro, a rare and ancient alloy of gold and silver with traces of copper, using an environmental scanning electron microscope coupled with an X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy.

In parallel, the percentage of the elements contained in the ancient Byzantine gold coins minted in the 11th and 12th centuries was measured. A full correspondence was found in the composition of the alloy between Shroud micro-particles and Byzantine coins, leading to the hypothesis of a contamination by the latter on the linen fabric. According to Fanti, this would contradict the result of Radiation-14 carbonation.

The Shroud is a linen fabric 4.4 meters long and 1.1 meters wide containing the double image placed next to the head of the corpse of a dead man following a series of tortures culminating in the crucifixion. The first certain and documented records date back to the 14th century when the French knight Geoffroy de Charny built a church in the small town of Lirey - near Troyes - to house the Shroud. Before then the tracks are more vague. Texts date back to the V-VI century in which it is stated that a portrait of Jesus (indicated with the Greek word Mandylion) imprinted on a cloth was preserved in Edessa (now Urfa, in Turkey). In the 10th century the Mandylion was transferred to Constantinople, at that time the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

With the sack of Constantinople and the theft of countless precious objects, it is assumed that the Shroud was brought by the Latins to Greece, where the Charny family was present. In the first half of the '400 Marguerite de Charny withdrew the Shroud from the church of Lirey. In 1453 the Shroud was transferred to the Savoys, who remained owners until 1983, when the relic went to the current owner of the Holy See on a testamentary bequest.