

## The Shroud and the pious forger

**The unfortunate piece of the art historian Tomaso Montanari, raised a chorus of protests and the magazine 'Aboutartonline' published the contributions of eleven high-profile experts who rejected his clumsy theories**

by [Emanuela Marinelli](#) on May 8, 2020 7:00 am

Ever since the Shroud was [photographed for the first time](#) in 1898, deniers of its authenticity began to have a difficult life. The photographic negative revealed in all its beauty a harmonious body, a fascinating face, despite the agony of the torments suffered. The relic, preserved for centuries as the funeral sheet of Christ, now revealed its majestic features, at this point inexplicably imprinted on the canvas.

**The known history** of the precious linen, the one documented in a certain way, that of the European period, **left no room for a realization of that image after 1350**, an era in which the sheet that is now in Turin [was certainly in Lirey](#), France. **Attempts immediately began to reproduce the Shroud**, with artistic means or with the wrapping of corpses, but nothing to do, **in no way anything remotely comparable was obtained.**

A further blow to the theory of forgery was dealt by the [analyzes conducted in 1978](#): the examination of the whole Shroud with X-ray fluorescence did not detect any paint pigment, [if not negligible microtraces](#) due to contact with the copies that were placed next to the original to make them sacred.

**The image is an extremely superficial yellowing of the linen**, it is a **dehydration and oxidation comparable only to that obtained with exposure to light**. Where the wounds are observed, there is blood coagulated on the skin of the corpse that has partially re-dissolved in contact with the cloth soaked in perfumed oils. Once again, and this time definitively, [attempts to pass the Shroud for a painting failed miserably](#).

**The deniers**, however, **took the lead in 1988**, when three prestigious laboratories, those of Oxford, Tucson and Zurich, [dated the Shroud to the Middle Ages](#) with the radiocarbon method and [published their results](#) in the prestigious magazine 'Nature.'

**The problem of the time of birth of the artifact seemed solved, but not that of the technique with which it would be made.** The difficulties of the alleged forger appeared so enormous that in 1997 an ironic book appeared, 'Apologia di un falsario', written by two well-known Sindonologists, **Mario Moroni** and **Francesco Barbésino**.

On the cover an artist appeared, with a lot of brushes in hand, while trying his hand at the impossible work. The book showed how the realization of the Shroud was practically impossible.

It should be emphasized that even today, with all the technique of the 21st century, **no one has managed to make a copy of the Shroud that is truly comparable to the original**, even if occasionally clumsy attempts are passed off as scientific truths; which do not, however, stand up to laboratory tests. Of this and much more I speak in my book, which comes out in these days, *'New light on the Shroud'* (Edizioni Ares).

Another fact should be remembered: **in 2019 radiocarbon analysis was definitively refuted** by an important article of statistical analysis of raw data [published on 'Archeometry.'](#)

**Those who deny the authenticity of the Shroud have had a bad blow since the publication on 'Archeometry,'** which effectively canceled their workhorse, heralded as the test par excellence: the C14.

At this point, **however, a scientific counteroffensive was expected, not a short article on 'The Friday of the Republic' like the one that appeared on April 24 last**, on p. 79. The author of those few lines is an art historian, **Tomaso Montanari**, who casually throws his unwatchable truths there: **the authenticity of the Shroud would be a fake news and 'the indisputable scientific truth' would be that 'the Shroud is a French medieval artifact.'**

Evidently, **not being an expert on the relic, he recklessly turned to unreliable sources who deceived him with their** yes -- **fake news of an alleged falsity seasoned by the ridiculous, tailor-made legend of the pious artist who creates the Shroud with faith.**

The zealous art critic hastens to add that "it is certainly not a masterpiece", "it is of modest artistic quality." Evidently the poor man who ventured to color this huge sheet, besides faith he had no other skills. Because then, if what we keep in Turin is just a beginner's mess. Does Montanari not show us what he can do better? And if he doesn't want to try his hand at the company, why can't he find someone who can at least copy the Shroud?

**The unfortunate exit of the art historian has raised a chorus of protests and the magazine 'Aboutartonline' has published the contributions of eleven high-profile experts who have rejected without hesitation his clumsy theories**, comparing them with what we are told by physics, chemistry, biology, archaeology, art history about the revered flax.

**The bitter conclusion of this story is that the Shroud annoys someone. And I understand them: the ancient sheet is an uncomfortable presence for those who do not want to stop and reflect on a story of two thousand years ago that divided history and changed the destiny of humanity.**