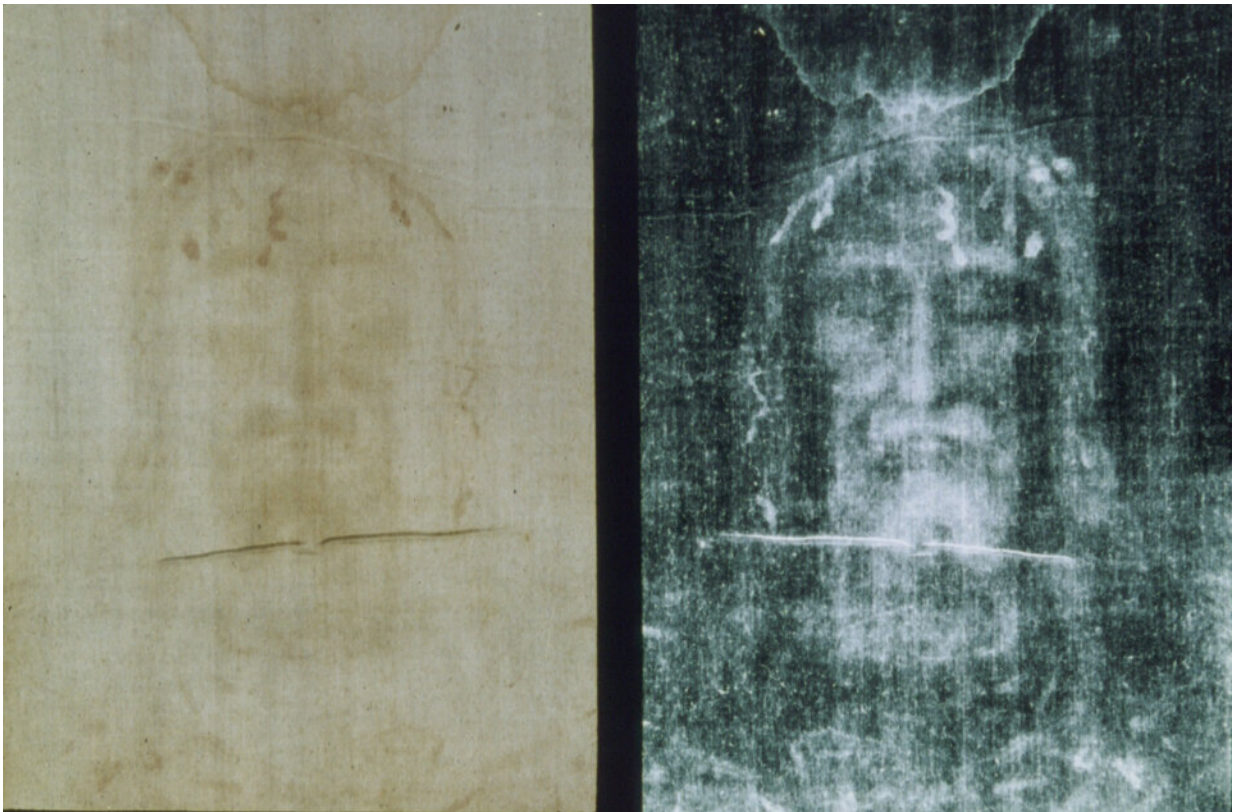


Study of data from 1988 Shroud of Turin testing suggests mistakes

July 24 2019, by Bob Yirka



A team of researchers from France and Italy has found evidence that suggests testing of the Shroud of Turin back in 1988 was flawed. In their paper published in Oxford University's *Archaeometry*, the group

describes their reanalysis of the data used in the prior study, and what they found.

Back in 1988, a team of researchers was granted access to the Shroud of Turin—a small piece of cloth that many believe was used to cover the face of Christ after crucifixion. As part of the research effort, several research entities were chosen to examine individual pieces of cloth from the shroud, but in the end, only three were allowed to do so: The University of Arizona in the U.S., the Federal Institute of Technology in Switzerland and Oxford University in the U.K.

After testing was concluded, the researchers announced that all three research groups had dated their cloth snippets to a time between 1260 and 1390—evidence that the shroud was not from the time of Christ. But there was a problem with the findings—the Vatican, which owns the shroud, refused to allow other researchers access to the data. In this new effort, the research team sued the University of Oxford, which had the data, for access—and won. After studying the data for two years, the new research team announced that the study from 1988 was flawed because it did not involve study of the entire shroud—just some edge pieces. Edge pieces from the shroud are rumored to have been tampered with by nuns in the Middle Ages seeking to restore damage done to the shroud over the years. In a recent interview with *L'Homme Nouveau*, Tristan Casabianca, team lead on the new effort, claimed that the raw data from the 1988 tests showed that the test samples were heterogeneous, invalidating the results.

The researchers suggest that new studies must be conducted on the shroud if its true date is to be ascertained. For that to happen, the Vatican will once again have to provide access to the shroud, which appears to be in doubt, as officials with the church have proven reluctant to allow further testing.

More information: T. Casabianca et al. Radiocarbon Dating of the Turin Shroud: New Evidence from Raw Data, *Archaeometry* (2019).
[DOI: 10.1111/arcm.12467](https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12467)

Radiocarbon dating of the Shroud of Turin, *Nature*, Vol. 337, No. 6208, pp. 611-615, 16th February, 1989. www.nature.com/articles/337611a0

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