

The Hypotheses About The Roman Flagrum: Some Clarifications

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Abstract:

The debate concerning the instrument that was used to flog the Man of the Shroud's body is now stronger than ever.

Several hypotheses have emerged. Some scholars, after a careful analysis of the bloodstains on the Turin Shroud, can establish, with a high degree of certainty, the shape of this Roman tool punishment.

Other scholars hint at an example of a *flagrum* that would have been found in the Roman town of Ercolano (Herculaneum), or to another one that would be preserved at the Diocletian Thermal Bath Museum (Rome); but those statements often lack precise references. Research into the historical evidences of this tool (including a survey of archaeological, linguistic, and artistic witnesses), conducted with the help of some of the Cultural Institutions of Lazio and Campania, sheds new light on this matter.

From the analysis of those data, it seems possible to conclude that the *flagrum* in the Roman era (and, to be more precise, in the 1st century AD) existed indeed, and it was a terrible torture tool. The aim of the research is to raise new perspectives for the study of a problem that involves not only the Shroud, but several culture disciplines like History, Archaeology, Linguistics, and Iconography.