

**Minutes of Derby Medical Society meeting.
Thursday 7th April 2022**

Announcements

Summer event: Sunday 26th June.
Florence Nightingale Heritage walk.
Contact Sarah Milner if interested

Speaker

Dr Robert Hunter

The Passion of Christ: A forensic medical perspective

Introduction by Dr MCance

Dr Hunter is one of the few remaining coroners who is medically and legally qualified.

DMS welcomed Dr Hunter after a 2 year delay due to CoVid.

The talk is a hypothetical inquest into the death of Jesus based on testimony of the time and from a modern medical perspective.

Background

Dr Hunter was an Army doctor for 5 years with operations in Gulf War and Northern Ireland.
Experience in wounds, PTSD and the psychology of torture and interrogation.

3 years of psychiatry training

Trained as specialist in emergency medicine.

Consultant in forensic medicine with interpretation of wounds, scenes of crime.

Expert witness work prior to becoming coroner.

Declaration of interest: Also an ordained minister

Gethsemane

Witnesses were Matthew and Luke.

Luke was a physician and gave more information about sweat turning into blood (haematuridosis - associated with acute, severe distress).

Medical, physiological explanation for stigmata.

Describes the humanity of Jesus and extreme stress he was under.

Such a specific detail that not made up.

Crucifixion

No trial could take place at night as witnesses were asleep.

Jewish authorities could not impose the death penalty, only the Romans (Pontius Pilot) could authorise.

Crucifixion was perfected by the Romans and seen as a shameful way to be executed.

Aimed to make the process as painful as possible to punish but also act as a deterrent.

Phases:

Judgement

Flagellation

consequences of flagellation: pain, deep lacerations with blood loss, bruising with further blood loss and resulting CVS consequences.

Cross piece carried through the town with plaque documenting crimes on them.

Flagellation and cross carrying was done naked to add to humiliation.

Jesus fell 3 times while carrying the cross piece due to blood loss and exhaustion.

Mechanism of crucifixion

Hands being pierced may have been the wrist as the colloquial Greek used the same word for both.

Studies by Pierre Barbett on Paris:

Pierced through hand - max weight of 36kg

Pierced through wrist: stays on cross

Likely that nails were pierced through the median nerve

Turin shroud shows blood staining around the wrists

Mechanisms of death

Primary mechanism

Positional, slow asphyxiation

Secondary mechanism

Cardiac failure due to hypovolaemia and hypoxia

Healthy people become hypoxic after 30-40 minutes suspended on a cross.

Expiration becomes an active not a passive activity when ribcage is expanded.

Person becomes exhausted.

ROMans would sometimes break the legs to hasten death.

Jesus was already dead - spearing the chest of Jesus "released blood and water".

He would have developed pulmonary oedema

It is finished.....or is it just the beginning?

The empty tomb

Theories:

Jesus was not dead - crucifixion was effective due to previous evidence

The body was stolen - no convincing forensic evidence although stories were rife

There was resurrection

Physical evidence:

Burial cloth left in tomb - speculation regarding Turin shroud

Turin shroud has been carbon dated in 1988 - 3 labs performed carbon dating and date was 1260-1390. There has been recent questioning of the validity of the carbon dating and was the previous material sampled actually a medieval repair of a tear!

Pollen analysis from the shroud has identified plants native to Israel

Gundelua tournefortii has been found and is a spiky plant that only found in Hebron.

Analysis of blood group is AB, XY male group - AB is very rare in European population.

AB common blood group in Israel at that time

Scientific facts about shroud

Carbon dating reliable but questions about testing

Pollen grains consistent with area of Israel

Injuries show injuries consistent with crucifixion

Blood group consistent with male from Jewish group in Israel

400-500 people claim to see Jesus after death.
These were not all believers

Questions:

References outside the Bible for Jesus being seen after resurrection - other books were written at the time but did not get into the Bible.

Would the shroud be re-dated -Vatican have refused.

Heart failure due to myocardial “stunning” and acute heart failure

How can you explain Jesus speaking while being asphyxiated - slow process

Luke’s gospel was a physician and included more medical details.