

THE SPEAR



OF DESTINY



The spear thrust by Roman soldier Longinus into Christ's side



Georgia Performance Standards

- **SSWH3** The student will examine the political, philosophical, and cultural interaction of Classical Mediterranean societies from 700 BCE to 400 CE. (Constantine)
- **SSWH4** The student will analyze the importance of the Byzantine and Mongol empires between 450 CE and 1500 CE. (Attila the Hun)
(Charlemagne)
- **SSWH7** The student will analyze European medieval society with regard to culture, politics, society, and economics.
- **SSWH14** The student will analyze the Age of Revolutions and Rebellions. (Napoleon)
- **SSWH17** The student will be able to identify the major political and economic factors that shaped world societies between World War I and World War II. (Adolf Hitler)



The **Spear of Destiny** (also known as the Holy Lance) is a name given to the spear used by a Roman soldier to pierce the side of Jesus of Nazareth several hours into crucifixion.



Victims of Crucifixion

It was a very slow and agonizing form of death. Victims of crucifixion could languish in agony on the cross for up to several days. The dying process could be shortened by breaking the victim's legs so that the victim could no longer push up with their feet for gasps of air. The thieves on both sides of Jesus had their legs broken, but when the Roman soldiers reached Jesus, one of them, reportedly a centurion named Gaius Cassius Longinus saw he was already dead and proved it to his fellows by using his spear to pierce the Christ's side. Blood and water poured out. There was no need to break his bones.

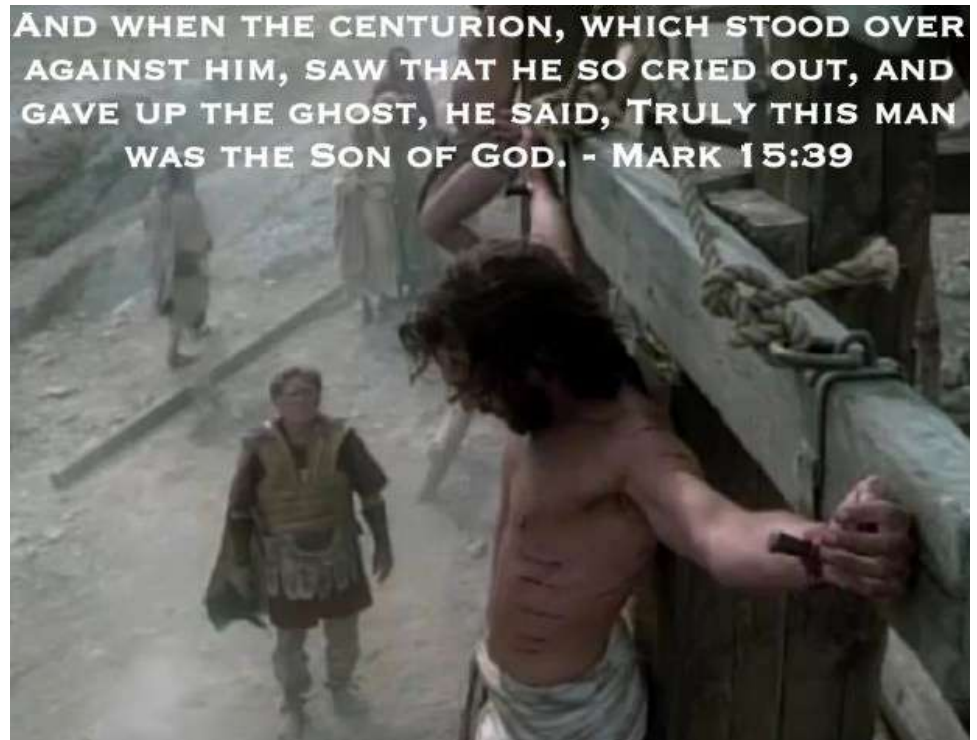


Gospel of John (19:31-37)

- ³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

Mark 15:39

According to the Gospel of John (19:31-37) as Jesus hung on the Cross a Roman centurion, pierced His side with a spear. Blood and water spurted forth from the wound. The mixture apparently splattered in Longinus' face, restoring his vision, which had been failing. It was then he exclaimed, "Indeed, this was the Son of God!" as recorded in Mark 15:39.



Religious Relic

The spear itself became a religious relic. The piercing was seen as proof of Jesus' death and his subsequent resurrection.



A Legend

Over the centuries an object claimed to be this Holy Lance has passed through the hands of some of Europe's most influential leaders, most recently Adolf Hitler. A legend has arisen that "whosoever possesses this Holy Lance and understands the powers it serves, holds in his hand the destiny of the world for good or evil."



Constantine the Great

Constantine the Great (Roman Emperor, b.337, d.361, carried it into victory at the battle of Milvian Bridge and also while surveying the layout of his new city, Constantinople) Eusebius of Caesarea, who became a spiritual advisor to Constantine described the Holy Lance as it was at the height of Constantine's power in the Fourth Century



Roman Emperor Constantine

The Roman Emperor Constantine believed in the power of the spear, and held it as he called the Council of Nicea, which established Christianity as the official religion of Rome. Constantine also had one of the nails from the crucifixion enshrined within the top portion of the spear. A later Emperor added the golden sleeve, which reads 'Lancea et Clavus Domini' or "Lance and Nail of the Lord" The spear and it's alleged power was passed down from Emperor to Emperor. It remained with the Roman Emperors, until Attila the Hun sacked Rome during his rampage across Europe.



Holy Nail inserted

At some murky point in history, a nail from the crucifixion was added to the lance, the center of the spear hollowed out and the Holy Nail inserted, but during this process the lance broke in two. The fracture was mended with an iron clamp, and the blade fastened with bands of wire which were in turn covered with sheaths of silver and gold. Two small knife blades, believed to be the ones used by Roman soldiers to divide the garment of Christ, were added at the bottom of the shaft.



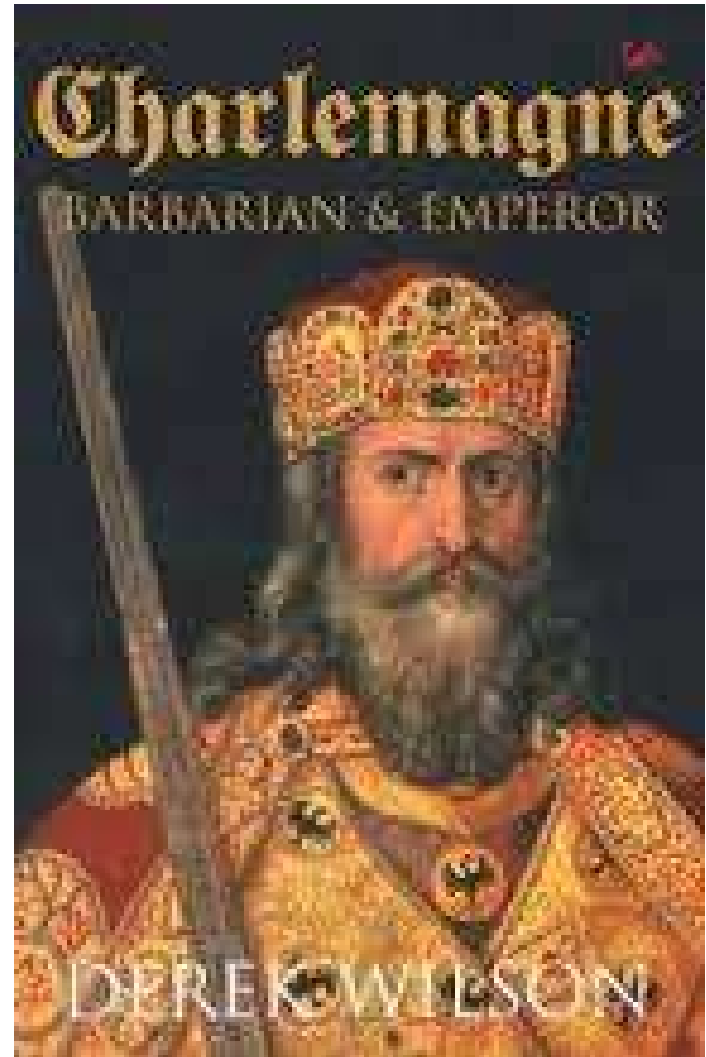
Attila the Hun

One of the earliest documented uses of the Holy Lance is credited to Attila the Hun, who acquired it as he cut his path of destruction through Europe. When his army was weakened from famine and pestilence 'in Italy, he galloped his horse to the gates of Rome and hurled the lance at the feet of the officers who had been sent out to surrender the city. "Take back your Holy Lance," he said, "it is of no use to me, since I do not know Him that made it holy."



Charlemagne the Great

Charlemagne the Great
(Carolingian King of
France, Emperor of the
West, b.771, d.814),
carried the Spear through
47 victorious battles, but
died when he accidentally
dropped it.



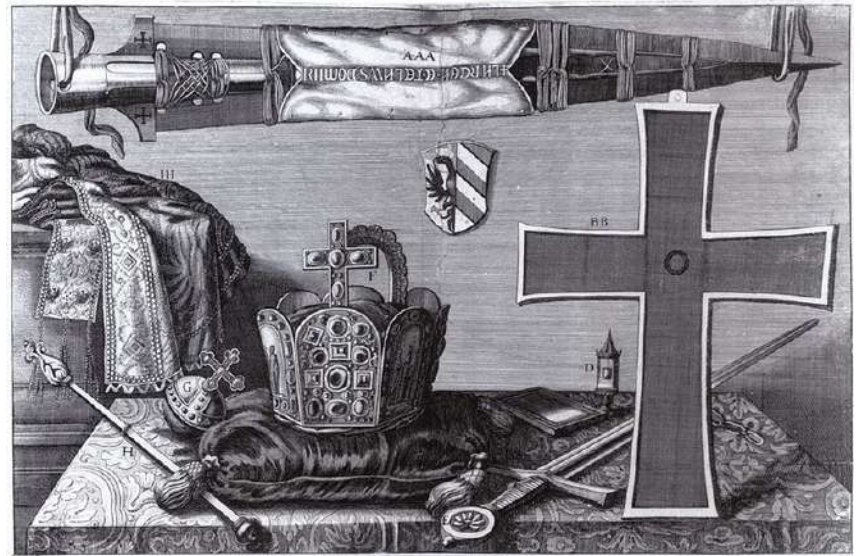
Saxon Dynasty

In the early 900's, it fell into the possession of the Saxon Dynasty of Germany, passing from Heinrich I the Fowler (Duke of Saxony, Saxon King of Germany, ruled 919-936, the Spear was present at his victorious battle against the Magyars) to his son Otto I the Great (Saxon King of Germany, Holy Roman Emperor, ruled 936-973, Pope John XII (term 955-963) used the Spear to christen him Holy Roman Emperor in 936 - Otto went on to carry the Spear into victory over the Mongols in the Battle of Leck.



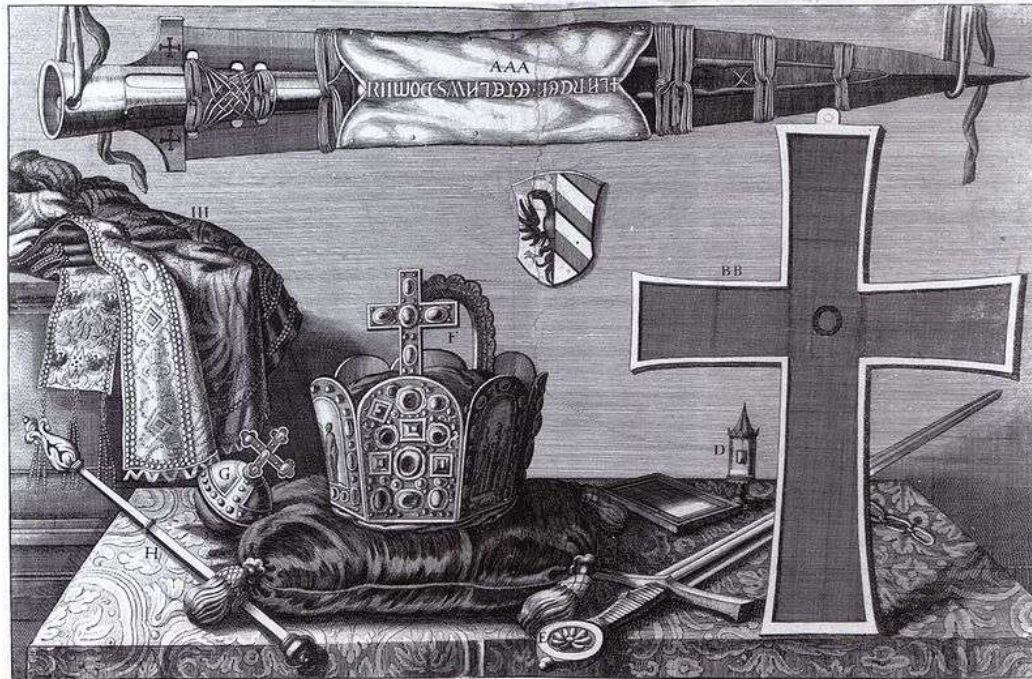
Imperial Insignia

The holy spear that was used by the Holy Roman Emperors (from Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor on and the one most often referred to) as a part of their imperial insignia eventually found its way to Vienna, Austria, where they are kept in a museum.



Imperial Regalia

In 1411 Sigismund was made Holy Roman Emperor. In 1424 he announced: "It is the Will of God that the Imperial Crown, Orb, Scepter, Crosses, Sword and Lance of the Holy Roman Empire must never leave the soil of the Fatherland." This collection of relics, known collectively as the Reichkleinodien or Imperial Regalia, were moved from his capital in Prague to his birth place, Nuremberg.



Napoleon Bonaparte

When the army of Napoleon Bonaparte approached Nuremberg in the spring of 1796 many were terrified that Napoleon would seize the Spear and rule the world with it. The city councilors decided to remove the Reichkleinodie to Vienna for safe keeping. The collection of relics was entrusted to one Baron von Hügel, who promised to return the objects as soon as peace had been restored and the safety of the collection assured.



Napoleon Bonaparte

Habsburgs

Baron von Hügel took advantage of the confusion over who was the legal owner of the Reichkleinodie and sold the entire collection, including the Spear, to the Habsburgs. Baron von Hügel's perfidy did not come to light until after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. When the city councilors of Nuremberg asked for their treasures back the Austrian authorities' response was a curt rejection.



Kaiser Wilhelm II

In the early 20th century, it was briefly in the possession of Kaiser Wilhelm II, before eventually ending up the Hofsburg Treasure House in Vienna. It was there, in September of 1912, where Adolf Hitler first laid his eyes upon it...



Kaiser Wilhelm II

Adolf Hitler

Hitler wrote upon seeing it, "I knew with immediacy that this was an important moment in my life... I stood there quietly gazing upon it for several minutes quite oblivious to the scene around me. It seemed to carry some hidden inner meaning which evaded me, a meaning which I felt I inwardly knew yet could not bring to consciousness.... I felt as though I myself had held it in my hands before in some earlier century of history -- that I myself had once claimed it as my talisman of power and held the destiny of the world in my hands. What sort of madness was this that was invading my mind and creating such turmoil in my breast?".



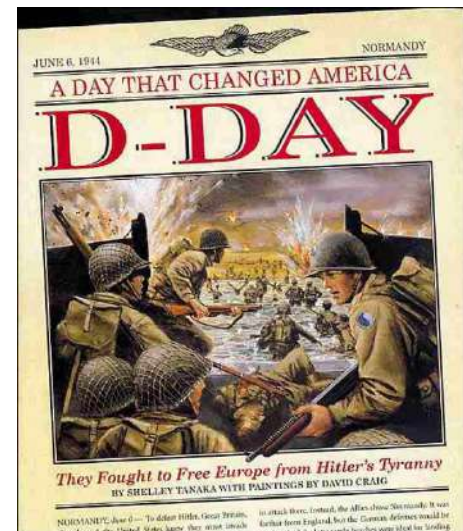
Church of St. Catherine

Adolf Hitler seized the Spear in the name of the Third Reich on March 12th, 1938, the day he annexed Austria. It was shipped via an armored SS train to Nuremberg on October 13th



June 6, 1944 D Day Invasion

Hitler's failure to invade England as he had planned was a fatal mistake which even the Spear of Destiny could not remedy. In time, the islands of the United Kingdom became the launching point for the greatest invasion in all of recorded history. On June 6, 1944, Allied forces made history with the landings in Normandy and soon the armies of the Third Reich were forced to retreat into the Fatherland. Hitler's generals realized very early on that the end was near, but history's most notorious tyrant held fast to his belief that possession of the Spear of Destiny would secure his final victory, no matter what the price.



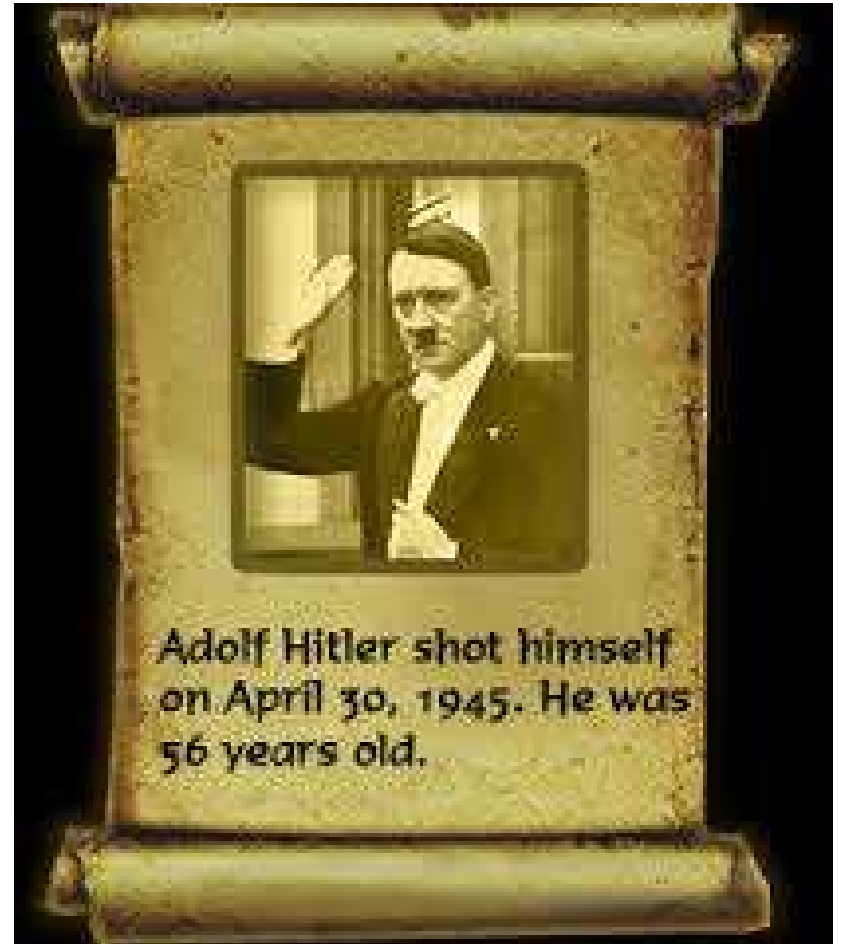
Bombing of Nuremburg

As the Allies advanced ever closer to the German borders, the cities of German came under constant attack from the air as bombing raids continued around the clock. To protect the Spear of Destiny and an unprecedented amount of treasure in the form of gold, jewels, and priceless works of art stolen from conquered nations, Hitler ordered these relics to be placed underground in caves, abandoned mines, and bunkers specially constructed for the purpose. The Spear of Destiny, which some believe was stored at the Church of St. Catherine's for a number of years, was deposited in a bombproof bunker under the city of Nuremburg.



As the legends state

Throughout the history of the Spear of Destiny, those who wielded the sacred relic came to unprecedented position of power and were hailed as kings, emperors, and conquerors. But, as the legends state, the moment men of such greatness let the Spear slip from their fingers, their time on earth as rulers comes to a quick end. And such may have been the case with Adolf Hitler.



Lieutenant Walter William Horn

In the city of Nuremberg, the fighting had already ceased and a victorious American army began to secure the city. On April 30, 1945, at precisely 2:10 PM, First Lieutenant Walter William Horn, an adjutant assigned to the United States 7th Army, took possession of the Spear of Destiny in the name of the United States government. Within 90 minutes of the United States capturing the Spear, Adolf Hitler lay dead in his Berlin bunker after having taken his own life.



General George S. Patton

News of the capture of the Holy Lance of Longinus quickly reached legendary General George S. Patton, who immediately took a personal interest in the relic. It is said that when the general first laid eyes upon the spear which had pierced the side of Christ, he became silent and withdrawn, meditating upon the object in deep contemplation.



Carthaginian General Hannibal

Patton was well known for his deep scholarly interests in history and for his intense personal religious fervor, but there was another side to "Old Blood and Guts" which may explain his utter fascination with the Spear of Destiny. Patton was quite well known for his strong beliefs that he had been reincarnated as a warrior many times over and was quite adamant about being the literal reincarnation of the legendary Carthaginian General Hannibal.



General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Whether or not his experiences in past lives allowed Patton to readily identify the relic which lay before him as the Spear of Destiny is a matter of speculation, but it is certain that he realized the great worth and importance of the ancient lance. Immediately, he ordered that the history of the artifact be researched and fully documented so that he might be better prepared to give a full report on it to his superior, General Dwight David Eisenhower. Patton personally supervised a great portion of the research efforts, carefully guiding his staff in all aspects of the project. In the end, he presented his findings to Eisenhower.



Russian Communism

There is some contention at this juncture of the long history of the Holy Lance of Longinus as to what the conversation may have been between the two great generals, but it is believed that Patton was firmly in favor of claiming the spear in the name of the United States. Oddly, it was during this period in time when Patton began to petition his superiors for permission to begin engaging the Russians in battle, claiming that the threat of communism was every bit as evil as the banished threat of Nazism. Despite the speculation, in the end, General Eisenhower ordered the Spear returned to Austria.



General Patton Dies

Once American forces retrieved the artifacts, it was up to General Patton to return them to Austria. After having the Spear of Destiny studied, Patton returned all of the Museums contents and prepared for his final trip home...he never made it.

On December 9th 1945, the day before Patton was scheduled to leave Europe for the USA, he was involved in a car crash. Even though the crash was relatively minor, Patton was the only passenger who was not aware of an upcoming crash. He did not brace himself, thus slamming his head into a metal part of the car, paralyzing him from the neck down. He lived for another 12 days when he finally passed away in a Military Hospital at Heidelberg.



copy of the spear

Many people also believe that General Patton and the American Government had a copy of the spear made and returned the fake to the museum in Austria where it remains to this day.



Hofsburg Treasure House

The Spear has been in the possession of the Royal House of Hapsburg for quite some time. It now rests, once again, in the Hofsburg Treasure House in Austria, where Hitler first saw it in 1912, and where the public can see it, free of charge, Monday through Saturday, 9am-6pm.



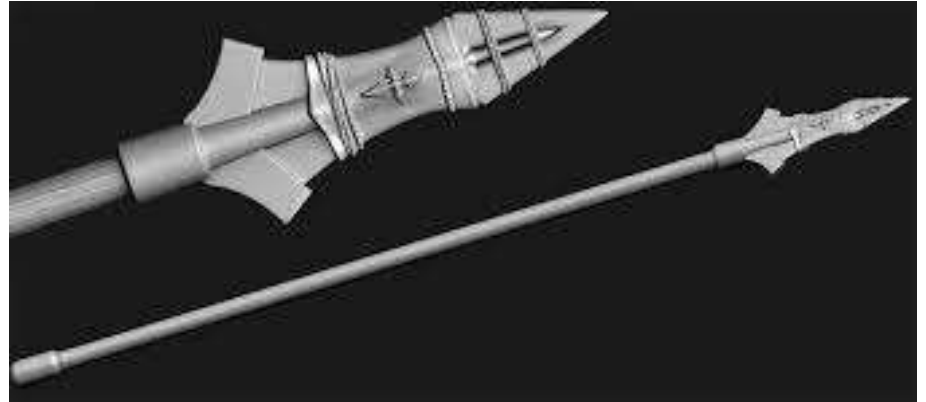
Spear in Vienna was tested

The Spear in Vienna was tested on in 2003. The results concluded that the spear in Vienna was not one from the 1st Century (thus meaning it was not the spear used to prove the death of Jesus). The spear was however, one from the 7th Century; and the nail it contained (purported to be a nail from the crucifix of Jesus) did correlate with others from the 1st Century.



Many relics claim to be the Spear of Destiny

As with other biblical objects, many relics claim to be the Spear of Destiny or part of the Spear of Destiny. This includes the Vatican lance, the Echmiadzin lance and the Vienna lance.



The Echmiadzin lance is a relic believed to be the Spear of Destiny