

ANTIOCH AND THE SHROUD

By Jack Markwardt

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THE EARLY CENTURIES

If the Shroud of Turin is truly that holy icon employed to save the city of Edessa from the Persian army in the sixth century,¹ just how and when did it make its way there from first-century Jerusalem?

In 1978, Ian Wilson, cognizant that the cloth would never be accepted as authentic in the absence of a complete and credible biography, boldly and convincingly postulated its history from 544, when it mysteriously appeared in Edessa, to 1204, when it suddenly disappeared from Constantinople.² In an attempt to reach even further back into time, however, Wilson's "Mandylicon theory" also suggested that, shortly after the Crucifixion, an otherwise-unknown disciple named Thaddeus had carried Christ's image-bearing burial shroud³ to Edessa⁴ where it was soon portraitized and concealed in the city walls for almost five centuries.⁵ This particular portion of the theory was not grounded in history but, instead, was based upon the so-called Abgar legend, a fourth-century Syrian tale⁶ significantly permutated by tenth-century Byzantines in order to bestow an Apostolic history upon the Mandylicon cloth that had been brought from Edessa to Constantinople in 944.⁷ Yet, that very Abgar legend has been called "one of the most successful pious frauds of antiquity"⁸ by J. B. Segal, whom Wilson rightly regards the best modern authority on Edessa,⁹ and its earliest Syrian versions do not relate the existence of any miraculous image of Jesus.¹⁰ Segal concluded that Christianity did not arrive in Edessa until late in the second century¹¹ and Wilson himself has recently acknowledged that the factual underpinnings of the Abgar legend may well be

attributable to that latter era.¹²

The mere existence of such unresolved questions challenge sindonology to seek out and provide some alternative route for the Shroud's likely first-century escape from Jerusalem and the author believes it is to be found on the road which leads to the Syrian capital of Antioch on the Orontes.

ANTIOCH

Now lying substantially buried beneath the rubble of numerous earthquakes and wars near the modern city of Antakya, Turkey, ancient Antioch was, at the time of Christ, the third most important city of the Roman Empire.¹³ Founded in 300 BC, it served as capital of the Seleucid Empire until, in 64 BC, it was annexed to the Roman Republic by Pompey.¹⁴ When Rome's puppet ruler, Herod Archelaus, was banished to Gaul by Augustus Caesar in 6 BC, his territories of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea were incorporated into the imperial Roman province of Syria with Antioch as its capital.¹⁵ A favorite city of Julius Caesar and a number of Roman emperors,¹⁶ Antioch featured immense aqueducts, an imperial palace, a Circus, an Amphitheater, a Forum, and a grand Colonnade connecting it with the Temple of Apollo in the Vale of Daphne, an ancient center of pagan worship.¹⁷ At the time of Christ's death, the city bustled with commerce, diplomacy, and news of religious movements throughout the Roman world.¹⁸

Although relatively little is known about the Apostolic Church of Jerusalem,¹⁹ it is believed that the disciples of Jesus saved and maintained certain relics of his Passion.²⁰ In the decades following the Crucifixion, Jewish authorities expelled, arrested, and executed the leaders of the new Church²¹ and, at some time during this period of persecution, martyrdom, and war, these relics were surely transported out of Judea for their protection and preservation.²²

There can be little argument that, for the better part of the period that encompassed the persecution of the Jerusalem Church, Antioch provided the most logical and likely repository for the relics of the Passion.²³ Nicolaus of Antioch served as one of the first seven deacons of the Jerusalem Church²⁴ and,

upon the execution of Stephen, a number of Christians fled to Antioch where they preached to the Jews.²⁵ In approximately 40, under the leadership of Barnabas and Paul,²⁶ Christian missionaries shifted their attention to the Gentiles²⁷ and, within a year, Antioch was hosting the world's first Gentile Christian community²⁸ whose members were being referred to as "Christians".²⁹ By the middle of the first century, two distinct and official Christian churches existed side-by-side: The mother church of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and the mother church of Gentile Christians in Antioch.³⁰

While some believe that Barnabas and Paul may have conveyed the relics of Christ's Passion to Antioch,³¹ it is also possible that they arrived there during the Roman war against the Jews when many Christians fled from Judea to Antioch and Asia Minor.³² Eminent historian Glanville Downey has noted that such refugees "may have taken with them their books and their collections of the sayings of Jesus, by means of which the spiritual life of the community of Antioch would have been enriched".³³

The author suggests that it was Peter who brought the Shroud, together with certain other relics of the Passion,³⁴ to Antioch. Ordained chief of the Apostles by Jesus himself,³⁵ Peter was undoubtedly entrusted with the most sacred possessions of the nascent Church. Peter was the first to enter the empty tomb where the Shroud was discovered³⁶ and he seems to be identified as a sindonic custodian in two of the earliest reports concerning Christ's burial cloth. Although the lost second-century Gospel of the Hebrews related that Jesus gave his Shroud to "the servant of the priest", scholars have suggested that, before falling victim to a copyist's error, this text had actually stated that the Shroud was given to Peter.³⁷ In the fourth century, St. Nino, who had visited Jerusalem, recounted that the Shroud had been preserved by Pilate's wife, given to St. Luke, and hidden until it was found and kept by Peter³⁸. Not only did Peter assuredly live in Antioch, argue there with Paul over the circumcision of Gentiles, and use the city as the base for his missionary activities between 47 and 54,³⁹ but also, according to ancient tradition, he established the Church of Antioch and served as its first bishop⁴⁰.

ANTIOCH'S PASSION RELICS

Unlike Edessa, Antioch has laid claim to Passion relics other than the Shroud and it logical to conclude that all such preserved relics would probably have been transported together to the same safehaven.

In 1098, the Crusaders captured Antioch only to become surrounded by a Moslem force. Discovering there the hiding place of the Holy Lance of Longinus that had pierced the side of the crucified Christ, the Crusaders, with this relic placed at the head of their army, routed the enemy and set off for Jerusalem.⁴¹

In 1910, local Arabs unearthed, at the traditional site of Antioch's ancient cathedral,⁴² a silver chalice comprised of an unfinished inner cup and a finished outer holder, akin to a reliquary, exquisitely decorated with ten human figures, in two groups of five.⁴³ Professor William Newbold has noted that only in the middle of the first century did two groups of five men each govern the respective Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch and only at such time would a Christian religious object have displayed such a depiction.⁴⁴ Dated to the first century and considered genuine by many archeological and scientific authorities,⁴⁵ the Great Chalice of Antioch has been called "a most sacred Cup, in all probability the one which once served the Lord and his disciples at the Last Supper, the most precious object in Christian history, legend and tradition".⁴⁶

THE PRE-CONSTANTINIAN ERA (30-324)

During the first three centuries of its existence, the Christian Church was continually threatened with extinction and Roman imperial persecutions, first instituted by Nero, persisted, almost unremittingly, for two and a half centuries.⁴⁷ These persecutions fell particularly hard upon the Church of Antioch and, in 115, the city produced several martyrs, including Bishop Ignatius who was taken to Rome and killed

by wild beasts.⁴⁸ By 180, the appellation “Christian” was still considered an evil name in Antioch and during the reign of Decius (249-251), the Bishop of Antioch was arrested and died in prison.⁴⁹ The Emperor Valerian (253-260), responsible for particularly severe persecutions, used Antioch as the base for his military campaigns against Persia⁵⁰ and, from 303 to 305, while Diocletian destroyed churches and scriptures and banned Christian worship,⁵¹ many Antiochenes were martyred and their bishop was condemned to the marble quarries of Pannonia.⁵² Galerius prosecuted this so-called “Great Persecution” in the eastern portion of the Empire until 311, and at Antioch, the site of his imperial residence, he had martyrs slowly roasted over open fires.⁵³

During this rather extended period of persecution, all of the Passion relics would have been kept concealed due to the danger of their being confiscated and destroyed by imperial agents. Were the Shroud then known to be image bearing⁵⁴, it would have been kept hidden from radically iconoclastic Jews⁵⁵ and Christians⁵⁶ who insisted that God be worshipped in a purely spiritual manner.⁵⁷

THE CONSTANTINIAN ERA (324-337)

When, in 323, Constantine defeated Licinius,⁵⁸ enforcement of the Edict of Milan in Antioch was assured. Nevertheless, even after official imperial persecution had ended, there were still several compelling reasons why the relics of the Passion, particularly if hidden in Antioch, would not have been extracted from three centuries of concealment.

A. ICONOCLASM IN THE EAST

Although Constantine’s triumph precipitated a gradual shift toward the arts within the Church, the iconoclastic views of many ecclesiastics were never altered.⁵⁹ Thus, were the Shroud then known to bear an image,⁶⁰ its very existence remained threatened by radical iconoclasts, particularly in the Eastern Church. Bishop Eusebius of Caesaria, nearly appointed Bishop of Antioch in 326,⁶¹ confiscated images of Peter and

Paul,⁶² and as late as 393, St. Epiphanius of Salamis tore down an image-bearing veil in Palestine.⁶³

B. IMPERIAL RELIC APPROPRIATION

By 324, Christian relics were in vogue, a tradition of venerating saintly remains had become established, and magnificent sanctuaries were being erected over the graves of martyrs.⁶⁴ By century's end, St. Augustine could recount miracles wrought by Holy Land soil, flowers which had touched a reliquary, oil from church lamps, and items connected with saints.⁶⁵

In 326, the pagan-bred Constantine, enthralled by his new religion's relics, sent his elderly mother, Helena, to Jerusalem to search for momentos of Christ's Passion.⁶⁶ Having located the Holy Sepulchre, Helena promptly demonstrated that, once found, such relics would be appropriated and conveyed to the imperial capital,⁶⁷ to Rome, or to some other city closely connected with the imperial family. Dividing both the True Cross and the Title into three pieces, Helena left one part of each relic in Jerusalem and sent the remaining portions to the Emperor and to Rome.⁶⁸ Similarly, of the three Holy Nails found in the tomb, Helena sent two to Constantine and the other to Rome.⁶⁹ The Empress also reportedly conveyed the Holy Stairs from Pilate's palace to Rome⁷⁰ and took the Holy Coat to her own administrative capital in Trier, Germany.⁷¹

Once these sacred objects were in the hands of Constantine, he reportedly employed them as lucky charms or military paraphernalia. Believing that it would make his new capital city impregnable, the Emperor placed a portion of the True Cross in his statue set high above the Forum of Constantinople.⁷² He also attached one of the Holy Nails to his helmet and made a bridle for his horse from the other.⁷³ Under such circumstances, no truly devout eastern clergyman would dare disclose the existence of any of Christ's Passion relics and thereby risk both their transmittal to the West and the possibility of their desecratory employment by the Emperor.

C. ARIANISM AND THE ANTIOCH SCHISM

In the third century, Paul of Samosata had preached that there was only one God, the creator, and, extending this heretical doctrine, Lucian, an Antiochene priest, taught that Christ could not have existed for all eternity since he was, by definition, the Son of the Father.⁷⁴ When Arius, one of Lucian's students and an Alexandrian priest, espoused such teachings in the time of Constantine, they became popularly known as Arianism.⁷⁵ Although Arians dominated the religious affairs of Antioch itself, a regional synod of orthodox bishops met in 324, elected an orthodox bishop, and condemned Arius.⁷⁶ The Arians of Antioch, who would have likely maintained possession of the city's most precious ecclesiastical treasures, were now in conflict with their orthodox bishop.

From the inception of his association with Christianity, Constantine had demonstrated a proclivity to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs.⁷⁷ In 325, he presided over the Council of Nicaea which duly adopted his own compromise definition of the substantive nature of God, anathematized Arianism, sent Arius into exile, and decreed that Easter would no longer be celebrated according to Eastern church tradition.⁷⁸ The Arians of Antioch were now also in conflict with their orthodox Emperor.

In 330, the orthodox bishop of Antioch was removed from office and sent into exile.⁷⁹ When Constantine attempted to interfere in the appointment of his successor, two bishops, one Arian and the other orthodox, were elected and the Church of Antioch was divided by a schism that was to last for the next eighty years.⁸⁰ Under such circumstances, the Arian faction could not but continue to conceal any Passion relic in their possession if they were to prevent its appropriation by Constantine and his orthodox allies.

THE POST-CONSTANTINIAN ERA (337-540)

A. THE REIGN OF CONSTANTIUS

When Constantine died in 337, he left his Empire in the hands of his three surviving sons.⁸¹ Both the eldest, Constantine II who ruled in the West, and the youngest, Constans who ruled in the South, were closely aligned with the orthodox Church;⁸² however, the third son, Constantius, assumed control of the Eastern Empire and became an avowed Arian.⁸³ Notwithstanding the support of Constantius and their desire to establish an Arian Church dominated by the Emperor,⁸⁴ the Antiochene Arians were confronted with the distinct possibility that one of his two orthodox brothers might take control of the Eastern Empire and, like their father before them, send Arians into exile.

As fate would have it, however, Constantine II was killed in 340,⁸⁵ and when Constans died ten years later, Constantius was left in absolute control of the entire Roman Empire.⁸⁶ In Antioch, the orthodox faction split, an Arian was elected bishop in 357, and the city was thereby turned into “a stronghold of Arianism”.⁸⁷ The Arians immediately took control of the official Church and assumed sole occupancy of the Golden Basilica of Constantine,⁸⁸ a magnificent domed cathedral with marble walls and a gold exterior⁸⁹ that had been dedicated in 341.⁹⁰

With Arians now in control of both the imperial government and the official Church of Antioch, it became propitious to extract the relics of the Passion from hiding and to exhibit them to Arian believers within the confines of the city’s magnificent cathedral. Had the sindonic image developed only gradually and over a period of decades or centuries,⁹¹ this may have been the first occasion on which anyone noticed that the Shroud bore an incredible representation of the crucified body of Jesus Christ.

B. THE REFLECTED KNOWLEDGE OF PASSION RELICS

In Syria itself, archeologists have discovered, in fourth-century tombs, amulets and molded figures connected with the life and passion of Christ, including a zigzag lance, the Cup of the Last Supper, and so-

called “objects from the resurrection of Lazarus”.⁹² Were such resurrection objects actually intended to represent the burial linens of Christ and not those of Lazarus, it could indicate that the lance, the cup, and the Shroud were all copied in Syria during the fourth century. After exhaustively studying the evidence for many years, Professor Gustavus Eisen concluded that these artifacts had, in fact, been modeled upon actual sacred objects that were once kept in seclusion for their safety and were later lost when concealed upon the approach of persecution or war.⁹³

To the East, the Abgar legend was suddenly modified by the *Doctrine of Addai* to include, for the very first time, mention of a non-miraculous and painted portrait of Jesus.⁹⁴ Since the sindonic image itself has always been described as not being made by human hands⁹⁵ or as a moist secretion of sweat,⁹⁶ it would appear that an artistic copy of the Shroud face, perhaps painted in Antioch, was taken to Edessa by the close of the fourth century.

To the West, there suddenly appeared, during the Theodosian era (370-410), distinctly Shroudlike depictions of Christ with a long, narrow, and majestic face, a moustache and medium-length beard, and long hair falling upon his shoulders, sometimes parted in the center. A sarcophagus located at the University of Perugia, dated to about 350-360, shows Jesus with a lengthened face and long unparted hair and, beginning in approximately 370, the classic Shroudlike Christ began to be depicted in sarcophagi now to be found in Rome, Arles, Milan, and the Vatican.⁹⁷

The foregoing and other circumstantial evidence⁹⁸ demonstrates that, shortly after the middle of the fourth century, artists and artisans began to make copies of the lance and the chalice, both later discovered in Antioch, and the now-familiar face of the sindonic image. This would have occurred only had such relics been placed on exhibit and could not have taken place if, during this period, they had continued to remain out of sight, anonymous to the artistic community.

C. THE CONCEALMENT OF ANTIOCH'S CHURCH TREASURES

In 361, Constantius died at the age of forty-four and was succeeded by his cousin, Julian, a confirmed pagan who promptly proclaimed universal religious tolerance.⁹⁹ Although he undoubtedly desired to restore pagan worship, Julian wanted to project himself as the sponsor a new era of genial polytheism and, consequently, he opposed both illegal means and open persecution to eliminate Christianity and, instead, urged his fellow pagans to imitate Christianity's best virtues.¹⁰⁰

On October 22, 362, while Julian visited Antioch, a fire struck the Temple of Apollo, damaging both its roof and a statue of the god.¹⁰¹ Although the fire was likely caused by a pagan worshipper having left candles burning before a statue, blame was laid upon the Christians¹⁰² and Julian ordered the Great Cathedral to be closed¹⁰³ and its liturgical vessels and other treasures confiscated.¹⁰⁴ When the Count of the East, Julian's uncle, closed the Basilica and attempted to confiscate its sacred objects, the treasurer of the cathedral resisted:¹⁰⁵ In the words of Professor Eisen:

Theodoretus, for this was his name, refused to deliver some objects which he had hidden and, it is said, suffered torture and final execution rather than reveal some important secret. What that secret was is not known, but we may conclude that it referred to the treasure which he had hidden and whose hiding place he refused to divulge.¹⁰⁶

Julian's punitive measures represented the only occasion of his short imperial tenure (361-363) when he closed a religious house of worship, executed a churchman, or appropriated religious objects of veneration.¹⁰⁷ The author believes that this logical and tolerant emperor, aware that the cause of the fire was uncertain¹⁰⁸ and that his order would alienate the Antiochenes,¹⁰⁹ would not have taken such uncharacteristic action unless he believed it necessary to obtain, and destroy, three of the most precious relics of Christianity. The author also suggests that the Arian Presbyter, Theodoretus, at the cost of his head,¹¹⁰ successfully concealed Antioch's Passion relics in diverse places located throughout the Golden Basilica of Constantine.

D. THE RISE OF MONOPHYSITISM

In 380, the Emperor Theodosius established orthodoxy as the official religion of the Empire, condemned all heretics to serious penalties, expelled the Arians from Antioch, and restored custody of the Golden Basilica to the orthodox.¹¹¹ Yet, even with Arianism outlawed, basic differences between Syrian and Greek concepts of Christ's divinity remained. In 451, the Council of Chalcedon dogmatized the Greek view that Christ had two natures, human and divine, rather than the single divine nature ascribed to him by the majority of the Eastern clergy.¹¹² In 471, dissenting Monophysites seized control of the Church at Antioch¹¹³ and the city became the "rallying point of the Syrian people who now felt...that the government in Constantinople was their enemy."¹¹⁴

By the late fifth century, the Patriarch of Antioch had become the acknowledged leader of the Monophysite movement, his patriarchate was no longer in communion with Rome or Constantinople,¹¹⁵ and the Greek-speaking clergy became known in the East as "the Emperor's men".¹¹⁶ In 518, Emperor Justin exiled Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch,¹¹⁷ and the orthodox instituted a purge of the Monophysites.¹¹⁸

E. THE DISCOVERY OF THE SHROUD

In October of 525, a great fire ravaged a considerable part of Antioch¹¹⁹ and, seven months later, a major earthquake destroyed almost the entire city, including the Great Cathedral, and killed the Patriarch and more than 250,000 other people.¹²⁰ The new orthodox Patriarch, Ephraemius, described as a worse persecutor than Paul, promptly initiated a vigorous campaign to eradicate Monophysitism.¹²¹ In November of 528, a second earthquake destroyed all of Antioch's buildings and the Emperor Justinian sent financial assistance for reconstruction.¹²² The city was rebuilt throughout the period of 528-540 and the Golden Basilica of Constantine was rededicated in 537-538.¹²³

The author suggests that, in the process of clearing away the debris of the earthquake-ravaged cathedral, Monophysites discovered the Shroud in the place where it had been hidden in 362. Intensely persecuted by both Patriarch Ephraemius and Emperor Justinian,¹²⁴ they could not publicly acknowledge discovery of the sacred relic, but their possession of the cloth may have become rumored. In approximately 529-530, Justinian sent one of his robes to Antioch where, most strangely, it was displayed in an orthodox church and in a manner suggesting that it had healing powers.¹²⁵ There being no plague then ravaging the city,¹²⁶ this may have been an orthodox attempt to counter a reported Monophysite possession of some miraculous cloth. Curious too is the fact that, at about this very same time, Justinian changed the name of Antioch to Theopolis, the City of God.¹²⁷

F. THE DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT ANTIOCH

The kingdom of Persia threatened to attack Antioch in 529 and 531¹²⁸ and its truce with the Roman Empire, reached in 532,¹²⁹ ended in 540 when King Chosroes I invaded Syria and marched his army to Antioch.¹³⁰ Just prior to the initial assault, many fled the city, including the Emperor's representative and the orthodox Patriarch.¹³¹ In the bloody assault that followed, the Persians captured Antioch and took many of its survivors as hostages and slaves and, after personally supervising the looting of the Golden Basilica, Chosroes had the ancient city burned to the ground.¹³² The resultant destruction was so complete that "those few who had not been killed or carried away as slaves, could not find the site where once had stood their homes".¹³³

THE APPEARANCE OF THE EDESSA ICON

The author proposes that, shortly before the Persian attack, the Monophysites of Antioch fled with the Shroud to a nearby safehaven where the local Christian Church had maintained a long tradition of ecclesiastical independence and where Monophysites constituted the religious majority and had their own bishop.¹³⁴ In 540, the city of Edessa, lying only about 145 miles to the northeast,¹³⁵ was clearly the most

logical and attractive destination for the Monophysite refugees of Antioch.¹³⁶

In 544, a holy icon “not made by human hands” was present in Edessa during its siege by King Chosroes.¹³⁷ Ernst Von Dobschutz concluded that this date indicates, more or less, the arrival of the icon in the city¹³⁸ and his opinion finds support in the fact that, prior thereto, no icon is mentioned in Edessan literature,¹³⁹ particularly the *Edessan Chronicle*, an orthodox Syriac text composed between 541 and 544.¹⁴⁰

When Chosroes constructed a huge timber tower from which missiles could be fired down upon the city,¹⁴¹ the Edessans devised a plan to dig a tunnel and to set fire to the siegeworks from belowground. The scheme having failed,¹⁴² Edessa remained encircled by an enemy that, only four years before, had destroyed Antioch, and the Monophysite refugees were forced to produce the Shroud and allow it to be thrown “into the breach”¹⁴³ in the hope that it might, somehow, miraculously save them and the city.

Evagrius reports that, with the aid of the icon, the tunnel wood immediately caught fire and ignited the Persian siegeworks aboveground.¹⁴⁴ Soon thereafter, the Persians abandoned their siege¹⁴⁵ and the icon became recognized as a holy relic and mighty palladium.¹⁴⁶ The author has previously proposed that, in the course of these events, the Shroud incurred the fire damage generally referred to as its “poker holes” and that, in order to conceal this damage, the Edessan church hierarchy doubled the cloth in four to create the portrait known as the holy Image of Edessa.¹⁴⁷

THE SYRIAN GRAIL

Hints of a lost Syrian sindonic history are to be found in the legends of the Holy Grail, an object which, in recent years, has been increasingly linked to the Shroud.¹⁴⁸ Some seventy-five years ago, Professor Eisen concluded that the earliest Grail legends attempted to account for the loss of real sacred objects known in fourth-century Syria and that these stories reflected a passionate desire to locate and recover such objects from concealment.¹⁴⁹

A mere seventy years after Crusaders had discovered the Holy Lance in Antioch, Chretien de Troyes wrote the first of Western Europe's Grail romances¹⁵⁰ and coupled the mysterious Grail with a bleeding white lance.¹⁵¹ Soon thereafter, Robert de Boron mentioned an image of Christ on a shroud,¹⁵² identified the chalice as the Grail, and related that Joseph of Arimathea, the Shroud's first owner, had died in Syria,¹⁵³ in stark contrast to later tales which, integrated with the Arthurian legend,¹⁵⁴ placed him in Britain.¹⁵⁵ Seraphe, one of Boron's characters, is the name of a young man taken captive by Julian the Apostate during his siege of Strassburg and later reportedly placed in charge of the Teutonic legions in fourth-century Syria.¹⁵⁶ As previously noted, it was Julian who orchestrated the very persecution that caused Antioch's church treasures to be concealed in 362.

The author perceives a direct linkage between the fourth-century disappearance of Antioch's Church treasures, the eleventh-century discovery of the Holy Lance in Antioch, and the twelfth-century birth of European Grail romances having Syrian roots and emphatic references to the lance, the chalice, and the Shroud. He identifies the mysterious Grail as symbolic of the Passion relics that Crusaders reported as having disappeared from Antioch's Great Cathedral during the persecution of Julian the Apostate and suggests that memories of these lost Syrian relics inspired the earliest of the Christian Grail romances.¹⁵⁷

THE HISTORICAL VACUUM

A well-founded criticism of the Shroud's claim to ancient provenance is the undeniable fact that, after the victory of Constantine, its existence should surely have been reported, and those who seek to promote the relic's authenticity must provide an adequate explanation for its historical anonymity. While Wilson attempted to resolve this problem for the period prior to 544 by claiming that the Shroud remained hidden in the city walls of Edessa, one must also seriously consider the distinct possibility that, over the centuries, certain sindonic custodians may have been religious heretics. Most such heretics were, in fact, devout Christians who cherished Jesus either as God's Son or as his holy and anointed prophet and who

would have assuredly protected his image-imprinted burial cloth as zealously as any orthodox believer--the Arian Presbyter Theodoretus may provide a perfect example of such uncompromising devotion. Upon the demise of their respective religious movements, however, heretics were invariably exiled or executed, their teachings suppressed, and their writings destroyed. Thus, for any period when the Shroud may have been in the possession of Christian heretics, its history was undoubtedly expunged with that of the banished sect. Tragically, both for history and sindonology, the records of fourth-century Arians, sixth-century Monophysites, and thirteenth-century Cathars¹⁵⁸ have been forever lost.

In addition, and unlike Edessa, ancient Antioch has bequeathed to posterity very little ecclesiastical or historical information.¹⁵⁹ Antiochene writings do not become plentiful until the pagan Libanius details the city's administrative, social and intellectual life in the late fourth century and great gaps of knowledge occur in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹⁶⁰ This tragic historical vacuum is attributable, in part, to the numerous fires, earthquakes,¹⁶¹ and wars which ravaged Antioch throughout the early Christian centuries and to that extraordinary series of sixth-century calamities which virtually erased whatever might have then remained of the ancient city.¹⁶² While some hold hope that buried objects might yet provide testimony to Antioch's Christian history,¹⁶³ archaeological excavations conducted between 1932 and 1939 did not produce many texts and it is rather unlikely that any new excavations would add much to that which is presently known.¹⁶⁴

A PROPOSED CHRONOLOGY

Blending the central core of Ian Wilson's Mandyliion theory¹⁶⁵ with the trilogy of proposals that the author has advanced in papers presented to the Nice International Scientific Symposium in 1997,¹⁶⁶ the Turin Third International Congress in 1998,¹⁶⁷ and the Richmond International Conference in 1999¹⁶⁸ produces the following chronology:

- 30-47 Peter conceals the Passion relics in Jerusalem.
- 47 Peter brings the Passion relics to Antioch.
- 47-357 The Church of Antioch conceals the Passion relics.
- 357-362 Arians exhibit the Passion relics in Antioch's Golden Basilica.
- 362 Theodoretus conceals the Passion relics in the Golden Basilica.
- 362-528 The Passion relics remain hidden in the Golden Basilica.
- 528-540 Monophysites discover the Shroud in the Golden Basilica.
- 540 Monophysite refugees bring the Shroud to Edessa.
- 544 The Shroud is fire damaged as Edessa defeats the Persian army.
- 544-549 The Shroud is portraitized to become the Image of Edessa.
- 549-944 The Edessans venerate the holy icon "not made by human hands".
- 944-1204 The Byzantines venerate the Mandylion and sindon in Constantinople.
- 1098 Crusaders discover the Holy Lance in Antioch.
- 1170 Grail romances, with lance, cup, shroud, and Syrian roots, appear in the West.
- 1204 The Shroud disappears during the Crusader sack of Constantinople.
- 1204-1349 Cathars conceal the Shroud in Languedoc.
- 1349 Geoffrey de Charny acquires the Shroud pursuant to the terms of a royal grant.
- 1355 Geoffrey de Charny exhibits the Shroud in Lirey.
- 1910 Arabs discover the Great Chalice at the site of Antioch's ancient cathedral.

CONCLUSION

The author suggests that the proposed early sojourn of the Shroud in Antioch provides both a plausible biography for the relic prior to its appearance in Edessa and also a credible explanation of why its existence during that early period was not historically documented. He believes that the first Christian

Grail romances were inspired by the disappearance of Antioch's Church treasures in the fourth century.¹⁶⁹ He considers it more than mere coincidence that the chronicled history of the Shroud begins¹⁷⁰ almost immediately after the glorious history of ancient Antioch concludes.¹⁷¹

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NOTES

1. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 136-137. Drews, p. 66.

2. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 136-172.

3. Wilson believed that the sindonic image was produced by a force rather than by a substance, that it resulted from the cloth having been scorched during the Resurrection, and that it was readily observable on the first Easter morning. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 248-251.

4. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 126-130.

5. Wilson proposed that the Shroud was rediscovered in the aftermath of a devastating flood that struck Edessa in 525. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 134; 138-139.

6. See note 10 and Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 129-130.

7. This account is referred to both as “The Story of the Image of Edessa” and as the Festival Sermon. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 272-290. Drews, pp. 55-58.

8. Segal, p. 64.

9. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 308, n. 1.

10. The first Syrian account, related by Eusebius, mentioned only a wonderful vision and the later *Doctrine of Addai* spoke only of a portrait made by human hands in choice paints. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 129-130.
11. Segal, p. 70.
12. See Wilson, *The Blood and the Shroud*, pp. 161-175.
13. Dowley, p. 62. Eisen, p. 4.
14. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 57; 117; 143-147.
15. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 167-168.
16. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 151-158; 169-188; 318-327.
17. Eisen, pp. 3-4.
18. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 188; 272.
19. Chadwick, p. 17.
20. Cruz, p. 4.
21. Between 30 and 62 AD, Hellenistic Christians were driven out of Jerusalem, Peter was arrested, and Stephen, the Apostle James, and James, the brother of Jesus, were executed. See Franzen, p. 14.
22. It is likely that the "relics of the saviour were sought for conveyance to safety and these included the Shroud, whose mysterious markings...would have ensured its preservation as an object of the greatest curiosity if nothing else". Curren-Briggs, p. xiv.
23. In 1989, Professor Daniel C. Scavone speculated that the Shroud was taken from Jerusalem to Edessa or Antioch, but felt that "the evidence points to Edessa". Scavone, p. 80.
24. Acts 6:5.
25. Acts 11:19.
26. Acts 13:1. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 273-275.
27. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 192-195.
28. Franzen, pp. 15-16.

29. Acts 11:26. Dowley, p. 62. This appellation was probably used by the Romans to distinguish the new religious sect from Judaism. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 198.
30. Cruz, p. 29.
31. Cruz, p. 29.
32. Franzen, p. 15. Dowley, p. 62. Chadwick, p. 17. Many of those who fled Jerusalem at this time likely sought refuge to the south and east of the city. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 286-287. Some may have relocated to Pella on the east bank of the Jordan River. See Wilson, *Jesus: The Evidence*, pp. 165-166.
33. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 286-287.
34. As mentioned hereinafter, the lance and the chalice.
35. See Matthew 16:18-19.
36. John 20:3-8.
37. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 92-93
38. Scavone, p. 75.
39. Gal. 2:11-12. Chadwick, p. 18. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 281-282.
40. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 281-282. A chronicle dated to 640 reports that “Simon Cephas laid the foundations of the church at Antioch”. See Palmer, p. 19.
41. It was reported that the relic’s hidden location was disclosed to a priest in a dream. See Eisen, pp.5-6. There are other so-called “holy lances” that also claim authenticity. See Cruz, pp. 44-45.
42. Eisen, p. 3.
43. Cruz, p. 28.
44. Cruz, p. 29.
45. Cruz, p. 28. Some art historians believe that, while the Great Chalice is not a modern forgery, it was made in the fourth or fifth century. See Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, pp. 214-215.
46. Eisen, p. 10.
47. In addition to the emperors specifically mentioned in the text, imperial persecutors included Domitian

(81-96), Trajan (98-117), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Septimius Severus (193-211), and Maximinus the Thracian (235-238).

48. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 132

49. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 292-293; 303.

50. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 308-310.

51. Segal, p. 83.

52. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 329-330.

53. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 331.

54. See note 91.

55. The Shroud image violated the second commandment and a ritually unclean gravecloth constituted a blasphemy and an abomination to Jews. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 100; 133.

56. Some of the Christian clergy inherited the Jewish animosity toward graven images and viewed art of all kinds as incompatible with religion. See Drews, pp. 76-77. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 100. Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Shroud of Turin and the Face of Christ in Paleochristian, Byzantine and Western Medieval Art*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 9, p. 7 (1983).

57. Both art and artists were disavowed by the Church. Drews, p. 77. This despite the faithful's yearning for religious images. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 100.

58. Kousoulas, p. 340.

59. Drews, p. 77.

60. See note 91.

61. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 352.

62. Lest they be the cause of scandal. Drews, p. 77.

63. Presumably because Scripture did not authorize such objects. Drews, p. 77. Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Shroud of Turin and the Face of Christ in Paleochristian, Byzantine and Western Medieval Art*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 9, pp. 7-9 (1983).

64. As early as 156, the inhabitants of Smyrna had venerated the remains of St. Polycarp. Cruz, pp. 2; 5.

65. Cruz, p. 3.

66. Cruz, p. 38.

67. Located, at that time, in Nicomedia. Constantinople was not officially dedicated until May, 330. Kousoulas, p. 393.

68. The Roman portion of the True Cross was placed in the city's Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem which now maintains three pieces of the True Cross, each about six inches long, in a cross-shaped reliquary. The Basilica also preserves a faded and illegible portion of the title, together with a replication of its text. Cruz, pp. 38-39; 43.

69. Rome's Holy Nail relic is still preserved at the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. Other so-called "Holy Nails" are preserved at the Cathedral of Monza, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Cathedral in Florence, and the Cathedral in Trier, Germany. Cruz, pp. 41-42.

70. They are now maintained at the Sancta Sanctorum. Cruz, p. 32.

71. The Trier Cathedral contains an ivory tablet, dating from the fifth or sixth century, which shows a translation of relics there with the cooperation of Helena. An eleventh-century biography of the Trier's first bishop reports that Helena donated the Holy Coat to the Cathedral. Cruz, pp. 25-26.

72. Cruz, pp. 38-39.

73. Cruz, pp. 41-42.

74. Kousoulas, pp. 345-346.

75. Kousoulas, p. 345.

76. Kousoulas, pp. 355-356.

77. Constantine had proclaimed: "There is no higher responsibility for me by virtue of my imperial office than to dispel errors and repress all rash thought so as to cause all to offer to the Almighty God true religion, honest concord, and proper worship." Kousoulas, p. 307.

78. Kousoulas, pp. 355-356; 363-370.

79. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, pp.145-146. Kousoulas, p. 440.

80. Kousoulas, pp. 441-442.

81. Constantine II was then twenty-two, Constantius twenty, and Constans eighteen. Kousoulas, p. 470.

82. Kousoulas, p. 470.
83. Kousoulas, p. 470. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, pp. 149-150. Downey, *Antioch in the Age of Theodosius the Great*, p. 48.
84. Downey, *Antioch in the Age of Theodosius the Great*, p. 48.
85. In an ambush arranged by his brother Constans. Kousoulas, p. 471.
86. Kousoulas, p. 472.
87. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 157.
88. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 176.
89. Eisen, p. 4.
90. Constantius himself had attended the official ceremony. Chadwick, pp. 137-138.
91. The cloth's early historical anonymity could be simply explained if, during that period, it was not known to exhibit an image. Although Wilson noted that botany specimens could develop, in seventy-plus years, into "strikingly precise images in a sepia color closely akin to that of the Shroud", he discounted all image formation processes that could not have been completed within the thirty-six hour entombment of Christ's body. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 247. In 1981, S. F. Pellicori produced an image on linen sensitized by contact with a body covered in myrrh, olive oil, and skin secretions and theorized that the sindonic image had developed over a period of decades or centuries. See Drews, p. 19, citing S. F. Pellicori and M. S. Evans, *The Shroud of Turin Through the Microscope*, 34 *Archaeology*, pp. 34-43 (1981). In 1993, Dr. Leoncia Garza-Valdes suggested that bacteria had not only invalidated the results of the Shroud's carbon dating, but had also formed the sindonic image over the course of a century. Garza-Valdes, pp. 56-57. Were an image not readily observable after the Resurrection, the Shroud's earliest custodians may well have believed it to be only a blood-stained burial cloth, folded it, and hidden it away with other Passion relics, the image thereby being permitted to develop unperceived until the cloth was extracted from concealment.
92. Eisen, pp. 161-162.
93. Eisen, pp. 164; 166.
94. The *Doctrine of Addai*. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 129-130.
95. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 137.
96. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 115.

97. Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Shroud of Turin and the Face of Christ in Paleochristian, Byzantine and Western Medieval Art*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 9, p. 13 (1984).
98. The *Cateches* of Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428) reflected his knowledge of a post-passion image of Jesus inscribed upon his linens in the sepulchre. See Dreisbach, Albert R. Jr., *Liturgical Clues to the Shroud's History*, p. 3, Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1995). Theodore of Mopsuestia was born in Antioch and attended classes given there by the pagan sophist Libanius.
99. Bowersock, pp. 61; 70.
100. Bowersock, pp. 31; 79; 83; 87.
101. Bowersock, p. 99.
102. Chadwick, p. 156. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 388.
103. Chadwick, p. 156.
104. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 388.
105. "He (the Count of the East) plundered, by order from his master, the great Church at Antioch, which was at that time in the hands of the Arians, and then shut up the doors of it; upon which the Clergy there thought it high time to shift for themselves. Only Theodorus, a Presbyter, who had the care of the church-plate, etc., kept his ground, was apprehended, and no tortures prevailing with him to make any sacrilegious discoveries, or any way to disgrace his holy profession, he lost his head." Parker, p. 256.
106. Eisen, p. 5.
107. In the only other remotely similar event of his reign, Julian had summarily confiscated property owned by the Edessan Christian community. Bowersock, p. 92.
108. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 169.
109. Bowersock, p. 99.
110. Parker, p. 256. Eisen, p. 169.
111. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 184.
112. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, p. 227.
113. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, pp. 226-227.

114. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 12.
115. Frend, pp. 49; 186. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 12.
116. Dowley, p. 176.
117. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 513.
118. Frend, p. 241.
119. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 520-521.
120. Eisen, p. 6. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 521-522.
121. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 526-528; 533.
122. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 524-528.
123. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 533.
124. One edict exiling Monophysites, issued in 532, provoked riots in Antioch. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 527. Another, issued in 536, prohibited Monophysites, including Severus, from preaching, gathering assemblies, or celebrating the Eucharist. Wigram, pp. 118-119. Harvey, p. 194.
125. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 531.
126. Some twelve years later, in 542, a plague struck both Antioch and a large part of the Eastern Empire. See Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 553-557.
127. The Emperor's reason for doing so remains unknown, although some believe that this was a propitiatory gesture to God after the devastation of the fire and the two earthquakes. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 529. Eisen p. 6.
128. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 530- 532.
129. Segal, pp. 112-113.
130. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 533-544.
131. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 541.
132. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 552.

133. See Eisen p. 6.

134. Segal, pp. 77; 81.

135. About 233 kilometers distant from Antioch. See Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Plate 4, "Roman Roads in Northern Syria".

136. Only two years later, Jacob Baradaeus, with the assistance of the Empress Theodora (a stalwart Monophysite supporter despite the official policies of her husband), was ordained a bishop and dispatched to Edessa where he initiated rather prodigious efforts to reorganize the Monophysites into a church independent from the orthodoxy. Harvey, p. 105. Wigram, pp. 198; 136. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 534.

137. This according to the Syrian church historian, Evagrius, who wrote late in the sixth century. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 137.

138. Dobschutz, Ernst Von, *Christusbilder; Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leipzig 1899, as cited in Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Shroud of Turin and the Face of Christ in Paleochristian, Byzantine and Western Medieval Art*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 10, p. 9 (1984).

139. For example, the diary of Egeria (who visited Edessa in approximately 383), the writings of the late-fourth century St. Ephraim, the works of the early-sixth century Jacob of Serug, and the *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, written in Edessa in approximately 507. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 131.

140. Professor Robert Drews feels that this omission constitutes "strong evidence" that the icon was not found in the aftermath of the flood which devastated the city in 525. Drews, pp. 60-61. See also Crispino, Dorothy, *A Unique Manuscript on the Image of Edessa*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 40, p. 25 (1991).

141. Drews, p. 64. The Persians may also have wanted to scale the city's high walls. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 137.

142. A fire could not be started in the underground passage due to a lack of air. See Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 137.

143. See Drews, p. 66.

144. Drews, p. 61. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 137.

145. Procopius of Caesaria, in his *History of the Wars* written in approximately 546, confirms that the Edessans dug a tunnel, experienced problems with starting a fire due to a lack of air in the underground chamber, and succeeded in setting a fire which spread to the Persian siege-works; however, he does not mention the intervention of any icon and he attributes the Edessans' victory to their own courage and resourcefulness. Procopius, pp. 503-515. Segal, p. 77. Drews, pp. 64-66.

146. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, p. 140. Drews, p. 66.
147. Markwardt, Jack, *The Fire and the Portrait*, British Society for the Turin Shroud Newsletter, No. 48, p. 18 (Dec. 1998). Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1998).
148. See, e.g., Curren-Briggs, pp. 1-29; 72-73.
149. Eisen, pp. 164-166. Some ancient Syrian legends contain Grail themes, usually in accounts of the Apostles Philip, James, and John. Eisen, p. 168.
150. The *Story of the Grail* was written ca. 1175. See also Curren-Briggs, pp. 6; 212.
151. Chretien, p. 420. In the later Welsh Grail romance, *Peredur*, two young men carry a spear of incalculable size with three streams of blood running to the floor. See Curren-Briggs, pp. 1; 12.
152. Boron, pp. 26-27.
153. See Eisen, p. 166.
154. Curren-Briggs, pp. 1-2.
155. Eisen, p. 166.
156. Eisen, pp. 5; 169.
157. Professor Daniel C. Scavone also believes that Western travelers or crusaders to the East were the source of the Christian Grail romances, but suggests that these tales resulted from their having heard whispers of something mysterious kept in Constantinople and intimately identified with the body and blood of Christ and Joseph of Arimathea (i.e., the Shroud). See Scavone, Daniel C., *Joseph of Arimathea, the Holy Grail and the Turin Shroud*, Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1996).
158. See Markwardt, Jack, *Was the Shroud in Languedoc During the Missing Years?*, Acts of the Third International Scientific Symposium of CIELT-Nice 1997, p. 177 (Paris, 1998). Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1997).
159. Particularly from its Apostolic and sub-Apostolic periods. "Any information about the Antiochene church is of value, since it is so scarce". Carrington, p. 438.
160. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, pp. 4-7.
161. In addition to the two serious earthquakes of 526 and 528, an earthquake crippled Antioch in 115, almost killing the visiting Emperor Trajan and, in 458, "nearly the whole city fell" and a fire followed the

quake. Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, pp. 98; 221-233.

162. See Eisen, p. 5.

163. Eisen, p. 6.

164. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 6.

165. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin*, pp. 136-172.

166. Markwardt, Jack, *Was the Shroud in Languedoc During the Missing Years?*, Acts of the Third International Scientific Symposium of CIELT-Nice 1997, p. 177 (Paris, 1998). Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1997).

167. Markwardt, Jack, *The Fire and the Portrait*, British Society for the Turin Shroud Newsletter, No. 48, p. 18 (Dec. 1998). Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://www.shroud.com> (1998). *The Fire and the Portrait* is scheduled for publication in the official Acts of the Third International Congress of the Shroud.

168. *Antioch and the Shroud* is scheduled for publication in the official Acts of the Richmond International Conference.

169. In accordance with arguments initially advanced by Professor Eisen.

170. Evagrius' report of an icon "not made by human hands" and employed to defend Edessa during the Persian siege of the city in 544.

171. "The real greatness of the city must have come to an end in A.D. 540". Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, p. 559.