

TWO SCHOLARS ON THE EDESSAN TRAIL

L'IMMAGINE EDESSENA: IMPRONTA DELL'INTERA
 ERSONE DI CRISTO. NUOVE CONFERMA DEL CODEX
 VOSSIANUS LATINUS Q69
 GINO ZANINOTTO

In Codex Vossianus Q69, Professor Zaninotto hopes to offer further support to the hypothesis that the Edessa Image could be identified with the Shroud of Turin. The Codex Vossianus is a Xth century Latin translation of an original text in Syriac that can be dated to the VIII/IXth century. It is a *Tractatus* that tells of the cloth sent by Christ to King Abgar of Edessa, with a description of the image and explanation of how it was produced.

At least five legends are known that give explanations on how the image was formed: 1) the Doctrine of Addai, Vth c., mentioning only that Ananias painted Jesus' face on a panel; 2) VIth c., Eulalio finds sealed up in a city wall an image formed when Jesus wiped his face on a cloth and gave it to Ananias; 3) the image was produced when Jesus lay down upon a pure white cloth, leaving there an imprint of his whole body: in the Acts of Thaddeus, Meneo greco, the Tractatus. 4) Gregory the Referendary speaks of an image formed by the bloody sweat of Gethsemane.

The fifth phase describes the image formed by the agony of Gethsemane, adding the detail of the flow of blood and water from the side wound.

It is this detail that points to the Shroud.

The Byzantine envoys, headed by the emperor's First Chamberlin, Theophane, went to Edessa in 944 to receive the famous image. On that occasion, with appropriate ceremony, the Holy Image was displayed, with veil removed, for their inspection and veneration. Gregory the Referendary was certainly among those who accompanied Theophane.

Professor Zaninotto believes that the Vossianus Tract relies on the third phase, the VIth century Acts of Thaddeus, for its information concerning image formation.

This brings to mind the legend of the Beirut icon, desecrated circa 365, especially since the Codex is entitled "de cruce [*sic*] Beryti".

Professor Zaninotto was one of the few speakers at the symposium who actually programmed his talk to 20 minutes. One felt that several points were pregnant with far more information than he could impart, leaving listeners wondering if a complete study was being developed.

Father Dubarle, in the communication that follows, recalls the fact that it was Gino Zaninotto who re-discovered the Homily of

Gregory the Referendary. Zaninotto made a brief reference to the Homily in an article conjecturing on the sidestrip (*Collegamento Pro Sindone*, May-June 1986) and in the same journal, March/April 1988, his research still carries a question mark: "Il Codice Vat. Gr. 511, FF 143-150v: Una conferma dell'identità tra l'immagine Edessena e la Sindone di Torino?"

Step by step, with infinite caution, the research moves ahead.

L'IMAGE D'EDESSE DANS L'HOMÉLIE DE GRÉGOIRE LE REFERENDAIRE

A.-M. DUBARLE, O.P.

Right away, let's look up this word "referendaire", in English "referendary": someone to whom questions or other matters were referred. In America, the word is obsolete while "referee" retains the definition. Father Dubarle explains that in Byzantium, the "referendary" was the priest whose task it was to bring the patriarch and the emperor to mutual understanding on religious questions.

In this detailed paper, Père Dubarle examines the homily that Gregory, Archdeacon and Referendary, gave on the festive occasion of the arrival to Constantinople, the 15th of August 944, of the image "not made by the hand of man". The mention therein of the flow of blood and water from the side wound permits us to identify the Edessa Image with the Shroud of Turin.

Gregory was sent to Edessa by the emperor to investigate that city's famous image. Gregory consulted the ancient books conserved there, translating Syriac texts into Greek. Father Dubarle traces the parallel legends known to the Referendary in order to contrast their taste for the marvelous and the miraculous with Gregory's "sobriety", thus to establish his credibility. Historians can therefore attribute to Gregory an objectivity that holds to facts without elaborating for effect.

Consonant with the rhetorical style of the period, the orator relates the arrival of the Edessan Image to Biblical events, Crossing the Red Sea, etc. Like the divine commandments given to Moses, the image was formed by the hand of God.

Gregory's discourse must be seen in the context of the iconoclastic turmoil still fresh in the memory of the citizens of Constantinople. The Abgar legend had been effectively used against iconoclasm and Gregory carries the argument into spiritual dimensions: not only was it legitimate to make visible representations; but the hand of God is formed in every person by the "sweat" of his efforts to achieve virtues. "One must not stop at the description of the material image," the Archdeacon declaims, "for one can discover there a lesson that relates to the spiritual imprint on the human soul."

It is interesting to note that in the Edessa cloth, the Referendary did not recognize a funeral shroud. Resting his judgment on some

of the ancient documents he had studied, he supposed that the image was formed by the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, when Jesus wiped his face on a kerchief. The cloth was kept, Gregory reasons, and used again to wipe the blood and water flowing from his side.

To have mentioned the flow of blood and water, Gregory must have seen not only the face (familiar to us as the "Mandyion") but also the side wound. This presents a little problem, for the mention is not part of a description of the linen, — indeed there is no description, presumably because the image was on display in the sight of the congregation — but it comes at the end of the homily in a moral and religious exhortation.

Extracting this mention from Father Dubarle's translation of Gregory's sermon, we read: [The face] ... "imprinted only by the sweat of the agony that ran like drops of blood ... that colored the true imprint of Christ. And the imprint, after the sweat ran down, was embellished by the drops of his own side. The two things are full of instruction; blood and water here, there the sweat and image." Alluding to John 7:38, Gregory expounds upon the Source of Living Water divided into two rivers, a salvation motif illuminated in crucifixion scenes of Greek psalteries a century later.

Even though it is only a pastoral exhortation, there seems no doubt but that the Referendary based his mention on direct observation of the Object. He would not, otherwise, have spoken of it.

Father Dubarle concludes that the Homily of Gregory the Referendary deserves to be kept in consideration because it ties together the more or less legendary accounts concerning the Edessa Image, can lead to the identity between the image and the Shroud, and is an argument for the existence of the Shroud from at least the year 944.

Père Dubarle's paper was read by Danial Raffard de Brienne.