

The Mandylion Or The Story Of A Man-Made Relic

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The Shroud of Turin

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SHROUD OF TURIN

The Controversial Intersection of Faith and Science - International Conference

St. Louis, Missouri - October 9 - 12, 2014

Introduction

For many years, numerous historians have tried using historical documents to trace the Shroud of Turin back before its appearance in Lirey, France, around 1357.

On this subject, an hypothesis has kept attention, the one proposed by Ian Wilson in 1978. Wilson proposed that the portrait of Christ that appeared in the city of Edessa would have been the Shroud of Turin folded in such a way that only the face was visible. This image was venerated in Edessa as a miraculous image of the face of Christ. Then, after its arrival in Constantinople in 944, a very limited number of « privileged persons » would have discovered its real nature of a burial shroud that bears a bloody and complete body image of Jesus. Later, again in Constantinople, the cloth would have been unfolded and exposed as the real shroud of Christ, before disappearing in 1204, during the sack of Constantinople by the Latin crusaders. This is the same shroud that would have appeared in Lirey, France, later on.

Here's a picture that shows what the Image of Edessa might have looked like, if the hypothesis of Ian Wilson would be right:



The major problem with this hypothesis is that it didn't take into account the evolution of the Abgar legend, which is strongly related to the different political and religious context of each era.

At the beginning, the Image of Edessa comes from the legend of Abgar V, who was king of Edessa at the time of Christ.

For those who don't know this legend, here's a short summary in his most recent version:
« The King Abgar was afflicted with a skin disease and would have sent a letter to Christ, in order for him to come to Edessa to heal him. Jesus' response was also by letter. He told him that he cannot come to Edessa, but promised him to send him one of his Apostles to heal him and to preach him the Gospel. He also sent him an image of his face miraculously imprinted

on a cloth after he used it to wash his face. This image will heal the king and will serve as a protection against Edessa's ennemis. » (personal translation).

As we will see, the Abgar legend and the Image of Edessa will evolve during the centuries, in parallel with the questions related to the dogmas that were proclaimed by the universal Church.

At the end, we will look at another trail for the Shroud of Turin being in Constantinople before 1204.

This presentation is the short summary of a complete paper that will be finished the next year. This article is written in collaboration with Yannick Clement and based on many paper of reknowned historians.

Point 1: The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

Edessa was a small independent kingdom founded by the Nabataeans in today's Turkey. We must wait until 202 A.D. to see this kingdom becoming officially Christian with the conversion of his king, Abgar IX.

However, there were in Edessa numerous Christian currents already at the end of the Second Century A.D. At that time, Christianity started to regroup the texts relative to its doctrine, but the theological debates and the questions concerning the nature of Christ, was a fertile ground for the coming up of new « heresies ».

In that context, the apostolic churches that were directly founded by the most important Apostles, like Rome or Antioch, served as references for the Christian doctrine that was considered sure and authentic.

Consequently, having a church founded by one of the direct Disciples of Christ allowed his Bishop to have authority in face of the other Christian currents of thoughts. For the church of Edessa, it really was important to consolidate its place among the Christian world and the best way to do this was certainly to bring the evangelization of the city back to the apostolic age.

It's in that context of religious disputes that appears in Edessa, most probably at the end of the Third Century A.D., the Abgar legend.

The oldest written version of this text that has survived is the one of Eusebius¹, Bishop of Caesarea, who, at the beginning of the Fourth Century A.D., tell the story of Abgar V, king of Edessa who lived at the time of Christ, of his miraculous healing and of his conversion by Addaï, a disciple sent by Jesus after his resurrection. To recount this legend, Eusebius based his work on Syriac documents that he would have consulted directly in the city archives and which he translated in Greek. In these documents were found, according to Eusebius, an authentic letter of Christ to king Abgar, which would have been given to him by Addaï.

« King Abgar being afflicted with a terrible disease...sent a message to him(Jesus) by a courier and begged him to heal his disease. But he did not at that time comply with his request; yet he deemed him worthy of a personal letter in which he said that he would send one of his disciples to cure his disease, and at the same time promised salvation to himself and all his house. Not long afterward his promise was fulfilled. For after his resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ. »

¹ Eusebius Pamphilus (Bishop of Caesarea), « The Ecclesiastical History », Book I, Chapter XVIII. Translated from the original by Rev. C.F. Cruse, A.M. - Published by R. Davis and Brother, Philadelphia, 1840.

But the construction of the account and the terms used by his author, along with the theology contained in the Abgar legend, indicate that it's largely inspired by the canonical Gospels, which certainly makes it an apocryphal story.

Here's a few clues that allow affirming it:

1 – the exploitation of the theme concerning the time after the resurrection of Christ when he will act while being absent, through, among other thing, the sending of his disciples in mission. According to the Abgar legend, the Apostle Addaï was one of them. He will heal the king of Edessa and will convert him afterward, along with his entire kingdom.

In his letter, Christ says to the king: « *But after I have been taken up I will send to you one of my disciples, that he may heal your disease and give life to you and yours.* »

2 - The exploitation of the theme of believing without seeing.

In his letter, Christ says to the king: « *Blessed are you who hast believed in me without having seen me* »

3 – the exploitation of the theme of seeing without believing.

In his letter, Christ says: « *For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me* ».

We find in the Abgar legend some themes that reflect the struggle of the Church of Edessa against certain heretical currents, like, for example:

- the fight against the Bardesanites, who were Gnostics who denied the resurrection of the flesh:

In the Abgar legend, we found a precision concerning the time when Addaï was sent to the king: « *For after his resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven* ».

- or against the Manicheans:

In the Abgar legend, the name Addaï, who is the Apostle sent by Jesus to heal the king, is also the name of a real Manichean missionary who performed miracles. Mani, the founder of the sect, wrote also a letter to the city of Edessa, just like Jesus, who sent a letter to Abgar, and the followers of Mani venerated his painted portrait, just like we will see appearing in the legend, at the very beginning of the Fifth Century A.D., the theme of the painted portrait of Christ sent to the king Abgar by Addaï.

The convergence of these multiple factors really leads to think about an invention of the Church of Edessa, in order to fight with more efficiency against the Manicheans and their leader².

One last important note: When Eusebius wrote his account, he indicates having already seen in certain cities some painted images of Christ and the Apostles, but there is no trace of that kind of portrait in his translation of the Abgar legend. Proof that such a portrait didn't exist in Edessa at that moment.

Here's what Eusebius reports: « *Since we have also seen representations of the apostles Peter and Paul, and of Christ himself, still preserved in paintings.* »³.

There is therefore in this legend a desire to affirm an apostolic filiation of the Church of Edessa by the means of Addaï, so-called disciple of Christ, sent by him to heal the king and evangelize the whole city, along with traces of the fight against numerous Christian heresies at the time the legend was invented, which is at the end of the Third Century A.D. In any case, there is no mention of image or portrait of Christ.

Point 1 : The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

Conclusion of the Point 1

There is therefore in this legend a desire to affirm :

- An **apostolic filiation** of the Church of Edessa.
- The **fight against the numerous Christian heresies**.
- The legend **was invented** at the end of the **Third Century** A.D.
- **No image or portrait of Christ**

² Dominique Gonnet (Lyon), « L'histoire d'Abgar, roi d'Édesse, ses sources bibliques et sa stratégie narrative (Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire ecclésiastique, livre I, XIII) » - Journée d'Agrégation du samedi 19 novembre 2005.

³ Eusebius Pamphilus (Bishop of Caesarea), « The Ecclesiastical History », Book VII, Chapter XVIII. Translated from the original by Rev. C.F. Cruse, A.M. - Published by R. Davis and Brother, Philadelphia, 1840.

Point 2: Why a portrait of Christ appeared only in the story at the beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.?

At the end of the Fourth Century A.D., on the road for the Holy Land, a pilgrim known as Egeria visited Edessa. She discovered that in the letter of Christ to Abgar, Jesus said concerning the city: « *no enemy shall again become master of it forever* ».

This later addition that wasn't there in the primitive text seen by Eusebius⁴ is most probably due to the fact that at the time Egeria wrote her account, Edessa had never been invaded by the Persians. We can also note that in Eusebius version, it's Abgar who is blessed by Christ. The transfer of a personal blessing of Jesus addressed to the king to a promise of protection concerning the whole city happened progressively throughout the Fourth Century A.D. This divine promise will render Edessa famous in all the Middle East.

During the Council of Constantinople, held in 381 A.D., which is around the time the account of Egeria was written, the dogma of the two natures of Christ, human and divine, is proclaimed, condemning therefore the heresies that were denying one or the other.

And it's some years later, at the very beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.⁵, in a text entitled « The doctrine of Addaï, the Apostle », appeared a new important addition to the Abgar legend: a painted portrait of Christ.⁶

Here's the relevant part of the text :

« Hannan was not only archivist, he was also the king's painter. When he saw that Jesus spake to him like this, he painted a likeness of Jesus with chosen paints, and brought it with him to Abgar the king, his master. And when Abgar the king saw the likeness, he received it with great joy, and placed it with great honour in one of his palatial houses. After the Ascension of Christ, Judas Thomas sent to Abgar Addai the Apostle, one of the seventy-two disciples. » (personal translation).

What's important to remember here is that this painter makes this portrait « *with chosen paints* »⁷. This demonstrates the artistic nature of the portrait, showing a Christ alive and well, with the eyes open and without showing any injury or bloodstain.

⁴ In a Syriac manuscript that reports the account of Eusebius of Caesarea discovered by William Cureton and dating approximately of the fifth century A.D.

⁵ Documents discovered and published by Mr. Cureton and dating of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., and Mr. Philips (taken from a complete text of the sixth century A.D.) at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁶ For a more complete text, see : L.-J. Tixeront, « les origines de l'église d'Edesse et la légende d'Abgar, Étude critique suivie de deux textes orientaux inédits », Maisonneuve and CH. Leclerc Editors, Paris, 1888, p. 33 à 45.

⁷ It's relevant to mention here one last very important detail concerning « The doctrine of Addaï »: the exact date of the meeting between Christ and Hannan and of the painting done by this person is well described by the author of the text and don't lead to any misinterpretation, while he placed these events « on the twelfth day of Nisan, on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday). », which is more than 24 hours BEFORE the beginning of

To justify this novelty, the archivist who simply transmitted the letter of Abgar to Jesus in the original version of the legend is transformed by the author of « The doctrine of Addaï » into a more important character, showing himself worthy of this task, while coming directly from the king's court. He's therefore no more a simple « *archivist* » as he was in the primitive text seen by Eusebius, but he « *was also* », here's the novelty, the king's official painter.

In the post-Council of Constantinople context of the era in which this account was written, it seems more than probable that the portrait in question was invented and used by the Church of Edessa in order to counter the heresies by « *confirming* » the dogma of the two natures of Christ, and particularly of his human nature.

Point 2 : Why a portrait of Christ only appears in the story at the beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.?

Conclusion of the Point 2

In the **post-Council of Constantinople** context of the era :

- The portrait of Christ was **invented** and **used** by the Church of Edessa :

-> To counter the heresies by showing Jesus with a complete human aspect to confirm the dogma of the two natures of Christ, and particularly of his human nature.

the Passion of Christ, which started the night after at the garden of Gethsemane. This chronology is very important because it allow noting that Christ was alive and well at the time of the creation of the image. We can therefore conclude without any doubt that this painting must have shown the face of a living Christ without any traces of blood or injuries, which is also the case for all the reproductions without exception of the Image of Edessa that have survived until this day, but which is not at all the case when it comes to the face that we see on the Shroud of Turin.

Point 3: Why this painted image was transformed into an image « not made by human hands »?

The painted portrait, which was in Edessa, wasn't considered as having been created miraculously, nor as having « protective powers ». On the contrary, it's the letter of Christ containing his blessing on the city that, according to popular belief, will explain the defeat of the Persians against Edessa in 503⁸, 540 and 544 A.D.⁹ which was confirmed¹⁰ by the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea¹¹ in 550 A.D.

However, the historian Evagrius¹², at the end of the Sixth Century A.D.¹³, and many years after Procopius, also described this same attack of the Persians in 544 A.D., but for him, the victory is attributed to the Image of Edessa, which is « *the image that has not been made by the hand of men* ». It's important to notice it's the first time in the Abgar legend that the image is described as not made by human hands.

This new addition to the Abgar legend has been rendered possible thanks to the combination of many factors that were already existing:

- The divine protection given to the city by Christ contained in his letter to Abgar is « transferred » to the portrait that is exposed in Edessa, which was, from that moment, considered as a « palladium » for the city.
- A particular event that happened during the battle attributed to God and thus to the image : the water that revives the fire « *with greater activity than the oil would have* », according to Procopius.
- The attribution of a miracle by an image of Christ could appear credible, because in 503 A.D.¹⁴, in the town of Amid, located near Edessa, another portrait of Christ had « *delivered the city to the Persians because of his sins* », thus providing a precedent.
- We also knew of a miraculous image in the town of Kamuliana at the end of the Sixth Century A.D. and which was transferred in 574 A.D. Following this transfer, the victory of the Byzantines against the Persians was attributed to this image. This image is specifically

⁸ Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite, written ca. 515 A.D. – Texte et traduction par M. l'abbé Paulin Martin - F. A. BROCKHAUS-LEIPZIG 1876 - page LV

⁹ Procopius of Caesarea, « Histoire of the war against the Persians » – Book II, chapter XXVI : « It wasn't to attack Justinian, nor his subjects, it was to attack the God of Christians. Like he attempt the siège of Edessa during the first campaign, and that he had little success, he felt a bitter displeasure of this disgrace. »

¹⁰ Mark Guscin, « The Image of Edessa », Brill, Laiden & Boston ed., 2009, pages 193 et 194.

¹¹ Procopius of Caesarea, « Histoire of the war against the Persians » – Book II, chapter XII.

¹² Evagrius Scholasticus is an historian who speak Greek, born ca. 536 A.D. in Epiphanius (Syria) and who died shortly after 594 A.D. His work is an *Ecclesiastical history* in 6 books, starting in 431 A.D., which is the year of the condemnation of Nestorius by the council of Ephesus, and runs until 593 A.D.

¹³ Mark Guscin, « The Image of Edessa », Brill, Laiden & Boston ed., 2009, pages 194 et 195.

¹⁴ Patrologia Orientalis - Tome VII - Fascicule 2 - Histoire Nestorienne (Chronique de Séert) Seconde Partie - Page 40-41 – The chronicle of Seert, a Syriac writer, is part of a work that relates the Universal history of the world and is very precious to know the history of the Nestorian Church until the beginning of the Eleventh Century.

described as « *made by miracle, and without the art of the Embroiderers, nor the Painters.* »¹⁵ This image thus served as a precedent to ease the establishment of the image « not made by human hands » of Edessa.

Incidentally, a testimony comes to contradict the hypothesis sometimes proposed of a discovery of the Image of Edessa at the time of the falling down of one of the walls of the city during the flood of 525 A.D. Effectively, before 439 A.D.¹⁶, an eyewitness comes in the city « *especially to be blessed by the image of Christ that was there...»*¹⁷.

¹⁵ Théophylacte Simocatta « Histoire de l'empereur Maurice », Livre II, chapitre III - Dans « Histoire de Constantinople depuis le règne de l'ancien Justin jusqu'à la fin de l'Empire ». Traduite sur les originaux Grecs de M. Cousin, Président en la Cour des Monnoies. Dédicée à Monseigneur Pompone, Secrétaire d'État. Tome I. Suivant la copie imprimée, à Paris, chez Damien Foucault, Imprimeur et Libraire ordinaire du roi, M. DC. LXXXV.

¹⁶ Jacob of Serugh, who died in 521 A.D., was a Bishop, and in one of his writings, he tell the life of one of his contemporary, Daniel of Galash (death in 439 A.D.). It is written that Daniel and a monk named Mar Māri went to Edessa « first and foremost to be blessed by the image of Christ that was there and to visit the monks of the mountain [...] The Saints worship the image of Our Lord and they live in a cavern 2 miles south west of Edessa.»

¹⁷ Text cited in « Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Christ » - Sebastian Brock, Oxford University – He based his work on the manuscript: Paris, syr. 235, f.166r. See “Revue de l'orient Chrétien-Deuxième série-Tome V(XV)-Paris” for the translation of the complete text in French.

Point 4: Is it possible to claim that this Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

First of all, by passing from a painted portrait to a miraculous image made by Christ himself, the Image of Edessa played a key role in the unification of the Church and also of the Byzantine Empire. This kind of miraculous image could be interpreted by everyone according to their own beliefs¹⁸.

In the Acts of Thaddeus, a document of the Abgar legend written in Greek¹⁹ during the Seventh Century A.D.²⁰, we discover how the image not made by human hands would have been created.

It is written that Jesus washed his face with a cloth and that his image has been immediately imprinted on it in a miraculous way:

« And He knew as knowing the heart, and asked to wash Himself; and a tetradiplon was given Him; and when He had washed Himself, He wiped His face with it. And His image having been imprinted upon the linen, He gave it to Ananias, saying: Give this, and take back this message, to him that sent thee: Peace to thee and thy city! »

In only one version²¹ of the Acts of Thaddeus, it's the word « tetradiplon » that is used to describe the cloth. In the other versions, the words used are « strips of cloth » or « handkerchief ».

The term « *tetradiplon* » is composed of these two elements: the word « four » and the expression « folded in two »²².

Concerning the prefix « four »:

An Arab text of the Tenth Century²³, sheds light on an important detail concerning the translation, from Syriac, of a word related to the aspect of the image:

« Hannan, who was a painter ... took a square board and painted on it Our Lord the Christ, he may be glorified, in nice and beautiful colors. »

¹⁸ Andrew Palmer, « The Acts of Thaddeus » - Apocrypha 13, 2002, page 79

¹⁹ Andrew Palmer, « The Acts of Thaddeus » - Apocrypha 13, 2002, page 80

²⁰ Mark Guscin, « The Image of Edessa », Brill, Laiden & Boston ed., 2009, pages 189 à 191.

²¹ A.-M Dubalre « Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin jusqu'au XIIIe siècle », O.E.I.L., 1985, Paris, page 106, note 30. In the majority of versions of the Acts of Thaddeus, it's the word “Rakos” that is used to name the towel. It can means “torn cloth, rags, strips of cloth, etc.”.

²² Mark Guscin, « The Image of Edessa », Brill, Laiden & Boston ed., 2009, pages 270 à 272.

²³ Agapius of Manbij or Agapius of Hierapolis, son of Constantine, named in Arab Mahbūb ibn Qūṣ ṭānṭīn (death ca. 942), is an arabophone Christian historian of the Tenth Century, author of a Universal chronicle. He was the Melkite Bishop of the Syrian town of Manbij (Hierapolis in Greek and Mabboug in Syriac).

The word « square » in Arab language possess the same root as the Syriac word “ mbr’ ” translate by « four »²⁴. So, the Greek translator of the Acts of Thaddeus took the same Syriac term used by this Arab author, but this time he translated it by « tetra » (four) instead of « square ». The Greek and the Arab words reflecting the same Syriac expression, we can easily think that the support of the image or the image itself was « square ».

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

« Hannan, who was a painter ... took a square board and painted on it Our Lord the Christ »

« square » in Arab language possess the same root as the Syriac word « four »

«mbr’»	=	«square»
In Syriac	same root	In Arab

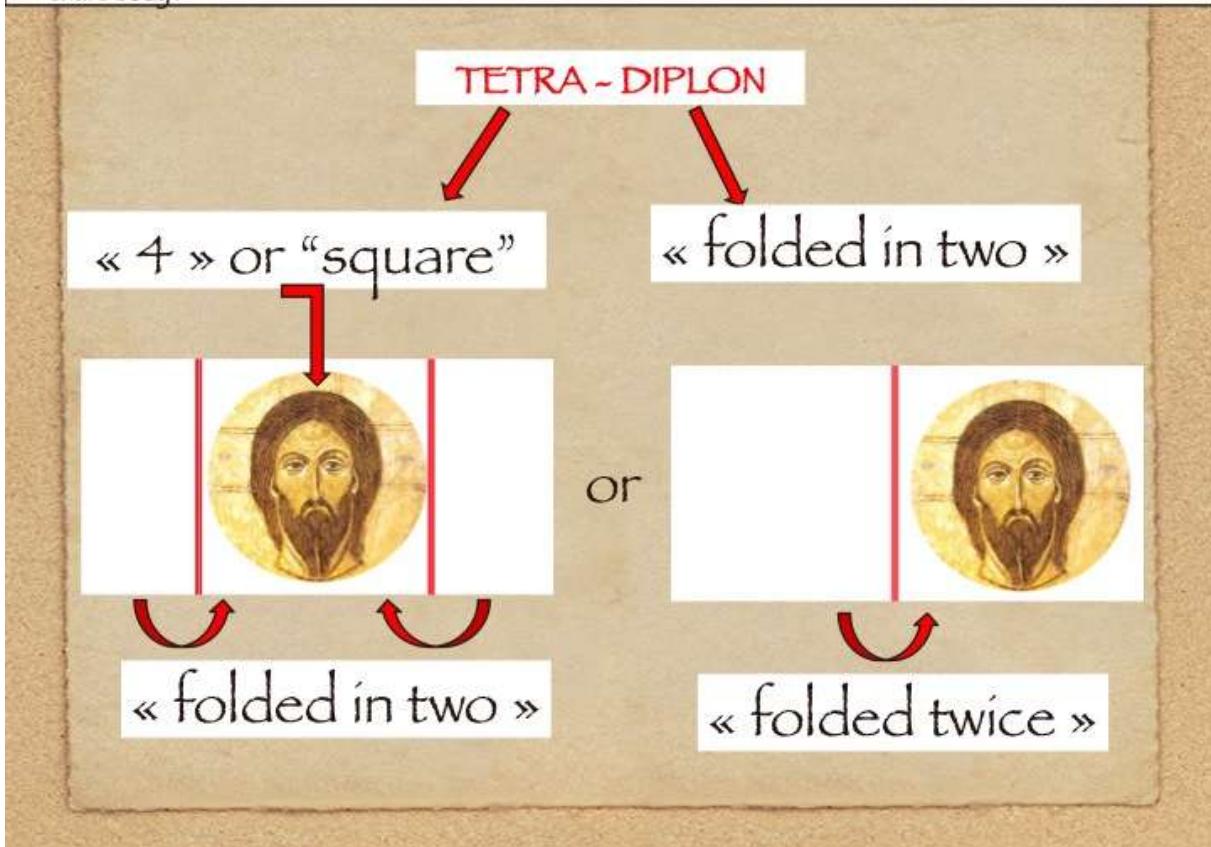
Greek translator of the Acts of Thaddeus took the same **Syriac term** used by this Arab author, but this time he translated it by « **tetra** » (four) instead of « square »

«mbr’»	=	«square»	=	«tetra»
In Syriac	same root	In Arab	=	In Greek

However, it is truly possible that the cloth used as a support of the image could have been for exemple folded in two or folded twice in order to be more easily inserted in the ancient square reliquary.

²⁴ A.-M Dubalre « Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin jusqu’au XIIIe siècle », O.E.I.L., 1985, Paris, page 106.

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?



Along the centuries²⁵, others images of Christ started to bleed after an aggression. But each time, a theological significance is given to the incident. It's the case of the most famous of these images, the Image of Beirut, which was used against the Iconoclasts during the second council of Nicea in 787²⁶.

According to this legend²⁷, the Jews of Beirut outraged an image of Christ when they « *nailed his feet and hands, pierced his side with a spear stab. Immediately, blood and water gushed out.* »²⁸ The Image of Beirut should therefore have depicted the entire body of Christ, along with bloodstains.

« *The Jews of Beirut ... outraged the image of Christ, they nailed his hands and feet, they passed on his mouth a sponge soaked in vinegar and, finally, they pierced his side with a spear stab. Immediately, blood and water gushed out...* »

²⁵ Gregory of Tours, « Libri miraculorum », II, 4-18.

²⁶ JD Mansi, « Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova Amplissima Collectio », XIII, Florentiae, 1767, Col 24-32.

²⁷ Jean-Marie Sansterre, « L'image blessée, l'image souffrante : quelques récits de miracles entre Orient et Occident (VI^e-XII^e siècle) » page 117 et note 14 pour la référence.

²⁸ Jean-Marie Sansterre, « L'image blessée, l'image souffrante : quelques récits de miracles entre Orient et Occident (VI^e-XII^e siècle) » page 117.

It's in this context that the Codex Vossianus Latinus of the Tenth century introduces a unique variation in the Abgar legend: Christ sent to the king a towel on which is found, not only the face, but the image of his entire body.

« If you want to physically see my person, I am sending you this towel on which you can see not only the appearance of my face, but the state, printed miraculously, of my whole body.. »²⁹ (personal translation).

In reality, this Codex³⁰ contains many manuscripts, among which some of them talk about:

- the Abgar legend, translated from Syriac documents of the Eighth Century³¹
- the legend of the Image of Beirut.

In fact, in this Codex of the Tenth Century, we find all the elements necessary to back-up and defends the dogmas of the Church in his fight against the Iconoclasts: The entire body of Christ introduced in the Abgar legend in order to make reference to the dogma of the Incarnation, the blood and the water³² exiting from the Beirut icon in order to signify the Eucharist and the Baptism³³, the miraculous image of the face of Jesus himself in order to affirm the divinity of Christ and all this coming from icons in order to affirm the importance of their role in the religious practice.

²⁹ E. Poulle, dans un article « Les sources de l'histoire du Linceul de Turin», Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique, Vol. 104 (2009), N°3-4, page 767.

³⁰ « facie figuram sed totius corporis figuram cernere poteris », Codex Vossianus Latinus, Q69, et Bibliothèque vaticane, Codex 5696, fol.35, Pietro Savio, Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone, Turin, 1957.

³¹ Gino Zaninotto, « L'immagine Edessena : impronta dell'intera persona di Cristo Nuove conferme dal codex Vossianus Latinus Q 69 del sec. X », 1993.

³² Grumel Venance, « Recherches récentes sur l'iconoclasme ». In: Échos d'Orient, tome 29, N°157, 1930. pp. 92-100. Page 93.

³³ Jean-Marie Sansterre, « L'image blessée, l'image souffrante : quelques récits de miracles entre Orient et Occident (VI^e-XII^e siècle) », 118. Et page 121 pour l'article cité de G. Didi-Huberman, « Un sang d'images » - Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse, 32, 1985, p 123-153. (p144-146).

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

10th century - Codex Vossianus Latinus contains :

The Abgar legend,
translated from Syriac
documents
of the 8th Century

The legend of
the Image of Beirut.

+

↓
1-The entire body of Christ
to make reference to the
dogma of the Incarnation

↓
3- The blood and the water
to signify
the Eucharist and the Baptism

2- The miraculous image of
the face of Jesus himself
to affirm the divinity of Christ

=
all this coming from icons
to affirm the importance of their role in the religious practice.

POINT 5: The Mandylion and the relics of the Passion.

In 944, the Image of Edessa passed into the hands of the Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos. We can now talk of the Mandylion, since it is in this way that the people of the Byzantine capital usually named the Image of Edessa.

At the end of the Twelfth Century, there are again two traditions explaining the origin of the Image of Edessa, but the most used is the one in which the painter sent by Abgar bring back the « miraculous » cloth where only the face appeared.

« For the Most Powerful, transforming this embarrassment in ease and facility, brought the painter, ask for water and sprinkles his face. His creator. He takes a towel to wipe his face, and printed immaterially – miracle! - the shape that the hand did not do... »

At that time, a new important addition is included in the legend, while on the road that bring the relic from Edessa to Constantinople, an exact replica of the image would have been miraculously imprinted on a tile³⁴.

« ...the replica of the image is imprinted on one of the tiles, spontaneous replica, without the intervention of the hand, without recourse to drawing... » (personal translation).

« Oh power of the model, as it also gives the tile its colors! » (personal translation).

³⁴ E. Poulle, dans un article « Les sources... » [voir n°27], page 758. Aussi : Mark Guscin, « The Image of Edessa », Brill, Laiden & Boston ed., 2009, pages 280 et 281.

4th addition to the legend :

An exact replica of the **image** would have been miraculously
imprinted on a tile

*« ...the replica of the image is imprinted on one of the tiles,
spontaneous replica, without the intervention of the hand,
without recourse to drawing... »*
(personal translation).

« Oh power of the model, as it also gives the tile its colors! »
(personal translation).



Also, the description of pilgrims³⁵ who saw the « relic » in ceramic afterward in Constantinople told us that only the face appeared on it and that it was in color!

In all the accounts of pilgrims visiting the various cult places in Constantinople and the relics that were preserved there³⁶, the Mandylion is never associated³⁷ to a burial cloth or to the others relics of the Passion, while many accounts clearly mentioned, in a separate way, one or many cloth that can be associated to the empty tomb. We must also note that in many accounts, the tile is mentioned in association with the Mandylion, the two relics were kept side by side, in the same place.

Here's a few examples of these pilgrims accounts:

*« The crown of thorns, the mantle, the whip, the stick, the sponge, the wood of the cross of Our Lord, the nails, the lance, the blood, the robe, the belt, the sandals, linen and the shroud of the entombment. »*³⁸ (personal translation). English pilgrim in end of 11th Century

³⁵ Krijnie N. Ciggaar, « Une description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais ». In: Revue des études byzantines, tome 34, 1976. pp. 211-268.

³⁶ Between 1194-1197 - Flusin Bernard, « Didascalie de Constantin Stilbès sur le mandylion et la sainte tuile », (BHG 796m). In: Revue des études byzantines, tome 55, 1997. pp. 53-79.

³⁷ Comte Paul Riant, « Exuviae sacræ Constantinopolitanæ », Tome 2, page 211 et 212, 1877-1878.

³⁸ Krijnie N. Ciggaar, « A description of Constantinople translated by an English pilgrim ». In: Revue des études byzantines, tome 34, 1976. p 245.

And later on: « *Christ's Image of Edessa, 2 clay ceramics, the marble basin of the Lord and another one smaller... »*³⁹ (personal translation). Nicolas Mesarites in 1200/1201

« *The legislator himself drawn as a first impression, printed on the towel and chased in the brittle ceramic art as a graphic elaborated not by the hand »*⁴⁰ Nicolas Mesarites in 1200/1201

« *For there were two rich vessels of gold hanging in the midst of the chapel by two heavy silver chains. In one of these vessels there was a tile and in the other a cloth. »*⁴¹ Robert de Clari 1203

Then, in 1200⁴², the guardian of the relics of the Pharos chapel, located inside the Emperor's Palace, describe, among other burial cloths related to Christ, a shroud that seems to bear the image of his entire body, because he make sure to mention his nudity, which is a very odd thing in the circumstances:

« *The gravecloths of Christ, they are in linen... because they wrapped after the passion the incomprehensible dead man nude covered with myrrh. »* (personal translation). Nicolas Mesarites in 1200/1201

Finally, we got the eyewitness account of the French knight Robert de Clari⁴³ who describe a visit of Constantinople he did in 1203 during which he clearly saw a shroud of Christ bearing distinctly the complete image of Christ's body and which was exposed once a week at that time in the church of Our Lady of Blachernes.

« ...where there was the Shroud in which our Lord had been wrapped, which every Friday raised itself upright so one could see the body of our Lord on it. »

But at the moment of the sack of Constantinople of 1204, this shroud showing the image of Christ would have disappeared, again according to Robert de Clari.

« ...And none knows - neither Greek nor Frank - what became of that shroud when the city was taken. »

On the other hand, Robert de Clari doesn't say anything concerning the couple Mandylion/tile, which is normal, since in 1207, the guardian of the relics of the Pharos chapel

³⁹ E. Poulle, in a paper « Les sources... » [see n°27], pages 760 et 761.

⁴⁰ E. Poulle, in a paper « Les sources... » [see n°27], page 760.

⁴¹ E. Poulle, in a paper « Les sources... » [see n°27], page 761.

⁴² E. Poulle, dans un article « Les sources... » [voir n°27], pages 759 et 760. Note : M. Poulle mentionne l'année 1200, alors que M. Scavone, M. Barta et M. Green indiquent l'année 1201.

⁴³ E. Poulle, in a paper « Les sources... » [see n°27], page 761.

listed the treasure that was there and which, therefore, had not been stolen by the crusaders in 1204. We find, among other things, the crown of thorns, the Mandylion and the tile.

« ...the cross and the foot rest are here. They present the braided crown of thorns, the sponge, the lance and the reed... The indescribable, who appeared among us in the likeness of man, drawn as in a first imprint, printed on the towel and we chased in the brittle ceramic like a graphic art not elaborated by the hand. » (personal translation).

RELICS OF THE PASSION PRESENT IN THE CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE PHAROS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY	GOLDEN BULL OF BAUDOUIN II TO AUTHENTICATE THE SELLING OF RELICS TO LOUIS IX (1247)
The shroud (sydoine ou syndon), accompanied by others burial cloths.	A part of the shroud (sudarii) in which the body of Christ was enveloped in the tomb (probably one or more linen strips)
A cloth (or towel) and a tile (or ceramic).	A sacred cloth insert into a table (or a board)
2 large pieces of the true cross	A piece of the true cross + Another piece of the true cross
The crown of thorns	The crown of thorns
The blood of Christ	Le sang du Christ
The spearhead	The spear
The tunic	The purple mantle
The reed	The scepter (probably the reed)
The sponge	The sponge
A stone coming from the tomb	A stone coming from the tomb
A towel used to wash the Apostles' feet	A towel used to wash the Apostles' feet
2 crucifixion nails	

We know that these relics that were kept in the Pharos chapel, where the Mandylion and the tile were, would be sold later on to Saint Louis. Effectively, Boniface de Montferrat, a crusader chief, was quick to occupy the Palace area, where the Pharos chapel was, so the relics could be preserved from the sacking of the city and then pass in security into the hands of the new latin Emperor, Baudouin II.⁴⁴

It wasn't the case however of the church of Our Lady of Blachernes, where, at that moment, the shroud of Christ seen by Robert de Clari⁴⁵ was kept, because this church was located outside the Imperial Palace⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ M. Angold, « The fourth crusade : Event and context », Longman (editor), 2003 - 281 pages.

⁴⁵ E. Pouille, in a paper « Les sources... » [see n°27], page 761.

The Mandylion, once arrived in Paris, will be exposed in the Royal Treasure of the Holy Chapel and disappeared definitively during the French Revolution in 1789.

⁴⁶ On this subject, see the paper of H. A. Klein, « Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople », BYZAS 5, 2006, 23 pages. Note : The author make an exhaustive list of all the chapels and cult places that were located inside the Imperial Palace, including the Church of Our Lady of the Pharos, while specifying that many important relics were kept in each of these places. However, the most important churches of the city, including this church of Our Lady of Blachernes, are not part of this list.

The « epitaphios » trail

The « epitaphios » trail



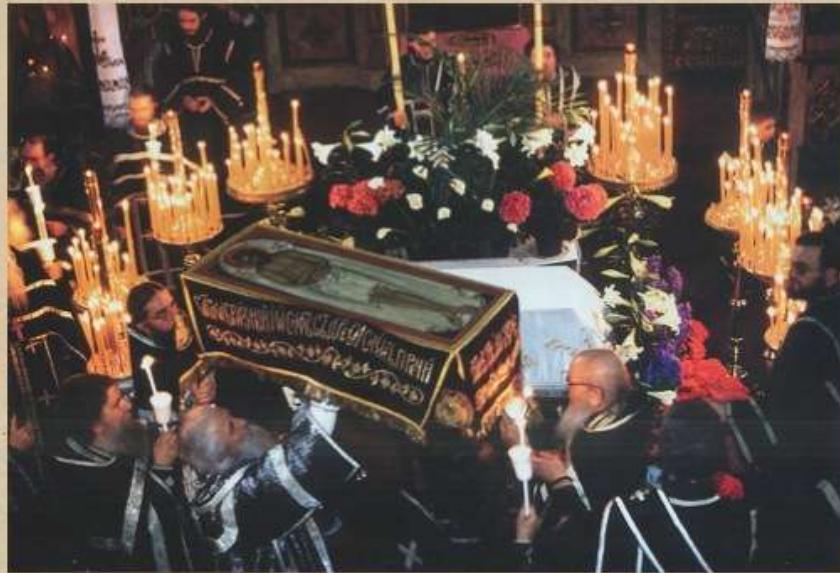
We saw that the hypothesis of the Mandylion being the folded Shroud of Turin doesn't correspond to what we see on the Shroud of Turin: no blood traces, no entire body.

By considering those facts, maybe it would be easier to suppose that, from the time it became publicly known, the Shroud had always been considered as a burial shroud directly linked with the Passion of Christ, which was showing blood traces, with maybe also a visible body image.

A trail allows making a link between an ancient Orthodox tradition and the Shroud of Turin. It is the « epitaphios » trail.

Actually, the « epitaphios » are embroidered or painted cloths showing the entombment of Christ with an image of the deposit of his corpse in his burial shroud. They rest on the altar of Orthodox churches on the evening of Holy Saturday right until the day prior to the Feast of the Ascension. The first known epitaphios can be dated around the year 1200.

The « epitaphios » trail



"Epitaphios Procession Beginning at Great Saturday Mattins"

by KassaphoreGeorge - Own work. Wikipedia

Nevertheless, we already find the trace of liturgical celebrations on images of Saints during the Ninth Century⁴⁷ or on portable altars sometimes in linen⁴⁸ when we had to celebrate Mass outside a church. Later, during the Twelfth Century⁴⁹, these cloths called « antimension » will be used to dedicate the altar in newly built churches.

We got here an old tradition that allowed celebrating Mass on a linen cloth large enough to cover an altar.

A written testimony indicates that, during the Seventh Century A.D. in Jerusalem, people venerated a shroud of Christ of about 2.2 meters long, but without any mention of an image. Also, in the same account, another longer cloth is mentioned : « *On this cloth are embroidered certain representations of the Twelve Apostles, and there is shown an image of the Lord Himself. On one side, the color of this cloth is dark brown and, on the other side, in*

⁴⁷ From a letter of Michael II (820-829) to Louis the Pious : Mabillon, Act. S. O. B. V, 15.

⁴⁸ Théodore the Studite – P.G. t. XCIX, col. 1056. The word « sindone » appear in order to design the cloth; proof that this term is also used to define the « material » and not exclusively the « function », like the one of a shroud.

⁴⁹ Rhalli et Polti, t. V, p. 413, P. G. t. CXIX, col. 960 seq.

certain parts, the color is green. » (personal translation)⁵⁰. We will see this type of depiction on later « epitaphios », where the body of Christ is lying down and it is surrounded by symbolical depictions of the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Thanks to this eyewitness account, we see that the veneration of a long cloth showing an image of Christ that could be understood as being his burial shroud had started to appear in Jerusalem at least in the Seventh Century A.D.

In 944, when the Mandylion arrived in Constantinople, an account describes the relic. In his highly apologetical discourse, Gregory Referendarius explain that the image of the Mandylion had been produced with the drops coming from Christ's sweat of agony and, depending on translation, another image had been produced by the drops of blood from his side. The text is not descriptive enough to indentify this other relic, but the author seems to make a clear difference between two relics located in two different places.

Starting from there, we can understand why the accounts of pilgrims who visited Constantinople will always make a clear distinction between the Mandylion, a cloth bearing a facial image that would have been produced during the life of Christ, and one or many shroud(s) of Christ, among whom, one would have showed traces of blood and a complete image of his body.

But in the end, it's another testimony that allow to make a link between a cloth large enough to bears an image that is probably one of Christ, the « antimension » tradition and the iconography of the « epitaphios » in Constantinople.

In the Tenth Century, during the religious ceremonies in Constantinople, the emperors followed a very precise ceremonial in order to go to the church of Hagia Sophia.

During their itinerary, the imperial cortege stopped in many buildings and churches of the Imperial Palace, and in one of those, we could find « *the image of the Persians* »⁵¹, or in other words, the image of Edessa which arrived in Constantinople one year earlier and which was specially suspended under a large cross. Then, when they arrived at the large church of Hagia Sophia, in the sanctuary reserved to the patriarchs, where was an altar called « *The Holy Table* », because this is there the chalices and the patens were kept, the emperors must lean down and « *kiss the image of the Holy Tablecloth that the patriarch raised and that he presents to the sovereigns so they can kiss it.* » (personal translation)⁵².

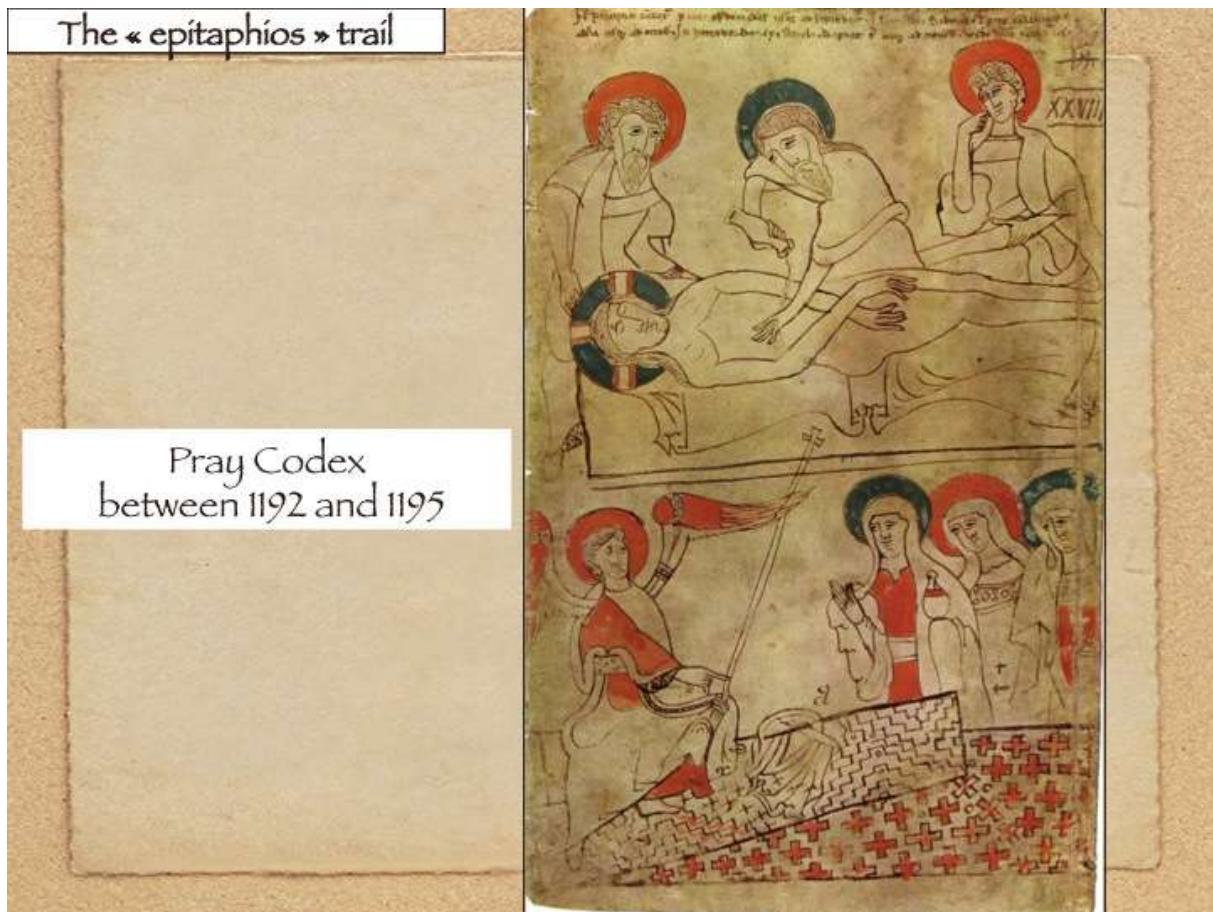
⁵⁰ Adamnan, « On Holy Places », book I, chapter XI, in « Voyageurs anciens et modernes », E. Charton, First tome, 1854.

⁵¹ Constantin VII Porphyrogenitus, « le livre des cérémonies », Book I. French translation by Albert VOGT – Société d'édition les Belles Lettres – 2006 – page 5, note 1.

⁵² Constantin VII Porphyrogenitus, « le livre des cérémonies », Book I. French translation by Albert VOGT – Société d'édition les Belles Lettres – 2006 – page 11.

So we got here a cloth large enough to cover the altar, a cloth with an image important enough to be especially reserved for the altar of Hagia Sophia, which was presented by the patriarch to the emperor so that he could kiss the image that was on it.

Another document allows making a link between the Shroud of Turin and the « epitaphios » iconography. It is the Pray Codex, which dates from the end of the Twelfth Century. On one of the drawings included in this document, we see the body of Christ being prepared for the anointment, and on another drawing, we see an angel pointing out what looks like an open and empty tomb after the resurrection.



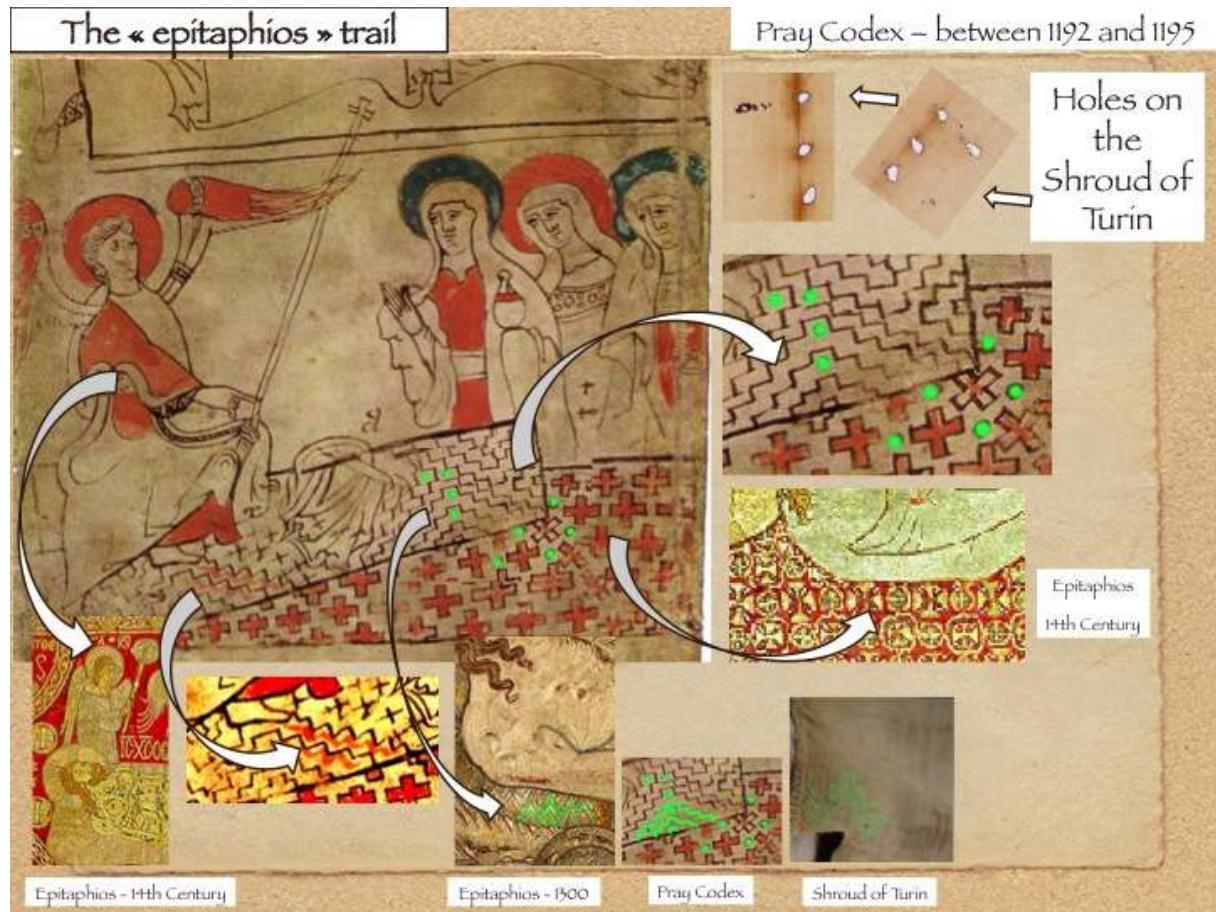
First, it's important to understand that the goal of the artist wasn't to create an exact replica of the objects and cloths that he could have seen but it was to illustrate the theme of the entombment of Christ.

Along with this, the holes drawn on the shroud correspond almost exactly to the burn holes so characteristic of the Shroud of Turin.

Then, there are other clues a bit less evident that allowed linking it with the shroud and/or with the « epitaphios » tradition: first, we have the angel who indicates the empty shroud to the women. Then, there is the weave of the cloth , which is so characteristic of the Shroud of Turin and which is found on this drawing of the Pray Codex and on some « epitaphios ».

There are also red crosses on the shroud of the Pray Codex, which is also found on many « epitaphios ».

Even if there is no body image on this part of the drawing, a clue allows understanding that the bloodstained body had really been lying on it, because under the angel's left foot, we find two bloodstains.



There's no doubt that this Pray Codex constitutes a solid proof that at the end of the Twelfth Century, there really was a shroud with bloodstains on it. This can also echo the 944 speech, in which a mention is made of a relic of Christ that was stained with his blood.

Finally, with this drawing, we understand that it was impossible to confuse a burial shroud of more than 4 meters long with a simple facecloth like the Mandylion, since on the shroud of the Pray Codex, we can see the sudarium that had been used before on Christ's face.

Since the Seventh Century A.D., we can therefore follow the veneration of a shroud of Christ in Jerusalem and noticed also the presence of a cloth long enough to contain the complete image of Christ's body, sometimes stained with blood. A similar cloth will be venerated later on in Constantinople on the altar of Hagia Sophia. This cloth inspired perhaps the iconography of Christ's entombment that we find, among other places, on the « epitaphios » and in the drawings of the Pray Codex. However, it is impossible to say if all these ancient

testimonies speak of one and the same cloth and to certify that it is the shroud now kept in Turin.

The « epitaphios » trail

7th C.



- Veneration of a shroud of Christ in Jerusalem
- Cloth long enough to contain the complete image of Christ's body

944



A "relic" with blood

945



"kiss the image of the Holy Tablecloth"
In Constantinople

12th



The Pray Codex « with blood and burn holes »

13th



A shroud of Christ bearing distinctly the complete image of Christ's body

Conclusion

We demonstrated that a critical reading of the texts that speaking of an image, while taking into account the historical and religious context surrounding the Abgar story, allow us to understand that this image was most probably invented to back-up the dogmas of the Church and, at the same time, to counter the numerous heresies defended by various christian sects. We have seen that the Image of Edessa changed its nature everytime a new dogma was proclaimed.

Non-existing when the Abgar legend was invented in Edessa around the Third Century A.D., this image was introduced in the legend at the beginning of the Fifth Century A.D. as a painted portrait in order to confirm the dogma of the Incarnation, and then it became very useful to the Edessa Church for his teaching and his defense of the dogma of the two natures of Christ. Finally it acquired the status of a miraculous image not made by human hands that had a protective power for the city.

Also, whether in his iconography or in the Abgar legend, the Image of Edessa had always been considered as a small cloth that could only show the face of Christ, while the few allusions to an entire body are isolated texts that served, each time, a certain theology.

The « epitaphios » trail, even if it cannot take back the Shroud of Turin before the Tenth Century A.D., is nevertheless clear and simple, because it respect the true nature of the Shroud, which is a burial cloth.

Through a critic historical approach of the texts, we think that the Mandylion and the Shroud of Turin were two different relics.

However, there are many evidence that the Shroud of Turin was one of the other relics kept in Constantinople before the Thirteenth Century.

Thank you.

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