

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP AND THE HISTORY OF THE TURIN SHROUD

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THE MODERN HISTORICAL DEBATE

The modern version of the debate over whether the Shroud of Turin existed prior to the middle of the fourteenth century has been ongoing for more than a century. Today's combatants do not dispute that, in *ca.* 1355, the relic was placed on exhibit by a French knight, Geoffrey de Charny, in the small village of Lirey, as this circumstance is well-established by both a souvenir medallion which bears Charny's coat of arms and depicts the cloth's two full-length images, and also a local bishop's writings which recite that Charny had enticed pilgrims to travel to Lirey to view a burial shroud which presented a "two-fold image of one man".¹ From that very narrow baseline of limited concurrence, however, those who entertain the possibility of the Turin Shroud's authenticity proceed to research its putative pre-Lirey existence, while those

¹ The twin-imaged pilgrim's medallion is maintained in Paris' Musée de Cluny. A full translation of Canon Ulysse Chevalier's transcription of a document, which he claimed to be a memorandum to the Pope that had been drafted in 1389 by Pierre d'Arcis, the Bishop of Troyes, appears in Bonnet-Eymard, Bruno, *Superabundant Historical Testimony, Catholic Counter-Reformation in the XXth Century*, Eng. Version, No. 237, pp. 11ff. (March 1991), and a truncated version of this transcription may be found in Thurston, Herbert, *The Holy Shroud and the Verdict of History*, The Month, Vol. CI, pp. 17ff. (1903).

firmly convinced of its fraudulence, particularly those who have been persuaded by the results of radiocarbon dating tests performed in 1988, perceive such efforts to be an exercise in futility.

The modern historical debate was triggered, in 1898, by Secondo Pia's photographic negatives which, in their revelation of theretofore-obscure details of the relic's image, propelled the cloth to international attention and provided it with a luster of authenticity. In 1900, a French cleric, Canon Ulysse Chevalier, fearful that a perception of the relic's authenticity would cripple ongoing progressive efforts to divorce the modern Church from the ancient practice of relic veneration,² published a historical study containing a memorandum in which Pierre d'Arcis, the bishop of Troyes in 1389, allegedly notified Avignon Pope Clement VII that an unnamed artist had previously confessed to having painted the relic's mysterious image.³ So powerful was this disclosure, and attendant historical arguments advanced by Chevalier, that Paul Vignon, a widely-respected authenticist, admitted that the "documentary history is distinctly unfavorable to the authenticity of the Holy Shroud,"⁴ and the Reverend Herbert Thurston, Chevalier's progressive colleague, would sardonically observe that "it curiously happens that the history of

² "It is a matter for regret that the question of the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin has been discussed—one might almost say fought out—in France as a sort of test-case between two religious parties. For a long time past many Catholics whose sympathies in all matter of erudition are strongly conservative, have been smarting under the rude blows which...scholars...have dealt to certain of their most cherished convictions...Who could have dreamed that the Shroud of Turin, which was perhaps more seriously compromised by positive evidence than any of the numerous traditions that had been assailed, should find vindicators even in the Academy of Sciences itself, and that agnostic professors of the Sorbonne should venerate a relic of the Passion which Jesuits and Monsignori had repudiated? On the other hand, it was natural, though regrettable, that the party of progress thus unexpectedly taken in the rear, should somewhat lose their heads and grow unduly violent." Thurston, Herbert, *The Holy Shroud as a Scientific Problem*, The Month, Vol. CI, p. 162 (1903).

³ Chevalier, Ulysse, *Etude critique sur l'origine du Saint Suaire de Lirey-Chambery-Turin*, Picard (Paris 1900).

⁴ Vignon, Paul, *The Shroud of Christ*, University Books p.11 (New Hyde Park 1970) (originally published in 1902 as *Le Linceul du Christ, Etude Scientifique*).

the supposed relic for thirteen hundred years down to that precise date (the appearance of the Charny shroud) remains an absolute blank”.⁵ More than a century later, it is rather clear that Chevalier, in order to create the illusion that the bishop’s charge of relic fraudulence had been scrutinized by the Pope, adroitly manufactured a document consisting of two distinct draft memoranda⁶ and then assigned a false date to this hybrid contrivance,⁷⁸ and that Thurston, in producing an English translation of Chevalier’s transcription, skillfully excised portions which evidenced its preliminary nature and false dating.⁹

Nevertheless, turn-of-the twentieth century historical chicanery was not the exclusive province of progressive skeptics. In 1902, Dom François Chamard, a staunch authenticist, constructed a narrative which claimed that, in 1204, Othon de la Roche snatched the Turin Shroud during the crusader sack of Constantinople and, four years later, sent it to his father, Ponce de la Roche, then residing near Besançon in France, and that the relic, having been subsequently installed in that city’s cathedral, was stolen in 1389 by Geoffrey de Charny when

⁵ Thurston, Herbert, *The Holy Shroud and the Verdict of History* (see note 1), pp. 17ff.

⁶ In 1993, Hilda Leynen noted that two distinct draft memoranda were maintained in the Champagne collection of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, one a very rough effort which contained bracketed words (Volume 154, folio 138), and the other a relatively neat and polished product (Volume 154, folio 137). See Crispino, Dorothy, *Literary Legerdemain*, Shroud Spectrum International, *Spicilegium*, pp. 63ff. (April 1996).

⁷ Ignoring a number of historical and textual indicators that d’Arcis had drafted this memorandum in August of 1389, Chevalier placed the date “end of 1389” (“*fin 1389.*”) at the head of his transcription and provided no reason for having done so. See Markwardt, Jack, *The Conspiracy Against the Shroud*, British Society for the Turin Shroud Newsletter, No. 55, pp. 13ff. (June 2002). See also Bonnet-Eymard, Bruno, *Superabundant Historical Testimony* (see note 1), pp. 11ff.

⁸ Markwardt, Jack, *The Conspiracy Against the Shroud* (see note 7).

⁹ Thurston, Herbert, *The Holy Shroud and the Verdict of History* (see note 1), pp. 17ff.

the church was set afire;¹⁰ however, the credibility of his narrative suffered from the inconvenience of circumstances implicating Ponce de la Roche's death in 1203¹¹ and Geoffrey de Charny's presence in Flanders at the time Besançon's cathedral was destroyed by fire.¹²

As members of the Catholic clergy went about manipulating and/or confusing historical facts and documents in an effort to advance their private agendas, secular academe prudently avoided the fray, but, nonetheless, appreciatively awarded Chevalier a gold medal of 1,000 francs for having produced his relic-debunking study. Academic scholars continued to evince an aloof diffidence toward the Turin Shroud both in 1957, when Father Werner Bulst concluded that his historical study left the question of relic's authenticity unresolved,¹³ and again in 1969, when Father Maurus Green failed to link the cloth to any burial shroud of Jesus referenced in the historical record.¹⁴

¹⁰ Chamard, François. *Le Linceul du Christ*, Oudin (Paris 1902).

¹¹ Chamard appears to have confused Othon's father, Ponce de la Roche, with Emperor Henri I's secretary, Ponce de Lyon who is said to have transported certain relics from Byzantium to Lyon in 1208. See Zaccone, Gian Maria, *The Shroud from the Charnys to the Savoys*, in *The Turin Shroud, Past, Present and Future*, eds. Scannerini, Silvano and Savarino, Piero, Proceedings of the 2000 Turin International Symposium, p. 395, Effata Editrice, (Turin 2000).

¹² See Crispino, Dorothy, *Doubts along the Doubs*, Shroud Spectrum International, No. 14, pp. 17ff. (1985).

¹³ Bulst, Werner, *The Shroud of Turin*, (trans.) McKenna, Stephen, and Galvin, James J., Bruce Publishing Company, p. 102 (Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1957).

¹⁴ Green, Maurus, *Enshrouded in Silence*, Ampleforth Journal, Vol. LXXIV, pp. 319ff. (1969).

THE MANDYLION THEORY

In 1978, Ian Wilson postulated a historical hypothesis now known as the Mandylion theory.¹⁵ In brief, he suggested that, in the first century, the Turin Shroud had been folded and framed into the legendary “portrait of Jesus”, that this portrait had been hidden away in a niche above an Edessan city gate for five hundred years, rediscovered in the sixth century and deployed in 544 as a palladium during a Persian siege of that city, and venerated, for the next five centuries, as the historical icon known as the Image of Edessa. Confiscated by the Byzantine army and taken to Constantinople in 944, it became known as the Mandylion, and, unfolded in the twelfth century, it was exhibited at full-length as a palladium against the Fourth Crusade in 1203-1204. Subsequent to the relic’s disappearance during the crusader sack of the capital on April 12 1204, it was acquired, and worshipped as a “head idol”, by the Knights Templar, and later obtained, in some unknown fashion, by Geoffrey de Charny.¹⁶

Modern scholars cared little about whether a folded and framed Turin Shroud might have once been the Jesus-portrait mentioned in the Abgar legend; however, they were mortified by its identification as the Image of Edessa/Mandylion. After all, this was a world-class icon that had long been the subject of academic research and publication, with the very esteemed Steven Runciman having suggested, in 1930, that the Edessa siege icon was merely some old painting of Jesus that had been found in a wall or cellar;¹⁷ however, Wilson was well aware of this

¹⁵ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?*, Doubleday and Co. (Garden City 1978).

¹⁶ *Id.* at 92-165.

¹⁷ Runciman, Steven, *Some Remarks on the Image of Edessa*, *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 3, pp. 238ff. (1929-30).

circumstance for, in publishing his hypothesis, he made full disclosure that Runciman and other historians “very justifiably feel that they cannot back the concept of identity.”¹⁸

The academic assault upon the Mandylion theory commenced in 1980 with Professor Averil Cameron’s declaration that the form of the Image of Edessa story precluded its identification with the relic and her pronouncement that the icons’ essential nature was “utterly different than what is suggested by the Shroud, which bears beyond all doubt the complete bodily image back and front of a dead and wounded man lying in a prone position”.¹⁹ Here again, such observations did not conflict with the essential thrust of the Mandylion theory and, in fact, Wilson had already obligingly conceded that, while the Turin Shroud “for all the world appears to have been a burial wrapping”, the Image of Edessa/Mandylion icon “seems to have born the image only of the face of Christ, and that apparently made when he was alive and well”.²⁰ He had also candidly admitted that the Abgar legend seemed “quite incompatible with the deductions of anyone looking at the cloth we now call the Turin Shroud”, that the Image of Edessa had been not been carried in procession on Good Friday, that Byzantines had depicted the dead Jesus wrapped like a mummy, and that the cloth’s Byzantine appellation, “Mandylion”, derived from the Arabic word *mandil*, meaning a veil or a handkerchief.²¹ Yet, he logically argued that each and every one of these historical difficulties were met and overcome by a single

¹⁸ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 96.

¹⁹ Cameron, Averil, *The Sceptic and the Shroud*, Inaugural Lecture in the Departments of Classics and History Delivered on April 29, 1980 at King’s College London, as cited in Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud and the Mandylion—A Reply to Professor Averil Cameron*, Lecture Delivered on March 3, 1986 at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, freepages.religions.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wmeacham/wilson1.pdf, pp. 19-20.

²⁰ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 92.

²¹ *Id.* at 96-98.

hypothecated fact: “Someone at the very earliest stages of the Shroud’s existence mounted and folded the Shroud in such a way that it no longer looked like a shroud. Furthermore, this was done in such a clever way that, either accidentally or deliberately, it deceived many generations.”²²

In 1986, Wilson chided Cameron for having entirely failed to address the essential basis of his hypothesis—that, “in the early centuries, as the Mandylion or Image of Edessa, the Shroud was folded in such a way that only the face was visible”,²³ and he reiterated his view that “the only sensible explanation for the lack of any clear history for the Shroud before the 14th century lies in its identity as the Image of Edessa”.²⁴ This spirited rejoinder seemed to generate a series of scholarly attacks upon either his hypothesis as a whole or its component factual assumptions, the unusual pugnacious mood of academe being clearly reflected in Eva Kuryluk’s charge that “Wilson wants so badly to prove that the Turin shroud is the burial cloth of Christ that he jumps to many unjustified conclusions”.²⁵

One such conclusion was that the Turin Shroud had been the *acheiropoietos* (“not made by human hands”) Edessan siege icon mentioned by Evagrius Scholasticus in his late sixth-century Church History.²⁶ In 1997, Julian Chrysostomides, a professor of Byzantine history,

²² *Id.* at 102.

²³ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud and the Mandylion—A Reply to Professor Averil Cameron* (see note 19), p. 20.

²⁴ *Id.* at 26.

²⁵ Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth*, Basil Blackwell, Inc., p. 225, n. 3 (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1991).

²⁶ “So when they (the besieged Edessenes) came to complete despair, they brought the divinely created image which human hands had not made, the one that Christ the God sent to Abgar, when he yearned to see him. Then when they brought the all-holy image into the channel they

opined that this passage, which she perceived as having been indelicately squeezed into an earlier account of the siege authored by the Byzantine historian, Procopius, was clearly an addition to the original text made by eighth-century iconophiles seeking to create precedential authority for the veneration of holy images.²⁷ In 1998, Professor Han J. W. Drijvers, a specialist in Syriac—Edessa’s native language—labeled this same passage “a later interpolation originating shortly before 787 in iconophile circles in Constantinople”,²⁸ noting not only its textual awkwardness, but also three historical circumstances which militated against its originality.²⁹ In 2000, Michael Whitby, a professor of Byzantine history and a translator of Evagrius, while taking issue with “the substance of Chrysostomides’ attack on the integrity of Evagrius’ narrative”,³⁰ made no mention of Professor Drijvers’ historical conclusions and provided an excellent reason to doubt the truth of Evagrius’ account in observing that the

had created and sprinkled it with water, they applied some to the fire and the timbers...at once the timbers caught fire and, being reduced to ashes quicker than word, they imparted it to what was above as the fire took over everywhere.” *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Whitby, Michael (trans.), Book IV, Chapter 27, in *Translated Texts for Historians*, Vol. 33, Liverpool University Press, pp. 226-227 (Liverpool 2000).

²⁷ Munitiz, J.A., Chrysostomides, J., *et al.*, *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilus and Related Texts*, Porphyrogenitus, pp. xxviff. (Camberley, Surrey 1997).

²⁸ Drijvers, Han J. W., *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition*, in Kessler, Herbert L. and Wolf, Gerhard (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Villa Spelman Colloquia, Volume 6, Nuova Alfa Editoriale, p. 30 (Bologna 1998).

²⁹ *Id.* at 18-22. First, all other references to an *acheiropoietos* Edessa icon did not appear until much later than the sixth century. Second, the passage clearly assumes reader familiarity with Abgar’s portrait of Christ being *acheiropoietos*, an attribution first alleged by the seventh-century *Acts of Thaddeus*. Third, had this incident actually occurred as Evagrius reported, it is difficult to understand why the Edessenes would not have deployed this same image as a palladium in 580, when the Persian army again laid siege to the city, or in 604, when the city was attacked by imperial forces opposed to the emperor Phocas, or in 609, when the city was actually captured by the Persians.

³⁰ *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (see note 26), Appendix II, p. 325.

chronicler seemed to have exploited a “comparable story in Theodoret...to improve the account of events at Edessa”.³¹

There are two additional reasons to question the authenticity and veracity of the Evagrius siege icon passage. First, as it bears an undeniable similarity with the historical successful deployment, in 626, of an *acheiropoietos* image of Christ during a siege of Constantinople by the barbarian Avars, it may have been invented out of a memory of that event.³² Secondly, iconophiles claimed in 787, at the Council of Nicaea, that iconoclasts had removed this critical passage from Evagrius’ text,³³ thereby indicating that it did not then exist, and they may have justified an interpolation of this text by characterizing it as a replacement for that which had previously been present in the original narrative.

In 1997, Professor Robin Cormack, an art historian, concluded that Wilson’s identification of the Turin Shroud with the Mandylion was “an impossible guess”, pointing to a depiction of that icon in a St. Catherine Monastery panel painting that is datable to 945-959 (Figure 1).³⁴

³¹ *Id.* at 227, n. 73.

³² As will be shown, the Christ-icon implicated in the Avar siege of Constantinople was the Image of God Incarnate, also known as the Image of Camuliana.

³³ *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea, at Which the Worship of Images was Established*, Mendham, John (trans.), William Edward Painter, pp. 288-290 (London 1850).

³⁴ Cormack, Robin, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds*, Reaktion Books Ltd., p. 122 (London 1997).

Figure 1



In 2010, Wilson acknowledged that “a fringe runs along the bottom edge where we would expect the Shroud’s fold line to be,”³⁵ but he then proceeded to argue that varying portrayals of the Mandylion cancelled out one another as reliable representations of that icon and made it improbable that Byzantine artists “had actually viewed at first hand the original Image they were copying”;³⁶ however, this stance constituted a rather dramatic about-face from that which he had assumed in 1998 when, in support his folded-relic hypothesis, he had contended that copies of the Mandylion, such as the now-lost image of Spas Neredita (Figure 2),

Figure 2



³⁵ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved*, p. 17, Bantam Press (London 2010).

³⁶ *Id.* at 172.

“convey other recurring possible clues to the original’s appearance”, such as a lattice-type decoration possibly denoting the presence of an overlay grille and an image which had been set upon a landscape-aspect cloth.³⁷ If, as Wilson presently asserts, Byzantine artists did not actually view the original Mandylion in producing copies of it, then depictions that feature lattice-type decorations and landscape-aspect cloths would not necessarily be evidential of that icon having been the hypothetically folded and framed Turin Shroud.

Other unfavorable academic commentary would quickly ensue. In 1998, Professor Cameron flatly pronounced that “the Edessan image has nothing to do with the Shroud of Turin.”³⁸ In 2003, Andrew Palmer, a professor of Byzantine history, in dating the *Acts of Thaddeus*, which alludes to an image of Jesus on cloth, to the period of 609-726 CE,³⁹ undermined Wilson’s claim that it had been written in the sixth century and coincidental with the alleged historical appearance of the Edessa icon.⁴⁰ In 2004, Professor Sebastian Brock, perhaps the world’s foremost authority on Syriac texts, declared that the Mandylion’s history provided “a

³⁷ Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud*, The Free Press, p. 151 (New York 1998).

³⁸ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* in Kessler, Herbert L. and Wolf, Gerhard (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Villa Spelman Colloquia, Volume 6, Nuova Alfa Editoriale, p. 33, n. 3 (Bologna 1998).

³⁹ See Palmer’s appendix to Desreumaux, Alain, *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jesus*, Brepols, p. 137 (Turnhout, Belgium 1993).

⁴⁰ Wilson asserted this dating 1978 and reiterated it in 1998. Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 94; p. 99. Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud* (see note 37), p. 152.

very unsatisfactory ancestry for those who would like to identify the famous Turin Shroud with the Edessan Mandylion.”⁴¹

In 2007, Mark Guscini, a well-known authenticist, concluded that the Sermon of Gregorius Referendarius recites “that the sweat of agony (like drops of blood) adorned the Image (of Edessa), just like blood from its side adorned the body from which the sweat had dripped, i.e. two different events at two different times,”⁴² refuting Wilson’s assertion that it referenced blood flowing from Jesus’ side wound, thereby proving that the Edessa icon had borne a full-length image of his crucified body.⁴³ In that same year, Professor Irma Karaulashvili, a Georgian scholar and specialist in Syriac texts, observed that the Image of Edessa “seems to have been painted, most plausibly on wood”, citing several Syriac sources which had variously described the early Edessa icon as a quadrangle wooden tablet, a *dappa* (tablet), and a piece of wood.⁴⁴ In doing so, Karaulashvili concurred with Cameron that the sixth-century Image of Edessa

⁴¹ Brock, Sebastian, *Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Jesus*, *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, Vol. 18, no. 1, p. 56 (2004); www.jaas.org/edocs/v18n1/Sebastian%20Brock-mandili-Final.pdf.

⁴² Guscini, Mark, *Addendum to Translation of Sermon by Gregory Referendarius*, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/guscini3a.pdf> (2007), revising his previous view of this same text as expressed in Guscini, Mark, *The Sermon of Gregory Referendarius*, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/guscini3.pdf> (2004).

⁴³ Wilson drew this conclusion from André-Marie Dubarle’s translation of the sermon. See Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud* (see note 37), pp. 153-154.

⁴⁴ Karaulashvili, Irma, *The Abgar Legend Illustrated: The Interrelationship of the Narrative Cycles and Iconography in the Byzantine, Georgian, and Latin Traditions*, in Hourihane, Colum (ed.), *Interactions, Artistic Interchange Between the Eastern and Western Worlds in the Medieval Period*, Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 222 (University Park, Pennsylvania 2007). These sources drew information from much earlier Syriac texts, such as the writings of Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785), who recounted stories told by his grandfather, Daniel bar Moses of Tur Abdin, and the *History* of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre (d. 845), which chronicled events beginning in 582.

“probably never actually looked like a cloth at all.”⁴⁵ These professorial opinions find corroboration in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian (*d.* 1199) who obtained much of his information from the lost ninth-century *History* of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre. Patriarch Michael relates that, in *ca.* 700, Athanasius bar Gumoye, a wealthy Monophysite, desired to retain the Image of Edessa when its Melkite owners sought to redeem it from a pledge which had secured a loan that he had made to them. In an attempt to deceive the Melkites, Athanasius “ordered a skillful painter to produce a duplicate, which the latter did successfully, so that ‘the very image which was sent by the hands of (Hanan, King Abgar’s emissary) remained in his possession’.”⁴⁶ Clearly then, and entirely unlike the image of the Turin Shroud, the early eighth-century Edessa icon was quite capable of being convincingly duplicated by means of painting, and, therefore, it appears to have been a painted portrait, such as that which had been described in the early fifth-century *Doctrine of Addai*.

In 2009, Mark Guscini, based upon an exhaustive study of texts relating to the Image of Edessa, concluded that the icon’s origin “cannot be established with any certainty”,⁴⁷ and that “we cannot even be sure when it was first mentioned in historical documents, much less whether this denotes when it came into existence”.⁴⁸ He further opined that a story written by Symeon

⁴⁵ Cameron, Averil, *The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story*, Festschrift for I. Sevcenko, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7, pp. 80ff. (1983).

⁴⁶ *Chronique de Michel le Syrien patriarche jacobite d’Antioche (1166-1199)*, (ed. and trans.) J.-B. Chabot, II, 476-77 (11.16b) (Paris 1899-1924), as cited in Drijvers, Han J. W., *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), pp. 21-22. See also Karaulashvili, Irma, *The Abgar Legend Illustrated: The Interrelationship of the Narrative Cycles and Iconography in the Byzantine, Georgian, and Latin Traditions*, (see note 44), pp. 22-23.

⁴⁷ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa*, Brill, p. 176 (Leiden 2009).

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 211.

Metaphrastes, which related that two imperial princes had been unable to see the eyes and ears of the Image of Edessa, was merely an attempt by the author to demonstrate the innate spiritual qualities of the future emperor, Constantine VII, who was able to perceive these details, and was not a commentary upon the “physical properties of the actual Image”,⁴⁹ thereby casting doubt upon an argument, subsequently made by Wilson, that this text confirmed that the Edessa icon bore the faint image of the Turin Shroud.⁵⁰

In 2010, and perhaps in an effort to rebut both Guscini’s conclusion that the date of the Image of Edessa’s origin was indeterminable and also the Cameron/Karaulashvili claim that the sixth-century Edessa icon was not a cloth, Wilson proposed that the full-length image of the Turin Shroud may have been known by a seventh-century Nestorian bishop,⁵¹ and/or by numerous witnesses to a trial by fire reportedly held in Jerusalem in *ca.* 679,⁵² and/or by the anonymous authors of several manuscripts written “not very long after 945”.⁵³ While such knowledge, if established, might tend to support the alleged existence of a seventh-century Edessan image on cloth, it would also serve to seriously impeach the *sine qua non* premise of the Mandylyon theory—that, for some eleven centuries, the Turin Shroud was “folded in such a way

⁴⁹ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 180.

⁵⁰ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved* (see note 35), p. 165.

⁵¹ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved* (see note 35), p. 145; pp. 321-322, notes 28 and 29. This view is attributed to the then-presiding Archbishop of Baghdad for the Assyrian Church of the East.

⁵² *Id.* at p. 148.

⁵³ *Id.* at pp. 176-177.

that only the face was visible”, and that “this was done in such a clever way that, either accidentally or deliberately, it deceived many generations.”⁵⁴

In 2012, Charles Freeman, a freelance historian, challenged Wilson’s claim that the *Acts of Thaddeus*’ allusion to a *tetradiplon* corroborated his folded-relic hypothesis. Freeman argued that this legendary text relates merely that a small folded cloth was handed to Christ so that he could dry his face, and that it specifically distinguishes between this so-called *tetradiplon* and “another set of cloths, the burial cloths, in the tomb...”⁵⁵

Thus, it is entirely clear that a substantial majority of modern scholars, whether rightly or wrongly, have determined that the Mandylion theory is not highly probable and have rejected it with an unusual harshness which “rarely occurs in academic publications”.⁵⁶ It is also quite apparent that shroud scholars are frequently at odds with their academic counterparts over the validity of Wilson’s hypothesis rather than the relic’s authenticity, a critical distinction well-illustrated in Andrea Nicolotti’s statement that “even if the Shroud was authentic and dated from the first century, it is a completely different object than the Edessean image”.⁵⁷

With the Mandylion theory clearly weakened by both thirty-plus years of incessant academic assaults and also Wilson’s recent concession that the Turin Shroud’s full-length image

⁵⁴ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud and the Mandylion—A Reply to Professor Averil Cameron* (see note 32), p. 20, and Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 102.

⁵⁵ “The author of the Acts of Thaddeus only uses the word *tetradiplon* of the cloth BEFORE it was handed to Jesus and there is no hint that it was refolded *tetradiplon* afterwards”. Freeman, Charles, *Tetradiplon—The Mystery Solved?*, Skeptical Shroud of Turin Website (2102) http://freeinquiry.com/skeptic/shroud/articles/freeman_tetradiplon_mystery_solved/index.htm.

⁵⁶ Nicolotti, Andrea, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin, The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend*, pp. 202-203, Brill, English Edition (Leiden 2014).

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 5.

may have been known as early as the seventh century, and with skeptics insisting that “the Edessa theory seems to have stopped people pursuing more fruitful research on the possible origins of the shroud” and authenticists imploring researchers to “strengthen further the case of circumstantial evidence supporting Shroud history prior to 1350”,⁵⁸ the timing would seem to be propitious for the advancement of a new historical hypothesis consistent with the published findings of modern scholarship.

THE ANTIOCH-CONSTANTINOPOLE THEORY

ANTIOCH (35-540)

The five-century sojourn of the Turin Shroud in the great Syrian city of Antioch (*ca.* 35-540), has previously been set forth in two papers, *Antioch and the Shroud*,⁵⁹ and *Ancient Edessa and the Shroud, History Concealed by the Discipline of the Secret*.⁶⁰ In brief, the apostle Peter discovered the relic in Jesus’ tomb and took it to the safety of Gentile-ruled Antioch during the

⁵⁸ Freeman, Charles, comment on *Wilson & Shroudies vs. Academia*, Shroud of Turin Blog, Porter, Daniel R. (ed.), <http://www.shroudstory.com> (January 18, 2014), and Morgan, Rex, *The Shroud: An External Challenge*, Keynote Address to the International Shroud Conference held in Columbus, Ohio, p. 54 (2008), <http://www.ohioshroudconference.com/papers/morgan.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Markwardt, Jack, *Antioch and the Shroud*, British Society for the Turin Shroud Newsletter, No. 48, pp. 18ff. (Dec. 1998). Proceedings of the 1999 Shroud of Turin International Research Conference, Richmond, Virginia, Walsh, Bryan J., ed., Magisterium Press, pp. 94ff. (Glen Allen, Virginia, 2000). Proceedings of the 1998 Dallas Symposium, Adler, Alan D., Piczek, Isabel, Minor, Michael, eds., Alexander Books, pp. 296ff. (Alexander, NC 2002). Shroud of Turin Website Library, <http://shroud.com/pdfs/markward.pdf> www.shroud.com (1999).

⁶⁰ Markwardt, Jack, *Ancient Edessa and the Shroud, History Concealed by the Discipline of the Secret*, Proceedings of the Columbus International Conference, Columbus, Ohio (2008), Fanti, G., ed., Edizioni Libreria Progetto, pp. 382ff. (Padova, 2009). <http://www.ohioshroudconference.com/papers/p02.pdf>.

“Great Persecution” of the Jerusalem Church by Jewish authorities,⁶¹ and he may have employed the relic’s “clear portrayal of Jesus crucified” in the course of his missionary work, particularly among the Galatians.⁶² The cloth remained in Antioch during some two and a half centuries of Roman persecutions (64-313), saving only a brief evangelical excursion to Edessa, in *ca.* 190, which resulted in the conversion of King Abgar the Great. When Constantine ended imperial persecution of Christianity in 313, orthodox Church leaders instituted ecclesiastical persecutions against Arians who controlled the Church of Antioch, the custodian of the relic. In 362, the pagan emperor, Julian, attempted to confiscate Antioch’s ecclesiastical treasures, and the cloth was hidden above the city’s Gate of the Cherubim. About one hundred and seventy-five years later, while Antioch’s walls were being reconstructed due to extensive damage caused by earthquakes and fires,⁶³ “a very awesome icon bearing the likeness of our Saviour, Jesus Christ” appeared in the Kerateion, the city district adjacent to the Gate of the Cherubim, and it was reported that, from that image, a full-bodied Jesus had emerged, removed his tunic, and revealed several linen under-garments.⁶⁴

The Patriarch of Antioch, at that time, was Ephraemius of Amida, one of the sixth-century’s great “warrior bishops” who, while previously serving as *comes Orientis*, or Count of

⁶¹ A Church tradition, which holds that, during the Jewish-Roman war, an image of Jesus was brought to Herod Agrippa’s realm and later transported to Syria, may indicate that when Peter set out for Rome in *ca.* 55, he entrusted the relic to James, Jesus’ brother. See Mansi, XIII, 584a = Athan. opp. II 353c, and Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur Christlichen Legende*, vol. 3, p. 282, n. 3, J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, (Leipzig 1899).

⁶² Markwardt, Jack, *The Full-Length History of the Turin Shroud*, Proceedings of the St. Louis International Shroud Conference (2014). <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlmarkwardtpaper2.pdf>. and Gal. 3:1.

⁶³ See Markwardt, Jack, *Antioch and the Shroud* (see note 59).

⁶⁴ See Markwardt, Jack, *Ancient Edessa and the Shroud, History Concealed by the Discipline of the Secret* (see note 60).

the East, had “demonstrated his competence at some of the most important qualities required of a patriarch”.⁶⁵ In 540, an army commanded by the Persian king, Chosroes I, ruler of the Sassanid Empire invaded Byzantine-ruled Syria and marched west to Antioch (see Figure 3).

Figure 3



The city’s leaders, after consultation with imperial authorities, deputized the bishop of Berea to parlay with Chosroes, who demanded ten centenaria of gold for withdrawing from Roman territory. When this demand was rejected, the Persian army attacked and destroyed Antioch, and the awesome image of Jesus was never again seen in that city. To paraphrase Robert de Clari, a crusader knight who, some six and a half centuries later, would recount the eerily-similar disappearance of an awesome image of Jesus during the Fourth Crusade’s sack of Constantinople,⁶⁶ “...no one, either Syrian or Persian, ever knew what became of this image after

⁶⁵ Downey, Glanville, *Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch*, in *Church History*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 364ff. (Dec., 1938).

⁶⁶ Robert de Clari, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, P. Lauer (ed.), p. 90 (Paris, 1924), as cited in de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, p. 175, Dutton, (New York 2012).

the city was taken”;⁶⁷ however, its fate is tied to a coincidental event which has baffled historians for almost fifteen centuries.

According to Procopius, “Ephraemius, the bishop of Antioch, fearing the attack of the Persians, went into Cilicia”.⁶⁸ Yet, Glanville Downey, the city’s pre-eminent historian, believes that there was some other, and unknown, reason why Ephraemius found it “either necessary or prudent to leave Antioch and go to Cilicia”,⁶⁹ and he rejects the suggestion “that he fled in fear, as Procopius says he did”.⁷⁰ Certainly, such cowardice would have been entirely irreconcilable with Ephraemius’ reputed character, his unique status as a “warrior bishop”, and his expected subservience to an honored tradition that “in time of war against the Persians the bishop could be relied upon to strengthen resistance to the enemy”.⁷¹ Instead, Downey asserts, the Patriarch’s actual reason for leaving Antioch may be gleaned from the history of Evagrius, an account which, he says, has been “neglected by modern historians, who have followed Procopius’ account throughout”.⁷² Evagrius relates that Ephraemius left the city only after he had “saved the church and all of its surroundings, by adorning it with holy dedications to be a ransom for it”,⁷³

⁶⁷ If modern academe is correct in its invalidation of the Mandylion theory, the Turin Shroud did not subsequently assume the role of the Image of Edessa.

⁶⁸ Procopius of Caesaria, *History of the Wars* (trans. H. B. Dewing), Harvard University Press, II, VI, 21, p. 317 (Cambridge 1996).

⁶⁹ Downey, Glanville, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton University Press, p. 539 (Princeton, New Jersey 1961).

⁷⁰ Downey, Glanville, *Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch* (see note 65), p. 370.

⁷¹ Segal, J.B., *Edessa, The Blessed City* (see note 43), p. 128.

⁷² Downey, Glanville, *Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch* (see note 65), p. 367.

⁷³ *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (see note 26), Book IV, Chapter 25, p. 223.

and Downey has pronounced it impossible “to deny to the patriarch the credit for realizing that there was a chance to preserve at least the building itself by giving up its treasures to the greedy invaders, and for having the courage to put this plan into execution”.⁷⁴ In determining Ephraemius’ motive for leaving Antioch, three attendant circumstances must be taken into consideration. First, his principal concern was the preservation of Church property. Second, had he actually abandoned his flock in fear for his own safety, he could not have resumed his patriarchal duties in Antioch, as Evagrius reports that he later did.⁷⁵ Third, it is obvious that his departure from the city was deemed entirely appropriate by the emperor, his church superiors, and the surviving members of his congregation.

The only possible logical conclusion is that Ephraemius left Antioch in order to take the awesome image of Jesus to a safe haven, a determination effectively corroborated by a tenth-century Byzantine text. The *Narratio de imagine Edessena* provides a garbled version of the Turin Shroud’s Antiochene history in its recitation that, during a time of pagan persecution (it substitutes Abgar V’s grandson for the emperor Julian), a sacred image of Christ (it substitutes the Mandylion for the Turin Shroud) was hidden in a wall niche located above a city gate (it substitutes an Edessan city gate for Antioch’s Gate of the Cherubim), and, when this sacred image was rediscovered centuries later and shortly before an attack mounted by Chosroes (it substitutes the Persian king’s siege of Edessa in 544 for his conquest of Antioch in 540), it was

⁷⁴ Downey, Glanville, *Ephraemius, Patriarch of Antioch* (see note 65), p. 370.

⁷⁵ Ephraemius was again serving as Antioch’s Patriarch in 542, when the city was beset by plague. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (see note 26), Book IV, Chapter 35, p. 240.

saved by the actions of the local Orthodox religious leader (it substitutes a fictitious Edessan bishop, Eulalius, for the historical Antiochene Patriarch, Ephraemius).⁷⁶

ANATOLIA (540-574)

Ephraemius, knowing that Chosroes had “threatened to destroy all the Syrians and Cilicians”,⁷⁷ may have taken the Turin Shroud further north, through the highly-defendable Cilician Gates, to the safety of Cappadocia and the Anatolian plateau (Figure 4).

Figure 4



In any event, with the Byzantine-Persian war still raging and his talents needed in Antioch, Ephraemius returned to his patriarchy and, in all likelihood, entrusted the awesome image of Jesus to orthodox Cilician or Cappadocian churchmen allied with Emperor Justinian. Although he surely anticipated retrieving the cloth as soon as Antioch had become militarily defensible, he died in 545 before that could be accomplished.

A mere nine years later, in 554, a group of orthodox priests paraded an image of Jesus impressed upon linen throughout Anatolia. In a chronicle datable to 568-569,⁷⁸ Pseudo-

⁷⁶ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 37-39.

⁷⁷ Procopius of Caesaria, *History of the Wars* (see note 68), p. 317.

⁷⁸ Greatrex, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity*, Liverpool University Press, p. 32 (Liverpool 2011).

Zachariah Rhetor of Mytilene relates that the idea for this unusual money-raising procession had been conceived, not by these priests, but by an advisor to Justinian,⁷⁹ and the emperor's direct complicity in its undertaking is evidenced by the clerics being permitted to accord to this image honors previously reserved only for images of the emperor himself.⁸⁰ In addition, such a caravan could not have been conducted without the approval of Byzantine church authorities who, although traditionally opposed to image veneration, must have been convinced of this particular cloth's authenticity, as its image is the very first in all of history to be called *acheiropoietos*.⁸¹

Pseudo-Zachariah also relates a legend which recites that this linen cloth had been discovered, inexplicably dry, in a garden well located in the Cappadocian village of Camuliana.⁸² Thereafter, the image miraculously spawned two *acheiropoietos* copies of itself, one of which was conveyed to the Cappadocian capital of Caesarea, and the other to the Pontic village of Diobulion where it survived a barbarian raid

⁷⁹ “One of those in the palace who was closely associated with the emperor advised him that the icon should go around on a tour to the cities with these priests in order to collect enough money for the building of the sanctuary and the village (of Diobulion)”. Greatrex, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor* (see note 78), pp. 426-427.

⁸⁰ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), vol. 3, p. 6**, as cited in Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 8, pp. 99-100 (1954).

⁸¹ “In that region they call it *acheiropoietos*, which means ‘not made by hands’.” Greatrex, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor* (see note 78), p. 426. This same term employed, relatively soon thereafter, by Antonius of Placentia to describe a Christ-image located in Memphis. Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 44, text in Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), Document 1 (Kap. IV), p. 135*. The same term was also used, but much later, by Evagrius Scholasticus to describe the Edessa siege icon—if, in fact, this passage is not an iconophile interpolation. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (see note 26), pp. 226-227.

⁸² Greatrex, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor* (see note 78), pp. 425-426.

before being taken on a fundraising tour of Anatolia.⁸³ Given the complicity of imperial authorities in initiating the caravan, it is obvious that they created this fantastic image legend, and did so for the specific purpose articulated by the art historian, Heinrich Pfeiffer:

That is why the legend is so important. The legend always has to justify the image's belonging in a particular place. If the image shows up in a godforsaken hole like Camuliana, then it seems clear and right to everyone that it belongs in Constantinople and should be transferred there, to the capital of the empire. ...Legends have always served the purpose of clarifying and legitimizing questions of possession.⁸⁴

For more than two centuries previous, and commencing with Constantine the Great, Byzantine emperors had been pursuing an official ambition to bring the most significant Christian objects to Constantinople and to thereby make their capital the preeminent “cult center for the relics of Christ's Passion”.⁸⁵ The obvious purpose of the Pseudo-Zachariah legend, which ascribed the image's origination and possession to the insignificant villages of Camuliana and Diobulion, was to permit the emperor to obtain and retain it free and clear of any competing ecclesiastical claim, for, had its recent travelogue come to light, the Church of Antioch would surely have demanded its immediate return. The historical consequences of the Pseudo-Zachariah legend cannot be overstated, as it effectively stole from the Turin Shroud not only its ancient history, largely spent in Antioch, but also its rightful claim to apostolic provenance.

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ Badde, Paul, *The Face of God*, Ignatius Press, p. 129 (San Francisco 2010).

⁸⁵ Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, F.A. Bauer (ed.), *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft*, BYZAS 5, p. 79 (2006), <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/arhistory/faculty/Klein/Sacred-Relics-and-Imperial-Ceremonies.pdf>.

CONSTANTINOPLE (574-1204)

THE IMAGE OF GOD INCARNATE

When Justinian died in 565, he was succeeded by his nephew, Justin II, an avid relic collector who would, during his thirteen-year reign, procure for the capital the alleged bones of St. Symeon, Zacharias, James, and John the Baptist.⁸⁶ In 573, Persia captured the city of Dara and, in the following year, Justin, brought to the capital two extremely important religious objects to serve as imperial Palladia. The first was a relic of the True Cross, which was placed into a precious container and deposited into the church of Hagia Sophia.⁸⁷ The second was the image of Jesus which, according to the Pseudo-Zachariah legend, had originated in Camuliana.⁸⁸ The Byzantines regarded it as *acheiropoietos*⁸⁹ and an “unpainted painting”,⁹⁰ and they called it “the Image of God Incarnate”⁹¹ (although it is often referenced as the Image of Camuliana).⁹²

⁸⁶ *Patria Konstantinupoleos*, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, III 148, p. 263 (1907, repr. 1975), cited in Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), pp. 87-88.

⁸⁷ *Georgii Cedreni Historiarum Compendium*, ed. I. Bekker, I + II. *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, I, p. 685 (Bonn 1838-1839) and *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, J.-B. Chabot (ed. and trans.), I-IV, II, pp. 284-285 (1899-1924), as cited in Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), p. 87.

⁸⁸ *Georgii Cedreni Historiarum Compendium* (see note 87). See also Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680-850*, Cambridge University Press, p. 55 (Cambridge 2011); Segal, J.B., *Edessa, The Blessed City* (see note 43), p. 77; Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (see note 25), p. 31. Michael and Mary Whitby suspect that the image arrived directly from Syria, presumably from Apamea along with its relic of the True Cross. Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, Clarendon Press, p. 46, n. 8 (Oxford 1986). Dobschütz ascribes the image’s arrival to 573 CE, believing that it may pre-date the Persian conquest of Apamea in that year. Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), vol. 1, p. 47.

⁸⁹ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), “Beilage I,” pp. 12*-18**, as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin*, Rowman & Allanheld, p. 70 (Totowa, N.J. 1984).

There is no record of the Image of God Incarnate having been installed in a Constantinople church or it ever having been removed from the imperial palace prior to the turn of the thirteenth century, excepting its one-time deployment, in 626, as a palladium wielded against the Avars who were besieging the capital. If it was, in fact, the Turin Shroud and, like the relic of the True Cross, it was reverentially stored in a golden case, it would have been folded for storage, and perhaps in a manner which revealed only its facial image and created the impression that the cloth was a *tetradiplon*. In any event, Byzantine imperial and Church authorities would certainly have desired to create the illusion that this cloth presented only a facial image of a living Jesus in order to promote three rather critical cultural, political, and religious policies.

First, “Christian art for a long time objected to stripping Christ of his garments”,⁹³ and crucifixes and crucifixion portrayals, invented just subsequent to arrival of the Image of God Incarnate in Constantinople, typically depicted Jesus wearing a robe or a *colobium*—a long, flowing, and sleeveless tunic which extended to his knees or ankles. For example, the Syrian

“This image was from the beginning held to be *acheiropoieta*, that is, ‘not made by hands’.” Heinrich Pfeiffer, as quoted in Badde, Paul, *The Face of God* (see note 84), pp. 125-126.

⁹⁰ Belting, Hans, *In Search of Christ’s Body. Image or Imprint?*, Herbert L. Kessler and Gerhard Wolf (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, p. 8, Villa Spelman Colloquia, Volume 6, Nuova Alfa Editoriale (Bologna 1998).

⁹¹ Theophylact Simocatta, Book Two, Section 3.4, and Book Three, Section 1.9-12, in Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 46; p. 73.

⁹² In 787, during the fifth session of the Second Council of Nicaea, a deacon alluded to this cloth as “the image of the Camulenses”. *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea, at Which the Worship of Images was Established*, Mendham, John (trans.) (see note 33), p. 287.

⁹³ Marucchi, Orazio, *Cross and Crucifix, Archaeology of the Cross*, The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume IV, Robert Appleton Company, p. 529 (New York 1908).

Gospel Book, dated to 586, contains a portrayal of a crucified Jesus wearing a sleeveless tunic (Figure5),⁹⁴

Figure 5



while, a full two centuries later, Jesus is draped in a long grayish-blue tunic,⁹⁵ and as late as the ninth-century, he wears either a *colobium* over a loincloth, or a *perizoma*.⁹⁶ Clearly, contemporary Byzantine concepts of modesty would have precluded the publication and circulation of a realistic artistic portrayal of a full-length naked image of Jesus and would have permitted only that of the face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and upper torso of the Turin Shroud image, with appropriate clothing added.

Second, Justin II brought this cloth to Constantinople to serve as a palladium which would make the Byzantine capital and empire *Theophylaktos*—protected from all enemies by God himself, but the Byzantine people would have viewed a naked and wounded Jesus as one whom had been humiliated and defeated by his adversaries, as reflected in their name for the

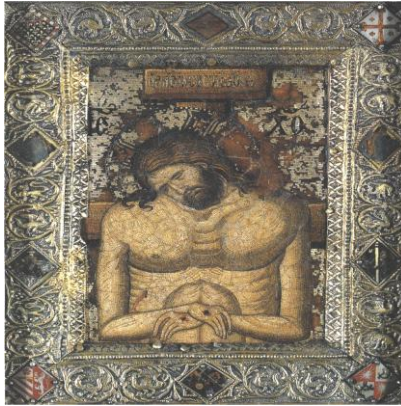
⁹⁴ *Id.* at 527. Schacher, A. A., *Crucifixion (In Art)*, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, McGraw Hill, p. 487 (New York, 1987).

⁹⁵ Marucchi, Orazio, *Cross and Crucifix* (see note 93), p. 528.

⁹⁶ Schacher, A. A., *Crucifixion (In Art)* (see note 94), p. 487.

thirteenth-century icon now known as the Man of Sorrows: *Akra tapeinosis*, or “utmost humiliation” (Figure 6).

Figure 6



Thus, imperial authorities had no choice but to present the Image of God Incarnate as a palladium of a triumphant Christ who had completely defeated his enemies, and only by concealing the humiliation and punishment which Jesus’ adversaries had been able to inflict upon him could the government engender public confidence in the Image of God Incarnate’s ability to provide the Byzantine people with perpetual divine protection against all those who might seek to inflict harm upon them. It was for this very reason that Byzantine crucifixes featured a victorious crucified Jesus—adhered, rather than nailed, to his cross, his eyes opened wide and his head held erect, evincing no agony, still very much alive, and totally triumphant in spirit. Clearly, contemporary Byzantine politics would have precluded the publication and circulation of a realistic artistic portrayal of a severely-tortured Jesus and would have permitted only that of the face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and upper torso of the Turin Shroud image, with all indicia of injuries removed therefrom.

Third, the Byzantines were extremely superstitious, and their fear of divine retribution is well-illustrated by the fact that imperial iconoclasm was instituted in 726 when Emperor Leo III interpreted a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean “as a sign of divine wrath as a result of the

idolatrous practices of the Christians,” and moved swiftly to preclude the public display of religious images.⁹⁷ Concerned about how God might react to imperial exploitation of a holy object, the Byzantines tested his view of their use of the relic of the True Cross by sending it to accompany “the emperor into battle already in the late sixth century, functioning as a token of divine protection and victory over the empire’s worldly enemies”,⁹⁸ and then awaiting his decision in the form of victories over, or defeats by, the Persian enemy. Similarly, they impressed copies of the face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and/or upper torso of the Turin Shroud image, appropriately clothed and evincing no sign of injuries, upon military standards, or *labara*,⁹⁹ and sent them into battle with the army. When, under the leadership of the very able emperor Maurice, victories were consistently won, the Byzantines concluded that God had approved of the image’s deployment as a military palladium and they came to believe that “like relics, *acheiropoieta* had intercessory and salvatory power...and channeled divine force to the Christian community.”¹⁰⁰

THE ARCHETYPE

The numerous battles won under *labara* bearing the Image of God Incarnate also convinced previously-iconoclastic religious authorities that the so-called “cult of images” should be permitted to flourish, that icons should be permitted to assume a central role in the daily lives

⁹⁷ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 79.

⁹⁸ Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), p. 94, citing Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 156.

⁹⁹ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), pp. 51-52.

¹⁰⁰ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), pp. 35-36.

of the Christian faithful,¹⁰¹ and that this particular image, having been established as authentic through the victories of the Byzantine military, should henceforth serve as the archetype for all images of Jesus.

In the late sixth century, the portrayal of Jesus as a mature and bearded man suddenly achieved ascendancy over all other depictions of him, and two eminent scholars, completely without any reference to the Turin Shroud, concluded that this ascendant portrayal derived from an archetype image. Hans Belting, an eminent modern art historian, believes that this archetype was selected from “a convenient repertory” of extant Jesus images and that its unremarkable origin was concealed behind legends of miraculously-produced *acheiropoiotos* images.¹⁰² On the other hand, the estimable eighteenth-century historian, Edward Gibbon, believes that this archetype was itself a recently-discovered *acheiropoiotos* image which was propagated by Christians, desirous of establishing a standard likeness for Jesus, “in the camps and cities of the Eastern empire”.¹⁰³ This archetype is identifiable through artistic and textual evidence.

With regard to art, the new “Pantocrator Type” portrayal of Jesus depicted him as a mature and bearded man having parted hair flowing in two different directions, with one part coming to rest on a shoulder and the other disappearing behind his neck.¹⁰⁴ The most notable

¹⁰¹ Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), p. 87.

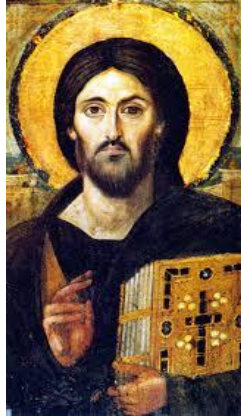
¹⁰² Belting, Hans, *In Search of Christ's Body* (see note 90), p.10

¹⁰³ Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 49, <http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap49.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Concept of “Acheiropoiotos”, the Iconography of the Face of Christ and the Veil of Manoppello*, Proceedings of the Frascati International Workshop on the Scientific Approach to the *Acheiropoiotos* Images, Di Lazzaro, Paolo (ed.), p. 205, ENEA, Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (2010).

examples of such portrayals have Constantinopolitan roots, including an icon located in the St. Catherine Monastery (Figure 7),

Figure 7



founded in *ca.* 548-565 by Justinian I, the emperor who was complicit in the Anatolian image caravan of 554-560. A second such illustration is a relief portrait of Jesus on a hammered silver vase (Figure 8),

Figure 8



which was discovered among church ruins in the Syrian city of Homs, formerly Emesa, a late sixth-century center of Byzantine Christianity. The Louvre, which holds this work of art, describes it as an excellent example of the flourishing metalwork and fabulous treasures of the late-sixth and early-seventh century Byzantine church, and notes that its quality “would seem to

indicate that it was made in the Byzantine capital, although it could equally be the work of a talented local craftsman, in Syria”.¹⁰⁵

The similarities between these Pantocrator Type images and the image of the Turin Shroud are obvious, and were it to be established that the former derived from the latter, the relic’s provenance would be datable to at least the late sixth century. In the considered opinion of Heinrich Pfeiffer, it was indeed the Pantocrator art which derived from the relic because “all details, which are casual on the shroud, and also are to be found on works of art, especially in the iconography of Christ, determine a relation between the two (and) only the casual and natural forms of details on the shroud can be first and the artwork second”.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it is certainly reasonable to conclude, on the basis of artistic evidence, that the Turin Shroud was, in fact, the sixth-century Jesus archetype. Wilson does just that, of course, but he then proceeds to identify the Turin Shroud as the Image of Edessa:

But why should we believe that this Image of Edessa cloth was our Shroud? The main clue lies in a quite extraordinary change in how artists portrayed Jesus’s likeness, which happened very soon after the Image of Edessa cloth came to light.¹⁰⁷

The fatal flaw in this argument is that, as noted by Mark Guscini, there is simply no way of knowing exactly when the “Image of Edessa cloth came to light”.¹⁰⁸ In addition, Professor Cameron has concluded that the Byzantines, who were the proliferators of these late sixth-century Pantocrator Christ-images, did not become aware of the Edessa icon’s existence until the

¹⁰⁵ See <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/vase-emesa>.

¹⁰⁶ Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Concept of “Acheiropoietos”, the Iconography of the Face of Christ and the Veil of Manoppello* (see note 104), p. 205.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 133 .

¹⁰⁸ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 176; 211.

onset of iconoclasm in *ca.* 726, that they were still unaware of its actual appearance by the early part of the ninth century, and that, even as late as the end of the ninth century, they did not know it “as an object to be gazed upon”.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, it is historically-chronicled that Constantinople’s Image of God Incarnate “came to light” just prior to the empire-wide debut of these Pantocrator portrayals of Jesus, first in Anatolia (554-560) and then in the capital itself (574).¹¹⁰ In addition, and as Wilson acknowledges, prior to 944 “there seem to be no depictions of the Image of Edessa in the later ‘popular’ form of a disembodied face on a landscape-aspect cloth”;¹¹¹ i.e., so-called Mandyliion Type portrayals of Jesus, such as the copy maintained in Moscow’s Tretjakow Museum (Figure 9),

Figure 9



¹⁰⁹ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandyliion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), pp. 42-43; p. 54.

¹¹⁰ In 2010, Heinrich Pfeiffer rejected an identification of the Image of God Incarnate with the Turin Shroud in the mistaken belief that the Sermon of Gregory Referendarius had described the Mandyliion “as painted with blood” and apparently unaware of Mark Guscini’s convincing demonstration that this text recited merely that the sweat of Jesus’ agony adorned the image in a blood-dripping manner. In addition, Pfeiffer had previously postulated a hypothesis that the Veil of Manoppello had once been the Image of God Incarnate. See Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Concept of “Acheiropoietos”, the Iconography of the Face of Christ and the Veil of Manoppello* (see note 104), p. 205.

¹¹¹ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved* (see note 35), p. 138.

which depict him with parted hair “symmetrically disposed and divided at least in four branches”.¹¹² Clearly, pre-944 Pantocrator Type portrayals of Jesus were not derived from the Image of Edessa/Mandyllion, an icon which displayed an image of only his disembodied head, but were, instead, based upon an archetype which must have presented his face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, and upper torso—Constantinople’s Image of God Incarnate.

The late sixth-century archetype is also identifiable textually. Edward Gibbon, in his monumental work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, concluded that *acheiropoietos* images which, before the end of the sixth century, “were propagated in the camps and cities of the Eastern empire”,¹¹³ derived from the archetype image which had been twice mentioned in the early seventh-century Byzantine chronicle of Theophylact Simocatta.¹¹⁴ In the first of these passages, Simocatta described an incident which occurred in 586 when imperial troops commanded by Philippicus marched under a *labarum* which displayed an image of Jesus at the Battle of Solachon, a great Byzantine victory over a numerically-superior Persian force.

When the enemy came into view and the dust was thick, Phillipicus displayed the Image of God Incarnate, which tradition from ancient times even to the present day proclaims was shaped by divine wisdom, not fashioned by a weaver’s hand nor embellished by a painter’s pigment. It was for this reason that it is celebrated among the Romans even as ‘not made by human hand’, and is thought worthy of divine privileges: for the Romans worship its archetype to an ineffable degree. The general stripped this of its sacred coverings and paraded through the ranks, thereby inspiring the army with a greater and irresistible courage.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Pfeiffer, Heinrich, *The Concept of “Acheiropoietos”, the Iconography of the Face of Christ and the Veil of Manoppello* (see note 104), p. 204.

¹¹³ Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 49, <http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap49.htm>.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* at footnote 12.

¹¹⁵ Theophylact Simocatta, Book Two, 3.4, in Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 46.

In order for this *acheiropoiotos* archetypal image to have been worshipped by Byzantines “to an ineffable degree” by the year 586, it would have had to be one which had been greatly favored by Byzantine emperors and widely venerated by their subjects for some period of time. The only such then-extant Christ-*acheiropoieton* was that which had been carried, at the direction of Justinian I, throughout Anatolia from 554 to 560, and brought, at the direction of Justin II, to Constantinople, in 574. It was certainly not any Christ-image which may have arguably then been kept secluded in Edessa. In 2011, Leslie Brubaker, a professor of Byzantine art, and John Haldon, a professor of history and Hellenic studies, jointly declared that it was “nearly universally believed” that the archetype twice referenced in Simocatta’s chronicle was the image that had been brought to Constantinople in 574,¹¹⁶ a conclusion that had been reached by Ernst von Dobschütz, cited by the eminent art historian, Ernst Kitzinger,¹¹⁷ and concurred in by the modern art historians, Ewa Kuryluk¹¹⁸ and Heinrich Pfeiffer.¹¹⁹

In a second passage referencing the archetype, Simocatta recounts a military mutiny which occurred in 588. When Byzantine soldiers encamped at Monocarton learned that their

¹¹⁶ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 55.

¹¹⁷ “Theophylaktos Simokatta (early seventh century) relates that in the year 586 the image of Christ not made by hand—according to Dobscheutz he refers to the image of Camuliana which was brought to Constantinople in 574—was used by Philippikos in the battle of the Arzamon River to instill courage into his troops...”. Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), p. 111.

¹¹⁸ Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (see note 25), p. 32.

¹¹⁹ Badde, Paul, *The Face of God* (see note 84), pp. 128-129. In 1986, historians Michael and Mary Whitby identified the 586 *labarum* image as being “...probably one of the two famous ‘divinely created’ images of Christ which came to prominence in the second half of the 6th c., either the Camuliana image, which had been transferred to Constantinople from Syria in 574, or the image of Edessa.” Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 46.

beloved commander, Phillipicus, had been replaced by Priscus and that their pay had been reduced by twenty-five per cent, they became extremely distraught. Priscus then triggered mutiny by refusing to honor a tradition of walking among his troops and extending his personal salutations:

...extreme anarchy made its entry: the masses converged on the general's tent, some carrying stones, others swords, as the occasion served each man. The general came to hear of the commotion and enquired the cause. When they gave no answer to his enquiry except "The unity of the whole array has been overthrown, the camp is leaderless", the commander Priscus was bathed in sweat and cowered in great fear, his mind being completely at a loss as to what exactly he should do. And so he uncovered the Image of God Incarnate, which Romans call "not made by human hand", gave it to Eilifreda (one of his commanders), and ordered him to go round the army, so that by respect for the holy object, the anger might be humbled, while the disorder take a change towards good sense. When the multitude was not brought to its senses thereby, but even pelted the ineffable object with stones, the general, chancing upon a horse of one of the emperor's bodyguards, naturally abandoned himself to flight, and cheated the peril with an unexpected salvation.¹²⁰

Here, again, Simocatta names the archetype "the Image of God Incarnate", and it is simply not possible that, in his accounts of the incidents which transpired in 586 and 588, he "was in fact referring to two different objects".¹²¹

Although Gibbon believed that the most ambitious of the propagated *acheiropoietos* images "aspired from a filial to a fraternal relation with the image of Edessa,"¹²² he provided no

¹²⁰ *Id.* at p. 73 (emphasis supplied).

¹²¹ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 177-178. Guscini concluded that the 588 *labarum* image derived from the Image of Edessa, primarily because the Monocarton mutiny took place in the vicinity of that city. He then inferred, given the similarity of the two passages, that the 586 *labarum* must have also been based upon the Edessa icon. While Guscini acknowledged Michael and Mary Whitby's opinion that the archetype for these *labara* may have been either the Image of Edessa or the image legendarily ascribed to Camuliana (see note 119), he appears to have been unaware that other historians, including Ernst von Dobschütz, had concluded that the Constantinopolitan palladium was the archetype for these military standards, and he published his study two years before Professors Brubaker and Haldon would declare this identification as one which was "nearly universally believed".

proof whatsoever of such a relationship and, in all candor, his reasoning is totally illogical in light of his sarcastic rejection of both the historicity of Abgar's portrait of Jesus and also the very notion that a Christ-image was implicated in the Persian siege of 544.¹²³ Gibbon also failed to appreciate that, while no contemporary legend asserted that the Image of Edessa had spawned even a single *acheiropoietos* copy of itself,¹²⁴ two contemporary legends implicating the Image of God Incarnate recited that it had produced three *acheiropoietos* copies of itself, one of which was translated to Cappadocian Caesarea, the second to Pontic Diobulion, and the third to Cappadocian Melitene and later to Constantinople.¹²⁵

¹²² Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (see note 113).

¹²³ *Id.* "A new super structure of fable was raised on the popular basis of a Syrian legend, on the correspondence of Christ and Abgarus, so famous in the days of Eusebius, so reluctantly deserted by our modern advocates. ...The bishop of Caesarea records the epistle, but he most strangely forgets the picture of Christ; the perfect impression of his face on a linen, with which he gratified the faith of the royal stranger who had invoked his healing power, and offered the strong city of Edessa to protect him against the malice of the Jews. ...Its first and most glorious exploit was the deliverance of the city from the arms of Chosroes Nushirvan; and it was soon revered as a pledge of the divine promise, that Edessa should never be taken by a foreign enemy. It is true, indeed, that the text of Procopius ascribes the double deliverance of Edessa to the wealth and valour of her citizens, who purchased the absence and repelled the assaults of the Persian monarch. He was ignorant, the profane historian, of the testimony which he is compelled to deliver in the ecclesiastical page of Evagrius, that the Palladium was exposed on the rampart, and that the water which had been sprinkled on the holy face, instead of quenching, added new fuel to the flames of the besieged."

¹²⁴ It would not be until the tenth century that Byzantines would claim, in the *Narratio*, that Abgar's portrait of Jesus, when it was rediscovered in Edessa's city walls, had impressed an image of itself upon a tile and that this copy was later conveyed to the city of Hieropolis. See Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 37.

¹²⁵ The translation of the Caesarea and Diobulion copies is recounted in Greatrex, Geoffrey (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor* (see note 78), pp. 426-427, while that of the Melitene copy is recited in Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), Document 4 (Kap.III), pp. 125*-127*, as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 123, n. 8.

The reason why the Image of God Incarnate has not been previously identified as the Pantocrator archetype is well-articulated by Hans Belting: “There is not only the Abgar Mandyllion at Edessa, but also the Christ image of Kamuliana which we usually disregard, as we do not know what it looked like, though it possibly preceded the Mandyllion in age.”¹²⁶ Thus, while the appearance of the Image of Edessa, at least in its tenth-century manifestation, is known via surviving copies of the Mandyllion, no depictions of the Image of God Incarnate have ever been discovered, and, consequently, its historical significance has been overlooked for centuries.

FULL-LENGTH AND ON-CLOTH IMAGES OF JESUS

Although the Turin Shroud was kept within the imperial palace and away from public gaze, it is clear that certain persons became aware of two of its image’s essential characteristics—it was full-length and impressed upon cloth. With regard to its full-length image, first, the “custom of displaying the Redeemer on the Cross...began with the close of the sixth century”.¹²⁷ As previously noted, a full-length crucified Jesus was illustrated in a Syrian Gospel Book dateable to 586,¹²⁸ the very year that a copy of the archetypal Image of God Incarnate was displayed on a Byzantine *labarum* at the Battle of Solachon.¹²⁹ Only an *acheiropoietos* full-length image of Jesus crucified could have convinced the iconoclastic Eastern Church clergy to countenance, and perhaps even invent, crucifixes and crucifixion images. Secondly, the

¹²⁶ Belting, Hans, *In Search of Christ’s Body* (see note 90), p. 8.

¹²⁷ Marucchi, Orazio, *Cross and Crucifix* (see note 93), p. 527.

¹²⁸ *Codex Syriacus*, 56, is preserved in the Laurentian Library at Florence.

¹²⁹ See Theophylact Simocatta, Book Two, 3.4, in Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 46.

Mozarabic Rite of the Visigothic Church of Spain began to recite that “Peter ran to the tomb with John and saw the recent imprints of the dead and risen one on the cloths”.¹³⁰ This liturgy is “intimately associated with and possibly even partly rewritten” by Leandro, the Bishop of Seville,¹³¹ who, while serving in Constantinople from 579 to 582, would likely have learned that the emperor was in possession of a burial cloth which bore the imprints of Jesus’ dead body. Thirdly, Pope Gregory the Great ordered the creation of a tempera painting of a full-length (albeit clothed and non-suffering) Jesus (Figure 10),

Figure 10



installed it in the Sancta Sanctorum Chapel,¹³² and named it the *Acheropita* (the *acheiropieton*). In his capacity of papal ambassador to the Court of Byzantium from 579 to 585, Gregory, like Leandro, would probably have learned that the Byzantines’ Image of God Incarnate depicted Jesus’ full-length body. It should also be noted that the Image of Edessa, never represented to

¹³⁰ Guscini, *The Oviedo Cloth*, Lutterworth Press, p. 17 (Cambridge 1998).

¹³¹ *Id.*

¹³² Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 121.

have presented anything other than an image of a living Jesus' face, could not have inspired crucifixes, crucifixion portrayals, a reference to bodily imprints on Jesus' burial cloth, or the full-length image of Jesus called the *Acheropita*.

With regard to the Turin Shroud's inherent nature as an image impressed upon cloth, Professor Brock has noted that, commencing in the sixth century, there was a "transformation, over the course of time, of what was originally understood to have been a painted portrait into a piece of cloth with Christ's face imprinted on it".¹³³ He mentions the *Acts of Mari*, a Syriac work dating to the late sixth or early-seventh century,¹³⁴ which recites that a linen cloth on which Jesus had imprinted an image of his face "was brought and placed as a source of assistance in the church of Edessa, up to today,¹³⁵ but seems to be entirely unaware that, in 568-569, and probably preceding the *Acts of Mari*, Pseudo-Zachariah had described the Anatolian caravan cloth, which later became Constantinople's Image of God Incarnate, as an *acheiropoietos image of Jesus* impressed upon a linen cloth. Similarly, while noting that the Greek *Acts of Thaddeus*, dated by Professor Palmer to the seventh or early-eighth century,¹³⁶ asserts that Jesus impressed his facial

¹³³ Brock, Sebastian, *Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Jesus*, Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies, Vol. 18, no. 1, p. 48 (2004); www.jaas.org/edocs/v18n1/Sebastian%20Brock-mandili-Final.pdf.

¹³⁴ See Jullien, C. and Jullien, F. *Les Actes de Mari, l'apotre de la Mesopotamie*, p. 53 (Turnhout 2001), as cited in Brock, Sebastian, *Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Jesus*, (see note 133), p. 49, n. 11.

¹³⁵ *Acta Sancti Maris*, section 4, Abbeloos, J-B (ed.), as cited in Brock, Sebastian, *Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Jesus* (see note 133), p. 49, n. 12.

¹³⁶ Andrew Palmer dates the work to ca. 609-726 (see note 39).

image on a *tetradiplon* that was later presented to King Abgar V,¹³⁷ Brock fails to mention that, in the seventh century, Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa related that Jesus had impressed an image of his face upon a linen drying towel which he then gave to the wife of the toparch of Camuliana. The toparch's wife later sealed this image, along with a lighted votive lamp, within a wall, and, a full century later, Bishop Gregory of Nyssa found them both, with the lamp still miraculously emitting light, and translated the image to Cappadocian Caesarea where it performed miraculous healings.¹³⁸

During the same period which gave rise to these "image on cloth" legends, a Syriac legend, datable to the seventh or eighth century, recited that the Image of Edessa had been thrown into a well, thereby bestowing miraculous healing powers upon its waters. Han Drijvers has noted that this legend possesses "close similarities to the legendary origin of the Camuliana icon that was also found in a well",¹³⁹ and has suggested that "the rise of icons in late sixth-century Byzantium and Heraclius' use of the Camuliana icon during his campaign against the Sassanians, which started in 622, could have been the incentive for a local Edessene development of the story of the origin of Christ's image".¹⁴⁰ As will be shown, this legend about a well is the first of several

¹³⁷ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), Document 24 (Kap. V), p. 182*; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.), Vol. 8, pp. 558-59, Scribners (New York, 1926), as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 36.

¹³⁸ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), "Beilage I," pp. 12**-18**, as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), pp. 70-71; Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), pp. 120-121. See also Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (see note 25), p. 31.

¹³⁹ Drijvers, Han J. W., *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), p. 29. Hans Belting believes that the Abgar legend "...is virtually interchangeable with that of the example from Kamuliana". Belting, Hans, *In Search of Christ's Body* (see note 90), p. 8.

¹⁴⁰ Drijvers, Han J. W., *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), p. 30.

texts which, while facially implicating the Image of Edessa, contain features relating to Constantinople's archetypal Image of God Incarnate.¹⁴¹

THE ROAD TO ICONOCLASM

Reflecting the example set by the emperor Maurice, the great Heraclius (610-641) employed a *labarum* bearing a copy of the Image of Camuliana¹⁴² “as a palladium in his Persian campaign”.¹⁴³ In 622, George of Pisidia, imbedded with the Byzantine army, authored a hymn in which he extolled this beloved Byzantine image as tangible proof of the Incarnation, a means of confounding the phantasiasts, an unwritten writing, an image of the Word which had shaped the universe, and an original image made by God.¹⁴⁴ The image's fame would reach its apex in 626 when, after it had been carried around the walls of Constantinople,¹⁴⁵ the barbarian Avars abandoned their siege of that city. Although, at the time of Heraclius' death in 641, it was held in the highest esteem as a sacred instrument possessed of both offensive and defensive military

¹⁴¹ See notes 185-193 and related text.

¹⁴² Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61) Vol. I, pp. 52ff.; Vol. II, pp. 128ff, as cited in Cameron, Averil, *The Mandyllion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 52, n. 71

¹⁴³ George of Pisidia, *De expedition persica*, I, 139ff. (Bonn ed., 9, 17), as cited in Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), p. 111.

¹⁴⁴ George of Pisida, *De expedition persica*, I, 139ff., *Heraclius*, I, 218, and *Bell. Avar.*, 37, 3, as cited in Cameron, Averil, *The Mandyllion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 52; George of Pisida *De expedition persica*, I, 139-153; *Heraclius*, II, 12-18, as cited in Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 55; Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), pp. 120-121; and Pfeiffer, Heinrich, as quoted in Badde, Paul, *The Face of God* (see note 84), pp. 128-129.

¹⁴⁵ V. Vasilievsky, *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, III, 96 (1896), as cited in Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 95), p. 112. “An acheiropoieton image of Christ (perhaps the Kamouliaianai portrait) famously saved Constantinople from the Avars”. Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 36, citing Van Dieten, J.-L., *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I bis Johannes VI (610-715)*, pp. 174-178 (Amsterdam 1972). See also Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth*, (see note 25), p. 71.

powers, the Byzantine army suffered a series of crushing defeats under the emperors Constans II (641-668) and Constantine IV (668-685), despite, it may be reasonably assumed, its display of the Image of God Incarnate on military campaign *labara*. At some undetermined point during the second half of the seventh century, the superstitious Byzantines ceased deploying the image, as it was never again mentioned in any chronicle of war.

In 692, Justinian II convened the Quinisext Church Council, which promptly declared that, henceforth, Christ should be represented in human form “so that all may understand by means of it (his image) the depth of the humiliation of the Word of God, and that we may recall to our memory his conversation (life) in the flesh, his passion and salutary death, and his redemption which was wrought for the whole world”.¹⁴⁶ At that time, of course, there were no such published images of Jesus and only the Turin Shroud, if then extant, could have effectively communicated to its viewers both the extent of the gruesome tortures inflicted upon Jesus during his passion and crucifixion, and also the depth of his humiliation in having been stripped of his clothing and hung naked on a cross. The only possible reason for the Council’s adoption of this Canon was to provide ecclesiastical approval for a planned future revelation of the full-length Image of God Incarnate, perhaps because Justinian had concluded that the empire’s recent military setbacks were God’s punishment for his predecessors’ failure to have revealed the palladium’s entire uncensored image. In any event, Justinian issued a coin which featured a non-suffering Pantocrator image of Jesus with wide peering eyes, forked beard, and uneven hair lengths (Figure 11),

¹⁴⁶ Quinisext Council Canon 82, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3814.htm>.

Figure 11



had it embossed with the legend “*Rex Regnatium*”, permitted himself to be depicted, on the reverse side, standing reverentially as the *Servus Christi*”,¹⁴⁷ and awaited God’s verdict on this limited use of the Image of God Incarnate for imperial purposes. It was delivered with dispatch. In 695, Justinian was deposed, and his enemies, aware of a Byzantine tradition requiring an emperor to remain unblemished, cut off his nose before sending him into exile. A decade later, Justinian would return at the head of a foreign army, capture Constantinople, and reclaim his throne; however, apparently convinced that his use of the Image of God Incarnate had incurred God’s wrath, he employed only non-Pantocrator images of Jesus on coinage minted during his second reign (Figure 12),

Figure 12



¹⁴⁷ Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), p. 126.

but to no avail, for, in 711, he was again deposed and, on this occasion, beheaded.

Superstitious Byzantines, particularly orthodox religious leaders with traditional anti-image attitudes,¹⁴⁸ concluded that God had very clearly demonstrated his disapproval of the public display of religious images by inflicting defeats upon the military when it employed Christ-imagined *labara* and visiting misfortunes upon Justinian each time he had placed an image of Christ upon his coinage. In 717, Leo III, known as the Isaurian, seized the Byzantine throne and when, shortly thereafter, Constantinople was besieged by Arab forces, he did not resort to the Image of God Incarnate, which had reportedly saved the city in 626, but relied, instead, upon the display of an image of the Virgin and the relic of the True Cross.¹⁴⁹ As previously noted, in 726, Leo interpreted a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean¹⁵⁰ “as a sign of divine wrath as a result of the idolatrous practices of the Christians,¹⁵¹ and instituted iconoclasm as a means of bringing “peace, stability, and military success to the empire”.¹⁵²

The history of Byzantine iconoclasm, which prevailed from 726 to 775 and from 813 to 843, was written by image advocates who portrayed Leo as a fervent iconoclast; however, the modern scholars, Professors Brubaker and Haldon, have rather convincingly demonstrated that,

¹⁴⁸ See Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), pp. 17-18.

¹⁴⁹ *Oratio historica in festum tes akathistou* (F. Combefis, *Hist. haer. monothel.*, cols. 805ff., especially col. 818C = PG, 92m cik, 1365 C), cited in Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), p. 112.

¹⁵⁰ Theophanes reports that steam bubbled up from the depths of the sea between the islands of Thira and Thirassia and that large pumice stones were spewed out all over Asia Minor and towards Macedonia.

¹⁵¹ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 79.

¹⁵² *Id.* at 5.

in fact, Leo “was not an ‘iconoclast’ in the sense imposed upon him by later iconophile tradition, and accepted by much modern historiography”.¹⁵³ While he surely restricted the public display of certain types of images and had them removed from prominent places in churches,¹⁵⁴ Leo never issued an edict or instituted a policy which mandated either their destruction or removal from imperial territory,¹⁵⁵ and the fate of the Image of God Incarnate must be considered in this modern light.

Rather amazingly, despite the fact that not a single historical record even hints at the loss or destruction of the Image of God Incarnate, Ewa Kuryluk has suggested that “iconoclasts...were probably also responsible for the disappearance of the acheiropoietos of Camuliana”,¹⁵⁶ Averil Cameron has declared that “it did not survive (iconoclasm)”,¹⁵⁷ Ian Wilson has pronounced that “even reputedly ‘not by hand made’ rivals to the Image of Edessa, such as the Image of Camuliana, were not spared, because we never hear of the latter again,”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ *Id.* at 155.

¹⁵⁴ *Id.* at 153.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.* at 119; 153. A letter attributed to Pope Gregory III, reciting that images had been banished by the Emperor, is highly suspect. *Id.* at 82.

¹⁵⁶ Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (see note 25), p. 56.

¹⁵⁷ Professor Cameron bases her conclusion partially upon the fact that the Image of God Incarnate was not specifically mentioned in the *Letter of the Three Patriarchs*, published in *ca.* 836; however, she concedes that this listing, “...rather than being a careful selection of major examples (of efficacious relics), may simply represent eastern images known and accessible to the compiler, while many others with equally miraculous reputation or potential remain unmentioned”. In addition, this letter has been described by scholars as, *inter alia*, doctored, bizarre and a fake. Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 52; pp. 47-48.

¹⁵⁸ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved* (see note 35), p. 153.

and Heinrich Pfeiffer has baldly averred that it was “lost without trace after 705”.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, five historical circumstances powerfully refute the myth that the Image of God Incarnate was destroyed by iconoclasts.

First, as previously noted, record silence regarding the Image of God Incarnate existed a full century prior to iconoclasm, it having last been referenced in connection with the Avar siege of 626, and its reputation as a divinely-endorsed palladium seems to have been tarnished by numerous military defeats suffered under Heraclius’ imperial successors. Once Leo III had instituted iconoclasm, no significance could be accorded to the image, and the entirely-to-be-expected lack of its mention does not even raise an issue, let alone create a presumption, that it was destroyed in anti-image fervor. To the contrary, it is far more reasonable to conclude that, had the image been destroyed by iconoclasts, iconophiles would have decried such an outrage in the numerous historical records which they generated after re-taking power in 775.

Second, the Image of God Incarnate was maintained within the imperial palace, was thereby protected from iconoclastic masses, and could not have been destroyed without Leo’s specific approval. As Professors Brubaker and Haldon have concluded, Leo was simply not a destroyer of religious images.

Third, the Image of God Incarnate was regarded as *acheiropoiotos* and, as noted by Professor Cormack, *acheiropoiotos* images “came with a story that their manufacture was not human but miraculous – in other words, some kind of divine intervention meant that they were in principle protected from iconoclast criticism that early materials were implicated in the

¹⁵⁹ Heinrich Pfeiffer, as quoted in Badde, Paul, *The Face of God* (see note 84), p. 130. He hypothesizes that it thereafter became, first, the Veronica and, later, the Veil of Manoppello.

representation of the being of Christ.¹⁶⁰ Thus, destruction of the Image of God Incarnate would not have advanced the iconoclastic agenda, and, in fact, such an act would have constituted both a religious sacrilege and an injury to Christian church property, a crime under the Theodosian Code.¹⁶¹

Fourth, the Image of God Incarnate was, in fact, mentioned after the onset of Byzantine iconoclasm. At the Council of Nicaea held in 787, Cosmas the Deacon and Chamberlain physically demonstrated how iconoclasts had unashamedly removed, from a martyrologium (a book describing martyrdoms), not only images but also the story of the Image of God Incarnate.¹⁶² Significantly, however, he neither charged them with having destroyed the image itself, nor alleged that it had been otherwise lost to history, thereby reflecting an iconophile understanding, at that time, that the Image of God Incarnate still existed.

Finally, and as will now be shown, the Image of God Incarnate's survival of Byzantine iconoclasm is positively confirmed by a previously-obscure text of the late eleventh century.

¹⁶⁰ Cormack, Robin, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks, and Shrouds* (see note 34), pp. 98-99.

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., Theodosian Code, xvi, 2, 25, 31, as cited in Boyd, William Kenneth, *The Ecclesiastical Edicts of the Theodosian Code*, p. 81, n. 3, Kessinger Publishing, LLC (Whitefish, Montana 2007).

¹⁶² “We have found also this book in the archives of the sacred oratory of the Patriarchate: it contained the conflict of various Martyrs, and besides, the account of the image of the Camulenses, not made with hands; but all that related to the image they (the iconoclasts) have cut out, and here it is for you to look for yourselves.” *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea, at Which the Worship of Images was Established*, Mendham, John (trans.) (see note 33), p. 287. See also Mansi, 13: 189B; Barber, Charles, *Figure and Likeness, On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Princeton University Press, p. 26 (Princeton 2003).

THE IMPERIAL COVENANT WITH GOD

In 1995, a Byzantine scholar, Krijnie N. Ciggaar, published a French translation of the anonymous Tarragonensis 55 (generally known as the Tarragon manuscript), datable to *ca.* 1075-1098, written in Latin, and maintained in the Public Library of Tarragon, Spain.¹⁶³ Likely composed during the reign of the emperor Alexios Komnenos (1081-1118), it names, as the city's most highly-venerated relic, an encased image of Jesus impressed upon linen:

There is in the same glorious city, the face of our Lord Jesus Christ on a linen cloth, made by Jesus himself in the following way, as the Greeks say. The above-mentioned King Abgar was in the city burning with a great desire to see the beautiful face of our Lord. Jesus knew of the king's desire and so took a linen cloth and wrapped his face in it—the form and figure of his face was imprinted on to the cloth. The Saviour thus sent his face to King Abgar on the linen cloth, so that he might see what he looked like. This wonderful linen cloth with the face of the Lord Jesus, marked by direct contact, is kept with greater veneration than the other relics in the palace, and held in such esteem that it is always kept in a golden case and very carefully locked up.¹⁶⁴

At first blush, this portion of the manuscript would seem to identify the referenced cloth as the Mandylion, which, as will be shown, had been brought to the capital from Edessa in 944; however, the author does not call it by that name, he does not connect it to the cloth which had arrived in Constantinople approximately a century and a half previously, and he does not place it in the renown Pharos Chapel, where the Mandylion had remained from the time of its arrival, thereby indicating that its location was unknown, very likely because, as will also be shown, it was secreted within the imperial palace. In addition, the recited history for this encased linen is entirely inconsistent with that of the Mandylion:

¹⁶³ Ciggaar, Krijnie N., *Une Description de Constantinople dans le Tarrogonensis 55*, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 53, pp. 117ff. (1995).

¹⁶⁴ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 181-182.

And when all the other palace relics are shown to the faithful at certain times, this linen cloth on which the face of our redeemer is depicted is not shown to anyone and is not opened up for anyone except the emperor of Constantinople. The case that stored the holy object used to be kept open once, but the whole city was struck by continuous earthquakes, and everyone was threatened with death. A heavenly vision revealed that the city would not be freed of such ill until such time as the linen cloth with the Lord's face on it should be locked up and hidden away, far from human eyes. And so it was done. The sacred linen cloth was locked away in a golden case and carefully sealed up, and then the earthquake stopped and the heaven-sent ills ceased. **From that time on nobody has dared to open the case or to see what might be inside it, as everyone believes and fears that if anyone tries to open it the whole city will be struck by another earthquake.**¹⁶⁵

The Image of Edessa/Mandylicon icon, on the other hand, had been viewed by any number of persons, and on multiple occasions, over the preceding centuries. The *Narratio de imagine Edessena* relates that, when the Mandylicon was obtained by the Byzantine army, it was closely inspected by Abramios, the Bishop of Samosata,¹⁶⁶ and its concluding section, the Liturgical Tractate,¹⁶⁷ reports that, during its previous centuries-long sojourn in Edessa, its container had been opened frequently in order to permit its regular viewing by both the clergy and the faithful. For example, on the first Sunday of Lent, a bishop “was allowed to draw near the holy and undefiled image, to revere it and to kiss it”, on the fourth day of the middle week of Lent, a bishop would open the chest, wipe the icon with a sponge soaked in water, and distribute this water to the people, and, on Wednesdays and Fridays during the year, the “image was beheld by all the congregation”.¹⁶⁸ Symeon Metaphrastes recites that, upon the arrival of the Mandylicon in Constantinople, “everyone was looking at the marvelous image of the Son of God on the holy

¹⁶⁵ *Id.* (emphasis provided).

¹⁶⁶ *Id.* at 47.

¹⁶⁷ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁶⁸ *Id.* at 65-67.

cloth, (and) the emperor's (Romanus Lecapenus') sons declared that they could only see the face, while Constantine (Porphyrogenitus) his son-in-law said he could see the eyes and ears".¹⁶⁹ Gregory Referendarius recites that he closely examined the image which he described as a reflection "imprinted only by the sweat from the face of the ruler of life, falling like drops of blood, and by the finger of God".¹⁷⁰ John Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Byzantine History* recites that, in 1036, the Mandylion was carried in procession through the capital in an attempt to end a six-month drought,¹⁷¹ and Abu Nasr Yahya, a Christian-Arab writer, claims to have viewed the icon within the Hagia Sophia Cathedral in 1058,¹⁷² although neither report specifically recites that the cloth itself had been publicly exhibited. Nevertheless, it is virtually certain that some Byzantine artists were given access to the Mandylion in order to produce the copies which are datable to 944-*ca.* 1090. Clearly, then, and in stark contrast to the history of the encased imaged linen cloth referenced in the Tarragon manuscript, the Image of Edessa/Mandylion had not been sealed within a golden case and thereafter kept from the viewing of all but the emperor himself.

Besides establishing that this most sacred cloth was not the Image of Edessa/Mandylion icon, the Tarragon manuscript provides information which rather precisely identifies it as the Image of God Incarnate. By both recounting that the golden case was open while continuous earthquakes ravaged "the whole city" and also prophesying that, were this sealed container to be

¹⁶⁹ *Id.* at 180.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.* at 85.

¹⁷¹ *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*, Wortley, John (ed.), pp. 377-378, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 2010).

¹⁷² Graf, G., *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literature, II*, pp. 259-260 (1944-53), as cited in Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 134.

re-opened by anyone other than the emperor, “the whole city” would be struck by another earthquake, it names the present situs of the cloth, Constantinople, as the city which had been previously ravaged by “continuous earthquakes”. Wilson has argued that the manuscript’s reference to “continuous earthquakes” is merely “a memory of the earthquakes which beset not Constantinople but Edessa in 679 and 717”;¹⁷³ however, the city of Edessa never experienced any earthquakes which could be fairly or reasonably be described as “continuous”, as the two Edessan earthquakes referenced by Wilson struck almost forty years apart and neither was reported to have been “continuous” in any fashion.¹⁷⁴

Thus, the cloth mentioned in the Tarragon manuscript must be identified with a Christ-imagined linen which had been maintained in Constantinople at a time when “continuous earthquakes” struck that city, and it is a matter of recorded history that, on October 26, 740, the Byzantine capital was struck by a major earthquake which was followed by “continuous earthquakes” over the course of the next twelve months.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud, the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved* (see note 35), pp. 326-327, n. 31. He had made this same claim in 2009. See Wilson, Ian, Book Review, Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa*, Brill, Leiden & Boston, 2009, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/edessa.pdf>.

¹⁷⁴ “In April 679 an earthquake, which completely razed Batnae, killed many people at Edessa. The *ciborium* of the Great church of Edessa collapsed, as well as its two outer sides, and was rebuilt at the order of Mu’awiya. Forty years later, probably in 717-18, occurred another earthquake and there were many victims. The Baptistry and again the Old church were destroyed, as well as many high buildings; where buildings did not fall, cracks appeared and ‘those who lived in them would tremble before the Lord whenever they saw these traces of the earthquake’.” Segal, J.B., *Edessa, The Blessed City* (see note 43), p. 204.

¹⁷⁵ One other Constantinopolitan earthquake could be called continuous, but its duration was brief and it caused limited damage. On January 9, 869, an earthquake which struck the capital and “continued for forty days and nights” destroyed the Church of the Virgin of the Sigma, and damaged St. Sophia, and, possibly, the Church of the Holy Apostles. Downey, Glanville, *Earthquakes at Constantinople and Vicinity, A.D. 342-1454*, *Speculum*, Vol. 30, No. 4, p. 599 (1955).

In the same year (740) a violent and fearful earthquake occurred at Constantinople on 26 October, indiction 9, a Wednesday, in the 8th hour. Many churches and monasteries collapsed and many people died. There also fell down the statue of Constantine the Great that stood above the gate of Atalos as well as that of Atalos himself, the statue of Arkadios that stood on the column of the Xerolophos, and the statue of Theodosios the Great above the Golden Gate, furthermore, the land walls of the City, many towns and villages in Thrace, Nicomedia in Bithynia, Prainetos, and Nicaea, where only one church was spared. In some places the sea withdrew from its proper boundaries. **The quakes continued for twelve months.**¹⁷⁶

The Byzantine chronicler, Nicephorus, reported that these continuous earthquakes caused great damage to the Church of St. Eirene, numerous other buildings, and the city's Theodosian walls.¹⁷⁷ An obviously-perplexed Leo III increased taxes in order to continually reconstruct the city's buildings and walls,¹⁷⁸ but, upon his death in 741, his son and successor, Constantine V, applied a purely-iconoclastic solution to what he perceived to be a divinely-dispensed problem. Again, quoting from the Tarragon manuscript:

A heavenly vision revealed that the city would not be freed of such ill until such time as the linen cloth with the Lord's face on it should be locked up and hidden away, far from human eyes. And so it was done. The sacred linen cloth was locked away in a golden case and carefully sealed up, and then the earthquake stopped and the heaven-sent ills ceased. From that time on nobody has dared to open the case or to see what might be inside it, as everyone believes and fears that if anyone tries to open it the whole city will be struck by another earthquake.¹⁷⁹

The one and only *acheiropoietos* Christ-image impressed upon linen then present in the city of Constantinople was the Image of God Incarnate, and, in October of 741, Emperor

¹⁷⁶ Theophanes, A.M. 6232, p. 412.6 ff. (emphasis provided).

¹⁷⁷ *Hist. Synt. (Nicephori opuscula historica)*, (ed. De Boor), p. 59.2-14, as cited in Downey, Glanville, *Earthquakes at Constantinople and Vicinity, A.D. 342-1454* (see note 175), pp. 598-599.

¹⁷⁸ Van Millingen, Alexander, *Byzantine Constantinople: the Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sights*, Cambridge University Press, p. 98 (New York 2010).

¹⁷⁹ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 181-182.

Constantine V, having interpreted the continuous earthquakes as a divine sign that the Image of God Incarnate should never again be viewed or employed for any imperial purpose, sealed it away, in a golden case, and, fortuitously and coincidentally, the earthquakes ceased. In making, and then keeping faith with, this covenant, Constantine and his successors effectively consigned the Turin Shroud to more than four and a half centuries of complete obscurity and, just as the invention of the Camuliana legend had accomplished some one hundred and seventy years previous, this agreement stole from the relic a very significant portion of its history. Although it is not reported, it is likely that the relic was thereupon locked away in the *skeuophylakion*, a round building of the imperial palace which housed, *inter alia*, the relic of the True Cross.¹⁸⁰

THE BLURRING OF IMAGE TEXTS

The institution of imperial iconoclasm in 726 created a very difficult situation for Byzantine image advocates. While desirous of basing their iconophile arguments upon Jesus having created a miraculous image of himself, their own *acheiropoietos* Image of God Incarnate had been popularly discredited both by military defeats incurred under its banner and also by the imperial failures of Justinian II. Thus, they were compelled to make a previously-irrelevant *acheiropoieton*, an image reportedly possessed by the Edessan Melkites, the principal symbol of their resistance to iconoclasm,¹⁸¹ and as a result of their doing so, texts alluding to the Edessa

¹⁸⁰ *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris de ceremoniis aulae byzantinae*, J. J. Reiske (ed.), II, 8, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (1829-1830). Partial edition with French transl. by A. Vogt, *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, Le Livre des Cérémonies, texte, I + II* (1935, 1939); *commentaire, I + II* (1935, 1940), as cited in Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), pp. 90-91.

¹⁸¹ Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth*, (see note 25), p. 56.

icon began to implicate the full-length image character of Constantinople's Image of God Incarnate.

The leading edge of this confusion is evidenced in two works referencing the Abgar legend and written, between 730 and 749, by John of Damascus in the relative safety of Moslem-ruled territory. In *De Imaginibus (On Images)*, the Damascene related that the facial image which Jesus had impressed upon a small cloth (*rakos*) which was thereafter presented to King Abgar had "survived to our own times";¹⁸² however, in *De fide Orthodoxa (On Orthodox Faith)*, he described that same cloth as a *himation*,¹⁸³ traditionally an oblong garment approximately two yards wide by three yards long¹⁸⁴ and fully capable of bearing a full-length image of Jesus' body, but he omitted any mention of its survival. While John does not seem to be aware of the existence of a full-length image of Jesus, his employment of these varying descriptions certainly indicates his knowledge of two entirely different-sized imaged cloths, with the *rakos* referencing the extant Image of Edessa, and the *himation* alluding to the Constantinopolitan Image of God Incarnate which he appears to fear may not have survived the onset of Byzantine iconoclasm.

A progression from confusion to commingling is reflected in the text of a sermon delivered by Pope Stephen III in *ca.* 769, some twenty-eight years after Constantine V had sealed the Image of God Incarnate in a golden case. In its original form, this sermon simply recounted

¹⁸² John of Damascus, *De Imaginibus, Oratio I*, in Kotter, Bonifatius (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Vol. 3, p. 114 (Berlin 1975), as cited in Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 152, n. 26.

¹⁸³ John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, in Kotter, Bonifatius (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Vol. 2, pp. 206-208 (Berlin 1973), as cited in Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 151, n. 25, text on p. 152.

¹⁸⁴ Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 39.

the Syriac Abgar legend which held that Jesus sent to Abgar a picture of his face on cloth;¹⁸⁵ however, at some time subsequent to its origination,¹⁸⁶ the text of this sermon was interpolated to recite that Jesus had “stretched out his whole body on a cloth, white as snow, on which the glorious image of the Lord’s face and the length of his whole body was so divinely transformed that it was sufficient for those who could not see the Lord bodily in the flesh, to see the transfiguration made on the cloth”.¹⁸⁷ Nicolotti perceives this interpolation to be “an attempt to adapt the story of the Edessean image to some other legend circulating at this time” and/or that it is “the product of confusion between different stories”,¹⁸⁸ and, indeed, it appears to constitute an importation of the full-length nature of Constantinople’s sequestered Image of God Incarnate into the familiar Abgar legend which implicates the Image of Edessa.

A morphing of the two images is also evident in the so-called “Latin Abgar Legend”, a narrative found in a Vatican Codex known as the *Treatise translated into Latin from a book of the Syrians*.¹⁸⁹ Dobschütz, who dated this text to ca. 800,¹⁹⁰ concluded that it “cannot have its

¹⁸⁵ See Nicolotti, Andrea, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin, The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend* (see note 56), pp. 114-115.

¹⁸⁶ Wilson has argued that this interpolation and other Western European references to a full-length image of Jesus on cloth were made shortly before the 1130, triggered by his theorized unfolding of the Mandylion/Turin Shroud. Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), pp. 135-136.

¹⁸⁷ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), Appendix: “Der alte lateinische Abgartext”, translation in Green, Maurus, *Enshrouded in Silence*, Ampleforth Journal, Vol. LXXIV, p. 333 (1969), and as cited in Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 135.

¹⁸⁸ Nicolotti, Andrea, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin, The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend* (see note 56), p. 115.

¹⁸⁹ *Codice Vossianus latinus Q69*.

¹⁹⁰ The Latin version of the Abgar Legend, translated perhaps as late as the eleventh or early twelfth century, reflects a much earlier stage of the legend. Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder*

origins in Edessa”.¹⁹¹ The codex relates that that Jesus, having informed Abgar that “... if you wish to see my face in the flesh, behold I send to you a linen, on which you will discover not only the features of my face, but a divinely copied configuration of my entire body”,

...spread out his entire body on a linen cloth that was white as snow. On this cloth, marvelous as it is to see or even hear such a thing, the glorious features of that lordly face, and the majestic form of his whole body were so divinely transferred, that for those who did not see the Lord when he had come in the flesh, this transfiguration on the linen makes it quite possible for them to see.¹⁹²

It is obvious that this text cannot possibly apply to the facial portrait which was the Image of Edessa. Yet, it recites that “this linen, which until now remains uncorrupted by the passage of time, is kept in Syrian Mesopotamia at the city of Edessa in a great cathedral”.¹⁹³ Thus, it is quite evident that, by the ninth century, there is residual knowledge of the one-time existence of a full-length image of Jesus—that which is presented on the Image of God Incarnate—but that, with this cloth now long sealed away in the imperial palace, the size of its image has been imputed to the only then-acknowledged extant *acheiropoietos* image of Christ—the famous facial portrait of Jesus maintained in Moslem-ruled Edessa.

Thus, after the death of Constantine V in 775 and the resultant transfer of imperial power to iconophiles, Leo the Anagnostes of the Church of Constantinople reported to the Second

(see note 61), pp. 139** and 194*, at Document 40 (Kap. V), as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 47. Andrea Nicolotti would ascribe this text to the tenth or eleventh century. Nicolotti, Andrea, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin, The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend* (see note 56), p. 112.

¹⁹¹ Nicolotti, Andrea, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin, The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend* (see note 56), p. 112.

¹⁹² Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), “Latin Abgar Legend”, 4-7, “Beilage III”, p. 134**, cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), pp. 46-47.

¹⁹³ *Codice Vossianus latinus* Q69. Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), “Latin Abgar Legend”, 6-7, “Beilage III”, p. 134**, as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 47.

Council of Nicaea, held in 787, that “when I, your unworthy servant, went to Syria with the royal commission, I came to Edessa and saw the holy image that was not made by human hands, held in honour and venerated by the faithful.”¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it was the provenance of the sequestered full-length Image of God Incarnate, and not the Image of Edessa facial portrait, which, during those proceedings, was referenced in a sermon ascribed to Athanasius, the fourth-century bishop of Alexandria (*ca.* 328-373),¹⁹⁵ but quite possibly yet another iconophile invention.¹⁹⁶ This sermon relates the story of a certain “image of our Lord and Saviour at full length” which had been “painted on a tablet of boards”.¹⁹⁷ The leaders of the local Jewish community, in imitation of the tortures and abuses scripturally accorded to Jesus, spit in its face, buffeted, mocked, and insulted it, drove nails through its hands and feet, put a vinegar-filled sponge to its mouth, and struck its head with a reed. When, as a final mockery, they pierced its side with a spear, a large quantity of blood and water burst forth,¹⁹⁸ a mixture employed to cure the paralyzed, the possessed, and the blind, thereby bringing about the conversion of the entire Jewish community.¹⁹⁹ The Latin version of the Council’s proceedings recites the following history of this full-length image of Jesus:

¹⁹⁴ Mansi 13, 192, as cited in Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 178-179.

¹⁹⁵ *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea, Held A.D. 787, in Which the Worship of Images was Established*, Mendham, John (trans.) (see note 33), pp. 146ff.

¹⁹⁶ “Sigebert, a writer of the twelfth century, would fix it for the year 765, about twenty years before the Council; but the annalist (Cardinal Caesar Baronius) prefers the account given in the ancient Lectionaries of the Church, which suppose the event to have occurred in the reign of Constantine and Irene (which began in 780 CE)”. *Id.* at 146, note *.

¹⁹⁷ *Id.* at 147.

¹⁹⁸ *Id.* at 149.

¹⁹⁹ *Id.* at 150-151.

Nicodemus made it and gave it on his death-bed to Gamaliel. Gamaliel, when he was about to die, gave it to James. James left it to Simeon and Zaccheus, among whose successors it was preserved till the destruction of Jerusalem. Two years before the destruction of Jerusalem, all the Christians left it and betook themselves to the kingdom of Agrippa. At which time, among other things belonging to the Church, this image also was carried away and ever since remained in Syria: this I having received as birth-right from my parents when dying, have had in my possession till the present time.²⁰⁰

The sermon's report of the conveyance of an image of Jesus from Jerusalem to Syria fits well with Professor Downey's observation that, upon the outbreak of the Jewish War with Rome, many Christian refugees had fled to Antioch and brought 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".²⁰¹ If, in fact, this sermon was actually written in the fourth century, the then still-prevailing Discipline of the Secret would have required the metaphorical conversion of a full-length image of a tortured and crucified Jesus impressed upon his burial cloth into a full-length image of Jesus painted on a board which was subjected to the same passion and crucifixion wounds that are evidenced on the relic. Even were this sermon not actually written in the fourth-century, it certainly reflects a late eighth-century tradition of an extant full-length image of Jesus which dates to apostolic times and evinces the wounds of his passion and crucifixion. Parenthetically, this sermon inspired the late eleventh or early twelfth-century legend of the Crucifix of Beirut,²⁰² an object which was reportedly made by Nicodemus and jetted blood upon a group of Beirut Jews who were abusing it.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ *Id.* at 147-148, note *. This language is very similar, but not identical, to that reported in Mansi (see note 61).

²⁰¹ Downey, Glanville, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (see note 69), pp. 286-287.

²⁰² Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), vol. 3, p. 282.

By 813, the iconophile-ruled Byzantine Empire had suffered a series of military defeats at the hands of Bulgar and Arab forces,²⁰⁴ and Emperor Leo V, convinced that the military successes of his predecessors Leo III and Constantine V were attributable to their opposition to religious images, re-established imperial iconoclasm. In *ca.* 836, certain miraculous images were enumerated in the extremely-controversial *Letter of the Three Patriarchs*²⁰⁵ which did not specifically reference the Image of God Incarnate, but did mention a so-called “*soudarion*”.²⁰⁶ When iconoclasm finally ended in 843, the Turin Shroud was kept sealed within in its golden case, not because of any substantial lingering aversion to religious images, but because Byzantine rulers continued to fear that, should they break the imperial covenant with God, their capital city, and perhaps their entire empire, would be destroyed by continuous earthquakes.

THE MANDYLION AND THE SINDON

Freed from the taboos required by iconoclasm, Byzantine emperors renewed the ancient tradition of procuring relics for the capital city, first building the Pharos Chapel in 775-780, then extensively rehabilitating it in 842-867, and ultimately turning it into “the emperor’s chapel par excellence” which hosted the Holy Lance, a portion of the True Cross, the right arm of John the

²⁰³ Webb, Diana M., *The Holy Face of Lucca*, in Brown, R. Allen (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies IX, Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, The Boydell Press, p. 229, n. 11 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1987).

²⁰⁴ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 6.

²⁰⁵ This letter, which lists twelve extant major or miraculous images, was presumably written in 836, possibly in Constantinople, and, as previously noted, it has been described by scholars as, *inter alia*, doctored, bizarre and a fake. See Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), pp. 47-48.

²⁰⁶ *Id.* at 48.

Baptist, the Holy Keramion, Jesus' sandals, and Jesus' letter to Abgar.²⁰⁷ Imperial ambitions to obtain the Image of Edessa were spawned in 787 when iconophiles elevated it to celebrity status at the Second Council of Nicaea by emphasizing, or inventing, the Evagrius siege icon passage which proclaimed the icon as a proven palladium that could save a city from conquest. In *ca.* 836, the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem may have informed the iconoclastic emperor Theophilus Iconomachus that their inspection of Edessan state manuscripts had verified that the icon's the image was formed when Jesus "wiped the sweat that was running down his face like drops of blood in his agony, and, miraculously, just as he made everything from nothing in his divine strength, he imprinted the reflection of his form on the linen".²⁰⁸ Whether or not this actually transpired,²⁰⁹ it is rather clear that ninth and tenth-century Byzantine emperors were awaiting an opportunity to expropriate, as both a relic and a palladium, the famous Image of Edessa.

A fortuitous opening to do so presented itself in 943 when, with Moslem power temporarily weakened, Romanus Lecapenus dispatched an army to Mesopotamia. His extremely able commander, John Curcuas, negotiated an arrangement with Islamic authorities pursuant to which, in return for the imaged cloth, he spared the city, guaranteed it against future Byzantine attack, released two hundred Moslem prisoners, and paid over the sum of twelve thousand silver coins, and, after the Melkite-owned image had been certified as genuine by the Bishop of Samasato,²¹⁰ it was conveyed to the emperor in Constantinople and given a legendary biography.

²⁰⁷ Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), pp. 91-92.

²⁰⁸ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), pp. 73-77.

²⁰⁹ See Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), pp. 47-48.

²¹⁰ *Id.* at 43-47.

The *Narratio de imagine Edessena*, presumably “written by a cleric at the court of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos”,²¹¹ describes the Edessa icon as linen cloth bearing an image of Jesus’ face which was created when Jesus’ either “washed his face in water and wiped the liquid from it onto a cloth that he had been handed, and arranged in a divine way beyond understanding for his own likeness to be imprinted upon the cloth”,²¹² or “wiped off the streams of sweat on it (and) the figure of his divine face, which is still visible, was immediately transferred onto it.”²¹³ The *Narratio* claims that the cloth was presented to Abgar, then hidden in a wall located above a city gate at a time of persecution initiated by Abgar’s pagan grandson, and, in the sixth century, rediscovered (along with a lighted lamp and a tile on which a copy of the image had formed) by a mythical Edessan bishop named Eulalius, during an attack on the city by the Persian army under King Chosroes.²¹⁴ As previously noted, this legendary narrative correlates with the historical hypothesis that the Image of God Incarnate was presented, in ca. 190, to King Abgar the Great of Edessa, returned to Antioch and hidden, during a time of persecution by the pagan emperor, Julian, in a wall located above that city’s Gate of the Cherubim, rediscovered there during major reconstruction of the city walls, and protected by Patriarch Ephraemius shortly before the fall of Antioch to the army of King Chosroes. In addition, the *Narratio*’s claim that the Image of Edessa was rediscovered in the company of a lighted lamp appears to have been drawn from Pseudo-Gregory’s seventh-century account of the

²¹¹ Drijvers, *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), p. 14.

²¹² Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 21.

²¹³ *Id.* at 25.

²¹⁴ *Id.* at 33-39.

Image of God Incarnate having been rediscovered in a wall, along with a lighted votive lamp, by Bishop Gregory of Nyssa.²¹⁵

Accorded numerous honors, the Image of Edessa was laid upon the imperial throne and then taken to the relic-rich Pharos Chapel where it was “placed on the right toward the east for the glory of the faithful, the safety of the emperors and the security of the whole city together with the Christian community”.²¹⁶ In performing these ceremonials, the emperor effectively “underlined its new function as the protector of Constantinople and of the dynasty” and created an impetus for producing visual representations of it.²¹⁷ In time, this icon became known as the Mandylion, and, although frequently copied, it was rarely removed from the Pharos Chapel—as previously noted, in 1036, it was carried in procession through the capital, and, in 1058, it may have been exhibited within the Hagia Sophia cathedral.²¹⁸ Mentioned in several relic inventories and visitor reports of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the Mandylion was last reported, by the French crusader Robert de Clari, stored within a golden chest hung by silver chains from the ceiling of the Pharos Chapel. Although historical proof of its ultimate fate is not absolute, many scholars, including Steven Runciman and Averil Cameron, believe that it survived the fall of Constantinople and was sold, in 1247, to King Louis IX who installed in Paris’ Sainte Chapelle, where, in 1794, it was seized and destroyed by the forces of the French Revolution.

²¹⁵ Dobschütz, Ernst von, *Christusbilder* (see note 61), “Beilage I,” pp. 12**-18**, as cited in Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), pp. 70-71; Kitzinger, Ernst, *The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm* (see note 80), pp. 120-121. See also Kuryluk, Ewa, *Veronica and Her Cloth* (see note 25), p. 31.

²¹⁶ Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 21.

²¹⁷ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 35.

²¹⁸ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 134.

As to the emperor's second sacred cloth, the sequestered Image of God Incarnate, in 958, the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus VII sent to his army of Asia Minor a harangue, or letter of encouragement, advising that they would receive, for their protection, water which had been consecrated through contact with certain enumerated Passion relics, including a so-called *theophoron sindonos*—a “God-worn” or “God-bearing” linen sheet.²¹⁹ Clearly, this harangue does not allude to the recently-obtained Mandylion, an icon never deemed a Passion relic, and the emperor's reference to a “God-bearing sindon” implicates a cloth which had either borne Jesus' crucified body and/or presented an image of same. The only other Christ-imaged cloth ever owned by the Byzantine emperors was the Image of God Incarnate, and the imperial covenant with God specifically provided the emperor with obtaining access to it.

As previously noted, in *ca.* 1090, the Image of God Incarnate, sealed within its golden case, was referenced in the Tarragon manuscript and, at approximately that same time, the emperor Alexios Comnenus (1081-1118), in need of Western military support, reportedly sent a letter to Count Robert of Flanders in which he mentioned that among his relics were “the linens which were found in the tomb after his resurrection”. While the authenticity of this particular letter has been challenged,²²⁰ Alexios did, in fact, send letters seeking military assistance during

²¹⁹ Dubarle, A.M., *Histoire Ancienne du linceul de Turin jusqu' au XIII siècle* (Paris: O.E.I.L 1985) 55f. See also de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection* (see note 66), pp. 177-178.

²²⁰ *Epistula Alexii I. Komneni ad Robertum comitem Flandrum, in Epistulae et chartae adhistoriam primi belli sacri spectantes quae supersunt aevo aequales ac genuinae. DieKreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100*, H. Hagenmeyer (ed.) p. 134 (1901), English transl.: E. Joranson, The Problem of the Spurious Letter of Emperor Alexius to the Count of Flanders, in: *American Historical Review* 55, pp. 811-832 (1949/50), as cited in Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), p. 92.

this difficult period and specifically sought the assistance of the Count of Flanders.²²¹ In 1097, as the First Crusade passed through Constantinople en route to the Holy Land, Alexius required its leaders to swear “on the cross of the Lord and the Crown of Thorns, and many other holy objects” that, should they reconquer any Moslem-controlled territory formerly owned by the Byzantine emperor, they would not keep it for themselves.²²² The “holy objects” upon which these Crusader oaths were sworn may have included the golden case which held the Image of God Incarnate and, in any event, it would appear that Alexios advised the leaders of the Crusade that he was in possession of an image of Jesus’ entire body impressed upon cloth. The Norman lord, Bohemond, was one of the leaders of the First Crusade who took this oath and, in *ca.* 1130-1140, a Norman monk, Orderic Vitalis, published a *History of the Church* in which he reported that Abgar had been presented with a cloth displaying “the likeness and proportions of the body of the Lord”.

During the thirty-eight year reign of Manuel I Comnenus, which began in 1143, various visitors to Constantinople provided reports which confirmed his ownership of two distinct sacred cloths—Jesus’ burial shroud and a cloth bearing an image of Jesus’ face. In 1150, an English pilgrim mentioned both a *sudarium* which had been placed over the Lord’s head, and also a *mantile* which presented an image of the Lord’s face.²²³ So too did Nicholas Soemundarson, an

²²¹ Alexios’ daughter, Anna Komnena, writes that “things were not going well for Alexios either by sea or on land. ... Still the emperor did all that he could by summoning mercenaries by letter from all quarters. ... The emperor himself summoned the 500 Kelts of the count of Flanders from Nikomedia...”. Komnene, Anna, *The Alexiad* 8:3-5.

²²² *Le «liber» de Raymond d’Aguilers*, J. Hugh und L. L. Hill (eds). Documents des Recueils des Historiens des Croisades 9, p. 93 (1969), as cited by Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), p. 94.

²²³ Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud* (see note 37), p. 271.

Icelandic abbot, who, in 1157, reported the simultaneous presence of “the *sudarium* which was over his (Jesus’) head”, and “the *mantile* which our Lord held to his face, and on which the image of his face was preserved”.²²⁴ An 1190 listing of imperial relics included not only the “sindon” but also the imaged towel sent by Jesus to King Abgar of Edessa,²²⁵ and, in 1200, Archbishop Anthony of Novgorod mentioned both a linen and a second linen bearing a representation of Jesus’ face.²²⁶ In 1201, Nicholas Mesarites, the imperial *skeuophylax*, or relic custodian, stated that the Pharos Chapel held both a burial sindon which had “...wrapped the mysterious, naked dead body after the Passion”, and also a “towel (*cheiromanteion*) with a ‘prototypal’ image of Jesus on it ‘as if by some art of drawing not wrought by hand’”.²²⁷ Finally, the crusader Robert de Clari reported the simultaneous presence, in 1203-1204, of an imaged full-length shroud, which was exhibited weekly in a Blachernae church, and an imaged face cloth that was maintained within a rich vessel of gold that hung “in the midst of the (Pharos) chapel by two heavy silver chains”.²²⁸ In accordance with Constantine V’s covenant with God, however, none of these visitors claimed to have actually viewed the imperial sindon or made mention of it bearing an image.

²²⁴ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 143.

²²⁵ Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud* (see note 37), p. 271.

²²⁶ Anthony of Novgorod, *Le Livre du Pèlerin*, French transl. by M. Erhard, Romania 58 (1932), p. 57, as cited by Klein, Holger A., *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople* (see note 85), p. 92.

²²⁷ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), p. 144; Wilson, Ian, *The Blood and the Shroud* (see note 37), p. 272.

²²⁸ Wilson, Ian, *The Shroud of Turin, The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?* (see note 15), pp. 144-145; p. 141.

In 1162, Prince Béla of Hungary became engaged to marry the daughter of the heirless Emperor Manuel, and, in 1165, while serving as emperor-designate, he may have viewed the imperial sindon or had the details of its image described to him. When Manuel's wife became pregnant and produced a son, Béla's engagement to his daughter was cancelled, and he later married Manuel's sister-in-law, and succeeded to the Hungarian throne. In 1192-1195, several sets of notes relating to Hungary's history were assembled into a codex which is now known as the Hungarian Pray Manuscript and contains an illustration (Figure 13)

Figure 13



which depicts a dead Jesus who is naked and has arms crossed at the wrists, exceptionally elongated fingers, no thumbs, and a bloodstain on his forehead above the right eye. A second illustration (Figure 14)

Figure 14



portrays either a burial cloth, or a sepulcher lid, which possesses a herringbone-like pattern and holes arranged like an inverted-L. The modern art historian, Thomas de Wesselow, has asked:

Does this not look like an attempt to imagine the burial of Christ on the basis of the Shroud? What are the odds in favor of all these rare correspondences with the Shroud occurring in the same image just by chance?²²⁹

These similarities suggest that Béla viewed the Turin Shroud while serving as Byzantine emperor-designate and that, after he became King of Hungary, he provided details of its image and cloth to the codex illustrator.²³⁰ Should the Turin Shroud be identifiable as the twelfth-century imperial sindon, as suggested by the illustrations of the Hungarian Pray Manuscript, the accuracy of the 1988 carbon dating tests, which assigned to the relic an earliest-possible birth date of 1260, would not be sustainable.

THE COVENANT BROKEN

The imperial covenant with God was broken at the turn of the thirteenth century. Nicholas Mesarites' statement, in 1201, that Jesus' resurrection was being reenacted in Pharos Chapel ceremonies which involved a sindon that had "...wrapped the mysterious, naked dead body after the Passion" confirms that he, and the other participants in this rite, had viewed the image, very likely whenever they lifted the cloth to a vertical position. Three aspects of Mesarites' statement identify this sindon as the Turin Shroud: his description of the body as naked, his use of the adjective *aperilepton*, meaning "unoutlined", which aptly describes the

²²⁹ de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 179.

²³⁰ Thomas de Wesselow suggests that the artist observed the Turin Shroud directly, which is unlikely given the imperial covenant with God. "Given the close links at the time between Hungary and Byzantium, it can hardly be doubted that the artist saw the relic in Constantinople. The Shroud was the Byzantine Sindon." *Id.* at 180.

relic's blurry image, and his claim that the cloth had defied destruction, alluding no doubt to the fire damage evidenced by the relic's so-called "poker holes".²³¹

Clearly, in order for Mesarites to have opened the golden case, removed and viewed the image, and employed the cloth ceremonially, he would have had to have obtained the approval of the reigning emperor, Alexios III Angelos (1195-1203). To understand how, after more than four and a half centuries, a Byzantine ruler could break, with impunity, an imperial covenant with God, and thereby place his capital and empire at risk of divine retribution, the character of Alexios must be fully appreciated. In 1185, with the connivance of his father and brothers, he unsuccessfully attempted to depose his cousin, the emperor Andronikos I Comnenus (1183-1185), and was sent into exile. His younger brother, Isaac, facing execution for treason, appealed to the populace, which rioted, deposed Andronikos, and proclaimed him emperor. Although Isaac brought Alexios back to the imperial court, in 1195, Alexios exploited his younger brother's temporary absence from the capital, seized the throne, and had him arrested, blinded, and imprisoned. Alexios spent lavishly and emptied the imperial treasury, and when, in 1196, the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI, demanded tribute and threatened to invade the empire, he plundered gold and silver from imperial tombs located within the church of the Holy Apostles.²³² In 1203, Alexios was deposed by the Fourth Crusade and fled the capital, later blinding one son-in-law who had fled to him for protection and conspiring against another who had attempted to assist him. His serial treachery and flagrant desecration of the tombs of his imperial predecessors amply demonstrate that he cared nothing about loyalty or honor, and that he would have thought nothing of breaking a centuries-old imperial covenant with God.

²³¹ *Id.* at 176-177.

²³² Harris, Jonathan, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, p. 149, Hambledon Continuum (London 2003).

After the leaders of the Fourth Crusade had deposed Alexios, they awaited the promised payment for their services from the newly-installed Byzantine co-emperors, Isaac and his son, Alexios. As they waited, their men freely strolled the magnificent streets of Constantinople, and one of their number, Robert de Clari, would later report that, in the Blachernae church of My Lady St. Mary, the emperor kept “the sheets (*sydoines*) in which Our Lord had been wrapped, which every Friday rose up straight, so that one could clearly see the figure of Our Lord on it”.²³³ This was almost certainly the same burial cloth which Nicholas Mesarites had employed in the Pharos Chapel resurrection reenactment rite,²³⁴ and several modern art historians have identified it as the Turin Shroud. The late Ernst Kitzinger, a specialist in Byzantine art, reportedly stated that “for us, a very small group of experts around the world, we believe the Shroud of Turin is the Shroud of Constantinople.”²³⁵ The eminent Hans Belting has concluded that “the authentic relic of the Holy Shroud (which was) preserved in the chapel of the Palace before it ended up in Turin”,²³⁶ inspired both *threnos* art featuring a lamenting Virgin Mary (Figure 15),

²³³ Robert de Clari, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, P. Lauer (ed.), p. 90 (Paris, 1924), as cited in de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 175.

²³⁴ “There can be no doubt that Nicholas is referring to the same relic as that seen by Robert de Clari. He calls it the *sindones*, just as Robert refers to it as the *sydoines*—the same word in Old French. Both witnesses identify it as the linen in which Jesus was wrapped, and there cannot have been more than one cloth claiming this distinction at the same time in the same city.” de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 176.

²³⁵ Lavoie, Gilbert, *Resurrected, Tangible Evidence that Jesus Rose from the Dead*, Thomas Moore, pp. 73-74 (Allen, Texas 2000).

²³⁶ Belting, Hans, *An Image and Its Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Vol. 34/35, p. 6 (1980/1981). “Writing in 1981, before the carbon dating of the Shroud, the eminent art historian Hans Belting was happy to assert that Robert’s (de Clari) sindon was ‘probably identical with the Shroud of Turin’.” de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 176.

Figure 15



and also *epitaphioi* portrayals of a dead Jesus lying upon his burial cloth with his arms crossed at the wrist (Figure 16).²³⁷

Figure 16



Thomas de Wesselow has concluded that by “taking the historical evidence on its own, it is perfectly reasonable to connect the cloth seen by Robert de Clari with the Shroud”,²³⁸ and that “the Shroud of Turin, then, was once the Sindon of Constantinople”.²³⁹

²³⁷ Such as the *Man of Sorrows* icon and the Belgrade *epitaphios* commissioned by the Serbian king Uros II Milutin (1282-1321),

²³⁸ de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 176.

²³⁹ *Id.* at 181.

Constantinople was overrun by a marauding Crusader army on April 12, 1204 and, according to Robert de Clari, "...no one, either Greek or French, ever knew what became of this sydoine after the city was taken".²⁴⁰ It was approximately a century and a half later when the cloth now known as the Turin Shroud seemingly came out of nowhere and was exhibited in Lirey, France by Geoffrey de Charny.

THE IMAGE OF EDESSA ORIGINATION THEORY

If, as concluded, the Image of Edessa/Mandylion icon was not the Turin Shroud, the question arises as to when, how, and why was this icon created. In 1930, Steven Runciman, mindful of the Evagrius narrative, proposed that, in 544, "in the stress of the (Persian) siege, possibly in the course of the mining work, an old icon fell into the hands of the orthodox clergy, who, knowing the tradition, gave it out to be the portrait of Christ".²⁴¹ Runciman's proposal is, of course, quite consistent with the subsequent shared conclusion of Averil Cameron and Irma Karaulashvili that the early Edessa icon did not even look like a cloth and was probably a painting on wood. Nevertheless, it is rather clear that the icon brought from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 was, in fact an image of Jesus' face impressed upon a linen cloth, as the *Narratio de imagine Edessena* recited that this image was "transferred with no artistic intervention onto the cloth that received it by the supernatural will of its maker",²⁴² and

²⁴⁰ Robert de Clari, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, P. Lauer (ed.), p. 90 (Paris, 1924), as cited in de Wesselow, Thomas, *The Sign, the Shroud of Turin and the Secret of the Resurrection*, (see note 66), p. 175.

²⁴¹ Runciman, Steven, *Some Remarks on the Image of Edessa* (see note 17), pp. 243ff.

²⁴² Guscini, Mark, *The Image of Edessa* (see note 47), p. 9.

Archdeacon Gregory Referendarius sermonized that, employing his sweat, Jesus had “imprinted the reflection of his form on the linen”.²⁴³

Professor Cameron addressed this dichotomy by suggesting that, between the sixth and tenth centuries, the Edessenes transformed their holy image “from icon to cloth”, both to conform it to the *acheiropoietos tetradiplon* that had been described in the seventh-century *Acts of Thaddeus*,²⁴⁴ and also to endow it with even greater importance than it possessed previously, as “it could now be held to bear the genuine traces of Christ’s own face, when he pressed the cloth against it”.²⁴⁵ Given that, as previously noted, the Image of Edessa was quite successfully copied, at the beginning of the eighth century, by Athanasius bar Gumoye’s artist, its transformation from wood to cloth is likely to have taken place during the eighth, ninth, or first half of the tenth century.

With regard to the origination of the icon in its original form, a painting on wood, Han Drijvers has cited a ninth-century report that the orthodox Edessan Melkites had possessed their sacred image “from the time of the Greek kings until it was taken away from them by Athanasius bar Gumoye”,²⁴⁶ and, identifying these “Greek kings” as the Byzantine emperors Tiberius II and Maurice,²⁴⁷ he has fixed the probable date of the Melkites’ acquisition of this icon as transpiring between 578 and 602. As previously noted, it was during this precise period that the Byzantine

²⁴³ *Id.* at 77.

²⁴⁴ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 37. See also Drews, Robert, *In Search of the Shroud of Turin* (see note 89), p. 116, n. 20.

²⁴⁵ Cameron, Averil, *The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm* (see note 38), p. 40.

²⁴⁶ *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, II, 476-477 (11.16b)*, cited by Drijvers in *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), p. 22.

²⁴⁷ Drijvers, Han J. W., *The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition* (see note 28), p. 22.

army, in its Persian campaigns, employed *labara* which displayed the likeness of the Image of God Incarnate and which, it may be reasonably inferred, were made of linen in imitation of the archetype which had been worshipped to an ineffable degree. When, in 588, the troops encamped at Monocarton mutinied and “even pelted the ineffable object with stones”,²⁴⁸ their newly-appointed army commander, Priscus, fled the camp on horseback for the city of Constantina, and, I would suggest, took the *labarum* with him for its protection. At that time, “the leader of the clergy of Edessa”, most certainly its orthodox Melkite bishop, was visiting Constantina, and agreed to negotiate with the mutinous troops, but “after coming to the army and expending many words, made his return without success”. When Priscus then “took up residence” in Edessa, his army, under a newly-elected general, marched against that city and forced him to flee to Constantinople,²⁴⁹ leaving the *labarum* in Edessa. Shortly thereafter, the Melkites painted a copy of its image on wood so that they could claim to be in possession of the portrait of Jesus which had been described in the early fifth-century *Doctrine of Addai*. When the publication of the *Acts of Thaddeus* implicated an image of Jesus’ face on cloth and, as Professor Cameron has suggested, the Melkites then required such an image, they made the *labarum* itself the Image of Edessa. In 944, when the cloth was brought to Constantinople, the former *labarum* had not been seen by Byzantines for some three centuries and its image may have faded considerably over that period.

²⁴⁸ Theophylact Simocatta, Book Three, 1.9-12, in Whitby, Michael and Mary, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (see note 88), p. 73.

²⁴⁹ *Id.* at 74-75.

The typical Byzantine *labarum* was square or rectangular in shape, featured a fringe along the bottom, and sometimes displayed an image, or images, such as the military standard which featured Constantine the Great and two of his sons (Figure 17).

Figure 17



The imaged linen cloth brought from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 was likely rather accurately depicted in the St. Catherine panel painting of Abgar receiving the portrait of Jesus, dated to 945-959 (Figure 18),

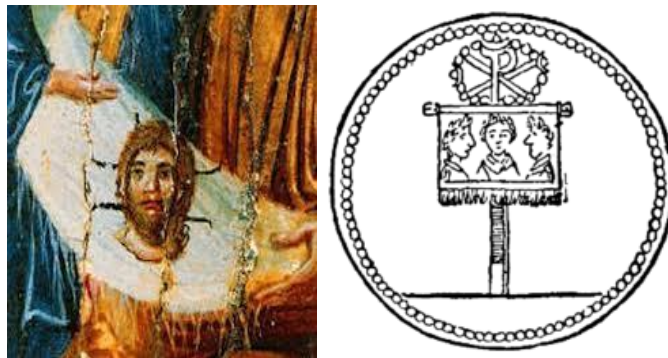
Figure 18



as it portrays Emperor Constantine VII as the Edessan king, and it depicts the Image of Edessa as a relatively small cloth, square or rectangular in shape, bearing a fringe at its bottom, and presenting a Pantocrator image of Jesus' head and neck.²⁵⁰

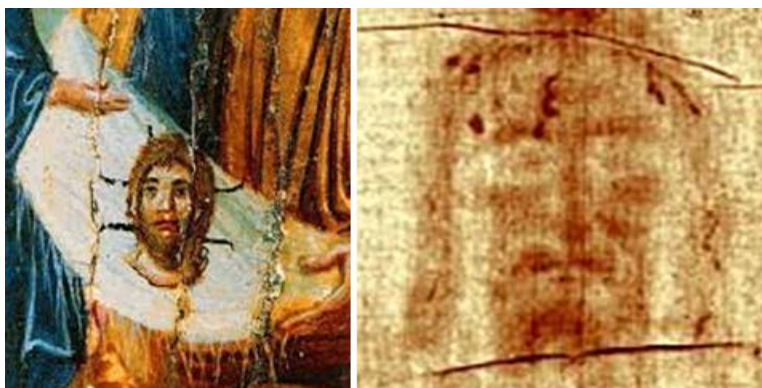
Not only does the cloth of the Image of Edessa, as so depicted, strongly resemble an imaged Byzantine *labarum* (see Figure 19),

Figure 19



but also the image of Jesus presented on that cloth mirrors the facial image of the Turin Shroud, absent its wounds and bloodstains, particularly with regard to their respective mouths, beards, and uneven lengths of hair (see Figure 20),

Figure 20



²⁵⁰ Parenthetically, the twelfth-century Madrid Skylitzes manuscript also depicts the Mandylion as having a fringe, but it appears at the top of the cloth, perhaps because the bottom of the cloth is obscured by the figure of a clearly-grateful emperor.

and if the tenth-century Image of Edessa was, in fact, a late sixth-century Byzantine *labarum*, an object which modern scholars “nearly universally believe” to have been modeled upon Constantinople’s Image of God Incarnate,²⁵¹ then that archetypal *acheiropoietos* image of Jesus was almost certainly the Shroud of Turin.

²⁵¹ Brubaker, Leslie, and Haldon, John, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* (see note 88), p. 55.