

THE SHROUD AND THE MANDYLION - A MAJOR NEW MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERY

In his book *Das Turiner grabtuch und das Christusbild*, published last year, Professor Werner Bulst has drawn attention to a text on the Mandylicon hitherto unknown to those sympathetic to the hypothesis that the Mandylicon of Edessa was one and the same as the Turin Shroud. The text, listed in the Vatican Library as Cod. Vat. Graec. 511, pp. 143-50b, is attributed to Gregory, a high official of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople, and appears to date from the time of the Mandylicon's reception into Constantinople in 944. Certainly the detail with which the event is described, particularly with regard to the ceremonial, and those present, indicates that the author must have been an eyewitness.

But the particularly interesting feature of this text, which is exceptionally sober and factual in style, is its reference to the image on the Mandylicon, and its manner of formation. According to Bulst:

After having related the legend of Abgar, Gregory describes and explains the image in a manner for which up to now we have found no parallel. The image was uniquely formed by the sweat of death pouring down his face. He [then] speaks of the "side" [πλευρα] and of the "blood and water found there" [αιμα και υδορ εκει], and the wound in the side. He must have seen the cloth up close and thus we may suppose that he belonged to the imperial delegation responsible in 943 for the reception and verification of the Edessa image.

Bulst goes on, in a paragraph on how the cloth was mounted in its frame:

Gregory's attestation of the side wound confirms anew the identification of the Edessa image and the Turin Shroud. That the wound with its blood and water is not mentioned elsewhere is easily explained. The image was not shown in public. Those who were allowed to see it up to the 12th century were not shown the side, along with the face. If Gregory saw more, it can only be explained by him having been given responsibility to verify the image before taking possession of it.

Until now the text has only been available, unrecognized and unedited, in *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd, ed., F. Halkin, 1957, vol. III, p.111, 7g, in an appendix on the Edessa image and Christ, in the series *Subsidia hagiographica* no. 8, published by the Bollandists of Brussels.