A Review of Recent Scholarly Literature on the Historical Documents Pertaining to the Turin Shroud and the Edessa Icon

Daniel Scavone, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Southern Indiana

FOREWORD.

My paper offers a commentary to recent scholarly discussions of the Edessa image and the Shroud, especially those generated by the contributors to the journal *Approfondimento Sindone.* One must respect seriously the philological researches of some members of that group, most notably Antonio Lombatti and Fr. Pier Angelo Gramaglia. Their studies and those of academicians who specialize in Byzantine and Syriac history have opened new avenues by which previous theories about the ancient history (A.D. 30 to 1355) of the Shroud of Turin will be refined. It remains true that beginning from different premises, researchers will be led to different conclusions. Therefore, their work, as this, must be taken as hypothesis. I begin with the Shroud itself, omitting from consideration here only the C14 dating, which must be left to qualified scientists to sort out, unless the work of M. Sue Benford and Joseph Marino in the present volume has settled that issue. At this moment, it remains entirely possible, as one reads in the numerous remarks made by C14 practitioners, that incorrect datings are frequently caused by unsuspected contaminants on their samples (Meacham, 1986; Scavone, 1988). I must state here for the record that the hypotheses and conclusions of this paper are in accord with the state of Shroud research at the time of this writing. Intensive ongoing scholarship on so many fronts leaves Shroud studies always in a state of flux. But should the Shroud linen be proved to be unquestionably medieval, the interpretation of the documents in this paper would remain largely unchanged as they pertain to the Edessa icon. In all cases, truth must be served and honored. Let us make some preliminary remarks flowing from observation of the Shroud itself. They will remain valid and will be operative throughout the intricate windings of the present paper.

1. Unlike all early and modern copies of the Turin Shroud, its human figure is so accurate that it has been argued to be a photograph. In addition, the bloodstains comprise real human blood.

2. If it is a manmade object--whether photo, rubbing, powder-transfer, or painting--its creator never made another like it. Theorists of these contradictory techniques have said it was very easy to fake. So good a fake and yet it was never replicated, not even by its alleged medieval creator. Is there a simple and believable reason for this?

3. As an icon, the face on the Shroud is uniquely a realistic portrait. In the meantime,

icons of the Virgin and other saints manifest generic faces and traits and are not portraits. Though we read apocryphal texts about miraculous images of the Virgin, all that can be seen are paintings.
The Shroud has never been *proved* to be a work of art of any kind. At this writing, the Shroud is unique in all the world.

4. Since the anatomical realism of the Shroud's image was not even attempted by Gothic artists in 1200 and the nudity of the Christ image was apparently not acceptable, it is not a Gothic rubbing. One can invoke here the paintings of Giotto (ca. 1300): faces, hands, and feet skillfully rendered, while his torsos are clothed in bulky garments, manifesting no apparent knowledge of anatomy. The Shroud fits no artistic genre. Since there is much evidence to show that its image was formed from a human corpse, the Shroud image is not a copy of anything. It may be the proto-original of all Jesus icons. This is evidenced from studies of Christ iconography. Alan and Mary Whanger have shown in some cases incontrovertible congruences between the Shroud face and the face of Jesus on 7th c. Byzantine coins (Whanger, 1999, pp. 33ff.).

INTRODUCTION: ON WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE SHROUD

All who try to write the history of the Turin Shroud should understand clearly the limitations of the historical evidence available for supporting--let alone proving--the Shroud's early existence. It is true that supporters of the Shroud's authenticity have written in such a way as to virtually ignore with their silence this absence of clear *proof*. It has been necessary to focus instead on the thin but persistent thread of evidence that points to--but, again, does not prove--the Shroud's survival from antiquity to the present day. Sometimes, in an honest zeal to contribute something to this history, elaborate scenarios are constructed placing the Shroud somewhere with only the flimsiest evidence, sometimes in a setting where the ancient inhabitants never mentioned an imaged cloth. Among proponents of the Shroud these efforts are appreciated, but outside of Shroud enclaves the result has been a benign dismissal of the Shroud as an object of serious study. I emphasize this point in order to make it as clear as possible that students of the Shroud must all be sceptics and must not proceed as though there are no uncertainties with the evidence.

The case for and against the Shroud's authenticity is highly subjective. If one sets out from a certain premise, it is possible to argue consistently in favor of that premise. So it is with the case presented in *Approfondimento*. If one takes the absence of clear and direct references to a burial shroud in the literature of the Edessa image at face value, one will not see a shroud in that literature. If one accepts the premise that there are subtle clues--not of *any* shroud, but precisely of the Shroud of Turin--in the literature

surrounding the Edessa image, then the evidence in its favor seems to make good sense and approaches the level of proof. And this evidence in favor of the Shroud includes many of the texts upon which the "*Approfondimenti"* depend to make their own case.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE SHROUD

If some of my comments seem obvious to long-time students of the Shroud, the reason is that many of their basic assumptions and the texts on which they are based have recently been under assault, both by sindonoclasts emboldened by the C14 dating and by academic historians specializing in the primitive Syriac church. Therefore, those assumptions need to be reassessed, but now with a new awareness of their vulnerability. The Shroud has been discovered by academia.

Recently two volumes have appeared that highlight the most current situation of Shroud historiography. *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Kessler-Wolf, 1998) contains seventeen papers delivered at a Colloquium held in Florence in 1996 by competent scholars--including Hans Belting, Averil Cameron, and Han J.W. Drijvers--on the origins and history of Christ-iconography. The book was not directed at the Shroud, but the Edessa image is prominent in its articles. In a few of them the Shroud is seen as a typical example of the piously or politically created "miraculous face" icon, but a single instance of one that "graduated" to its full figure. It is refreshing to read well-constructed unbiased arguments of Byzantine and Syriac academic scholars whose writings assess the Shroud dispassionately. They represent mainstream scholarship, for which I have a deep respect. But in casually regarding the Shroud as just another icon--as, e.g., the Caduin, the Camuliana, the Veronica, the Genoa, and, in a way, even the legendary Edessa *mandylion*--they, too, seem to rely implicitly on the 14th c. radiocarbon date of the Shroud. They know these icons are clearly manmade, though each was originally claimed to be *acheiropoietos*. For this reason and alert to the notion of some unique original whose appearance they cannot quite describe since only a few ancient sources described it, some scholars devote space to various possible techniques by which a faint or dark special original could have been manufactured. None of these purported techniques would produce the Turin Shroud, whose own technique of manufacture the academic scholars do not, for the most part, address (but see Trilling).

What is interesting is that before Ian Wilson (Wilson, 1978) identified the Edessa cloth with the Shroud, the German scholars of the turn of the 20th c. (Lipsius, Harnack, Zahn, von Dobschütz, et al), whom I absolutely revere for their thoroughness, dealt with the Abgar legend on its own merits. From extant 11th-12th c. MSS, the original *Acts of Thaddaeus* (hereafter *AT*) was dated early, i.e., 6th c. Today, with the Shroud in this picture, the *AT* is claimed by some modern historians to date significantly later and to have been invented during the iconoclast controversy in order to serve the iconodules.

These historians prefer this later date because it serves a preconceived scenario. It seems certain from several nuances in their papers that the Shroud has been a factor in this recent chronological transposition of the *AT* (but see Gunther and Peppermueller, who differ). Representative of the "old guard" of distinguished scholars who never addressed the Shroud in their writings but one who commented objectively on the Shroud before Wilson's thesis became widely known is Ernst Kitzinger. Dr. Gilbert Lavoie reports Kitzinger's remarks in an interview in 1979 (Lavoie, pp. 65f.).

> The Shroud of Turin is unique in art. It doesn't fall into any artistic category. For us, a very small group of experts around the world, we believe that the Shroud of Turin is really the Shroud of Constantinople. . . . As for the blood marks done by artists, there are no paintings that have blood marks like those of the Shroud.

The contributors to Kessler-Wolf and to the second recent volume mentioned above, (Munitiz, Chrysostomides*, et al.*) ignore what most Shroud scholars know, that the Genoa icon, which alone can be seen and described today, is rather a grotesque copy of the Shroud-man's face as it appears within the hairline. The Genoa example was itself once claimed as the original *acheiropoietos* icon. Its true nature as a medieval object has been amply demonstrated by the researches of Colette Dufour Bozzo, Fr. Luigi Fossati, and Fr. Heinrich Pfeiffer (Dufour Bozzo, 1974; Fossati, 1984; esp. Pfeiffer, 1984).

Most of the papers in Kessler-Wolf notice what they feel are the common elements shared by the several *acheiropoietos* Christ icons. The similarity of motifs shows that they feel they are dealing with a "type" rather than a series of "originals," and this is good reason for discovering and exposing what may be the fundamental error of their research: the Shroud is not a type, but unique unto itself. James Trilling (pp. 112f.) summarized three common elements, all deriving from the Edessa exemplar: (1) Christ icons are on cloth; (2) they are indistinct; and (3) they are able to replicate themselves. The replicative power can rather easily be understood by the great desire of churches to possess real or "contact" relics (known as *brandea* or *sanctuaria*). Still, when academicians attempt to define their notion of what the proto-original icon was like, they can only surmise about what process would have been likely to produce a contact transfer from the original to a tile such as to set in motion the legend that the original replicated itself (Trilling, p. 114). One might rightly question the second element of "indistinctness" as a frequent quality of ancient Jesus icons: in fact, we know of only the Edessa image described as a moist secretion without the painters art, and indeed it is this image that practically owns the field of *acheiropoietoi*. Still, let us ask why these precise features *ever* entered the literature. The great desire, sincere and honest though it be, of early Christians to possess some evidence of Christ's real human existence is given as a cogent reason for their

icons. But what explains the use of cloth and the image's indistinctness as in the Edessa legend? No other ancient faiths from China to Israel had a face of God on cloth. Not even did Buddhism, which also had a quasi-divine figure who, like Jesus, walked the earth. Whoever might have created this legend *ex nihilo*, as all--both unbiased academicians and outspoken sindonoclasts--must finally agree, could simply have made Jesus *will* his face on a board or--whatever. I wish to suggest that the entire history of that historically unique love-affair of the Byzantines with icons (beginning about the 4th c. as substitutes for the original person) needed an *Ur*-original icon to set it in motion. The Shroud cannot be placed among the plethora of icons as simply another icon, perhaps "better done" than all the rest. Could there have been one original Christ image which answers to all the suggestions offered about the Turin Shroud as the prototype: on cloth, indistinct features, folded to hide its nudity and its grisly Passion wounds (and its essence as a burial wrap), and hidden away for its protection? Theologian Fr. J.-M. Maldamé has been quoted in *Approfondimento*: "The Shroud does not escape the rule held for all burial cloths that have been exhibited to popular devotion: it has been manufactured to be at the center of a pilgrimage" (Lombatti, 1999, p. 88; Maldamé). This can only be a distractor in any discussions of the Turin Shroud, for there are no other burial cloths in competition with that unique object.

It seems that most Byzantinists are willing to accept the existence of some special original of the Edessa icon. But among these reputable scholars there is little agreement in these matters. One scholar, J. Chrysostomides, has argued that the passage in Evagrius in which the image saves Edessa is a later interpolation. She then surveys other 7th-9th c. texts and finds that all references to the Edessa *acheiropoietos* image in early texts are also interpolations. These include, besides Evagrius, *H.E,* IV. 27, the writings of John Damascene and the *Life of Michael Synkellos*. In every case, too, the interpolations were effected to subserve the iconodule position. Even the *AT* was first produced during the 8th c., and there was never an *acheiropoietos* image before iconoclasm. Chrysostomides (p. xxvi, n. 47) cites Averil Cameron (1998), but in fairness, she notes that Michael Whitby, who is preparing an edition of Evagrius, does not see any interpolation.**(1)** She also remarks: "The conclusions reached, it has to be stressed, have not been accepted by all members of the seminar. It is now left to the reader to assess their value" (Munitiz, Chrysostomides, et al. p. xvii). From her perception of so many interpolations, one is led to suspect that Chrysostomides may have recreated a documentation and a chronology to serve the agenda of that volume--which was to attribute all texts about miraculous Christ images to the iconoclasm debate--since the evidence for interpolations is not convincing, even to many academicians.

One need not take seriously Evagrius' story of how the city was saved miraculously by the icon. Perhaps the icon was brought out as a last resort in hopes of a miracle. When Chosroes' siege failed, it is natural that the icon was credited. That is as far as one needs to go in the interests of historical plausibility. But Evagrius' word for the image, ἀχειροτεύκτος, tends to confirm the *AT* in suggesting that in the 6th c. anyone looking at the face on the Edessa icon saw that it had a strange and faint appearance, one that its copyists in the capital could not reproduce except by means of the colors of their palettes. The unavoidably colorful or darkened-by-time copies of the Edessa face made in conformity to the Abgar legend, such as the Sinai triptych and the Genoa icon, do not agree with the words of the *AT* or the *Narratio,* which both verbally assert its faintness.

ARGUMENTS OF DRIJVERS AND CAMERON: MANI AND PROCOPIUS

Among academic scholars, Han J.W. Drijvers and Averil Cameron are among the more vocal sindonoclasts. The view of Syriac scholar Drijvers is that the prophet Mani (ca. 216-276) was associated with Edessa in the mid-3rd c. and that his portrait, his letters, and even his disciples Addai and Thomas were borrowed by the orthodox Christians. Christians thus imputed an invented letter and a portrait to Jesus and even created a secondary disciple, Addai, who is otherwise unknown in the NT. This view places both the letter and the icon back before Eusebius (Drijvers, 1982, p. 160). In Drijvers' words (1983, p. 177): "*Es gibt deshalb vorläufig keine entscheidenden Gründe nicht anzunehmen, dass zwei Briefe und das Christusbild zur Originalfassung der Abgar-Legende gehörten. Externe Gründe könnten diese Annahme verstärken.*" ("There is thus for now no decisive reason not to accept that the two letters and the Christ image belong to the original Abgar legend. External reasons can strengthen this point.")

Having done the image the favor of a 3rd c. origin, Drijvers did not consider the possibility that Mani was himself the borrower of traditions he found in Edessa. Church and Stroumsa take much further what was a hopeful intuition of Fr. Albert Dreisbach (personal correspondence). They noted that Mani's twelve disciples were obviously borrowed from Jesus' twelve. This likely included Thomas, who they show to be rather enigmatic as a disciple of Mani. The *Psalms of Thomas* are so closely related in concepts to the "Hymn of the Pearl" (1st c.) found in the *Acts of Thomas* that *if* Mani ever had a disciple named Thomas, he and his works (e.g., evangelizing in India and elsewhere for Mani) were also patterned after the NT Thomas.

Drijvers knows that Peppermueller had edited a papyrus version of the Abgar legend in Greek that predates both Eusebius (4th c.) and the *Doctrine of Addai* (hereafter *DA*) (4th-5th c.) This papyrus version is sufficiently different from both to be regarded as independent of both. Peppermueller shows that this Greek account is likely a translation of an earlier Syriac source extant before the *DA*, and this supports a date earlier than

usually accepted for the image. Drijvers deserves to be quoted (Schneemelcher I, p. 493):

> Comparison of the Eusebius text, the papyrus fragments and the Syriac text of the *Doctrina Addai* leads to the conclusion that these three witnesses probably go back to a common Syriac source, which was also translated into Greek. The text of the Greek papyri cannot be completely traced back to the text of Eusebius, so that we must reckon with the existence of a Greek version independently of Eusebius. The tradition history of the Abgar legend is thus more complicated than E. Von Dobschütz [1900] in his time assumed.

What emerges from all of this is that (1) the Edessa image may be dated earlier than Eusebius and (2) that Mani may have borrowed Thaddaeus (already named in the NT) in the form of Addas/Addai rather than the other way around, as Drijvers argues. To further fortify the chronological primacy of the name Thaddaeus, a Latin fragment of the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria, two generations before Mani, stated that Thaddaeus (not Addai) was buried in the *birta* of Edessa (Harnack, 1904). Drijvers' contribution to Kessler (Kessler-Wolf, 1998) is decidedly sindonoclastic, to the extent that he flatly dismisses the possibility of constructive discussion with Pere A. J. Dubarle. In his own discussion of the *AT*, Drijvers is silent on the pregnant implications of the term *tetradiplon*.

Averil Cameron (1999), outspoken academic sindonoclast, has accepted that Procopius, the court historian of Justinian (6th c.), simply did not know about the portrait, already in the literature (*DA*) for more than a century when he wrote. Since he accepts Abgar V (ca. 13-50) as the protagonist of the story and believes the letter of Jesus was a fact, we had better notice that Procopius knew precious little about the early history of Edessa. It seems that Eusebius was his only source for it. Given a hundred sources for the image noticed by von Dobschütz, one might conclude that Procopius was the only 6th c. writer who did not know of the image, and he does not belong in this discussion at all.

SINDONOCLAST ARGUMENTS OF THE *APPROFONDIMENTO* GROUP

Before discussing the comprehensive and aggressive assault on the historiography of the Shroud by the philologist-historians who have assembled under the banner of the journal *Approfondimento Sindone*, some comments should be laid on the table. In more than one hundred texts dealing with the Edessa cloth icon, the terms used for the cloth can be applied to a large or a small cloth and those used for the image can refer to a face or to a full body. The terms *mandylion* and *manutergium*, which must refer to a small cloth, come the latest in the literature. That is, the cloth was not originally semantically small. The earliest and operative term for the cloth was that used by the synoptic Gospels. In those accounts a *sindon* alone was used in the burial of Jesus. This term has many meanings, but its use in the NT is unequivocally as a large body wrap. *Sindon* or its

Mishnaic Hebrew equivalent (*sadin*) describes the unostentatious burial cloth of the most orthodox rabbis. Uses of this term in connection with the face or body of Jesus must resonate this NT usage. Documents assert that the Edessa icon was folded; thus it would have appeared smaller. Documents also assert emphatically that the Edessa cloth was kept most secretively as a precious relic of God incarnate and as a protective talisman for its city. Therefore, the legend of the face of Jesus on cloth was an aetiological legend created to describe the arrival of that which was displayed only rarely, briefly, and at a distance and which appeared as a face only. Despite the insistence of the legend that the cloth was small, some texts carry an alternate account of a full body of Jesus on cloth or of a cloth whose size related best to a full body wrap. Finally, in several accounts the image is described. These documents are crucial in teaching that the face or body image on the Edessa cloth was quite faint, for the image was formed, they say, when Jesus touched his moist face or body to the cloth. The great confusion of terms and details in the many accounts of the Edessa icon teach us that the prevalent legend of Abgar V was merely that which was most energetically promoted or which held the most romantic appeal.

Finally, when in the 10th c. the cloth left Edessa and arrived in Constantinople to be handled more freely in the cosmopolitan ambience of the capital than ever it was in Edessa, bloodstains are noticed, new Christ iconography suddenly appears in the form of the Man of Pity and in the threnos scene on walls or on epitaphios cloths, the full-body image begins to dominate the Abgar legend, and the faintness of the image is remarked. All of these seem to have been inspired by the Turin Shroud. Some of these points will be raised in more detail below.

On the other side, sindonoclasts have urged the following arguments, some well founded, but still not destructive of the Shroud's antiquity or authenticity. These also should be laid on the table for discussion.

1. There is no record of a twin image until the Seine medallion.

2. There is no record of Jesus' burial cloth in Edessa.

3. The Abgar story from the 4th to the 6th c. was intended to give the Edessan church an apostolic origin.

4. The New Testament terms for Jesus' burial cloth (sindon, othonia, and soudarion) do not translate as a large shroud, since they are sometimes small napkins or mummy-like wrappings.

5. The Syriac translation can be used to clarify or correct the original Greek New Testament.

6. Tetradiplon means 4-sided, and not folded.

7. Gregory Referendarius did not see a side wound. His words are an allegory relating the blood on the **face** to the events of Good Friday.

8. The Pray Codex proves nothing.

Lombatti has argued (1999) that there are numerous ("95") Syriac and Greek documents that repeat the Abgar story and know of the Edessa cloth icon of Jesus' face. None of these, he adds, knows of a shroud or of an image of a full body. All of this proves what is already well known: it was a legend that had become so venerable, even liturgically canonical (Skhirtladze), that writers who repeated it would not dare to change it. Certainly the Abgar legend captured the imagination of 3rd and 4th c. Christians in competition with certain Manichaeist (Drijvers, 1982 and 1983) or Gnostic sects (Drews, pp. 80, 92-93) that claimed to possess images, whether of Mani or of Jesus.**(2)** Later, in the 8th c., the Abgar legend was available to the iconodules in their ideological war with the iconoclasts.

Lombatti has also noticed that there are numerous documents whose authors *should know* and *should* have mentioned the Abgar legend but do not. The point of this revelation can only be that not everybody thought it important enough to mention every time they put pen to paper. But it is also true that some writers changed the story. And it is these few texts, and not the majority "95," that will prove to be significant.

Again, Lombatti has rightly noticed that early texts do not know of a twin full-body image. But what conclusion is to be drawn from this truth? Is the twin image on the Shroud a work of art that anyone, whether out of reverence or fakery, would logically have concocted based on the NT narratives or to lend veracity to the NT accounts of Jesus' burial? It clearly is not. The inspiration or motivation for someone to concoct a cloth with the Shroud's twin image is difficult to discern.

THE QUESTION OF THE "UPWARD MOBILITY" OF EDESSA'S RELIC

There can be little doubt that the original account of the Abgar V legend--the Syriac source of Eusebius in the archives of Edessa and source of the *DA*--served well the desire of the town of Edessa to enter among the lofty ranks of apostolic churches, that is, those like Antioch, Rome, and Jerusalem, founded by Jesus' immediate disciples. The legend--for that is what it is--accrued to the benefit of Edessa and must therefore have

originated there. But the premise of the *Approfondomenti*, that the legend was created as late as the 4th c. as propaganda to establish the city's stature among the great apostolic Christian centers and continued for centuries after, lacks plausibility (Gramaglia, 1999, pp. 9f.). Rather, the legend must logically be placed in the context of Edessa's actual emergence as a Christian city and early enough in time to make sense--at least to the ecclesiastical leadership of Antioch and Jerusalem. The optimum time was thus in the late 2nd c. and in the time of Abgar VIII, the Great. Both Eusebius and the *DA* attach the arrival of Christianity to the time of Jesus and King Abgar V (d. ca. 50). Outside of legend, Christianity certainly came to Edessa by 201 when Edessa's first known bishop, Palut, was consecrated by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (d. 211), and the Christian church was destroyed by flood, according to the Edessan Archives (Hallier, pp. 84 and 91). So Christianity and the role of Thaddaeus in Edessa antedated Mani by at least a long generation, and this further corroborates the direction of the borrowing as between Mani and the pre-Manichaean Christians.**(3)** It is conceivable that Abgar VIII himself, as early as 200, inspired the legend of Abgar V and for the very reasons argued by Gramaglia and Lombatti. I will elaborate this point below.

One must, however, question the motive which these scholars assign to the later Edessan ecclesiastical leaders for what they call a repeated manipulative enhancement of the city's relic: the city's constant and ongoing need to insist on "apostolicity." This may have been initially true. But why would they need to keep on enhancing their claim when they already had (so they said) the autograph letter of Jesus Christ himself and his direct hand in Edessa's evangelization. Consider for a moment the immense uniqueness of this relic. And when Edessa claimed to have Jesus' likeness (Hanan's portrait)--which no other city had ever claimed to have and which St. Augustine complained in his *De Trinitate* (VIII.4.7) did not exist--it makes more sense that the Edessan hierarchy were honestly revealing something they really had but had only gradually become aware of--the faint image of Jesus on a cloth folded *tetradiplon*. This alone would explain what otherwise must be regarded as an obviously foolish reliance on the credulity of the faithful, who may have been gullible but not stupid. They would scoff if told that a relic of a saint's finger had become a relic of his hand. How far could Edessa's bishops continue to alter one unique relic after another before becoming laughable? Besides, numerous repetitions of the Abgar legend, by virtually anybody who wished, even in Coptic Egypt, cannot all be attributed to *Edessa*'s ambitions. Such arguments rather tend to be merely distractors away from the serious data available for interpretation.

Again, given the numerous repetitions of the Abgar legend, all essentially telling the same story, and given the implausibility of the reasons given by the "*Approfondimenti*," for constantly upgrading, one must ask again the more incisive question why, in the religious climate of ancient Christian Syria, the autograph letter of Jesus Christ, the God incarnate, suddenly was--insufficient. Why would someone change

certain details, such as letter and/or portrait changing to the *acheiropoietos* of Jesus in his ministry? Yet, the letter and the portrait (the *mandylion*) are legends. There never was a *mandylion*. The Turin Shroud cannot be the *mandylion*. The *Approfondimenti* are absolutely correct. But if no actual letter and no *mandylion*, what winning card, then, did Edessa really have? When in 944 the image was again reinterpreted by eyewitnesses as an image of Jesus in Gethsemane with bloodstains on his face, it was not the doing of an ambitious Edessan hierarchy. What was it that came to Constantinople in 944?

RAMPANT CONFUSION ABOUT THE EDESSA RELIC

Is it possible for the Shroud to have been forgotten for 1000 years? The few divergent retellings amidst so many uncritical versions of the Abgar legend actually promote the notion that the Shroud may have been the very object at the heart of the legend of Abgar. The explanation lies first in the uniqueness of the object itself: the veritable receptacle of the body and blood of the Savior. Its care and keeping in benign and protective silence were an essential concern. This and other considerations may help in understanding why such an important object was not widely known for what it was: (a) the Edessa cloth was folded *(tetradiplon)*, as in the *AT* and in the Festival Sermon (von. Dobschütz, p. 48**), (b) the nudity of the image was something not to be shown publicly, and (c) the icon was kept in secrecy for centuries in Edessa so that there could not possibly be texts about a burial cloth.

Evidence for (b) is forthcoming from the history of the crucifix in art. Until the 12th c. the crucified Christ was not shown hanging on the cross but standing before it, regally dressed. In a word, it is not the Christ of the Passion but Christ triumphant. Christian art for centuries did not strip Christ of his garments. The realism of modern crucifixes began in the 11th c.**(4)** But even then, rarely--if ever--did one encounter the naked Christ of the actual crucifixion. It hardly needs to be said that the Shroud of Turin bearing the naked body of Jesus simply could not be shown casually to the faithful in Edessa. And *a fortiori* it is unthinkable as an early work of art.

Von Dobschütz (pp. 110**-114**, esp. 112**) identified an important document appended to two codices of the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena,* produced under the auspices of Constantine Porphyrogenitos in 944. He called the appended text the "Liturgical Tractate" and assigned it a date around 945-959, but he noted that it must have taken its information from an older Edessan Syriac original. Its importance lies in its description of the rituals and mode of preservation of the imaged cloth while it was in Edessa.**(5)** There the image had been shown to the public only rarely.

> And since the old chest containing the divine form was encased with shutters, so that it would not be visible to all whenever they wished, on these two days of the week--I mean on Wednesday and Friday--when these shutters . . . were opened up by means of very slender iron rods that were thrust through . . . then all the assembled throng gazed upon it; and every person besought with prayers its incomprehensible power. But nobody was allowed to draw near to it, or to touch their lips or eyes to the holy shape. So holy dread increased their faith, and made them shiver with yet more awe in their worship.

The element of secrecy could not be expressed more cogently. Virtually none of the many writers of the Abgar legend and its Christ icon ever knew or examined what they were talking about. The fact of the secrecy of the icon's keeping in Edessa, which must yet be adequately explained, is sufficient to lay to rest the force of the claim that many writers did not know of a full-length or, indeed, a twin image on the Edessa cloth.

Von Dobschütz (p. 225*) provides another text that supports this essential secrecy, so important to the present issue. Michael Glykas (ca. 1170) reviewed the speech of Patriarch Germanos in the presence of Leo the Isaurian in 729, when the icon was still in Edessa: "The patriarch adduced the impression (ἔκτῦπωσιν**)** of the Lord sent with Thaddaeus to Abgar and kept in [secret] storage **(**ἐναποκειμένην) in Edessa."

Lombatti (1999, pp. 93f) cites the commentary/translation of von Dobschütz (p. 147) in order to make the point that the image was shown to the people frequently. "*Für gewöhnlich ruht das Bild in einem Schrein mit verschlossenen Thüren, die nur des Mittwochs und Freitags, an den beiden Fasttagen, geöffnet werden, um die Volk die Mögligkeit des Anblickes zu gewären.*" ("Customarily the image lay in a shrine with the doors locked, which only on Wednesdays and Fridays, on the two days of fasting, would be opened, so that the people could look at it.") But he omitted the lines immediately before and after those he quoted. Just before the above quote (p. 146) von Dobschütz wrote, "*Dies alles geschieht nur zur Fastenzeit.*" ("All this occurred only in Lent.") This is precisely what the Greek text says (112**): τῇ μέσῃ ἑβδομάδι τῶν ἁγίων νηστειῶν ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν ἡμερῶν συγκεχώρητο μόνῳ τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ εἰσιέναι τε καὶ τὴν θήκην ἐν ᾗπερ ἐπέκειτο διανοίγειν. . . . κατὰ μόνας τάς τῶν ἁγίων νηστειῶν ἐτελεῖτο ἡμέρας**.** ("In the middle week of the holy fasting [Lent], on the fourth day, it was permitted to the bishop alone to go in and to open the chest in which [the icon] lay. . . . This occurred only on the days of holy fasting.")**(6)** Finally, and most significantly, Lombatti ended his quote of von Dobschütz too soon. For just

after the lines that he quoted, von Dobschütz (p.146-7) wrote, "*Die Idee scheint freilich, dass man dann das Bild selber sah, thatsächlich aber war es wohl in seiner weissen Hülle oder in der Purpurdecke eingeschlagen*." ("The idea seems, of course, that one then saw the image himself, but in actuality it was probably wrapped in its white cover or in its purple cloth." Cf. 111*: τὴν ἐπικειμένην λευκὴν ὀθόνην καὶ πορφυρίζουσαν ἑτέραν περιτιθέναι.) Von Dobschütz does not say what Lombatti wished to make him say; rather he expressly says its opposite: the icon itself was not frequently seen but was indeed kept in secret.

Karlheinz Dietz, Professor of Ancient History at the University of Würzburg, proffers a theory that carries the element of secrecy yet further. (Dietz, personal communication). It is that as Edessa's palladium, the icon thus was never to be exposed except in times of danger to the city, a substitute being shown to the public on other occasions. This theory is harmonious with the fact that copies of the true and unique icon were celebrated in the churches of the different Christian sects in the city. It should be noted again that the fact of many icons as copies points in favor of a unique original and does not in any way weaken the case for the Shroud.

The secrecy of its keeping led to rampant confusion. Why else would one, still in the Edessa period, change the size of the cloth from kerchief to *sindon/rhakos tetradiplon* and to large himation? After 944 we read from Leon Diaconos (ca. 992) that the image was on a large peplos. Massoudi (d. 957) did not know of the Abgar legend. His baptismal body towel was large but *absens* image. Finally, the full-body image was revealed by the anonymous writer of the "Oldest Latin Abgar Legend." Gervase of Tilbury knew the full-body version of the Abgar legend and another full-body version that had no Edessa connections.**(7)** Robert de Clari saw the *sydoines* with the *figure* of the Lord but told a story unrelated to Edessa.**(8)** At every turn one is confronted by confusion born of secrecy and rumor. Of course, it must be agreed that not all of these changes were made by writers who ever saw the actual object. The point is that behind the numerous face-only versions of the Edessa story, one finds a persistent record of a cloth too large to be equated reasonably with the *manutergium*-sized cloth of the Abgar legend (Drews, p. 40).

But logic requires that *someone* did see it. Among the extant versions of the legend, the likeliest candidates are possibly already the author of the *DA*, who first described the portrait, and also he who (in the *AT*) described it as caused by Jesus wiping his face on a cloth, and thus as a faint image. Certainly it is not refutable that the Byzantine imperial family and their archdeacon Gregory saw it in 944. The latter, for no reason we can determine, saw something that caused him to recall texts (e.g., Luke 22:44, etc.) that enabled him to compare the blood and sweat on the face of the Edessan image with the blood and water flowing from Jesus' side (Dubarle, 1997; Lombatti, 1999). Why, again, do all these changes in a well-known and much-told

venerable legend always move towards an ever more precise description of the Turin Shroud? I will go so far as to suggest that the only texts that matter are those few whose writers actually *describe* the appearance of the image and not the numerous other simple repetitions of the legend.

It is correctly noted that the story was told using numerous different terms for the image and for the cloth itself (Scavone, 1989). It is more evidence of confusion. Some of the terms for the image (πρόσωπον, ὄψις, e.g.) usually have the meaning of "face," and the face of Jesus on a cloth was, after all, the very essence of the Abgar legend. But importantly, these words may also mean "person."**(9)** Additionally, μορφή and χαρακτήρ are quite ambiguous and have the sense of "form" or "appearance" in general. Moreover, words like ἐκμαγείον and ἔκτύπωμα (both "imprint") do not speak to the question of "face" or of "size" but rather are neutral on these matters. Andreas Kretes ("of Crete," fl. ca. 726) referred to the ἐκμαγείον. . . σωματικοῦ αὐτοῦ χαρακτῆρος ("the imprint . . . of the bodily appearance [of Jesus]") (von Dobschütz, pp.185*-187*).

As for the cloth itself, in all cases the terms used are ordinary words for a cloth of any size. Gramaglia (1978, pp. 43ff.) rightly uses pages to make this point, but it does not prove that Jesus was buried in an *asciugamano di tavola* or some item of clothing. The Abgar context of a face only, of course, demands that these terms should be capable of rendering a cloth of modest dimensions. But in their effort to make that point, sindonoclasts occasionally use texts improperly to suit their purpose, as when Gramaglia (1999, p.1) cites the *Acts of Thomas* (par. 49) dealing with the bread of the Eucharist, where all the implements on the altar are symbolic and the *sindon* used in the service as covering the loaf of bread (Jesus' body) must necessarily be small. This could not possibly lead to the conclusion that the *sindon* of the NT a small cloth?

The many texts repeated over a period of many centuries comprise what seems an overwhelming body of evidence to prove the initial premise of the *Approfondomenti* that the Edessa image and Turin Shroud are not one and the same. They argue from their expertise as philologists, and Gramaglia's knowledge of Syriac has permitted him to adduce texts found chiefly in the scholarly literature from the beginnings of Syriac Christianity in Edessa. Therefore, he and Lombatti have contributed important insights to the larger picture. This is a major contribution to the study of the Edessa icon and the Shroud.

SYRIAC AND GREEK BIBLICAL TERMS USED IN THE BURIAL OF JESUS

It is true that the archival documents supposedly seen by Eusebius and also the *DA* itself were Syriac texts. Gramaglia (1978, p. 43-48; 1988, p. 526) launches an

argument against the Shroud's antiquity based on differences between the Syriac and Greek versions of the NT. He prefers the Syriac as if it were the *Ursprung*-original of the Gospels and thus should be prioritized over the Greek NT of the West. This is especially true in his discussions of Jesus' burial. However, the always derivative nature of the Syriac NT weighs heavily against the claim that the Syriac terms for the cloths and context of Jesus' burial should supersede the Greek terms. In fact, literary Syriac seems to have been virtually created in Edessa by Bardaisan (Bardesanes, 154-222) in the late second century. Prior to that, its literary quality was quite crude. Moreover, when the Greek NT traveled Eastward and was translated, Edessan Syriac was a tongue still, till the 3rd c., primitive as a language of literature and groping for a respectable vocabulary. Syriac scholars are in virtually unanimous agreement that the Scriptures were translated from Greek into Edessan Syriac. From the Greek title Τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγέλιον, given by Tatian himself (Eusebius, *H.E.* 29), even Tatian's (fl. 170) *Diatessaron* was, it seems, originally composed in Greek. Where later writers of Syriac diverged from the Greek NT, their version, therefore, may not be used in argument because it is clearer than the original.**(10)**

Using his reading of the Syriac NT, Gramaglia claims that the Syriac renderings of the Greek words used by the four Gospels to describe Jesus' burial wrapping do not fit the Shroud. In fact, he argues, neither do the Greek terms of the NT--*sindon, othonai, and soudarion*--fit a burial in the present Shroud. As all are aware, the field here is muddied for any definitive interpretation by the remarks found in all four Gospels on the peculiar circumstances of haste surrounding Jesus' burial. Matt. 27:57 remarks the lateness: "When it was evening, Joseph went to Pilate." Mark 15:42 provides a bit more: "And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate. . . ." Luke 23:54 supplies yet more clarification: "It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning [Greek: was dawning]." John 19:31 confirms the situation: "Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

The events of Sunday produce more evidence that Friday's burial was only temporary and incomplete. Mark 16:1f. says: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices to anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen." Luke has the same story. Matthew is silent on the spices. Only John writes as though the burial on Friday had been regular and according to Jewish customs. Here his account begs for hesitation on the part of modern interpreters. For even John agrees on the need for haste on Friday, and all four Gospels accept that no further burial process could be carried out on Sunday, since the body of Jesus was no longer in the

tomb. Argument, therefore, about whether the Greek words in the Gospels can describe a burial that conforms to that burial obvious on the Shroud must revolve around the indefinite sense of John alone.

In his interpretation of Jewish burial customs of the time of Jesus, Gramaglia argues that ἐνείλλω, ἐντυλίσσω, and δέω cannot mean "wrap" as the man of the Shroud was wrapped. He translates these Greek terms as *avvolgere*. But he has given no alternative Greek (or Italian) word that might describe the over-the-head wrapping of the man of the Shroud. Assuming from this, then, that there is no clear and definitive alternative term, one can conclude that the same words found in the Greek NT can also describe the wrapping seen on the Shroud. Gramaglia has tried to impose the idea that NT vocabulary--he is a linguist or he is nothing--may point to a mummy-like wrapping as the burial usage of the time of Jesus. He gives examples of the use of "bands" in burial literature. All scholars of the subject of Jewish burial customs in NT times have considered this and rejected it as nothing like Jewish burial customs, ever. Gramaglia may have been influenced by naive drawings of the raising of Lazarus. Wuenschel and Bender both describe the purest orthodox rabbinical burial custom as involving an unstained white cloth. Moreover, the synoptics and John all say or imply that there was a need to hurry the disposal of the body of Jesus in late afternoon of Good Friday. One does not find in the Gospels that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had sufficient time on Friday to tear the *sindon* purchased by Joseph into mummy-like strips. In the case of Lazarus we read that his feet and hands were bound with κειρίαις (bands) which Jesus commanded to be loosened. This can equally suggest a shroud bound to the body by strips of cloth in obvious places (around the neck, waist, and ankles). Presumably these would have bundled Jesus had his burial been achieved on Easter. It should be beyond dispute that the word *sindon* of the synoptics was not chosen to indicate that Jesus was wrapped in a kerchief-sized shroud. In the same pages Gramaglia presents examples of *sindon* being used for items of women's clothing. His scholarship is brilliant, but it does not always seem *approposito,* once it is admitted that the NT terms do indeed have other senses. In light of this, the Shroud as a first-century burial mode is not refuted. But let us all recognize that in the context of hasty and temporary burial, it is not entirely relevant that the words of the NT do or do not reflect the type of burial that is seen on the Shroud (though it seems to be the quickest means of disposing a body when the time of Sabbath was upon them).

When one addresses the chronology of the custom by which Jewish rabbis were buried in a clean white linen shroud, there is little certainty. It is hardly useful to argue that custom did not obtain in Jesus' time (Gramaglia, 1978, 43-47). It is true that there were departures from strict adherence to tradition when the rich were laid out in fine clothing. Yet a burial custom is not something that changes with each

generation but rather is a practice especially governed by the power of tradition, most especially a tradition grounded in the Jewish insistence upon propriety. Orthodox rabbis and others retained the custom of simple shroud burial (Wuenschel, 1946, pp.166ff.). A. P. Bender's remarks (1894-95, p. 261) must be taken as valuable and definitive: "After the rite of purification has been carried out in the customary manner, the corpse is clothed in grave-vestments as in Mishna: Sanhed. vi. 5, or . . . Bab. Talmud *Erub.* 41a. They are identical with the σινδών of the NT (cf. Matt. 27.59, etc.), being made of white linen without the slightest ornament, and must be stainless. . . . [Matthew 27:68 says Jesus' shroud was without stain.] Very frequently the white shroud used by strict Jews on New Year's Day, the Day of Atonement, and the Passover 'night of observance' forms part of their grave apparel." Morris Jastrow (p. 957) is even more direct: under the word *sadin* ("sheet") he quotes from the Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud, Kilaim IX, 32b, "Rabbi was buried in one linen shroud (without any other garments)." Jastrow himself there compares *sadin* to the Greek *sindon*. In light of these remarks, one must accept that Rabbi Jesus would most likely have been provided with the most respectable and orthodox burial conforming to Jewish tradition, a burial attested by the words *sindon***,** *othonia,* and *soudarion*.

TOWARDS A TRUE CHRONOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY'S ARRIVAL IN EDESSA

I propose here another and more realistic hypothesis for the origin of the Abgar legend, one based upon a careful reading of the earliest original texts of the Abgar legend, notably the Greek Eusebius and the Syriac *DA*. It may also help establish a truer chronology for the inception of the legend. It should be noted that J. J. Gunther (p.141) plausibly places the *Acts of Thaddaeus* in the mid-4th c., thus prior to the *DA*. Segal (1980) places the *DA* in the late 3rd c.

If the letter of Jesus and the *mandylion* are indeed but two elements in a "hoax" that initiated a thousand-year legend, then the healing of Abgar V (ca. 13-50) or of Abgar VIII (ca. 177-212), the sealing up in the wall, and the "miraculous" saving of the city may also be part of the hoax. Lying beneath the legend is the undoubted fact of the arrival of Christianity in Edessa, leaving only the question of when this occurred.

One can still accept an initial arrival of Christianity in Edessa under Abgar V, as does Segal in a persuasive article (1980, p. 190). But Christianity did not settle permanently in Edessa until about 200, time of Abgar VIII, and Segal supposes this second conversion as well. It may be true that Thaddaeus evangelized in Edessa. As Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-216) reported in his *Hypotyposes*, Thaddaeus was buried in the royal cemetery on the citadel (*birta*) of Edessa (Zahn, III. 70), and this

would tend to support a real conversion of Abgar V by a contemporary of Jesus. Even so, his body, like that of Thomas in the 4th c., would have been brought there much later. For the *birta* is documented in the Edessan archives as having been built in 205 by Abgar VIII. Both of these disciples are associated in the apocrypha with Edessa. Given the very early statement attributed to Clement, it is most likely that other apocryphal texts that place Thaddaeus' burial in Berytos (Beirut) of the Phoenicians are just copyists' assumptions from reading "*birta*" (or "*birtha*"), already garbled as "*Britio Edessenorum*" in the Latin translation of Clement's book (Scavone, *Arthuriana*, 1999).**(11)**

In all of the accounts, the story of Abgar revolves around the conversion and person of the king himself. It is Abgar V who is honored by the several utterances and the letter of Christ. But as Segal (1980) wrote, the story arose during the monarchy at Edessa, i.e., before its subordination by Rome in 242. Most likely the legend arose before 200, in the reign of Abgar VIII. Official Christianity in Edessa is associated primarily with the activities of Abgar VIII the Great (Gunther, p. 129). In the *DA* Abgar V's legates to the Roman magistrate found him in Eleutheropolis. It was Abgar V who wrote a letter to Jesus and assembled the people of Edessa to hear the preaching of Addai/Thaddaeus. In actual fact, it was Lucius Abgar VIII who reportedly wrote a letter to Pope Eleutherus requesting missionaries to preach the Gospel to the people of Edessa (Scavone, *Arthuriana*, 1999). It was Abgar VIII who stood to gain--the church itself only incidentally--by permitting the story of Jesus' epistolary promise to protect Edessa to be published in the city's archives. Christianity thus served a crucial political purpose, and the king was the prime mover in the evangelization of Edessa.

Buried in the legend as we have it in the *DA* are references to a pagan opposition to the king's recent Christian persuasion. The reality behind this may be Abgar VIII's adoption of possibly a Christian cross on his royal headdress, as is seen on his coins, replacing the former pagan symbols (Wilson, 1998, pp. 166ff.; Stauffer, p. 264ff.). Abgar VIII's decree forbidding ritual self-castration was a blow to ancient and venerable pagan usages. It may not be precisely true that the aim "to give the Edessan church an apostolic origin is incidental" to the story (Gunther, p. 128), since Abgar the Great could put that claim to good use in his war on the pagan priesthood. Finally, the old-guard priesthood will have been sorely chagrined to see their temple converted to a Christian church--perhaps that very church which was damaged by the flood in 201 (Phillips [*DA*] 38; Gunther, p. 132).

Christianity in Edessa was, then, a political event, as it was in the case of the political use of Christianity by Constantine. It will not have hurt the programme of Abgar the Great to recast the arrival of the faith to the time of Abgar V Ukama, thereby giving his city a church with apostolic beginnings. The transparency is

evident in the legendary succession of bishops in Edessa. Aggai, still contemporary of Abgar V, succeeded Addai and was, in turn, followed by Palut. Palut clearly lived in the time of Abgar VIII, and the story of Christianity in Edessa cares not that a century has passed between Aggai and Palut. The events of the reign of Abgar V Ukama could not have been widely known 150 years later in Abgar VIII's time. Abgar V's conversion by Thaddaeus is not disproved by the present hypothesis. History was in Abgar VIII's power to make. Apostolicity of the Edessan church was Abgar VIII's to claim, and he did so by sponsoring and promoting the archival story of the arrival of Christianity in the time of Abgar V Ukama. That this was effective--and sufficient--may be seen from the success of Christianity in his city and from the intellectual and cultural preeminence of Edessa among the earliest Christian cities. Its peculiar dialect of Aramaic, known as Syriac, became the *lingua franca* of Middle-Eastern religious literature. Edessa had achieved apostolicity, it had its cloth relic, and it needed no more. For this reason and the others recited throughout this paper, the *Approfondimento* argument that the repeated upgrading of Edessa's precious relic of Jesus was necessary in order to establish Edessa's status as an apostolic church now seems irrelevant. Moreover, in the 4th or 5th c., the gratuitous revelation of new Jesus relics would have been ludicrous unless the Edessenes could present an icon that was credible as a transfer from the face of Jesus himself. For this test neither the Genoa icon nor any one of the several copies mentioned in the Edessan texts would suffice.

Among reputable scholars, only Walter Bauer (ch. 1) strongly opposes any official establishment of Christianity in Edessa before about 312. He bases his stance on Entry XII of the *Edessa Chronicle*, which says, "In the year 624 [= A.D. 312] Bishop Koinos [Quna or Kûnê, according to Bauer 'Edessa's first bishop'] began construction of the church of Orhai [Edessa]." From this hint, Bauer can assert that the *DA* is a complete fabrication and has reference to neither Abgar V nor Abgar VIII. He argues with confidence that the Abgar legend was concocted by this bishop and "fed" to Eusebius as (falsely) coming from the Edessa Archives. All references to Palut and the conversion of the king around 200, including the destruction of the Christian church by flood in 201 (Entry I) are simple fictions. As I wrote previously (Scavone, *Arthuriana*, 1999, p. 23): on the question of when Christianity first appeared in Edessa, Bauer is opposed by Runciman, Tixeront (p. 68), Burkitt (ch. 1), Lipsius, Gunther, Segal (1980), and Koester (1965/1971, pp. 142f; 1980, pp. 291ff.), who all think Christianity arrived in Edessa at least a century earlier. Entry XII must mean a new--and not an "original"--cathedral, as Entry I demands and other scholars accept. Bauer is in a distinct minority on this question.

SUMMARY THUS FAR

The premise of this paper is that numerous derivative versions that copy one from the other, whimsically changing only the vocabulary and basing their emendations upon no special new information, prove nothing of significance regarding the nature of the Edessa image. It is fairly certain that none of these authors had seen the original. They did not claim to have seen it, and nobody imputes ocular knowledge to them. The numerous terms used for the image and for the cloth are evidence that the authors of those accounts do not know with any certainty what they are talking about. One did not go and inspect and prove the actuality of the image not made by hands before using the Abgar legend in the interests of a cause or just to tell a story. Such monotonously repetitious texts merely throw into high relief those few texts that reveal the "face icon" as larger and the image to be very faint and, in fact, describe the image. *They describe it.* Those sources that dared to alter the venerable Edessa legend (legend that "95" versions did not alter) from letter and portrait, to miracle-face on a *sindon* or *rhakos* folded in eight layers (*tetradiplon*), to moist secretion without artist's pigments, to stained in Gethsemane with bloodstains that appear to be drawn by the finger of God--those few sources define perfectly the face on the Shroud of Turin. The eyewitness documents of 944, the *Narratio* and the Gregory Sermon, describe the face identically as the *AT* implies: a moist face wiped on a large cloth folded *tetradiplon.* These ocular witnesses, with unprecedented opportunity to look upon that rarely displayed face, noticed the blood for the first time. But the *AT* was describing that which the *DA* had documented in the 4th c. and which Syriac scholar Han Drijvers thinks was in Edessa by the time of Bardaisan and King Abgar VIII (Drijvers, 1982 and 1983, p. 177).

We must all agree that the Abgar V legend was only a legend. This would mean there was never an image resulting from a miraculous wiping of Jesus' face. Since this is the case, there was never a *mandylion,* or towel. What then was it that any sane person might have seen that gave the Abgar legend the immense impetus it retained over ten centuries? Was it ever a faint *face* on a smallish cloth? Where today is the faint facial image with Gethsemane's bloody tears? True, we have all seen or read of many candidates, including the long-since-rejected Camuliana and the early copies supposedly present in the Christian churches of every Edessan sect, orthodox or heretical. So many images. But not one that would fool anyone.

Lombatti has argued that the numerous documents *sans* burial cloth speak for themselves. Let us invoke a perhaps surprising commonplace of historiography: The facts do *not* speak for themselves. Without the conscious mind to perceive and interpret what occurs, there is no meaning. In any circumstance it is left to us (our minds, perceptions, values, and prejudices) to decide what it means. The man who

kills another may be deemed a murderer who should be put to death himself or a hero who should have a monument raised in his honor. We put the meaning in; the event does not speak for itself. So many repetitions of the Edessa legend *cum* face icon! This overly simple fact simply does not speak for itself nor does it suffice to explain the peculiar changes in a time-honored, virtually canonical legend. Simply listing many texts that refer to a small cloth and ignoring the *specific traits* assigned to the image on that cloth is to remove the judging historian from the process.

ON THE *ACTS OF THADDAEUS* AND THE MEANING OF *TETRADIPLON*

Since Gramaglia and Lombatti note that in the *AT sindon* is a neutral word, referring neither to a burial cloth nor to any large cloth but only to one suitable for receiving Jesus' face--it alternates in the MSS of the *AT* with the generic *rhakos*--the term *tetradiplon* becomes more pertinent. A life-sized face on a cloth folded in eight layers means the cloth is large; but folded, it would appear as those framed copies that begin with the 10th c. example from Sakl , Cappadocia (Manton, pls. 10-11).

Lombatti is right in saying that "nobody ever saw a four-meter-long cloth." But since it was folded and usually covered by a symbolic protective white or purple cloth, its full size could not have been common knowledge. He quotes von Dobschütz (p. 168) as saying it was "unfolded" and stretched out, and he adds that it is seen this way in the 10th c. Sinai side-panel showing Abgar receiving what appears to be a simple and unfolded cloth fastened to a board and bearing the frontal face of Jesus in full color. But his interpretation of *Aufspannung* ("stretching out") as "unfolding" is clearly wrong, as it contradicts the *AT*, which says that the cloth was large enough to accept Jesus' face while folded in eight layers. It is also true that the anonymous artist of the Sinai painting was no Botticelli. By the 10th c. the Edessa image began to be copied by other artists who saw only a face in a central opening on a board or in a frame. That which came to the capital in 944, therefore, was still folded in eight layers. This seems to be the actual and unavoidable meaning of *tetradiplon*. That the face panel on the actual Shroud was thus exposed from time to time is confirmed by Paul Maloney's studies of the Frei sticky tapes of the Turin Shroud (Maloney). He counted microscopically many times more pollen grains in that frontal face panel than on any other part of the Turin Shroud. And he vindicated Max Frei.

Gramaglia (1999, p. 34) argues that *tetradiplon* means merely a four-sided cloth. He wrote: "On a stretched-out square cloth (*panno disteso quadrato*--τετράδιπλον) he wiped his face (νιψάμενος ἀπεμάξατο τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ). His image was impressed on the cloth (ἐντυπωθείσης δὲ τῆς εἰκονος αὐτοῦ ἐν σινδόνι)." *Quadrato* as translation of *tetradiplon* is clearly wrong. (Then what would be the sense of *diplon*?) *Tetraglochis* or *tetragonos*

or *tetrapleuros* are all words for "four-sided" or "of four equal corners" or "rectangular." *Tetradiplon,* a word used centuries before the first use of *mandylion* or *manutergium,* is so specific and unexpected that it cannot be casual or accidental. As for the choice of *sindon* vs. *rhakos* (both words for "common cloth," whether large or small) in the separate MSS of the *AT,* it matters little, since we know the cloth in question is large, it refers to Jesus, and the literary custom is to resonate the NT.

Dietz has developed a hypothesis that the Edessa cloth was never folded in eight, as the Sakl -type copies of the icon seem to dictate, but rather was folded in four. He based this view on his observation of the Shroud, on a lexical translation of *tetradiplon* as equivalent to *tetraploun* ("folded in four"), and also to accommodate the configuration of the four sets of burn holes just outside the hips of the Shroud-man and replicated on the Pray Codex. Jack Markwardt has urged this folding to support his theory that the burns occurred when the Shroud reputedly saved Edessa during the siege by Chosroes in 544. Dietz has asserted that only an artist's copy on cloth of the face of the Shroud-man was folded in eight to be copied by the Sakl artist after the Edessa shroud's arrival in Constantinople in 944. It should be recalled that the Shroud was folded in many layers while it resided in its silver chest in Chambery, a folding that is evidenced by the fire damage of 1532. Dr. John Jackson's research has shown that residual creases are still detected by raking-light photography. These tend to support the Shroud itself being folded in eight in a manner that places the face in the center of a panel one-eighth the size of the Shroud, and Maloney's pollen count also supports this folding. It seems, then, that the Shroud was folded differently at different times. But all agree on one fact: that in Edessa and in Constantinople the cloth was folded and not often seen.

It seems correct here, in order to establish the operative meanings of the key words of the *AT*, to join the evidence of art, the construction of Jackson's "unfolding" apparatus (Jackson-Jackson-Propp, 2000), and the Constantinople texts that describe the icon when it was in the capital and viewed more freely. Surely there is something amiss in the conclusions suggested by the *Approfondimento* team (Gramaglia and Lombatti, *passim)* that Jesus' body was wrapped around in a kerchief-sized *sindon* that was torn into mummy-like strips.**(12)**

THE *NARRATIO* OF 944

The *Narratio* of 944 is a key document in the study of the Shroud. It is this text that first announced the blood seen on the Edessa face. Within a day or two after the arrival in Constantinople of the reputed miraculous face, the *Narratio*, written under the auspices of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, and the Sermon of Gregory Referendarius (both eyewitness accounts of the icon) dare to alter for only the third

time the venerable and often-copied legend of Abgar. Now in 944 these two texts proffer a new version, one which virtually announces that much of the Abgar business was legend only. But it is a version which still defers to that legend. How is this to be rationalized? The *Narratio,* ch. 10-11, is worth quoting, if only that we should notice the moderate and sensible language in which this important discovery of blood was announced. After recalling yet again the traditional Abgar legend and describing--*describing*-- the image as a "moist secretion without the painter's art," the writer adds:

> That is the generally received story about the divine portrait of our Savior in the cloth. However, there is another story about this which is neither incredible nor short of reliable witnesses. Therefore, I will also give this version so that no one may suspect that the first opinion is correct through ignorance of the second. It would not be at all surprising if the facts had often been distorted in view of the time that has elapsed. The chief point, that the Savior's face was impressed on the cloth by some miracle, is agreed by all. There is, however, some disagreement about the circumstances. . . . Yet it does not affect the truth.
>
> The alternative version of the story is as follows: They say that when Christ was about to go voluntarily to death, he was seen to reveal his human weakness, feel anguish, and pray. According to the Evangelist, sweat dropped from him like drops of blood. Then, they say [I will later try to identify who "they" might be], he took this piece of cloth which we see now . . . and wiped off the drops of sweat on it. At once the still-visible impression of that divine face was produced. Jesus gave the cloth to Thomas and instructed him that after he ascended into heaven, Thomas should send Thaddaeus with it to Abgar, thereby fulfilling the promise He had made by letter.**(13)**

The new version, introduced by the vague "they say" and preferred by the writer, is told here for the first time ever, to my knowledge. The only explanation for this is that they, as eyewitnesses, saw blood on the face before them, blood that had not been perceived (or at least not noted) during all the time the image was in Edessa. But the Edessa image had a long-time reputation as a face made in Jesus' ministry. Now they had discovered that the Edessa face was an image not of his ministry but of his Passion. And everyone knew the cloth had just then arrived from Edessa. How ever was one to deal with this? Constantine's writer retained the Abgar story, omitting the role of Hanan, but layered over it the new firsthand observations. Gregory Referendarius had the same problem, especially after mentioning the "blood and water" of the side wound. No previous writer had alluded to this feature of the

Edessa icon. It is conceivable that folded upside down behind the face panel could be seen the next section below the face--the panel with the side wound. That Gregory saw the side wound is not absolutely certain, but it has yet to be convincingly disproved. In any case, the first *explicit* mention of Christ's burial cloth in the Imperial Byzantine relic collection has the date of 958, fourteen years after the arrival of the Edessa image, and there, as described below, one finds a clear reference to the blood from Jesus' side.

EARLY EVIDENCE OF A FULL-BODY IMAGE

But are there no early writers who had heard intimations of a full-body icon of Christ on a cloth? Are there no texts that know of a bloodstained shroud? There are, in fact, such texts, though they do not describe the Turin Shroud precisely. Let me preface this section with some comments on Gramaglia's article (1988, "Alcuni"). He cites there a number of Syriac and Arab texts from the 5th c. on that do not mention even an icon; he cites others that know the icon was painted, as in the *DA*. None of these mentions a burial cloth. Texts already cited above are responses to this last point since they vouch for the secrecy of its keeping and the resultant ignorance of its true nature on the part of its many writers.

It does not serve any purpose when Gramaglia cites texts that do not mention an image or a shroud when the texts date from a time posterior to the image's documentation in the *AT* and in the *DA* of the 4th-5th c. It is inevitable that some writers will not have known the *DA*. Yet Gramaglia (1988, p. 525) concludes that there is no reference to the image "probably because no legend yet existed when the work was composed."**(14)** By another premise, these omissions show that the image, still thought to be a painted portrait, was just not considered all that remarkable in its association with Jesus' autograph letter or, indeed, the omissions show that it was kept hidden as the texts produced by von Dobschütz have attested.

In discussing early texts referring to a cloth with a full-body image on it, one must admit that these writers also never saw the icon while it was kept inaccessibly in Edessa. Yet a leak has certainly set afoot the rumor of something other than the facial image in Edessa. Andreas Kretes (ca. 660-740) was one of many who defended icons in his *On Worship of Holy Icons (De sanctarum imaginum veneratione*). πρῶτον μὲν τὴν Αὐγάρῳ τῷ τοπάρχῃ πεμφθεῖς ῥάκει σεβασμίαν εἰκονα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐκμαγεῖον οὖσαν τοῦ σωματικοῦ αὐτοῦ χαρακτῆρος καὶ μηδὲν ἀποδέουσαν τῆς ἐκ τῶν χρωμάτων γραφῆς. ("Christianity holds nothing that is undemonstrable or carefully considered. Even the use of holy icons is from ancient tradition, and we have reliable examples of icons supported by proof. First, [there is] the awesome

image of our Lord on a cloth [*rhakos*] sent to Abgar the toparch, being an impression of his bodily traits and not at all needing colors.") (Dobschütz, pp. 185*-186*.) Chrysostomides (p. xxiii), conversely, translates ἀποδέουσαν τῆς ἐκ τῶν χρωμάτων by "imprints *in* color." In any case, and again, she doubts the authenticity of the passage. But as it stands, it attests a full body on cloth. Kessler (p. 136), on the other hand, translates Andreas' ἀποδέουσαν passage "unlike the art of painting with colors," thereby supporting its monochrome appearance and the possibility that Andreas had heard something extremely significant about the Edessa image.

Mark Guscin has proposed an interesting interpretation of the following lines of a letter sent to Taius by Braulio of Zaragoza about 645 (Guscin, 1998).

> *Fieri multa quae non habentur conscripta, sicut de linteaminibus, et sudario quo corpus Domini est involutum, legitur quia fuerit reppertum, et non legitur quia fuerit conservatum: nam non puto neglectum esse ut futuris temporibus inde reliquiae ab apostolis non reservarentur, et caetera talia.*
>
> ("But many things happened in those times that were not written about, such as the linen cloths and the shroud in which the body of the Lord was wrapped. We read that it was found, but we do not read that it was kept, for I do not think that it would be ignored so that the apostles would not have kept it as a relic for future times.")

Guscin concludes that the reference to the *sudarium* being lost refers not to the Gospel account, since it was not then "lost." Therefore, he surmises that the "found" must refer to some no longer extant report of its being found in Edessa in the 6th c. If he is right, it would be reference to the shroud of Jesus, though not necessarily imaged, in 7th c. Spain, when the *tetradiplon* was still in Edessa.

Guscin is certainly correct in noticing (personal communication), as I and others have, that while all versions of the Abgar stories make up the legend, the object in Edessa and later in Constantinople was *actual.* The legend was created to explain something actual but little known, and it was not necessarily only a face on a cloth. Many also wonder when and whence came Robert de Clari's actual *sydoines* to Constantinople, since there is no record of its arrival (Wilson, 1978).

Several documents of the life of Georgian St. Nino (d. ca. 338) refer to the preservation of the burial linens. Rightly or not, they associate St. Luke with these and St. Peter specifically with the shroud (though it is not said to be imaged). "When they had buried Jesus, they placed a guard over the tomb, but he arose and left it, and nothing was found in the tomb but the cloths, which shortly afterwards, fell into the hands of the Evangelist St. Luke, and were deposited by him, he alone knows where.

Since the Shroud was not found, some said of Peter that he had taken possession of it, to keep it and to guard it, but without giving any more precise details."**(15)**

Also in the 4th c., Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428) described the liturgy in his *Catecheses* as follows:

> When they bring up (the oblation at the offertory) they place it on the altar for the completed representation of the passion, so that we may think of Him on the altar as if He were placed in the sepulcher after having received His passion. This is why the deacons who spread linens on the altar represent the figure of the linen cloths at the burial. . . . (The deacons) stand up on both sides and agitate all the air above the holy Body with fans. . . . They shew by this the greatness of the Body which is lying there. . . . (Dix, p. 282).

As Dreisbach (unpublished monograph) has noticed, this text not only mentions a *figure* on *linen* but that the *figure* is specifically identified as a *post*-Passion image of Jesus on the linen burial cloths in the sepulcher and is represented by "deacons" in the plural. Might the deacons who "stand up at both sides" represent the two figures on the Turin Shroud? Dreisbach also noted a mandate of Silvester I (Pope 314-335) at the Roman synod held at the Baths of Trajan in 314 that henceforth all altar cloths must be of linen "as the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was buried in a clean shroud" (*sicut corpus domini nostri Jesu Christi in sindone munda sepultum fuit).* Are these early liturgical traditions, Dreisbach asks, veiled allusions to an original ancient large cloth with a twin image of Jesus?**(16)**

One of the most important of the apocrypha providing a strong case for the early existence of the Turin Shroud is the 5th-6th c. Gospel of Gamaliel. This "Gospel" contains two separate texts. In the first text, the "Lament of the Virgin," Jesus' mother complains throughout at her son's Passion and cruel death. The second text is called the "Martyrdom of Pilate." Both parts of the Gospel of Gamaliel seem to pay special attention to the burial cloths which wrapped Jesus' body in the tomb, as did the Gospel of Nicodemus, to which they are thus related. In both parts can be found numerous references to the nudity of Jesus on the cross, such as was normally artistically and textually avoided. The nudity of the image of Jesus on the Shroud is one of its most remarkable aspects. I limit myself to only one climactic passage in the "Martyrdom of Pilate." The Emperor Tiberius summoned John to Rome and asked John to depict Jesus' physical appearance. John's portrait of Jesus, done life-sized on a large slab of stone, then cried and spoke to him.

> "It is enough, O John, that you painted my image and the figure of my

> crucifixion as you witnessed it on the day of crucifixion. . . . It would have been better if you had painted my figure according to the image you saw of me after my resurrection. . . . Why do you crucify me again at the hand of Tiberius? . . . Do not allow the inhabitants of Rome also to see my nudity. My side was pierced with a spear on Friday, do not pierce me, O John my beloved, another time after my resurrection. . . ." And the Emperor took the image and embraced it, then he placed it on a high pedestal at that place, like the image of the Son of God in the country of the Byzantines (or of the Armenians) (Mingana, pp. 279-280).**(17)**

Among the numerous authors who signaled the relic was the Moslem historian Massoudi, writing in 944 and thus a contemporary of the transfer of the linen to the capital in 944 (Massoudi, *Fields of Gold*, ch. 29: "in the present year"). He knew of a precious linen seen in the Justinian basilica of "Roha," as he called Edessa. Massoudi alone, without speaking of an image, reinvents it as Christ's baptismal body towel. In his version the historical elements remain still simple, natural, and comprehensible: Christ, a large cloth, an application on a damp body. Massoudi obviously did not know the Abgar legend of Jesus wiping his face. He did know the cloth was in Edessa and was expropriated from the Arabs and brought to Constantinople (von Dobschütz, p. 209*). He is another example of someone who should have known the full story of the cloth but did not. What he had heard was that the cloth was larger than a *mindil,* the Arab word that supposedly is the root of a kerchief-sized *mandylion.***(18)**

Extremely important is an 8th-10th c. MS of Mt. Athos, thought by Adolf Harnack, its editor, to derive from a 5th-6th c. original. It tells an apocryphal story which has become the primary source for many later medieval romances. It describes how Joseph of Arimathea carried the NT shroud up to Golgotha when he deposed the body of Jesus. In it we read that Joseph captured Jesus' dripping blood in the shroud and the headbands (Scavone, *Arthuriana,* 1999). Though this text does not relate to Edessa, it is an early reference suggesting a knowledge of the bloodstained Shroud and possibly to even the Oviedo *sudario.*

In the 10th c. Cod. Voss. Q69, the Oldest Latin Abgar Text (identical to von Dobschütz's 14th c. Paris MS B.N. lat 6041A: pp. 137**-138**), we read that in Edessa the icon's figure was displayed on Easter so as to appear at the first hour as an infant, at the third hour as a boy, at the fifth hour as an adolescent, at the seventh hour as a young man, and at the ninth hour as the crucified Jesus. Both Cod. Voss. Q69 and Paris lat. 6041A, assessed by von Dobschütz as deriving from an 8th c. Syriac source, give us a crucified Jesus on a cloth in the 8th c. It may be significant to notice that the story of a full-body image has no motive unless it began from a source who had seen it. As for how the image came to be on the cloth, Cod. Voss. Q69, Gervase

of Tilbury, and Robert of Clari all give different versions.

Gino Zaninotto has dubbed this "the polymorphic Jesus," a concept that he presented in a remarkable paper in Turin (1998), from which can be gleaned the following**.** The apocryphal *Acts of John* (*AJ*), always dated to the mid-2nd c., contains a redactor's insertion (ch. 87-93) that resonates both the Shroud and the Edessa icon. It is perhaps the earliest clue outside of the NT of the antiquity of the survival of a shroud. All who have looked at the face of the man of the Turin Shroud have agreed that in one blink of the viewer (looking at the eyebrows), the eyes appear open and large; in another moment (looking at the eyelids below), they appear as closed in death. The *AJ* relates the constant open appearance of Jesus' eyes. The feet of the figure on the frontal side of the Shroud are partly absent, as if they have vanished in the white linen. We read in the *AJ* that his feet are whiter than snow and leave no imprint on the ground.

The *AJ* described the inability of the disciples to fasten on the appearance of Christ: John observes him from the back as "not at all clothed, but naked . . . and his head touched the sky. . . . He turned and appeared to me as a man of small stature." Recall that in the *Acts of Thaddaeus* Abgar's painter could not fix the face of Jesus so as to draw it. Later in the *AJ*, when Jesus is calling the sons of Zebedee, John sees him with dense beard but hairless in the upper part of his head, while James sees instead a youth with only incipient beard. In a still later passage, Jesus simultaneously appears and speaks twice. Zaninotto thinks it is a subtle reference to the twin image on the Shroud. It is as though the writer of the *AJ* was looking at the Shroud.

Zaninotto summarizes the many details that resonate the Turin Shroud (some highlighted above): Jesus hovering above the earth, image erect, evanescence of the image, double (anterior and posterior) image, old and young appearance, softness of the figure (the linen?). In a document admittedly bearing docetic influence, these details are distinctly Shroud-like.

I mention only briefly the legend of the full-body image of Jesus crucified that found its way to Βηρυτὸς (again Beirut). Its Greek MS is dated in the 11th c., but it is attributed to Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria (d. 373), and the image was supposedly made by Nicodemus. The legend of the Beirut icon says that in the time of Constantine II (d. 340), this image was crucified and pierced in the side, causing the flow of blood and water. As noted already, it is most likely that "Beirut" is an erroneous reading of the historically and semantically correct word "*birta*," the citadel of Edessa, where really existed an image of Jesus; and the story tells us that some knew the Edessa image was of the *integram staturam* of Jesus crucified (Savio, pp. 351-359; Scavone, *Arthuriana*, 1999).

THE SHROUD AS A WORK OF ART

Gramaglia is surely going to extremes in arguing that the Turin Shroud is a consciously created artifact of a later period (1991, pp. 89f). He asserts also that the Syriac term in the *DA* originally translated as "choice colors" has a wide semantics, from drug to poison, from medicinal herbs to natural pigments creating a picture in bright color (1999, p. 22). Therefore, Hanan's portrait was a matter of colors obtained with special natural varicolored pigments. His argument can be reduced to saying the "choice colors" of the *DA* described a bright paint that gradually over time lost all its coloration to become the faint monochrome face seen by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus--face that Gramaglia inadvertently concedes as gradually resembling more and more the face on the Shroud.

It cannot be proved that someone knew then precisely how to create the image we see today. Artists Isabel Piczek and Roger Basset affirm that they could not paint in all of the unseen physical attributes found by ultraviolet, infrared, and X-ray photographs of the Shroud. Not the least of these attributes is the near-absence of paint particles on the original. Nevertheless, Emily Craig easily and quickly sketched a face that contained three-dimensional information. Among numerous shortcomings, Craig's creation does not at all resemble the face on the Shroud, has none of the other unseen attributes of the Shroud image, and is entirely applied pigment. A *mise en scene* in which a ready-to-hand artist was permitted into the tomb for several hours on the Jewish Sabbath to create that twin figure precisely the size of Jesus as he lay in the tomb by drawing it on a second fourteen-foot cloth and then laying the drawing upon Jesus' bloodstained shroud, thus transferring the dusty pigment to the actual shroud, is not plausible. (It should be clear that a fourteen-foot length of parchment or paper was not possible then.) The same event, if it should be transposed to the 14th c., assumes a proto-Renaissance genius who never found another patron and thus never made another masterpiece similar to his production of a nude frontal and dorsal Christ. The Shroud-man's anatomical correctness has caused several researchers to claim it is a photograph of a crucified man. This, too, has been rejected by historians and practitioners of photography (Ware).

It cannot be denied, though Lombatti (1999) denies it, that the new and more intimate knowledge of that imaged cloth after 944 set in motion new Christ-imagery, new revisions of the Abgar legend, and new spiritual awarenesses (Belting, 1980-81; Belting, 1994, Pl. 207; Belting, 1981, pp. 96-102 and 124-128; La Favia, pp. 51-60). It could be compared with the impact of the first 1898 photos of the Turin Shroud. And it is reasonable that not everywhere was the new intelligence immediately known. Therefore, it is not surprising that many writers, even after the arrival of the Edessa icon in Constantinople, still wrote only and strictly of the Abgar legend as they had

received it, as Lombatti (1999) has asserted. This does not change the fact of the new imagery of Jesus that began in the 10th-11th c., when one begins to see the oblong "landscape" copies of the Edessa face, the frequent versions--beginning in the East and moving westward--of the "Man of Pity" motif, and the *threnos* or "lamentation" art represented on church walls and on *epitaphioi*--many of which portray Jesus lying upon a shroud woven in a herringbone pattern (Scavone, Richmond, 1999). Prior to this, in churches where now appear the full-body epitaphios murals, one saw only the familiar frontal (Edessa) face in *tondo*.

Lombatti and Gramaglia have set forth the premise that there was never a large shroud until perhaps the eyewitness text of Robert de Clari, and they cite the fact that the literature does not hint at a large shroud during those many centuries. But that position has prevented them from seeing one in many documents, one kept secretly and "disguised" by being folded, under conditions in which no viewer could have known that the faint face had bodies unseen folded behind it.

THE SERMON OF GREGORY REFERENDARIUS

When Gramaglia (1991, pp. 109f.) reads the sermon of Gregory Referendarius**(19)**, he understands Gregory's new explanation of the image--directly and immediately being observed by him and described as stained with blood as if by the finger of God--as *tracciata con colori rugginosi o ferruginei senza tuttavia alcuna macchia di sangue distinta dal resto della figura del volto* ("marked with reddish or ferrous colors still without any stain of blood distinct from the rest of the facial figure"). Citing Gregory's Greek text, πῶς ἡ ἐν τῇ ὀθόνῃ ἀναστήσασα με ἁγία ἐνετυπώθη μορφὴ ("how the holy form was impressed on the cloth"), he concludes that this is clear expression of a "*piccolo panno,*" though ὀθόνῃ and μορφὴ do not render "small cloth" or "face" at all. It must be admitted that Gregory did not precisely acknowledge that he was looking at anything but a face on the cloth, but nobody before him had compared that faded and liquid epsilon bloodstain--so clearly perceived, as I maintain, only in 944--with the watery bloodstains in Jesus' side. Looking today at the face on the Shroud, anyone must agree that the epsilon flow might well be described as "drawn by the finger of God"--ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι . . . αἵματος ἐντετύπωται καὶ δακτύλῳ Θεοῦ. Rejecting this text in their various papers, the *Approfondimenti* have said that there is no evidence of a large shroud of Jesus in 11th c. Constantinople that would fit the one "manufactured" at Torino. The Byzantine world was fanatical for relics used as talismans, and still no shroud was known (e.g., Gramaglia**,** 1997). Given the early documents hinting at the preservation of Jesus' shroud (the *Acts of John, Gospel of Gamaliel,* the Georgian *I, Joseph*, etc.), one must ask why it took so long for the

fanatical Greeks to "invent" it. Yet the shroud of Jesus did arrive in Constantinople, and there is no record of its arrival, whether from Edessa or from Jerusalem. Already in 958, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus sent a letter of encouragement to his troops, then campaigning around Tarsus, which explicitly introduces the shroud of Jesus into this context (Mazzucchi; Scavone, 1989). The letter announced that the Emperor was sending a supply of holy water consecrated by contact with the relics of Christ's *Passion* which were then in the capital. No mention is made of the recently acquired *mandylion*: as a relic of Jesus' ministry it would have been out of place among the relics of the Passion. In the letter, reference is made, however, to "the precious wood, the unstained lance, the precious inscription [probably the *titulus* attached to the cross], the life-giving *blood from his side* (ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ πλενρᾶς ἀπορρεύσαντος ζωοποιοῦ αἵματος)*,* the venerable tunic, the sacred linens, *the God-bearing sindon* (τῶν ἱερῶν σπαργάνων καὶ θεοφόρου σινδόνος), and other symbols of the immaculate Passion." (Italics are mine.) This would then be the earliest text mentioning any burial cloth(s), and it derives from 10th c. Constantinople. Permit me to wax philological for a moment: the term used here for "sacred linens," *Spargana*, usually means infant's "swaddling cloths" but in a list of Passion relics must refer to burial linens, as it does in several other texts. The context is always important. By citing the "ordinary" meanings of *sindon*, etc., *Approfondimento* writers muddy the field unnecessarily.

The precise identity of this *sindon* has been enigmatic, since no mention exists in any text of the arrival in the capital of Jesus' burial sheet. But it acquires some clarity with Zaninotto's rediscovery of the Gregory Sermon. Just as in the Gregory Sermon, the letter of 958 implies that the Byzantines could see "blood" from the side of the figure depicted on a cloth. One is additionally encouraged by the overlapping of textile relics and blood in Constantine VII's letter to suspect that this cloth was the same which had come from Edessa and was a second time recognized as bloodied.

When did this *sindon* arrive in Constantinople? The fact that the arrival of the burial wrappings of Jesus, so prominent in the N.T. and later in the imperial relic collection, was not heralded by the usual processions and viewings and not even mentioned in any source suggests a rather unorthodox presence. That Edessa's cloth was a bloodstained shroud icon is now reinforced by Gregory's sermon. A possible unfolding, harmonious with the words *sindon* and *tetradiplon* of the *Acts of Thaddaeus,* is evidenced by the imperial letter, where suddenly, without fanfare, Jesus' *sindon* was announced. But a complete unfolding would not be required: with the *mandylion* now folded in eight so as to expose only a facial panel, the chest-with-side-wound area, upside-down on the opposite side, would have been available to the view of Gregory and all.

THE PRAY CODEX

Finally, is that imaged cloth documented from the 3rd-4th c. in Edessa and in Constantinople until 1203 the same as appeared in Lirey in 1355? In the Pray Codex, dated to 1192 and thus inspired by that burial cloth still in Constantinople, a single illustration shows Jesus with crossed hands, red zigzag lines seeming to imitate those blood drippings down the arms of the Shroud-man, and two of the four sets of burn holes that were already visible on the Shroud before the fire of 1532 (Berkovitz). Lombatti has argued that one of the illustrations, that of Christ enthroned, shows nail wounds in the palms. Therefore, he says, the Pray Codex is proof of nothing. I reply that only one Shroud-like illustration is necessary. Lombatti's selection does not make it go away. The Pray Codex is simply and unarguably too precise to be questioned. The Shrouds of Constantinople and Turin are one and the same.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is no surprise that so many retellings of the Abgar legend tell of only a face on cloth. What *is* remarkable is that a painting on no specific surface (*DA*) becomes an image on cloth (i.e., it can be folded, wiped on). What *is* remarkable is that, little by little, the face is seen not to be painted, but faint and rather natural. The cloth is called a *sindon* in the 6th c. *AT*. Only in the late 10th c. is it called a (small) *mandylion* (Drews p. 39). Thus it was a large folded--*tetradiplon*--*sindon* before it ever was a napkin. What *is* remarkable--and has not been adequately explained away--is that the cloth was considered to contain a whole-body image before it left Constantinople, already possibly in the Gregory Sermon, surely in the Latin versions of the 10-12th c., which claim the cloth they describe was *still* in Edessa (Wilson, 1978, pp. 135-137). No adequate motivation has been offered to explain why Edessa's face "became" a full body. Another point that has not, to my knowledge, been addressed is that no text asserts that the Holy Face of Edessa was ever destroyed, and indeed, it would not have been destroyed without announcement and numerous textual echoes. Gramaglia argues there *was* a painted face on a board. It *was* tetradiplon--which he translated as "square." Lombatti says it is the painted icon in Genoa. That, as all are aware, is just a close copy of the Shroud-man's face. Little more need be said about the icons in Rome. So where *is* this square board with a painting of Jesus that had so exercised the Syriac church? (On the Shroud as a painting, see Piczek, 1990 and 1996.)

The fine scholars who produced the Munitiz volume (1997) on the *Letter of the Three Patriarchs* have a clear agenda, and to support it they have maintained that all--*all*--references before the iconoclast controversy to the face not-made-by-hands are

interpolations. Those contributors to the Kessler-Wolf volume (1998) have acknowledged the existence of some special and remarkable, indeed unique, original icon that sparked the entire syndrome of Abgar legends plus artistic copies. They suggest several techniques that would explain the special faint aspect of the original. Some call it "dark," judging the original not from texts but from the Genoa and from other copies darkened by time. They then add that they cannot imagine precisely how it must have looked. They seem to me, in fact, to have the Shroud in mind--they are all in awe of Averil Cameron, whom they freely quote--and are avoiding what to them is too tangled an issue on which to waste energy. Besides Cameron, a single writer mentions the Shroud, only to dismiss what he himself has noticed. James Trilling says (p. 111), "Among extant works, only the Shroud of Turin hints at the power of a genuine *acheiropoieton*. . . . The Shroud has been shown to date from the fourteenth century, and therefore cannot possibly be the authentic burial cloth of Christ." So ultimately all opposition, whether overt or veiled, takes its confidence from the radiocarbon date, as if that process were infallible.

On their part, Lombatti and Gramaglia must be thanked for footnoting the sources of many texts, often providing the original language of the text. They have caused me, and I hope others, to rethink several texts that had been assumed to be unassailable indicators of an early Turin Shroud. Their work has the merit of crystallizing the strongest philological arguments available to the sindonoclasts and demanding better responses from those who would defend the Shroud's antiquity and authenticity. This is a fine contribution to Shroud historical research, and I, for one, will acknowledge it. But Lombatti and Gramaglia have not written a new history of the Shroud that repudiates what many have spent half a lifetime seeking to confirm.

I have not taken up all of the objections thrown by Fr. Gramaglia and Mr. Lombatti against the possible authenticity of the Shroud. Gramaglia's libretto of 1978 will require a detailed analysis by itself. I know this debate will not end here, for Lombatti has said that he "adores the debate" and already has written his absolute refutation of the Shroud in his next book. It has not been my intention to prove beyond dispute that the Shroud is authentic. I hope, however, that it will now be clear to all that no refutation of the Shroud on philological or semantic grounds is likely to succeed.

NOTES

(1) The argument of Chrysostomides seems aberrant: at Nicaea II in 787, Evagrius seems not to have been known. Of two MSS available, one had the complete text of his *H.E.* IV.27 while in the other that passage was erased. Chrysostomides' case would make more sense if the latter MS simply did not have the passage about the miraculous icon saving the city. But the story had been there before it was erased.

(2) On Mani, see Han J. W. Drijvers (1982 and 1983). On the Carpocratian images, see Drews, 80 and 92-93. Drews' source was Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses,* 1.25.6. On the virtual dogmatic use of the Edessa face, see Skhirtladze.

(3) Segal (1980) has proposed that Edessa's leadership copied the main lines of the legend from parallel events in Adiabene, events which actually took place in Christ's lifetime.

(4) Personal communication from Jack Markwardt, quoting *The Catholic Encyclopedia.*

(5) Kessler, "Configuring," 142, transplants this ritual in error to the Pharos relic repository in Constantinople, but it clearly belongs in Edessa.

(6) In fact, the texts of the "Liturgical Tractate" in von Dobschütz (112**) and of the "Oldest Latin Abgar Legend" (134**) indicate at least three occasions for viewing the icon in Edessa: (1) It was shown one day in mid-Lent when the icon was touched with a wet sponge and the holy water was then sprinkled on the assembled people. (2) On two other days the bishop alone entered the shrine and opened the shutters of the icon's case, enabling the people to view the icon. It is not clear to me if these events took place during each week of Lent (therefore about fifteen days per year) or only on the specified days of Holy Week or Passion Week (thus two days per year) or simply on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the year (thus 104 days). In any case, I have shown from von Dobschütz (with linguistic assistance of Dietz and Guscin) that the image seems always to have been covered when it was "exposed" on these days. (3) On Easter the image was shown in increments throughout the day, from infancy to crucifixion, evidence that it was, after all, a full-body image.

(7) Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia, XXIV, De alia figura Domini,* carries an alternate version of the origin of a bloodied full-body image on a cloth, this time in a context related to the burial of Christ, and related to Lucca and not directly to Edessa; it

has no parallel, to my knowledge, in texts from Constantinople:

> There is another figure of the Lord expressed on cloth which has its origin in *Gestis de Vultu Lucano*. When the Lord our Redeemer, hung from the cross stripped of his clothing, Joseph of Arimathea approached Mary, the mother of the Lord, and the other women who had followed the Lord in His Passion, and said: Do you love Him so little that you allow him to hang there naked and not do anything about it? Moved by this castigation, the mother and the others with her bought a spotless *linteum* so ample and large that it covered the whole body, and when He was taken down the image of the whole body hanging from the cross appeared expressed on the linen.
>
> *Est alia in linteo Domini figura expressa, quae, ut in* gestis de vultu Lucano *ligitur, hoc suum habuit initium. Cum Dominus redemtor noster exutus vestimentis suis in cruce penderet, accedens Joseph ab Arimathia ad Mariam matrem Domini & ad alias mulieres, quae secuta sunt Dominum ad passionem suam, ait: O, inquit, quanto amore huic justo tenebamini, ex ipso rerum effectu perpendi potest, quem etiam nudum in cruce pendere vidistis, non operuistis. Quo castigationis alloquio mota mater ejus & aliae, quae cum ea erant, cito euntes emerunt linteum mundissimum tam amplum & extensum, quod tota crucifixi corporis effigies in linteo est expressa, cumque deponeretur, pendentis de cruce apparuit totius corporis effigies in linteo expressa.*

(8) Robert of Clari (1204), Par. 83 (in Hopf, 65-66):

> *Or avoit encore autres saintuaires* [relics] *en chele capele, que nous vous aviemes eulies a dire. Car il i avoit II. riches vaissiaus d'or qui pendoient enmi le capele a II. grosses caaines* [chains] *d'argent, et l'un de ches vaissiaus si i avoit une tiule, et en l'autre une touaile. Si vus dirons dont chil saintuaires estoient venu. Il eut jadis un saint homme en Constantinoble. Si avant que chus sains hons recouvroit de tiule le maison a une veve femme pour l'amour de Damedieu. Si comme il le recouvroit, si s'aparut nostre sires a lui, si parla a lui. Or avoit li boins hons une toaile entour lui. "Cha donne", fist nostre sires, "chele toaile." Et li boins hons li bailla. Et nostre sires en envolepa sen visage, si que se forme i fu emprientee, puis se li rebailla, se Ii dist qu'iI l'emportast et qu'iI la toucast as malades, et qui creanche i aroit, si seroit neties de se maladie. Et li boins le prist, si l'enporta; mais devant chou qu'iI l'emportast, quant Dieus li eut rendue se toaile, si le prist li boins hons, si le mucha sous une tiule dusques au vespre. Au vespre quant il s'en*

ala, si prist se touaile; si comme il leva le tiule, si vit le forme emprientee en le tiule aussi comme en le toaile. Si enporta le tiule et le toaile; puis en warirent maint malade.

"Now there was still another relic in this chapel which we had forgotten to tell you about. For there were two rich vessels of gold hanging in the midst of the chapel by two heavy silver chains. In one of these there was a tile and in the other a cloth. And we shall tell you where these relics came from. There was once a holy man in Constantinople. It happened that this holy man was covering the house of a widow with tile for the love of God. And as he was covering it, Our Lord appeared to him and said to him (now this good man had a cloth wrapped about him): 'Give me that cloth,' said Our Lord. And the good man gave it to Him, and Our Lord enveloped His face with it so that His features were imprinted on it. And then He handed it back to him, and He told him to carry it with him and touch the sick with it, and whoever had faith in it would be healed of his sickness. And the good man took it and carried it away; but before he carried it away, after God had given him back his cloth, the good man took it and hid it under a tile until vespers. At vespers when he went away, he took the cloth and as he lifted up the tile, he saw the image imprinted on the tile just as it was on the cloth, and he carried both tile and cloth away, and afterwards he cured many sick with them." (Translation in McNeal, 104.)

(9) Mark Guscin (personal correspondence) notes some texts to support this. See 1 Thess 2:17, 2 Cor 5:12 : Paul is present in heart (or spirit) but not "in person." There is no way this could be translated as "facially." Note, too, the NT verb προσωπωληπτέω, "to respect persons," i.e., to show favoritism, as in James 2:9, Romans 2:11, and Col. 3:25. Dreisbach (personal correspondence) has provided numerous other citations from Kittell.

(10) See McCullough, 9ff. Torrey, 245-295, discusses the earliest Syriac MS of the NT, the Lewisian version, and shows that the Syriac translation was made in Antioch in the 2nd c. and was unsatisfactory because it was written in an early and unsophisticated Syriac and retained many Palestinian-Aramaic expressions. This translation antedated Tatian's *Diatessaron* (ca. 173) but was revised by the Old Syriac NT, edited by Cureton. Cureton's text, early 3rd c., was written in more classical Syriac that expunged the archaisms of the Lewisian text and also the remnant Palestinian usages. One finds in this scenario no cogent philological reason for prioritizing the ancient Syriac NT over the equally ancient Greek NT. If the expressions of the Syriac differ from those of the Greek

NT, it is because Syriac could not precisely translate the subtleties of the Greek.

In support of his thesis, McCullough, 17, says that Lucian of Samosata, with no Greek and eager to succeed in the Graeco-Roman world, headed "not for Antioch" but for Ionia. "It seems that in Syria in the second century the native language had no strong literary tradition behind it, nor did it point to a future for an ambitious young man."

The view that the NT in Aramaic was earlier than the Greek was popularized by the late Syriac scholar George Lamsa. F. Rilliet (*Encyclopedia of the Early Church,* 809) says that the Syriac script dates to the 1st/2nd century A.D. from pagan inscriptions found in the Edessa region. The Aramaic bible (the Peshitta) was thought to have been written down in the 2nd-4th centuries in the Edessa region by Judaizing Christians from the Kingdom of Adiabene. Many scholars who are partial to Aramaic/Syriac have tried to build a case for an Aramaic "original" of the New Testament. However, Matthew Black (*An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts,* Oxford: 1967) and Max Wilcox (*The Semitisms of Acts,* Oxford: 1965) have pointed out that these Hebraisms are simply the result of the Semitic background of the writers of the New Testament. It has not been adequately argued that the Syriac text predates the Greek NT. (Thanks to Paul Maloney, personal communication.)

(11) On Beirut, see Tixeront, who notes correctly that the *AT* places Thaddaeus' burial in "Berytus, a city of Phoenicia by the sea." See also on this Roberts and Donaldson, Vol. 8, 559. Lipsius (159-161, n.3) gives about a dozen texts that mention the death and/or burial of Thaddaeus. Among these Pseudo-Dorotheos (5th-6th c.) attests: "Jude son of James and Thaddaeus and Lebaios proclaimed the gospel in all Mesopotamia" and, somewhat confusing, "he died and was buried with honor in Berytos of Abgar, King of Edessa." (ἐπὶ δε Αὐγάρου βασιλέως Ἐδεσσηνῶν ἐτελεύτησενἐν Βερύτῳ και ἐκεῖ θάπτεται ἐνδόξως). Seven other texts say essentially the same thing, always naming Edessa. One names Berytos of the Phoenicians, and three others place Thaddaeus' death and burial in the Sinai peninsula among the Blemmyes, on Ararat in Armenia, and in Egypt. These may be ignored as outlyers.

(12) Both Gramaglia and Lombatti refer to the *AT* by its MS dates (the 9th-10th c. Cod. Vindobonensis bybl. Caesar. Hist gr. 45 and the 11th c. Cod. Parisinus bybl. Nat. gr. 548), whereas the original version of *AT* has been dated by Lipsius, its premier researcher, to the period 550-600. See R. A. Lipsius, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha,* I. 1891, 273-278. J. Chrysostomides (xxviii, n. 53) mentions that scholars have variously attributed the compilation of the *AT* to the 3rd, 6th, or 7th c.

(13) For the translation of the entire *Narratio*, see Wilson, 1978, 235-251.

(14) Gramaglia cites Su-Min Ri, *La Caverna dei Tesori: deux recensions syriaques* in *CSCO,* Louvain, 1987*,* 486. Since the icon was already known, and Gramaglia's 6th c. sources of the *Caverna dei Tesori* did not mention it, why should Egeria? And if the original text of the *Caverna* did not mention it, how could any of its 36 rescensions mention it? The *Caverna* knows the legend of Abgar. One cannot know why its author mentioned no portrait. Similarly, Egeria is no proof of the absence of an image in Edessa in the late 4th c.

She tells how the bishop toured her around and showed her Thomas' shrine and tomb in the great church (his body brought there from India in 394), thus she was not there before 394. She says she knew the Abgar story but mentioned only the letters. It is revealing that though she does not mention the image, she cites Jesus' promise of Edessa's invulnerability that appears only in the *DA,* along with the image. Thus the *DA* must be dated prior to her arrival in the East. It is odd that Egeria never mentioned Addai or Thaddaeus, since "Thaddaeus" is already sent to Edessa and is preaching there in Eusebius (I.2.8ff) and "Addai" plays the same role in the *DA*. All in all, we cannot say that her omission of Thaddaeus or of the Christ image has much significance other than to teach us what Egeria does not know, though she should. As to the bishop's silence about it, the explanation may be simply that her visit did not coincide with those few days of the year in Lent when the bishop displayed the image in its scrinium in the locked-up room.

See Gingras 77-81 and notes for the scholarly opinions about what Egeria saw and about the date of her travels.

(15) *Histoire de la Georgie* (Tr. Brosset, 93). Cited by Beecher, 169-170. Beecher cites also *The Great Chronicle of Armenia* and *The Life of St. Nino*.

(16) Personal communication from Fr. Kim Dreisbach. The next lines in Dix, 283, seem to refer to more than two deacons but reinforce the evidence for an imaged shroud used as an altar cloth: "the deacons stand in a circle and fan the air and offer honour and adoration to the sacred and awe-inspiring Body which is lying there . . . to shew that . . . the Body lying there is high, dreadful, holy and true Lord. . . ." Thus there are more than two deacons in this picture.

The Jastrow reference is owing to Paul Maloney, personal communication.

(17) For MS history and bibliography on the *Gospel of Gamaliel,* see Anton Baumstark, "Un evangile de Gamaliel," *Revue Biblique*, n.s., 3 (1906) 253-259. See also M.-A. van den Oudenrijn, "The Gospel of Gamaliel" in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Westminster: John Knox Pr, 1991, 558-560), for the best and fullest translation, taken from the Garshuni MSS in the library of A. Mingana, 163-332, esp. 278ff.

(18) It is not germane here but interesting enough to mention: Franz Rosenthal (63f.) has noted, “The derivation of *mandil* from Latin *mantele, mantel(i)um,* through the obligatory Greek intermediary, is self-evident.”

(19) In his latest and definitive dissertation on the Gregory Sermon, A. M. Dubarle (1997, 29) had already corrected the unfortunate transposition of ἐκεῖ/ἐνταῦθα correctly noticed by Lombatti (1999, 90-93) in Dubarle’s earlier 1995 paper.

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