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The *Mandyliion* in Constantinople

Literary and iconographic sources

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The 20th century and the beginning of the new century saw the flourishing of numerous studies concerning the development of Christian iconography of the early centuries and its role in the transmission of faith¹. The rediscovery of the Christian icon of the first millennium also coincides with the period of the beginning of the scientific studies applied to the Shroud, with the famous first photograph of the linen, taken by Secondo Pia in May of 1898².

At the beginning of the 20th century, Professor Paul Vignon, a philosopher and scientist, highlighted the close relationship between the Shroud and the depictions of the Face of Christ from the 4th century onwards³. The study of written documents is precious. Along with the literary part, the numerous and varied iconographic repertoire should simultaneously be considered. The observation of the similarity between the Shroud face and most of the depictions of Christ known in art, both Eastern and Western⁴, together with the study of sources referring to such images, shows a clear dependence. The evident similarity can not be attributed to a pure case, but it seems to be the result of a correlation, mediated or immediate, of an image from the other and of all from a common source⁵.

Paul Vignon argued that Christ's face, as presented in Christian art, was elaborated and modeled from the Shroud face and he also felt that there was a similarity between the classic type of Christ's face with the beard and the faint image impressed on the Shroud⁶.

Observing the face of the Man of the Shroud, in fact, it is possible to identify many elements of irregularity that are repeated in the painted images of Christ: these are not simply attributable to the imagination of the artists⁷. They also allow us to hypothesize, with a high degree of certainty, that the ancient depictions of Christ's face depend on the venerated relic.

Analyzing the pictorial reproductions, he was the first to note and highlight some coincidences with the Shroud face, later referred to as "Vignon points". The hair is long and bipartite. Sometimes

¹ USPENSKIJ L., *La teologia dell'icona*, Milan, 1995, pp. 329-366; MUZI M.G., *Visione e presenza*, Milan, 1995; GRABAR A., *Bisanzio*, Milan, 1964; FALETTI I., *Da Bisanzio alla Santa Russia*, Rome, 2011; JAZYKOVA I., *Io faccio nuova ogni cosa*, Milan, 2000; LAZAREV V., *Storia della pittura bizantina*, Turin, 1967.

² ENRIE G., *La Santa Sindone rivelata dalla fotografia*, Turin, 1938².

³ VIGNON P., *Le Saint Suaire de Turin devant la science, l'archéologique, l'histoire, l'iconographie, la logique*, Paris, 1902.

⁴ MARINELLI E., *The Shroud and the iconography of Christ*, in *Shroud of Turin, the controversial intersection of faith and science*, International Conference, St. Louis (Missouri, USA), October 9-12, 2014, <http://www.sindone.info/STLOUIS2.PDF>

⁵ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, in *Emmaus 2*, Quaderni di Studi Sindonici, Centro Romano di Sindonologia, Rome 1982, p. 13; id., *L'immagine di Cristo nell'arte*, Rome, 1986, pp. 35-51.

⁶ VIGNON P., *Le Linceul du Christ. Étude scientifique*, pp. 163-192; P. VIGNON, *Le Saint Suaire de Turin devant la Science, l'Archéologie, l'Histoire, l'Iconographie, la Logique*, op. cit., pp. 113-191.

⁷ The Second Council of Nicea specifies: "The production of images is not an invention of painters, but the approved law and tradition of the Catholic Church", see: DI DOMENICO P.G. (Ed.), *Atti del Concilio Niceno Secondo Ecumenico Settimo*, Vatican City 2004, p. 304.

two or three locks of hair in the middle of the forehead are present and this detail could be a pictorial interpretation of the trickle of blood in an epsilon shape visible in the center of the forehead of the Shroud face. The superciliary arches are pronounced and in some of these representations an eyebrow appears higher than the other, like in the Shroud face. At the root of the nose some portraits show a sign that resembles a square missing its upper edge and below it, there is a V sign. The nose is long and straight and the eyes are big and deep, wide open, with enormous irises and big eye sockets. The cheekbones are very pronounced, sometimes with spots. In some pictures it is noted, just as on the Shroud, a quite large area, without imprint, between the cheeks and the hair, so that the locks of hair appear strongly detached from the face. One of the cheeks of the Man of the Shroud is very swollen, probably because of a severe trauma, and the asymmetry of the face is evident. In the lower part of it, at the height of the maxillary bones, there are significant similarities between the Shroud face and the representations of Jesus Christ. The mustache, that are often drooping, are disposed asymmetrically and descend beyond the lips on each side with a different angle. The mouth is small, not hidden by the mustache. The beard, not too long, bipartite and sometimes tripartite, is slightly moved on one side; there is a beardless area under the lower lip. The inspiration from the Shroud is evident, for example, in the signs between the eyebrows, on the forehead and on the right cheek of Christ's face (8th century), fresco of the catacombs of Pontianus⁸ in Rome⁹.

In the light of these evident correspondences it turns out indispensable to search through history the documents, the mentions, the descriptions of this particular object, to understand how much it could have influenced the representations of Christ during the centuries¹⁰.

It is known that the New Testament does not hand down any description of the Savior's physical features; the prohibitions of the Old Law (Ex 20:4; Dt 5:8) probably appeared to be an obstacle for the nascent Church and an impediment to fixing the physiognomy in pictorial portraits or statues, although the legend attributes some of them to St. Luke or Nicodemus¹¹, therefore at the apostolic time.

Until the 4th century, symbolic¹² representations of Christ (lamb, bread, fish) are imposed along with the use of appearances derived from other religions: Christ the sun, Good Shepherd, Orpheus, Hercules, Thaumaturge, Master, Philosopher. In many cases, the representation of the young and beardless Christ is used to emphasize his divine nature¹³.

After the freedom of worship granted by Constantine to Christianity and sanctioned in 313 by the so-called Milan edict, a different image of Jesus' face started to spread, characterized by a beard that was not too long, mustache, a high and majestic appearance, long hair that fall on the shoulders and that sometimes show a central line that divides them¹⁴.

One of the first depictions of the bearded Christ appears in Rome in the Hypogeum of the Aurelii (3rd century). Among the works that show Him with a beard, we must remember some sarcophagi of Theodosian age (4th century) still preserved, for example, in the Vatican Museums, in St. Sebastian outside the Walls in Rome, in St. Ambrose in Milan and the Lapidary Museum of Arles.

⁸ The catacombs of Pontianus are a Christian funerary area located in Rome, on the slopes of Monte Verde, in the modern Gianicolense district. In the past it was also known as the catacombs of Abdon and Sennen, two Persians converted to Christianity and for this reason martyred. Pontianus was the landowner who perhaps had hosted Pope Callisto I, in Trastevere, in his own house during the persecution of Alexander Severus from 222 to 235. Numerous martyrs were buried in this cemetery and some galleries of the catacombs are still unexplored. It dates from the 3rd to the 7th century for the archaeological evidence that attests it. It was discovered in 1618 and systematic excavations were carried out in 1883. Further excavations, between 1917 and 1924, also brought to light various oratories and the so-called baptistry where the image of Christ Pantocrator is placed. See: TESTINI P., *Le catacombe e gli antichi cimiteri cristiani in Roma*, Bologna, 1966, p. 107 and p.145.

⁹ WILSON I., *Icone ispirate alla Sindone*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan) 2000, pp. 72-88, on p. 78.

¹⁰ DROBOT G., *Il volto di Cristo, fedeltà a un santo modello*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 57-71, on p. 60.

¹¹ MARINELLI E., *Three "Acheiropoietos" Images in comparison with the Turin Shroud*, in *International Interdisciplinary Conference on the Acheiropoietos Images*, Toruń, Poland, May 11-13, 2011, pp.1-7, https://www.academia.edu/867143/Three_Acheiropoietos_images_in_comparison_with_the_Turin_Shroud

¹² For the theme of the symbol in ancient and medieval Christianity, see: BAUDRY G-H., *Simboli cristiani delle origini*, Milan, 2016; DE CHAMPEAUX G. - STERCKX S., *I simboli del medioevo*, Milan, 1997.

¹³ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., pp. 20-21; MATHEWS T., *Scontro di dei*, Milan, 2005.

¹⁴ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., p. 17.

Other examples of Christ's depictions that show a striking resemblance to the Shroud face are: the mosaic of Christ in the apse of the basilica of St. Pudenziana in Rome (4th century); the Christ the Teacher of the Cubiculum of Leo in the Catacomb of Commodilla in Rome (4th century) and the enthroned Christ between Peter and Paul in the catacombs of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter in Rome (4th-5th century). Also the ancient icon on panel called Acheropita of the Most Holy Savior, venerated in the oratory of St. Lawrence in *Palatio*, called *Sancta Sanctorum*, in Rome, although in his stylistic simplicity, shows schematically this similarity. The original icon, completely deteriorated, goes back to the 5th-6th century. The mosaic of the Chapel of St. Venantius by the Baptistery of St. John Lateran (7th century) shows a bust of Christ of that kind. It is one of the most remarkable mosaics of Roman production of the time. Other examples are: the panel of Christ of the cathedral of the saints Marguerite and Martin in Tarquinia (Viterbo), 12th century; the panel of Christ of the cathedral of St. Mary of Assumption in Sutri (Viterbo), 13th century; the mosaic of the apse of the basilica of St. John Lateran (13th century)¹⁵.

Starting from the 6th century, a particular type of portrait of Jesus, that seems to be inspired by the Shroud, spreads also in the East. It is the majestic Christ, with a beard and mustache, called the *Pantocrator* (the Creator of all things, which will be called the Almighty in the West), of which there are some ancient examples in the rock churches of Cappadocia¹⁶. There is a rather evident inspiration from the Shroud also in the face of Christ on the silver vase of the 6th century found in Homs, Syria, now in the *Louvre* in Paris, and in the one visible on the silver reliquary of 550, coming from Cherson¹⁷, in Crimea, which is in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg¹⁸.

The *Pantocrator* is also present in the post-Byzantine era and it will remain substantially unchanged until today¹⁹. This way of representing Christ has become the only one in the first Christian millennium both in the East and in the West²⁰. Even with the beginning of the new Christian millennium, things in the East do not change. In the *Pantocrator* (13th century) of the Basilica of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and in the *Pantocrator* (14th century) of the church of St. Saviour in Chora, in Constantinople as well, you can notice concave cheeks and prominent and asymmetric cheekbones.

A distinctive and original sign is the detail in the middle of the forehead. It is present frequently; it can be a single or double strand of hair, sometimes even a vertical wrinkle. It is always painted in the center of the forehead and reveals, although in different interpretations, the Shroud origin: the characteristic trickle of blood on the forehead.

You can notice the lock of hair, simple or double, for example in the mosaic of the apsidal vault of the oratory of St. Lawrence in *Palatio* in Rome which depicts Christ *Pantocrator* in a clypeus (9th century); in the *Pantocrator* (12th century) of Cefalù Cathedral (Palermo); in the *Pantocrator* (12th century) of Monreale Cathedral (Palermo); in the *Pantocrator* (12th century) of Sant' Angelo in Formis church in Capua (Caserta); in the *Pantocrator* (12th century) of the church of Daphni Monastery, near Athens²¹.

The detail appears, instead, like a true and proper trickle of blood on the forehead of Christ on the crucifixion panel in one of the windows of the Portal of the Kings in Chartres cathedral (12th century)²².

¹⁵ ZANINOTTO G., *L'Acheropita del SS. Salvatore nel Sancta Sanctorum del Laterano*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 164-180, on pp. 178-179.

¹⁶ MANTON L., *The Cappadocian frescoes in relation to the Turin Shroud*, in DOUTREBENTE M.-A. (Ed.), *Acheiropoietos. Non fait de main d'homme, Actes du III Symposium Scientifique International du CIELT, Nice, May 12-13, 1997*, Paris, 1998, pp. 119-126.

¹⁷ Cherson was an ancient city whose ruins are located near Sevastopol. The city decayed with the fall of Constantinople (1453).

¹⁸ MORONI M., *L'icona di Cristo nelle monete bizantine. Testimonianze numismatiche della Sindone a Edessa*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 122-144, on p. 124.

¹⁹ GHARIB G., *Icone bizantine e ritratto di Cristo*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 35-56, on p. 35.

²⁰ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., p. 20.

²¹ GHARIB G., *Le icone di Cristo, storia e culto*, Rome 1993, p. 153.

²² FALCINELLI R., *Testimonianze sindoniche a Chartres*, in BAIMA BOLLONE P. - LAZZERO M. - MARINO C. (Edd.), *Sindone e Scienza. Bilanci e programmi alle soglie del terzo millennio*, pp. 300-311, on p. 303 and p. 310,

https://www.academia.edu/872980/Testimonianze_sindoniche_a_Chartres-Torino_1998

The observation of the Shroud face seems to have influenced also the representation of Christ on the Byzantine coins from the 7th century²³. Justinian II (Byzantine emperor from 685 to 695 and from 705 to 711) was the first emperor to have the face of Jesus to be represented on coins. On his golden *solidus* (692-695) there is a *Pantocrator* whose features are very similar to those of the Shroud: wavy hair falling behind the shoulders, long beard, mustache and the characteristic little tuft on the forehead.

Unfortunately, there are very few images of Christ that survived the terrible period of the iconoclasm (730-843) which, denying the legality of images in Christianity, destroyed much of the existing ones²⁴. When the iconoclast struggles ceased, the face of Christ, similar to the Shroud, was portrayed again on coins. One strongly inspired by the Shroud *Pantocrator*, expressive, with large eyes, long hair and beard, appears on the golden *solidus* of Michael III (842-867)²⁵. The golden *solidus* of Basil I (Byzantine emperor from 867 to 886) is the first coin coined with the figure of Christ on the throne. The Face has many characteristics of the Shroud.

With the technique of superposition in polarized light²⁶ it has been shown that the Shroud face fits in most points with that, suitably enlarged, of the *Pantocrator* portrayed on coins. There are more than 140 highlighted points of congruence, which are the points of overlap, with the *solidus* and with the *tremissis* of the first reign of Justinian II. Those correspondences widely satisfy the American forensic criterion, according to which from 45 to 60 points of congruence are enough to establish the identity or similarity of two images. The same technique was applied to one of the finest examples of *Pantocrator*, the icon of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, dating back to the 6th century, which has even 250 points of congruence²⁷.

Another comparison of the Shroud face was made with the technique of digital processing. It turned out that the traits and the outlines of the Shroud face are superimposable to those of the Christ of the *solidus* of Justinian II and of the icon of the Sinai²⁸.

In the Byzantine literary sources the image of the *Pantocrator* is called *acheiropoietos* – not made by human hands – or *apomasso* – imprint – and according to tradition it derives from a cloth: therefore it is called *Mandyllion*. This canon portrait of Christ is considered up to now the only valid representation, not only by the Orthodox Church, but also by the Catholic Church²⁹.

It is interesting to notice that the wooden doors of the basilica of St. Sabina in Rome (5th century) present Christ with a beard in the scenes of the Passion, while He is without a beard in all the other scenes of His life. This distinction also characterizes the mosaics of St. Apollinaris New, in Ravenna (6th century)³⁰. The hypothesis that there may be a reason to relate the representation of the bearded Christ with the Passion seems more than plausible and it is referable to a preexisting image, clearly linked to the moments of Jesus' suffering. The reference to the Shroud and to the testimonies, both written and iconographic, of an imprint left by Jesus on a cloth with His sweat and His blood does not seem unbelievable at all.

All the literary references that report legends and traditions, as well as the simple hints of the existence of such an image, appear, in the light of these similarities, very precious in order to rebuild an itinerary of the Shroud during the obscure centuries preceding its appearance in Europe. It would

²³ MORONI M., *L'icona di Cristo nelle monete bizantine. Testimonianze numismatiche della Sindone a Edessa*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 122-144.

²⁴ GRABAR A., *L'Iconoclasme byzantin*, Paris 1957.

²⁵ MORONI M., *Teoria numismatica dell'itinerario sindonico*, in: COERO BORGA P. - INTRIGILLO G. (Edd.), *La Sindone – Nuovi studi e ricerche, Atti del III Congresso Nazionale di Studi sulla Sindone, Trani, October 13-14, 1984*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 1986, pp. 103-124, on p. 114.

²⁶ WHANGER A.D. - WHANGER M., *Polarized image overlay technique: a new image comparison method and its applications*, in *Applied Optics*, 24, 6, 1985, pp. 766-772.

²⁷ WHANGER A.D., *Icone e Sindone. Confronto mediante tecnica di polarizzazione di immagine sovrapposta*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 145-151.

²⁸ HARALICK R.M., *Analysis of Digital images of The Shroud of Turin*, Spatial Data Analysis Laboratory, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, December 1, 1983, pp. 1-97; BALOSSINO N. - TAMBURELLI G., *Icone e Sindone. Analisi comparativa con metodologie informatiche*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 152-157.

²⁹ EGGER G., *L'icona del Pantocrator e la Sindone*, in COERO-BORGA P. (Ed.), *La Sindone e la Scienza, Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Sindonologia, Torino, October 7-8, 1978*, Turin 1979, pp. 91-94, on p. 93.

³⁰ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., pp. 19-25.

thus be possible to understand why there are so numerous and widespread references to the existence of an image of Christ on a cloth, like the birth of the tradition of the Roman Veronica³¹.

In this regard, the testimonies concerning the so-called Edessa³² Image are particularly interesting. Edessa was a city of ancient Armenia subsequently called Urfa and now Şanlıurfa, in southeastern Turkey.

The Edessa Image was an ancient relic, very venerated, that belonged from immemorial time to the Orthodox/Melkite Church.

The Nestorians made a copy of it in the 6th century, and the Monophysites/Jacobites made another copy in the 8th century³³. In reality, all three Christian denominations believed that they had the only authentic icon and were sure the other two communities were in possessions of copies³⁴. According to Arabian Jacobite historian, Yahya ibn Jarir (11th century), the Edessa Image was preserved folded and put between two tiles under the altar of the great church of Edessa officiated by the Melkite³⁵.

Historian Ian Wilson³⁶ claimed and motivated the identification of the Edessa Image with the Shroud, which was folded in order to show only the face.

In the important museum complex of the very city of Şanlıurfa there is a mosaic of Christ's face (6th century), which bears a very strong resemblance to the small detail depicting the Face of Christ on the icon of the saints Sergius and Bacchus (6th century) coming from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, which is preserved at the Museum of Western and Eastern Art of Kiev in Ukraine. Both of these depictions show traits inspired by the Shroud³⁷.

The existence of a link between Christ and Edessa is witnessed by Eusebius of Caesarea³⁸ (3rd-4th century), who can be considered, in spite of himself, the initiator of a tradition. In his work *Ecclesiastical History* he narrates of an epistle exchange between Christ and Abgar, King of Edessa, who, being sick, asked for the thaumaturgical intervention of Christ. Jesus did not go, but instead, the apostle Thaddeus³⁹ went to Edessa with a response written by Jesus. The king was the witness of a great vision that appeared on Thaddeus' face and prostrated himself in front of him. The apostle laid his hands on Abgar and healed him. The king believed in Jesus and ordered all the citizens to gather to listen to Thaddeus' preaching. Riccardo Pane⁴⁰, theologian and scholar of the Armenian Church, states that the apocryphal and hagiographic tradition of the first evangelization of Armenia is linked to the apostolic age, and in particular to the preaching of the apostles Jude Thaddeus and Bartholomew.

Subsequently the tradition is enriched and in the *Doctrine of Addai* (the Syrian equivalent of Thaddeus)⁴¹, we read the addition of the detail of the sending a portrait of Christ. This text dates back to the 4th-5th century⁴², or possibly to the middle of the 6th century⁴³. It is a Syrian composition that includes many legends. According to this version, Abgar sent his archivist and painter Hannan with the letter. Jesus commissioned Hannan to bring an oral response back to the king, but the archivist decided to do even more:

³¹ WOLF G., "Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?" *Sguardi alla "vera icona" e alle sue copie artistiche*, in MORELLO G. – WOLF G., *Il volto di Cristo*, Rome, 2000, pp. 103-114.

³² A third of the population of Şanlıurfa was Christian at the end of the nineteenth century, while today Christians are totally absent.

³³ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone/Mandyllion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, in: E. MARINELLI and A. RUSSI (Edd.), *Sindone 2000, Atti del Congresso Mondiale, Orvieto, August 27-29, 2000*, San Severo, Foggia 2002, Vol. II pp. 463-482 and Vol. III pp.131-133, on pp. 463-464.

³⁴ VON DOBSCHÜTZ E., *Immagini di Cristo*, Milan 2006, p. 114.

³⁵ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone/Mandyllion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, op. cit., p. 467.

³⁶ WILSON I., *The Shroud of Turin. The burial cloth of Jesus Christ?*, Garden City, New York 1978.

³⁷ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, London (UK) 2010, pp. 188-189.

³⁸ EUSEBIO DI CESAREA, *Storia Ecclesiastica*, book I, 13.

³⁹ DI GENUA A. - MARINELLI E. - POLVERARI I. - REPICE D., *Giuda, Taddeo, Addai: possibili collegamenti con le vicende del Mandyllion edesseno-costantinopolitano ed eventuali prospettive di ricerca*, in *Leussein, Rivista di studi umanistici*, vol. VIII n.1/2, 2015, pp. 155-168; see ATSI 2014, *Workshop on advances in the Turin Shroud investigation*, Bari, September 4-5, 2014, pp. 12-17, <http://www.sindone.info/BARI2.PDF>

⁴⁰ PANE R., *Il cristianesimo armeno. Dalla prima evangelizzazione alla fine del IV secolo*, in *Costantino I, Enciclopedia costantiniana sulla figura e l'immagine dell'imperatore del cosiddetto Editto di Milano, 313-2013*, vol. I, Rome, 2013, pp. 833-847.

⁴¹ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., p. 412.

⁴² RAMELLI I., *Possible historical traces in the Doctrina Addai*, in *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*, vol. 9, n. 1, 2006, pp. 1-66.

⁴³ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, Paris 1985, p. 107.

When Hannan, the archivist, saw that Jesus spoke to him like that, as he was also a painter of the king, took some selected colors, painted the image of Jesus and brought it with him to Abgar, the king, his lord. And when Abgar, the king, saw the image, he received it with great joy and put it with great honor in one of his palaces⁴⁴.

Jesus also promised the safety of Edessa. The painting and the protection of the city are missing in Eusebius' narration, while the promise to send the disciple and the vision on his face are present in both texts, that date back these events to the year 30 A.D., when Jesus was crucified⁴⁵.

Historian Ian Wilson describes some reasonable hints to hypothesize significantly that the facts narrated in the *Doctrine of Addai* has an historical foundation. These may actually refer to Abgar V, who reigned at Jesus' time. When he died, in 50 A.D., his son Ma'nu V succeeded him. After his death, in 57 A.D., the reign passed in the hands of Abgar V's other son, Ma'nu VI, who returned to a pagan cult and persecuted Christians. It is therefore reasonable to think that the Image must have been hidden, as it is plausible that its memory faded, until its rediscovery, in a fortuitous way, during the 6th century. The Image would therefore be hidden and, as a consequence, no longer visible. The hypothesis of concealment would explain the silence⁴⁶ of some witnesses of the time such as Eusebius of Caesarea⁴⁷ and Egeria⁴⁸.

In 525 the Daisan, the stream that ran through Edessa, caused a catastrophic flood. Justinian, who will become the future emperor, embarked on a monumental reconstruction project, which included the principal church, St. Sophia. It is very likely that is when the long-forgotten Christ's taumaturgical portrait was found. A little chapel, situated on the right of the apse, was the site for it; in the chapel, it was preserved in a reliquary and was not exposed to the sight of the faithful⁴⁹.

The finding of the sacred cloth could have also happened during the Persian siege in 544 by king Cosroe I Anoshirvan, who is mentioned by Procopius of Caesarea in his work *The Persian war*, without mentioning the Image⁵⁰; the precious Image would have been rediscovered inside a niche in the wall that overlooked the city door, where it had been hidden to preserve it from destruction⁵¹. The Image's powers were attributed to having contributed to repel the city's assaulters. Testimonies of these events can be found in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius Scholasticus (594)⁵², who talks about the liberation of the city from the 544 siege thanks to the sacred portrayal called *theoteuctos*, "work of God"⁵³.

The *Universal History* of Agapios of Menbidj (10th century) and the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (12th century) agree both in Jesus' letter without the final promise of protection, and in the story of the portrait painted by Hannan. These works contain surely archaic elements, because they draw on documents that are similar, but not identical, to those by Eusebius and prior to them⁵⁴.

A text that could date back to the 8th century⁵⁵, attributed to Moses of Chorene, an Armenian historian of the 5th century⁵⁶, names "the image of the Savior, which still today can be seen in the city of Edessa"⁵⁷. Egeria, a pilgrim who went to Edessa between 384 and 394⁵⁸, reports that the bishop of the city, making her visit the most important places, leads her to the Door of the Ramparts from which

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

⁴⁵ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴⁶ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., pp. 159-174.

⁴⁷ FARINA R., *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea*, Zurich, 1966, pp. 9-23; CAROTENUTO E., *Tradizione e innovazione nella Historia Ecclesiastica di Eusebio di Cesarea*, Naples, 2001.

⁴⁸ EGERIA, *Pellegrinaggio in Terra Santa*, edited by NATALUCCI E., Florence, 1991, pp. 7-63.

⁴⁹ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101; VON DOBSCHÜTZ E., *Immagini di Cristo*, op. cit., p. 130.

⁵² ALLEN P., *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church historian*, Leuven, 1981.

⁵³ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

⁵⁴ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 109-119.

⁵⁵ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, Leiden-Boston 2009, pp. 160-161.

⁵⁶ RAMELLI I., *Dal Mandilione di Edessa alla Sindone: alcune note sulle testimonianze antiche*, in *Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones*, n. 4, 1999, pp. 173-193, on p. 173.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

⁵⁸ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., p. 171.

had entered Hannan, Abgar's messenger, bringing Jesus' letter; but the account of what she saw does not mention an image of the Savior present in the place⁵⁹.

In the Syrian *Acts of Mar Mari*, written in the 6th century but founded on previous material, the painters sent to Jerusalem by Abgar were in difficulty:

They were not able to make a portrait of the venerable humanity of Our Lord. The Lord then [...] took a cloth [*seddona*, in Greek *sindón*], pressed it against His face [...] and it resulted as He, Himself was. And this cloth was brought and, as a source of help, was put in the church of Edessa, until the present day⁶⁰.

All the tradition concerning the existence of Christ's portrait not made by human hands (*acheiropoietos*) may have originated already at the time of King Abgar VIII in the 2nd century⁶¹.

In 787, during the Second Council of Nicea, convened to deal with legitimacy of the veneration of the images in reference to the Christological dogma, during the fifth session⁶² they explicitly talked about the sacred Edessa Image, not made by human hands and sent to Abgar. It was mentioned as the principal subject in defense of the legitimacy of the use of the sacred representations against the contrary thesis of the iconoclasts. Gregory, of the Hyacinth Monastery, brought a copy of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius Scholasticus to the Council. Stefano, a monk and librarian, took it and read the fourth speech. When Evagrius tells of Edessa's liberation, he writes: "As they came to a point of total helplessness, they brought the image made by God that man's hands did not fabricate: Christ God sent him to Abgar, for he wanted to see him". Thanks to the miraculous power of the Image, the besieged managed to spark a fire that rejected the Persians. Immediately after that, Leo, a reader of the Church of Constantinople, brings a personal testimony: "I too, unworthy servant of you, when I went down to Syria with the imperial apocrisarii, came to Edessa and saw the sacred and acheropite icon venerated and honored by the faithful"⁶³. At this point there is no doubt that in Edessa during the 6th century they were convinced they had in their possession an Image of Christ, a divine work, and not human⁶⁴. This Image in some sources (6th – 10th century) is called *Sindon*.

A Syrian hymn celebrates the inauguration of the new cathedral of Edessa, eight years after the 525 flood that had destroyed the previous building⁶⁵. The hymn mentioned as fact that the Image was not made by human hands and the splendor of the marble of the cathedral as comparison: "Its marble is similar to the image *that-not-by-hands* and its walls are harmoniously covered with it. And for its splendor, all clean and all white, it holds light within itself"⁶⁶.

An interesting source is the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*⁶⁷, attributed to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, emperor of Constantinople from 912 to 959. This composition could have been realized by an ecclesiastic from the circle of the emperor by his order⁶⁸, by the protosecretary Theodore Daphnopates⁶⁹ or by Simeon Metaphrastes⁷⁰, 10th century Byzantine hagiographer, who certainly used this text for his *Menologium*, a collection of documents about the lives of the saints and the events celebrated each day. The *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* provides an interesting description of the Image:

As to the cause for which, thanks to a liquid secretion without coloring matter nor pictorial art, the

⁵⁹ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 108.

⁶⁰ RAMELLI I., *Il Mandylion di Edessa, cioè la Sindone*, in *Il Timone*, n. 85, July-August 2009, pp. 28-29, on p. 28.

⁶¹ SCAVONE D., *Edessan sources for the legend of the Holy Grail*, in DI LAZZARO P. (Ed.), *Proceedings of the IWSAI 2010, International Workshop on the Scientific approach to the Acheiropoietos Images*, May 4-6, 2010, Frascati (Rome) 2010, pp. 111-116, on p. 112, <http://www.acheiropoietos.info/proceedings/ScavoneGrailWeb.pdf>

⁶² DI DOMENICO P.G. (Ed.), op. cit., pp. 249-275.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁶⁴ DUBARLE, *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶⁵ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 169.

⁶⁶ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

⁶⁷ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., pp. 7-69.

⁶⁸ E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Immagini di Cristo*, op. cit., p. 126.

⁶⁹ G. ZANINOTTO, *La Sindone/Mandylion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, op. cit., p. 467.

⁷⁰ M. GUSCIN, *La Sindone y la Imagen de Edesa. Investigaciones en los monasterios del Monte Athos (Grecia)*, in *Linteum*, 34 (2003), pp. 5-16, on p. 13.

appearance of the face has formed on the linen cloth and how what came from such a corruptible material has not suffered through time any corruption and all the other arguments that who applies to realities as a physicist loves to research accurately, must be left to the inaccessible wisdom of God⁷¹.

In a New Testament Apocrypha composed about the 10th century, the *Acts of Andrew*, the Image of Edessa is described “not made by human hands, formed immaterially in matter”⁷². In the same period, the *Letter of Abgar* narrates: “The Lord took some water in His hands, washed His face and putting the cloth on His face, He painted Himself on it. Jesus' appearance fixed on it to the amazement of all the people who were sitting with Him”⁷³.

The account of the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* reports the most widespread tradition on the origin of the Image, the letter exchange between Abgar and Jesus, the attempt of the painter to draw on a cloth the features of the Master while He was preaching, the miraculous impression of an Image onto the cloth with which Christ wipes His face after having washed it.

The text of Constantine VII's work (XI, 17) continues:

Regarding the principal point of the argument everyone agrees that the form has been impressed in a marvelous way in the cloth by the face of the Lord. But regarding a detail of the thing, that is the moment, they differ, and this does not harm the truth in any way, whether that happened soon or later. Hence the other tradition. When Christ was getting closer to His voluntary Passion, when He showed the human weakness and people were able to see Him praying in agony, when His sweat dripped like drops of blood, according to the Gospel's word, then, it is said, He had from one of His disciples this piece of cloth that now we are seeing and with it He wiped the effusion of His sweat. And immediately He impressed in it this visible imprint of His divine traits⁷⁴.

Both traditions affirm that the Image is not made by material colors, but the second tradition adds the detail of the blood, matching what can be observed on the Shroud⁷⁵. In the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* we can also read what was the vision of King Abgar, placing it in relation to Jesus' Image: Thaddeus, “placed the likeness on his own forehead and went in thus to Abgar. The king saw him coming from afar and seemed to see a light shining out of his face, too bright to look at, sent forth by the likeness that was covering him”⁷⁶. Abgar then gave the order to destroy the statue of a pagan deity that was above the city door and in its place, he put the Image in a semicircular recess, fixed to a wooden plank and decorated with gold. Abgar's son respected his father's will. However, Abgar's grandson wanted to go back to paganism and like his grandfather destroyed the pagan idol above the city door, the grandson wanted to treat Christ's Image in the same way. But the bishop of the city hid it, covering it with a tile, placing a lamp in front of it and bricking up the cavity in which he had put it.

The Porphyrogenitus narration continues by describing the finding of the miraculous Image. During the Cosroe siege, one night bishop Eulalius had a vision in which the place where the Image was hidden, was revealed to him: it was a space above one of the gates of the city. The bishop went to the location and found it also reproduced on the tile, with the lamp still lit⁷⁷. The Byzantine will call the Image *Mandyllion*⁷⁸ (from Arabian *mindil*⁷⁹) e and the tile *Keramion*⁸⁰. The word *mandylion* (in Latin *mantilium*, in Aramaic *mantila*) normally, although not systematically, refers to a relatively big cloth, like the cloak of a monk or a sort of tablecloth⁸¹.

In St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai there is a 10th century icon coming from

⁷¹ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 69.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷⁶ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-37.

⁷⁸ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., pp. 233-234.

⁷⁹ BOUBAKEUR H., *Versione islamica del Santo Sudario*, in *Collegamento pro Sindone*, May-June 1992, pp. 35-41, on p. 36.

⁸⁰ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., p. 181.

⁸¹ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 205.

Constantinople, which was presumably made on commission by the emperor. Originally, the two parts of this icon were supposed to be two doors of a reclosable triptych. The central part could include a reproduction of the *Mandylion* of the same dimensions of the one that was preserved for centuries in the Basilica of San Silvestro in Capite in Rome, currently in the Sacristy of the Sistine Chapel. We have news of it since 1517. Of the same dimensions is the image that is preserved in St. Bartholomew of the Armenians in Genoa (13th-14th century)⁸². Both the images claim to be the true Edessene Image: they are paintings on canvas fixed to a wooden panel that has the same format, compatible with the missing central part of the triptych⁸³.

The hypothesis is more than plausible. Indeed the Sinai icon is assembled on a framework which keeps together the two wings: this is clear from the fact that there is a clean cut in the middle, which is not due to a time accident. In the upper part, on the left, a saint is depicted, identifiable as Thaddeus. It is likely that this saint is not only one of the 72 disciples, but one of the twelve, the apostle Judas Thaddeus. In the upper right side, King Abgar is represented with the facial features of Emperor Constantine VII⁸⁴. The saint depicted on the left has a face similar to that of the personage who, on the right, hands over the *Mandylion* to King Abgar. The juxtaposition is interesting: Judas Thaddeus, in fact, is on the same level as Abgar and sits on a similar chair, to highlight the equal dignity and a certain continuity of the pictorial text; as if to say that there is a sort of connection between the saint and the handover of the *Mandylion* to Abgar, due to the knowledge of texts and oral traditions which related the two personages. The pictorial analysis of the icon tends to justify these hypotheses⁸⁵.

Common elements exist also between the tradition of the *Mandylion* and that of the Veronica: the representation of Christ's face is on a cloth; the image is made through the direct contact with Christ's face; the imprint is produced from water, sweat or blood sweat. Significantly some different versions of both traditions speak of an image on a linen that includes Jesus' whole body⁸⁶. All these narrations try to explain the mysterious character of an appearance on a piece of cloth, evidently not painted, that appears as a direct imprint of a face. In their successive versions, they want to give more importance to the extraordinary character of the image whose story they tell. These reformulations get much closer to the reality of the Shroud and some sources start to talk about Jesus' whole body⁸⁷.

The question of a possible identification of the Shroud with the *Mandylion* has been in the center of a lively debate in the past years. Among the scholars who do not accept this identification there have been patrologist Pier Angelo Gramaglia⁸⁸, historian Antonio Lombatti⁸⁹ and historian Victor Saxer⁹⁰. On the contrary, favorable to the identification there have been historian Karlheinz Dietz⁹¹, historian Daniel Scavone⁹² and historian Gino Zaninotto⁹³. The discussion is still open today between those who, like historian Andrea Nicolotti⁹⁴, think that the Edessa Image is a small cloth,

⁸² PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., p. 26; BELTING H., *Il culto delle immagini*, Rome, 2004, pp. 255-277; WOLF G. – DUFOUR BOZZO C. – CALDERONI Basetti A.R., *Mandylion. Intorno al Sacro Volto da Bisanzio a Genova*, Genova, 2004; MORELLO G. – WOLF G., *Il volto di Cristo*, Rome, 2000; CALDERONI Basetti A.R. – DUFOUR BOZZO C. – WOLF G., *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, Venice, 2007.

⁸³ BELTING H., *Il culto delle immagini*, op. cit., pp. 258-259.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-261.

⁸⁵ DI GENUA A. - MARINELLI E. - POLVERARI I. - REPICE D., *Giuda, Taddeo, Addai: possibili collegamenti con le vicende del Mandylion edesseno-costantinopolitano ed eventuali prospettive di ricerca*, op. cit., pp. 12-17.

⁸⁶ PFEIFFER H., *La Sindone di Torino e il Volto di Cristo nell'arte paleocristiana, bizantina e medievale occidentale*, op. cit., p. 87.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁸⁸ GRAMAGLIA P.A., *La Sindone di Torino: alcuni problemi storici*, in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, anno XXIV, n. 3, 1988, pp. 524-568; GRAMAGLIA P.A., *Ancora la Sindone di Torino*, in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, anno XXVII, n. 1, 1991, pp. 85-114; GRAMAGLIA P.A., *Giovanni Skylitzes, il Panno di Edessa e le «sindoni»*, in *Approfondimento Sindone*, anno I, vol. 2, 1997, pp. 1-16; GRAMAGLIA P.A., *I cimeli cristiani di Edessa*, in *Approfondimento Sindone*, anno III, vol. 1, 1999, pp. 1-51.

⁸⁹ LOMBATTI A., *Impossibile identificare la Sindone con il mandylion: ulteriori conferme da tre codici latini. Con un'edizione critica del Codex Vossianus latinus Q69, ff. 6v-6r*, in *Approfondimento Sindone*, anno II, vol. 2, 1998, pp. 1-30; LOMBATTI A., *Novantacinque fonti storiche e letterarie che non possono essere scartate. Una risposta a D. Scavone*, in *Approfondimento Sindone*, anno III, vol. 2, 1999, pp. 67-96.

⁹⁰ SAXER V., *La Sindone di Torino e la storia*, in *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, anno XLIII, n. 1, 1989, pp. 50-79; SAXER V., *Le Suiare de Turin aux prises avec l'histoire*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, vol. 76, 1990, pp. 1-55.

⁹¹ DIETZ K., *Some hypotheses concerning the early history of the Turin Shroud*, in *Sindon N.S.*, Quaderno n. 16, December 2001, pp. 5-54.

⁹² SCAVONE D., *Comments on the article of A. Lombatti, «Impossibile identificare la Sindone...»*, in *A.S.*, II. 2 (1998), in *Approfondimento Sindone*, anno III, vol. 1, 1999, pp. 53-66; SCAVONE D., *Constantinople documents as evidence of the Shroud in Edessa*, in *Shroud of Turin, the controversial intersection of faith and science*, *International Conference*, op. cit.

⁹³ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone di Torino e l'immagine di Edessa. Nuovi contributi*, in *Sindon N.S.*, Quaderno n. 9-10, December 1996, pp. 117-130; ZANINOTTO G., *Ragionamenti di Lombatti alla I Crociata contro la Sindone*, in *Collegamento pro Sindone*, September-October 2000, pp. 22-34.

⁹⁴ NICOLOTTI A., *Dal Mandylion di Edessa alla Sindone di Torino. Metamorfosi di una leggenda*, Alessandria 2011, p. 7. This work has had a critical

the size of a towel and who, like Mark Guscini, a specialist of Byzantine manuscripts, thinks that different conclusions can be drawn from the sources. Guscini writes:

It should be stressed that there are no artistic representations of the Image of Edessa as a full-body image or with bloodstains, and the majority of texts make no reference to either characteristic; but at the same time it is undeniable that at some point in the history of the Image of Edessa, some writers were convinced, for whatever reason, that it was indeed a full-body image on a large cloth that had been folded over (possibly in such a way that only the face was visible) and that it did contain blood stains⁹⁵.

In the 3rd – 4th century the *Acts of Thaddeus*⁹⁶ have been drafted; this text, according to some scholars, could date back to the 6th century⁹⁷ or to the 7th-8th century⁹⁸. It says that Lebbaïos, a native of Edessa, was baptized by John the Baptist, taking the name of Thaddeus, and becoming one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. In the story Hannan, Abgar's messenger, in addition to convey the king's invitation, was also asked to “observe Christ attentively, his appearance, his height, his hair, practically, everything”. Hannan left.

After having given Him the letter, Hannan attentively looked at Christ and was not able to catch Him. But Jesus, who knows the heart, knew. With this, He asked (for the necessary things) to wash Himself. He was given a cloth *tetrádiplon* (doubled four times). After having washed, He wiped His face. Since His image made an impression on the cloth (*sindón*), He gave it to Hannan and asked to relay an oral message to his master. Abgar, receiving his own messenger, prostrated himself and worshiped the Image; he was then healed from his disease⁹⁹.

An interesting version of the narration is in the manuscript *Vindobonensis historicus graecus 45*, that dates back to the 9th-10th century. It states that Abgar's messenger had to bring back a portrait of “his whole body”¹⁰⁰. The king's request is therefore somewhat different and involves obtaining the description of Jesus' whole body.

Important indications on the Edessa Image can be found in the *Synaxáron*, a liturgical book with the lives of the saints of the Orthodox Church, and in the *Menaion*, that contains in addition, hymns and poems. The basis of the texts on both versions had their origin with Simeon Metaphrastes (10th century)¹⁰¹. In some manuscripts of the *Menaion* that exist in the monasteries of Mount Athos, dated from the 12th to the 18th century¹⁰², it reads: “Looking upon the whole human form of your image...”¹⁰³. In various manuscripts of the *Synaxáron* that dates back to the 13th through the 18th century¹⁰⁴, still in the monasteries of Mount Athos, Abgar asks Hannan to “make a drawing of Jesus, showing in all detail his age, his hair, his face and his whole body appearance, as Hannan knew the art of painting very well”¹⁰⁵. It also states that Jesus in life wiped his face in a shroud, while in death was placed in the final linen shroud.

The Edessa Image was worshiped with great respect. It was shown as an authoritative proof to legitimize the existence of the sacred images during the period of iconoclasm. In a letter of 715-731, attributed to Pope Gregory II, it is mentioned the Image of Christ “not made by human hands”¹⁰⁶. In the same period, Germanus I, Patriarch of Constantinople, reported by chronicler George the Monk,

review: MARINELLI E., *A small cloth to be destroyed*, in *Shroud Newsletter*, n. 75, June 2012, pp. 28-54, www.sindone.info/SN-75ENG.PDF.

⁹⁵ GUSCINI M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 215.

⁹⁶ L. MORALDI, *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. II, Casale Monferrato (AL) 1994, p. 719.

⁹⁷ A.M. DUBARLE, *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 105; VON DOBSCHÜTZ E., *Immagini di Cristo*, op. cit., p. 102.

⁹⁸ GUSCINI M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 145.

⁹⁹ DIETZ K., *Some hypotheses concerning the early history of the Turin Shroud*, in *Sindon N.S.*, Quaderno n. 16, December 2001, pp. 5-54, on pp. 10-25; WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., pp. 190-192; DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁰⁰ GUSCINI M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁰¹ GUSCINI M., *La Síndone y la Imagen de Edesa. Investigaciones en los monasterios del Monte Athos (Grecia)*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁰² GUSCINI M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 124.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁶ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

9th century, affirmed:

There is in the city of Edessa the image of Christ not made by human hands, that operates stupefying wonders. The Lord Himself, after having imprinted in a *soudáron* the appearance of His same form, sent (the image) that preserves the features of His human form through the intermediary Thaddeus apostle to Abgar, toparch of the city of the Edessene, and healed his disease¹⁰⁷.

In addition, George the Monk discusses the iconoclasts, and states:

They fight evidently Christ, who took a beautiful cloth and wiped His divine figure sovereignly bright and beautiful; He sent it to the chief of the Edessene, Abgar, who prayed Him with faith. Since that time and until today, thanks to tradition and apostolic exhortation, in view of recognize and remember what Christ did and suffered for us, as it is narrated in the holy pages of the Gospel, we make some images, and we venerate them with respect, despite Christ's opponents¹⁰⁸.

Around 726 Andrew of Crete, in his work *De sanctarum imaginum veneratione* (*On the veneration of the holy images*), referring to the “venerable image of Our Lord Jesus Christ on a cloth”, states: “It was an imprint of his body features and did not need colored painting”¹⁰⁹. In the same period, John Damascene lists among the things which the faithful venerate, Christ's funeral linens¹¹⁰. He defended the legitimacy of the images against iconoclasm, referring to the Edessa one. In the treatise *On the Orthodox Faith* it reads: “The Lord Himself applied a cloth on His own divine and enlivening face and imprinted on it His appearance”. In the *Sermon on the images*, he writes that Jesus “took the cloth and put it on His own face; His own appearance imprinted in it”¹¹¹. It is interesting to note, that in the second text the term that indicates the cloth is *rákos*, the one commonly used for the cloth in which the Image has imprinted, while in the first text, it is called *imátion*, that normally indicates a cloak¹¹².

John of Jerusalem, Secretary of Theodore, Patriarch of Antioch, around the time of 764, composed a speech for the sacred images. His purpose was to refuse the iconoclast's council that was held in Hieria in 754, summoned by the emperor, Constantine V Copronymus. He wrote:

Effectively Christ Himself made an image, the one that is said not made by human hands, and until today it exists and is venerated and no one says that it is an idol among the people of sane mind. Because if God had known that it would have been an occasion of idolatry, he would not have left it on earth¹¹³.

Patriarch Nicephorus I of Constantinople between 814 and 820 in the *Antirrheticus* affirmed: “If Christ, urged by a believer, imprinted His divine features on a cloth and sent it, why are they who reproduce it blamed?”. Moreover, in the text *Adversus iconomachus* he insists, saying that we must ask to “Christ Himself, who produced there and then the representation of Himself in a divine appearance and sent it to who had requested it”¹¹⁴. In the same period Teophanes the Chronographer recalled: “Did Christ not send Himself to Abgar His own image not made by human hands?”¹¹⁵.

George Syncellus, who had been secretary of Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople (784-806), after Tarasius death wrote in his *Summary of Chronography* that the arrival of Thaddeus in Edessa and the healing of King Abgar happened in the year 36 of the Incarnation. The apostle “illuminated all the inhabitants with his words and his actions. The whole city has venerated him until today; they

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹¹⁰ SAVIO P., *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, Torino, 1957, pp. 72-73; DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

¹¹¹ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 82.

¹¹² GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

¹¹³ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

also venerate the appearance of the Lord not made by human hands”¹¹⁶.

In a synodal letter of 836, addressed to Emperor Teophilus from the East Patriarchs Christopher of Alessandria, Jacob of Antioch and Basil of Jerusalem, it states:

The Savior Himself imprinted the imprint of His holy form in a *soudáron*, sent it to a certain Abgar, toparch of the great city of the Edessene, through Thaddeus, the apostle of divine language; He wiped the divine sweat of His face and left there all His characteristic traits¹¹⁷.

To argue against the iconoclasts, a famous author, defender of the icons, Theodore the Studite (8th - 9th century) speaks of the Shroud “in which Christ was wrapped and laid down in the sepulcher”¹¹⁸ and of the Image not made by human hands that was sent to Abgar. He wrote: “To clearly grant us His divine features, our Savior who had been covered with it, imprinted the form of His own face and portrayed it touching the cloth with His own skin”¹¹⁹.

The *Legend of St. Alexis*, another important Byzantine text composed in Constantinople in the 8th century, tells that in Edessa there was “the image not made by human hands of the features of our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ”¹²⁰; in this text, the cloth on which the Image is imprinted, is called *sindón*¹²¹.

A further Byzantine text of the 8th century, the *Nouthesia Gerontos*¹²², (The Admonitions of an Old Man), reports that Jesus imprinted His face in a *sindón*¹²³.

In the text *Life of St. Alexis*, that possibly dates back to the 9th century, the Edessa Image is defined “bloodstained”¹²⁴. The narrative of the wanderings of St. Alexis in Rome can be paralleled with the speech of Pope Stephen III, who in 769 during the Lateran Synod spoke in favor of the legitimacy of the sacred images’ veneration, referring to the image of Edessa. Pope Stephen III learned of the existence of this image from the narration of the faithful coming to Rome from the Eastern regions¹²⁵. In the sermon, he also spoke of the glorious image “of the face and of the whole body” of Jesus on a cloth¹²⁶. This part of the text is possibly an interpolation, for sure inserted into the text before 1130. It clearly explains how the imprint of Jesus' body happened:

He stretched his whole body on a cloth, white as snow, on which the glorious image of the Lord’s face and the length of his whole body was so divinely transformed that it was sufficient for those who could not see the Lord bodily in the flesh, to see the transfiguration made on the cloth¹²⁷.

A Muslim author, Massûdî, in 944 wrote that in Edessa there was a cloth “that had been used to wipe Jesus of Nazareth when He walked out of the waters of baptism”¹²⁸.

Around 1212 Gervase of Tilbury included this text in his work *Otia imperialia*¹²⁹.

A strong testimony in favor of the identification of the Edessa Image with the Shroud was discovered by historian Gino Zaninotto: the *Codex Vossianus Latinus Q 69 ff. 6r-6v*, preserved in the *Rijksuniversiteit* of Leiden (Netherlands). It is a 10th-century manuscript that refers to a prior original Syrian text that dates back to before the 8th century, a period in which it was translated into Latin by

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

¹¹⁸ SAVIO P., *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, op. cit., p. 74.

¹¹⁹ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 89.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹²¹ WILSON I., *Discovering more of the Shroud’s early history*, in *I Congreso Internacional sobre la Sabana Santa en España*, Valencia (Spain), April 28-30, 2012, pp. 1-32, on p. 7.

¹²² BACCI M., *L’iconografia come tradizione apostolica nel pensiero iconodulo: riflessioni sull’Ammonizione di un vecchio (Nouthesia gérontos)*, in: PACE V. (Ed.), *L’VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Cividale del Friuli, December 4-7, Comune di Cividale del Friuli 2010, pp. 63-68.

¹²³ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 154.

¹²⁴ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone/Mandylion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, op. cit., p. 466.

¹²⁵ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 85.

¹²⁶ RAMELLI I., *Dal Mandilion di Edessa alla Sindone: alcune note sulle testimonianze antiche*, op. cit., p. 179.

¹²⁷ WILSON I., *The Shroud of Turin. The burial cloth of Jesus Christ?*, op. cit., p. 135.

¹²⁸ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 149.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

the archiater Smira. According to the manuscript, while answering Abgar's letter, Jesus writes: "If you wish to look at my appearance as it is physically, I send you this sheet on which you will be able to see not only my face portrayed, but you will be able to look at the form of my whole body divinely transfigured"¹³⁰.

The text continues further on and states:

The mediator between God and men, in order to completely satisfy the king, laid down with the whole body on a sheet as white as snow. And then happened something wonderful to see and to hear. The glorious image of the face of the Lord, as well as the most noble form of His body, to divine virtue, transformed suddenly on the sheet. In this way, to those who have not seen the Lord come physically, it is enough, to see Him, the transfiguration produced on the sheet. Still uncorrupted, despite its ancientness, the sheet is in Mesopotamia of Syria, in the city of Edessa, in a room of the major church. During the year, on the occasion of the most important festivity of the Lord Savior, among hymns, psalms, and special canticles, the cloth is pulled out of a golden casket and venerated with great reverence by all the people¹³¹.

A hint to the image of the whole body has been made, around 1140, also by Orderic Vitalis. In his *Historia ecclesiastica* he names Abgar "to whom the Lord Jesus sent a sacred letter and a precious linen with which He wiped the sweat from His face and in which shines the image of the Savior Himself, painted in a wonderful way, that offers to the eyes the appearance and the height of the body of the Lord"¹³².

An important turning point in the history of the *Mandyllion* occurs in the years 943-94. The fame of the precious Image made it very yearned for. When Byzantine Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus, in 943, wanted to take possession of it, he sent the army under the command of Armenian General Ioannis Curcuas. Some interesting Islamic sources¹³³ report both the permanence of the image in Edessa and the bargaining to give it to Byzantium, as well as the pathway to transfer it into the capital of the Empire.

The emir of Edessa was expecting a violent attack by the eighty thousand soldiers who had come threatening under the walls. But General Curcuas began a negotiation: he was ready to save the city and release two hundred high-ranking Muslim prisoners, adding the sum of twelve thousand pieces of silver in exchange for the simple delivery of the Image.

The emir remained baffled by the request. The Christian community would have been stubbornly opposed to the confiscation of the priceless relic and he knew it well. Unsure on what to do, he took time and sent a horseback messenger to Baghdad, entrusting the caliph al-Muttaqi with the decision. Even for caliph, the choice was not simple; therefore he brought together the high magistrates and theologians (Qadi and Fuqaha) and the Grand Vizier 'Alī ibn' Īsā to submit to them the thorny question. But on the decision to take the views was controversial.

The discussion went on for a long time, with strong positions. All the wise men expressed their respect for the Image of Edessa, considered the *Mindīl* – that is the handkerchief - of the prophet Jesus, that - according to Islamic sources - was transported to Ruhâ (Arabic name of Edessa) at the beginning of the 7th century AD, after being kept in Ephesus, Damascus and Antioch. The *Mindīl* - or *Ikon al Mandil* - was kept in the old cathedral (Al Kanīssa-l-Koubra). Some emperors secretly went there for retreat periods and the Muslims, tolerant, turned a blind eye to that. One of these pious visits in the 8th century was reported to Caliph Haroun Rachid, who, however, decided not to follow up.

In the 13th century historian Alī ibn al-Athīr in his work "The complete history" wrote: "The Emperor of Christians addressed to the caliph al-Muttaqi a request: the handover of the Handkerchief

¹³⁰ ZANINOTTO G., *L'immagine Edessena: impronta dell'intera persona di Cristo. Nuove conferme dal codex Vossianus Latinus Q 69 del sec. X*, in UPINSKY A.A. (Ed.), *L'identification scientifique de l'Homme du Linceul: Jésus de Nazareth, Actes du Symposium Scientifique International, Rome 1993*, Paris 1995, pp. 57-62, on p. 60.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹³² DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 57.

¹³³ BOUBAKEUR S.H., *Versione islamica del Santo Sudario*, op. cit., pp. 35-41.

with which Christ, he asserted, had dried his face and on which his image was imprinted, which was in the district of Ruhâ. The opinions were different and nobody found the question unusual. This handkerchief, somebody said, has been for centuries in the land of Islam, without a Byzantine sovereign ever claiming it. Succeeding such a question would make us appear decadent people. The liberation of prisoners from their captivity, the end of their suffering, the uncomfortable things they endure, is preferable, said Alī ibn 'Īsā, to the preservation of this handkerchief on our territory. Sharing his point of view, the caliph ordered it to be returned to the Byzantines, provided that they would release the Muslim prisoners. The Great Vizier carried out this order by sending the Emperor a plenipotentiary to receive the prisoners who were released”¹³⁴. The Byzantine emperor also undertook, at the request of the caliph, not to send any other military expeditions against Edessa, which was guaranteed a perpetual immunity.

The assignment to take the Image was entrusted by the Emperor to Samosata's bishop Abramio, as Curcuas could not be able to distinguish the original from its copies. It was the bishop himself asking the two copies to be shown to him so as to see what the true relic was¹³⁵. One of these copies would be taken to Constantinople between 1163 and 1176¹³⁶. The bishop also requested the letter Jesus had written to King Abgar.

The *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* says that it was not easy to get the venerated effigy out of the city. Christians, in fact, rebelled to see it taken away and spread a great stir among the people, who felt themselves deprived of a sacred object considered to be the protector of the city. The emir managed to convince some, but had to threaten many others to quell the revolt. When everything seemed to be resolved and the Image was about to leave the city, a terrible thunderstorm arose, whose thunder and lightning convinced the faithful of God's will to leave it in the city of Edessa.

The emir succeeded in bringing bishop Abramio out of the city walls, carrying the precious Image with him, under the protection of General Curcuas and his army, ready to return to Constantinople. A long journey in stages started, so that the Image could be worshiped by the faithful it met in the places it visited.

After a day of marching the army reached the river Euphrates. Even the inhabitants of the area opposed the transfer of the Image, but were stopped by a divine sign:

The ship that was intended to ferry the bearers across the Euphrates was still moored on the Syrian side, while the rioters were still in the grip of tumult. Yet as soon as the bishops who were carrying the divine image and the letter had boarded, suddenly, with no rowers, no helmsman and no other ship to tow it, their boat set off for the land on the other side, guided only by the will of God. This filled all the onlookers who were present with fear and amazement, and convinced them to allow the departure to go ahead¹³⁷.

When they arrived to Samosata, the bishop stopped for a few days in his town. The *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* testifies the prodigious signs and miracles that occurred both in Samosata and in the rest of the way to Constantinople: the healing of blind, lame and other sick, who left their beds perfectly restored. Towards the end of the journey the bishop and his followers came to the Theme of the Optimatoi, that is in the “Province of the Best”, on the peninsula overlooking the Bosphorus in front of Constantinople. The precious Image was placed in the church of the Monastery of the Mother of God for worship.

To receive the sacred effigy with great honor, the emperor sent patrician Theophane, his chamberlain, to the Monastery, along with the most important senators. The dignitaries came bringing candles decorated with gold in their hands. The Image was extracted from the reliquary and was venerated with great devotion. Many sick people were healed and a possessed man cried out:

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

¹³⁵ VON DOBSCHÜTZ E., *Immagini di Cristo*, op. cit., p. 123.

¹³⁶ DESREUMAUX A., *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus*, Turnhout 1993, p. 168.

¹³⁷ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 49.

“Receive your glory and joy, Constantinople, and you, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, your kingdom!”¹³⁸ Immediately he was released from the devil's possessions.

The splendid shrine, which contained the precious effigy delivered to Abramio, came to Constantinople on the evening of August 15, 944, the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin, surrounded by a triumphal reception. It was placed for a first veneration in the upper chapel of the church of St. Mary of Blachernae where - without being opened - was revered by Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus, with his sons Stephen and Constantine, and by the legitimate emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. Then the reliquary, escorted with great honor and with many lights, was transferred by the emperors on the royal galley and brought to the imperial palace, where it was placed in the chapel of St. Mary of the Pharos, which already hosted many relics of the Passion.

The next day, August 16, the emperors revered and kissed the reliquary again. Then the priests picked it up between psalms, hymns, and lights to bring it into a solemn procession again towards the sea. It was placed for the second time on the royal galley, which sailed around the city in a sign of protection and then moored outside the city's western walls. Once again on the ground, the precious shrine was carried by foot by the emperors, together with the senators, the patriarch, the clergy and their escorts, outside the city walls to the Golden Gate, from where they began solemnly the procession with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs between infinite torches.

In the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* we read that “they went with the box holding the precious and sacred objects as if it were another ark of the covenant or something even greater”. Crossing the city, they intended to make it “holier and stronger”, keeping it “unharmful and unassailable for all time”¹³⁹. Even during this passage there were wondrous healing and a lame, miraculously healed from his infirmity by simply looking at the reliquary, ran with his legs to embrace it.

At the Basilica of the Hagia Sophia, the venerated Image and the letter of Jesus were placed in the most hidden recesses of the sanctuary, where all the clergy could venerate them. Then the procession went on again to *Bukoleon*, the imperial palace, where the divine effigy, as a sign of the highest dignity of the relic, was placed on the imperial golden throne in the Chrysotriklinos, an octagonal plan room with dome vault, gorgeously decorated. Christ *Rex Regnantium* was honored in his holy Image. Thus the throne was sanctified and the gift of justice and righteousness would have been given to the emperors who would sit there.

After the veneration and the prayers, the relic was finally transferred again into the chapel of St. Mary of the Pharos along with the other relics of the Passion¹⁴⁰. “It was consecrated and placed on the right towards the east for the glory of the faithful, the safety of the emperors and to safeguard the whole city together with the Christian community”¹⁴¹. The event was celebrated with a liturgical celebration on the anniversary¹⁴², August 16, still celebrated by Orthodox Christians. Some hymns, written for this feast, refer to the Image, particularly venerated, to which a taumaturgical power is attributed¹⁴³.

The Image did not have the characteristics of a well-recognizable painting, but of an evanescent imprint, just what can be observed on the Shroud. When they were observing the features of the holy imprint, the Emperor's sons declared that they could only see the face, while Constantine, the emperor's son-in-law, said that he was able to see his eyes and ears¹⁴⁴. Even Constantine, who became emperor in 912, like some of his predecessors made coins with the face of Christ, which was very similar to the Shroud face.

The scene of the solemn arrival of the *Mandyllion* in Constantinople is represented in the *Skylitzes Codex* (*Codex Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2*)¹⁴⁵. It is an illustrated manuscript which reports the

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁰ VON DOBSCHÜTZ E., *Immagini di Cristo*, op. cit., p. 124.

¹⁴¹ GUSCIN M., *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁴² GHARIB G., *La festa del Santo Mandyllion nella Chiesa Bizantina*, in COERO-BORGA P. (Ed.), *La Sindone e la Scienza, Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Sindonologia, Torino, October 7-8, 1978*, Turin 1979, pp. 31-50.

¹⁴³ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

¹⁴⁴ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone/Mandyllion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, op. cit., p. 468.

¹⁴⁵ SKYLITZES J., *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057*, translated by WORTLEY J., New York 2010.

Synopsis of the History of Ioannes Skylitzes, covering a time period ranging from the death of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I in 811 to the deposition of Michael IV in 1057. The manuscript was certainly written in Sicily in the 12th century and is currently kept at the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* in Madrid. It is the only illustrated manuscript of a Greek chronicle that came to us and includes 574 miniatures.

During the stay of the *Mandyllion* in Constantinople (944-1204), the veneration of the Sacred Image becomes significant to the point of assuming the role of palladium of the capital and protagonist of numerous liturgical processions also in occasion of natural calamities or dramatic events. Philologist Carlo Maria Mazzucchi¹⁴⁶ believes that the discovery of the true nature of the *Mandyllion* and the transfer to St. Mary of the Blachernae could have happened between 1201 and 1203, among the most convulsive years of Byzantium's history. It should be remembered that when it arrived in Constantinople, as previously stated, the Edessa image was brought first to St. Mary of the Blachernae and then placed in the chapel of St. Mary of the Pharos; then a shift between the two churches is not unlikely. Besides, about 1100 Byzantine historian George Cedrenus wrote that in the winter period 1036-1037 the *Mandyllion* was brought in a walking procession from the imperial palace to St. Mary of the Blachernae to impetrate the end of a long drought¹⁴⁷.

The presence of the Shroud in Constantinople is documented by other written testimonies. Most of them date back to the 11th-12th century. Around 1095, a letter attributed to emperor Alexis I Comnenus lists the relics that are kept in the city, and among them “the cloths that were found in the sepulcher after the resurrection”¹⁴⁸. William of Tyre narrates that Manuel I Comnenus in 1171 showed Amalric I, King of Jerusalem, the relics of the Passion, including the Shroud. Jesus' funeral linens in Constantinople are also mentioned in 1151-1154 by Nicholas Soemundarson, abbot of the Monastery of Thyngeyr in Iceland¹⁴⁹ and in 1207 by Nicholas of Otranto¹⁵⁰, abbot of the Monastery of Casole, who probably saw them in Athens¹⁵¹.

In 1201 Nicholas Mesarites, custodian of the relics preserved in the chapel of St. Mary of the Pharos, had to defend them against the looters by remembering the seditious the sanctity of the place, where, among other things, the *soudáron* with the funeral cloths were kept. “They - Mesarites underlines - still have the perfume, they defy corruption, because they have wrapped the ineffable dead, naked and embalmed after the Passion”. It is logical to conclude by mentioning the naked body, Mesarites was referring to the image of the whole body of the Savior on a sheet¹⁵². Speaking to the rebellious, after having enumerated ten of the most precious relics, Mesarites continues: “But now I put in front of your eyes the Legislator faithfully portrayed on a towel and sculpted in a fragile clay with such an art of drawing that we can see that this does not come from human hands”¹⁵³.

In 1207 Mesarites makes another reference about the image of Jesus on a cloth in the funeral oration of his brother John, where he affirms: “The indescribable, appeared *in human likeness* (Phil 2:7), like us is describable, having been impressed in a prototype on the towel”. Theologian André-Marie Dubarle comments: “What is notable, is that for him the miraculous image is the *prototype*, the model of the images made by human hands and their justification”¹⁵⁴.

Another important discovery by historian Gino Zaninotto, also in favor of the identification of the Edessa Image with the Shroud, is the *Codex Vat. Gr. 511* ff. 143-150v¹⁵⁵, which dates back to

¹⁴⁶ MAZZUCCHI C.M., *La testimonianza più antica dell'esistenza di una sindone a Costantinopoli*, in *Aevum*, anno 57, n. 2, May-August 1983, pp. 227-231, on p. 230.

¹⁴⁷ ZANINOTTO G., *La Sindone/Mandyllion nel silenzio di Costantinopoli (944-1242)*, op. cit., p. 474.

¹⁴⁸ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁵⁰ SAVIO P., *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

¹⁵¹ SCAVONE D., *The Shroud of Turin in Constantinople, the documentary evidence*, in *Sindon N.S.*, Quaderno n. 1, June 1989, pp. 113-128, on pp. 120-121.

¹⁵² DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁵⁵ ZANINOTTO G., *Orazione di Gregorio il Referendario in occasione della traslazione a Costantinopoli dell'immagine edessena nell'anno 944*, in RODANTE S. (Ed.), *La Sindone. Indagini scientifiche, Atti del IV Congresso Nazionale di Studi sulla Sindone, Siracusa, October 17-18, 1987*, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 1988, pp. 344-352; DUBARLE A.-M., *L'Image d'Edesse dans l'homélie de Grégoire le Référendaire*, in UPINSKY A.A. (Ed.),

the 10th century. It contains the Oration of Gregory, archdeacon and referendarius of the great church of Constantinople (Hagia Sophia). It describes the Edessa Image as a figure not restricted to the face alone. In Gregory's sermon, after a scrupulous list of colors commonly used to draw the faces of the icons, the author claims that this image of Edessa, which he is describing, has not been produced with artificial colors, since it is only “splendor”.

And here's how Gregory explains the imprint in paragraph 26:

Τὸ δέ, - πᾶς ἐνθεασθήτω τῷ διηγήματι, - μόνοις ἐναγωνίοις ἰδρῶσι προσώπου ζωαρχικοῦ τοῖς ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι κατασταλάξασιν αἵματος ἐντετύπωνται καὶ δακτύλῳ θεοῦ. Αὐταὶ τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον ὄντως Χριστοῦ αἱ χρωματουργήσασαι ὠραιότητες, ὅτι καὶ τὸ ἀφ' οὗ κατεσταλάχθησαν ῥανίσι πλευρᾶς ἰδίας ἐγκεκαλλώπισται. Ἄμφω δογμάτων μεστά· αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ ἐκεῖ, ἐνταῦθα ἰδρῶς καὶ μορφή. Ὡς πραγμάτων ἰσότητος, ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς γὰρ ταῦτα καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ·

(To dé – pas entheasthétō to dieghémati – mónois enagoníois idrṓsi prosōpou zoarchikoū tois ὡσεὶ thrōmboi katastalāxasin àimatos entetypotai kài daktylō theoū. Autai to ekmaghēion ontos Christoū ài chromatourghésasai oraidētetes, ὅτι kài to af' oū katestalāchthesan ranīsi pleurās idias enkekallōpistai. Amfo dogmaton mestà: àima kài ydor ekéi, entàutha idrṓs kài morfē. O pragmatōn isōtetos, ek toū enòs gar tàuta kài toū autoῦ.)

The splendor, on the other hand, - and may each one be inspired by this narrative - has been imprinted only by the drops of agonizing sweat of the face of the prince of life, which are dropped as bloodstains, and by the finger of God. These are the beauties that colored the imprint which is really of Christ, for also this (the image) from when they (the drops) oozed is embellished by the drops of his own side. Both are full of teachings: blood and water there, here sweat and figure¹⁵⁶. Oh equality of things! These things come from the One and the Same.

Thus, on the Edessa Image not only was the face visible, but also the chest at least up to the height of the side¹⁵⁷.

The text does not question the identity of what is imprinted on the cloth. It is presented as “imprint which is really of Christ” – τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον ὄντως τοῦ Χριστοῦ (to ekmaghēion ontos Christoū) – and this imprint is defined in the previous paragraph 25 “supernatural splendor” – ὑπερφυῆς ἀπαύγασμα – (yperfyēs apàugasma): καὶ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα ἐζωγράφηται (kài to apàugasma ezogràfetai) – “also the splendor is represented”. The τὸ δέ (to dé) with which the paragraph 26 of the homily opens resumes, in fact, the neutral noun of the previous paragraph ἀπαύγασμα (apàugasma). This image is not a painting, it is not given by colors, it is just a “splendor” that is source of wonder because it is determined by two extraordinary factors: by the blood of the Passion and by the “finger of God” – δακτύλῳ θεοῦ (daktylō Theoū) –. In particular: the face was imprinted “only by the drops of agonizing sweat of the face of the prince of life, which are dropped as bloodstains” (Lk 22:44) – μόνοις ἐναγωνίοις ἰδρῶσι προσώπου ζωαρχικοῦ τοῖς ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι κατασταλάξασιν αἵματος ἐντετύπωνται (mónois enagoníois idrṓsi prosōpou zoarchikoū tois ὡσεὶ thrōmboi katastalāxasin àimatos entetypotai) –. These – the sweat drops - “are the beauties that colored the imprint which is really of Christ”. The rest of the body is therefore presented as a consequence of those and the fact is introduced by the causal particle ὅτι (òti):

for also this – that image he mentioned earlier, the τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον (tò ekmaghēion), resumed from the only article τό (tò) - from when they (the drops) oozed, is embellished by the drops of his own side.

L'identification scientifique de l'Homme du Linceul: Jésus de Nazareth, op. cit., pp. 51-56; DUBARLE A.-M., *L'homélie de Grégoire le Référendaire pour la réception de l'image d'Edesse*, in *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 55, 1997, pp. 5-51; GUSCIN M., *The Sermon of Gregory Referendarius*, 2004, pp. 1-13, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/guscin3.pdf>.

¹⁵⁶ The place adverbs ekéi and entàutha can both take the opposite meanings here and there (see L. ROCCI, *Vocabolario Greco Italiano*, Rome 1964, pp. 571 and 646). This point may be the subject of a subsequent discussion.

¹⁵⁷ DUBARLE A.-M., *L'Image d'Edesse dans l'homélie de Grégoire le Référendaire*, op. cit., pp. 51-56; ZANINOTTO G., *Orazione di Gregorio il Referendario in occasione della traslazione a Costantinopoli dell'immagine Edessena nell'anno 944*, op. cit., p. 349.

The text presents the imprint of the body as a temporal consequence of the sweat of blood which has imprinted on the face and, at the same time, in close relation to that, because it is the same image that was “embellished” also of drops (of blood) of the side.

This connection is clearly resumed and underlined by the pronoun ἄμφω (àmfo) - both. They are the two things he has just mentioned: the image of the face made of the blood of agony and the image of the body embellished by the wound of the side. For both of them there is the same presence of two elements: blood and water; more precisely blood and sweat for the face, blood and water for the side. Face and side are related by two place adverbs: ‘there’ and ‘here’. The text says: “blood and water there” (the side, imprint subsequent to that of the face), “sweat and figure here” (the face imprint determined by the agonizing sweat, dropped as blood clots). Stylistically, the two references to blood spills are closely linked by a chiasmic structure that makes them one and inseparable:

αἷμα	καὶ	ὔδωρ	ἐκεῖ,	ἐνταῦθα	ιδρώς	καὶ	μορφή.
àima	kài	ydor	ekéi	entàutha	idròs	kài	morfé
blood	and	water	there,	here	sweat	and	figure

- to ἐκεῖ (ekéi) corresponds ἐνταῦθα (entàutha): two place adverbs;
- to ὔδωρ (ydor) corresponds ιδρώς (idròs): two nouns indicating a similar liquid: water and sweat;
- to αἷμα (àima) corresponds μορφή (morfé): two nouns that indicate the same substance, blood. This is cited, once, in the proper sense: the blood of the side, the other in what derived from it: the image of the face.

The unity of the parts, so emphasized by the chiasmus, is explicitly stated in the following text: ὃ παραμάτων ἰσότητος (or pragmatòn isòtetos) - oh equality of things!¹⁵⁸.

Three times, and in three different ways, the unity of the considered elements is emphasized: by means of the pronoun ‘both’ - ἄμφω (àmfo), by the chiasmic structure, by the noun ‘equality’ - ἰσότητος (isòtetos).

Gregory is describing what he finds on the Edessa cloth; there he sees together the figure of the face and the wound of the side, not just one of the two imprints. Here we have a confirmation that the Edessa cloth had the whole figure of a man with the signs of a passion and crucifixion with the side wound, as found on the cloth of the Shroud. We can say, therefore, that the text of Gregory Referendarius presents valid evidence to identify the Edessa cloth with the Shroud¹⁵⁹.

Also the Byzantine Liturgy celebrates the Edessa cloth as an icon of Christ. As of August 16, it reads: “Memory of translation from Edessa of the icon not man-painted of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, of the Holy *Mandylion* (944)”¹⁶⁰.

The Prayer of Vespers sings a Hymn where the image imprinted on the cloth is without any hesitation recognized and venerated as the image of Jesus Christ.

The text reports:

With what eyes will we look at your icon, we children of the earth? Nor can the armies of angels see it without fear, radiant as it is by divine light [...]

¹⁵⁸ Quality genitive, common in poetry and liturgical texts.

¹⁵⁹ GUSCIN M., *Addendum to translation of Sermon by Gregory Referendarius*, December 2007, p. 1, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/guscin3a.pdf>; NICOLOTTI A., *Forme e vicende del Mandilio di Edessa secondo alcune moderne interpretazioni*, in *Sacre impronte e oggetti «non fatti da mano d'uomo» nelle religioni*, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Torino, May 18-20, 2010*, Alessandria 2011, pp. 279-307 and tabb. 23-31, on pp. 292-297; ROMANO R., *Gregorio il Referendario, sermone intorno all'immagine edessenica*, in *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano*, 18, 1, 2014, pp. 19-37, have different opinion, with arguments that can be discussed in a subsequent work.

¹⁶⁰ *Anthologhion di tutto l'anno*, Vol. 4, Roma 2000.

With what hands, oh Word, will we touch your icon, we made by soil? [...]

The shaking cherubs veil their faces, the seraphs do not tolerate the sight of your glory, and with fear the creation serve you. Do not condemn us if by faith, oh Christ, unworthily greet your tremendous form.

Here is again a divine day of solemnity of the Lord, for the one who sits in the high heavens has visibly visited us today through his august icon. The one who invisibly sits above the cherubs shows himself in effigy to those to whom he has become like, ineffably formed by the immaculate finger of the Father in his likeness; and we, prostrating ourselves with faith and love to this icon, are sanctified by it.

More than once the effigy imprinted on the cloth is greeted as an 'icon' of the Word of God, the 'icon' of the One who was ineffably formed 'by the immaculate finger of the Father'. 'Finger of the Father' is, in Christian symbology, the Holy Spirit. The image imprinted on the Edessa cloth is then sung as an icon of Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God.

The Homily of Gregory Referendarius has provided valid elements for identification of the Edessa cloth with the Shroud. The liturgical text, which celebrates the Edessa Image as an icon of Christ, allows us to consider and venerate the image imprinted on the Shroud as the true imprint of the Body of Christ.

The reliquary that contained the *Mandyllion* could have been opened during his long stay in Constantinople from 944 to 1204. In this way it was possible to see not only the face of Jesus, but all his body with the signs of the Passion. The cloth called *tetrádiplon* should therefore have been partially unfolded. All this could justify the emergence, during the 12th century, of a new iconic type called in the West *Imago pietatis*. This new type depicts the dead Christ standing upright¹⁶¹. In the East this iconographic type is known by the denominations of *Akrà tapinosis* (Great Humiliation) and *E apocathelosis* (Deposition).

In this study, this iconographic type is particularly considered. Christ is depicted dead, but in a standing position with his arms crossed and his head reclined on his right. Subsequently, the representation of the dead Christ is accompanied by the presence of a structure similar to a grave, oddly resembling a well, from which it appears to emerge.

Another iconographic novelty that appears in the same period is the representation of the dead Crucified with his reclining head. In fact, in the representation of the crucifixion, there is the passage from Christ still alive, with his eyes wide open, with no sign of suffering, often dressed in the *Colobion* (a purple tunic) and crowned, to the dead Christ, wounded, with his eyes closed and his head reclined towards his right, in a contorted position almost to outline a curve.

In addition, it also appears the depiction of Christ deposed from the Cross, lying on the funeral sheet, called *Epitaphios*, mainly embroidered on liturgical veils. In the same period many frescoes appear in the Byzantine churches, depicting Christ lying on a shroud, with crossed arms, in the scene of the deposition, surrounded by evangelical personages referring to the same episode (Mary, John, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and the pious women).

The peculiarity of these representations makes plausible the hypothesis of a progressive discovery of the *Mandyllion*, which reveals itself in its true nature: a cloth with the whole image of the dead Christ and not just of the face. The aforementioned disclosure of the *Mandyllion* (also called *Rakos Tetrádiplon*) finds confirmation in the research, in the studies and in the measurements directly made on the Shroud. The physicist John Jackson in 1978, during the research of the STURP (*Shroud of Turin Research Project*), noticed on the Shroud the existence of folds, later highlighted by photographs in raking light. In the nineties, he assumed that the folds could derive from the use of a gimmick used to lift the *Mandyllion*-Shroud so that the entire frontal figure was progressively visible¹⁶². The existence of machinery and mechanical devices in the city of Constantinople is known. It can not therefore seem unlikely the hypothesis that such a device could be used to expose the

¹⁶¹ PFEIFFER H., *La immagine della Sindone e quella della Veronica*, in *La Sindone, la Storia, la Scienza*, Leinì (TO) 1986, pp. 41-51 and tabb. I-XII, on p. 48.

¹⁶² JACKSON, J. P. - JACKSON, R. S. - PROPP, K. E., *On the late Byzantine history of the Turin Shroud*, in WALSH B. J. (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 Shroud of Turin International Research Conference, Richmond, Virginia*, Glen Allen, Richmond, Virginia 2000, pp. 185-195.

Mandylion to the faithful¹⁶³. The existence of the Magnaura Throne, work of the talent of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus¹⁶⁴, further reinforces this thesis.

In the Sacred Imperial Palace, which included barracks, offices and about twenty churches, the main rooms of representation, called Triconchos, Chrysotriklinos (literally “golden bed”) and Magnaura (a huge and gorgeous environment giving the name to all the immense palace) played a key role. They were especially designed to impress visitors and highlight the emperor's sacredness. To achieve this goal, machines were also used to move from the bottom of the room or to lift the throne of the Emperor: the fact that he remained motionless and impassive in front of the ambassadors asking for a hearing was considered an essential element to demonstrate the sacredness of his power. The scenery surrounding every emperor's public appearance was made even more impressive by the presence of golden “automata” that moved through the presence of hydraulic pumps, not visible by the public. The throne, symbolically personification of the Salomonic wisdom, was located in the central apse¹⁶⁵. An Italian ambassador, Liutprand of Cremona¹⁶⁶, who went to Constantinople in 948 and 966¹⁶⁷, tells in his work *Antapodosis* that he had seen two enormous golden lions roaring with their wide, open mouths on the sides of the throne, moving their tongue and striking the floor with their tail. Regarding the throne movement, Liutprand writes:

The throne of the emperor was built with skill in such a way that at one instant it was low, then higher, and quickly it appeared most lofty. [...] Thus, prostrated for a third time in adoration before the emperor, I lifted my head; and the person whom earlier I had seen sitting elevated to a modest degree above the ground, I suddenly spied wearing different clothes and sitting almost level with the ceiling of the mansion¹⁶⁸.

The throne was perhaps lifted by virtue of the mechanism thanks to which the beam of the presses are usually lifted¹⁶⁹.

All this was not considered a useless waste of money as it was intended to demonstrate to the barbarian populations, and to the potential enemies, the intellectual and technological superiority of the empire. Was there perhaps such a mechanism to display the *Mandylion*-Shroud with equal authoritativeness?

Wilson argues that a confirmation of the possible exhibition of the *Mandylion*, raised from a reliquary, can be inferred from the observation of a miniature present in a Georgian manuscript of 1054. It is the *Alaverdi Tetraevangelion*, preserved at the Institute of Manuscripts of the Georgian Academy of Sciences of Tbilisi. It includes the four Gospels and the story of the Edessa Image brought to King Abgar; it was realized shortly after the returning to Georgia by King Bagrat IV, who had remained in Constantinople in the previous three years. In the miniature it is possible to see a golden drape that appears raised from a reliquary and on it the *Mandylion* decorated with red crosses¹⁷⁰.

The weekly exhibition of the Shroud during its stay in Constantinople is attested by the testimony of the crusader knight Robert de Clari, chronicler of the 4th Crusade. In his work *La conquête de Constantinople*¹⁷¹, he wrote about the wonders that could be seen before the fall of the city (April 12, 1204) in the hands of the Latin crusaders:

Among these there was a church called St. Mary of the Blachernae, where it was kept the Shroud (*Sydoines*) in which Our Lord was wrapped, that every Friday was elevated all straight, so that it was possible to see well the figure of Our Lord. No one, nor Greek nor French, knew what happened to this Shroud when

¹⁶³ BRUBAKER L., *L'invenzione dell'iconoclasmo bizantino*, Roma, 2016, pp. 123-124.

¹⁶⁴ BARSANTI C., *Costantino VII Porfirogenito*, in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*, vol. V, Rome 1994, pp. 380-381.

¹⁶⁵ CARILE A., *Il Sacro palazzo di Costantinopoli Nuova Roma*, in *Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione*, 2003, pp. 15-35.

¹⁶⁶ OLDONI M.- ARIATTA P., *Liutprando di Cremona, Italia e Bisanzio alle soglie dell'anno Mille*, Novara 1987, pp. 193-194.

¹⁶⁷ BRETT G., *The Automata in the Byzantine "Throne of Solomon"*, in *Speculum*, vol. 29, n. 3, July 1954, pp. 477-487, on p. 477.

¹⁶⁸ IAFRATE A., *The wandering throne of Solomon. Objects and tales of kingship in the medieval Mediterranean*, Leiden 2015, pp. 61-62.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁷⁰ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

¹⁷¹ DE CLARI R., *La conquête de Constantinople*, a cura di DUFOURNET J., Paris, 2004, pp. 182-184.

the city was conquered¹⁷².

This testimony seems to significantly strengthen Jackson's thesis. Robert de Clari also saw in the Chapel of St. Mary of the Pharos the reliquary of the *Mandyllion*, which at that moment could be empty¹⁷³, as the Shroud was exposed at Blachernae. The Shroud seen by Robert de Clari in 1204 disappears mysteriously from Constantinople.

The depictions of the Man of Sorrows, that spread in Constantinople at the time of the well-known presence of the Edessa Image (mid-10th to early 13th centuries), find therefore confirmation in the literary sources of their probable Shroud origin.

The observation of the similarity with the Man of the Shroud of two Roman images, present in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem¹⁷⁴ and the Four Crowned Martyrs¹⁷⁵, suggested the deepening of the relationship between the Sacred Linen and the new depictions of the suffering Christ (*Christus Patiens*, *Christòs pàschon*), which, as we have seen, originated in Constantinople in the period (mid-10th-early 13th century) coinciding with the established presence of the Edessa Image. The two Roman images belong to that iconographic type we have previously described and which takes the name of *Imago Pietatis*.

In the Roman Basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem, following a donation by Prince of Taranto, Raimondello del Balzo Orsini, in 1386, there is a Byzantine mosaic icon, depicting the Man of Sorrows. It is a masterpiece of Constantinopolitan mosaic art from the beginning of the 14th century. The figure of Christ is represented at the height of the bust, with the crossed hands and the reclined head, while on the bottom stands the cross with the canonical Byzantine inscription, the King of Glory. This image, which came to Rome already surrounded by the aura of a taumaturgical image, knew a great fame. By linking to the tradition of an apparition of dead Christ to Gregory the Great, during the celebration of the Mass, the iconographic motif of the Man of Sorrows experienced an extraordinary spread throughout the Catholic Church.

A fresco in the church of the Four Crowned Martyrs in Rome juxtaposes an *Imago Pietatis* with the representation of the funeral sheet of Christ, held by two angels. On this sheet there are figures of leaves while the body of Christ is covered with sores. The fresco dates back to the 14th century and assumes some indirect knowledge of the Shroud.

Starting from these two Roman images, research was carried out in Byzantine art. Some significant works have been considered.

In the Castoria Icon Museum in Greek Macedonia, the oldest portable icon of the representation known in West as *Imago Pietatis* is preserved. It dates back to the second half of the 12th century. In it the dead Christ with his reclining head is depicted standing up to the chest height. On the reverse the image of the Mother of God Odigitria is depicted. The expression of the Mother of God indicating the Son is grieving: she is aware of the tragic death that the Son will have to suffer, since Simeon had announced it to her¹⁷⁶. The icon that brings together the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Cross was probably destined to be taken in procession during the Holy Week according to a use, now lost, in the Byzantine Church.

The *Karahisar Evangeliary* (12th century)¹⁷⁷, which is preserved in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (MS gr. 105), contains two miniatures accompanying the narratives of the

¹⁷² SAVIO P., *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 190-191; P. SAVIO, *Le impronte di Gesù nella Santa Sindone*, in *Sindon*, Quaderno n. 9, May 1965, pp. 12-23.

¹⁷³ BARTA C., *What the Shroud is and it is not*, in *I Congreso Internacional sobre la Sabana Santa en España*, Valencia (Spain), April 28-30, 2012, pp. 1-20, on p. 9.

¹⁷⁴ LEONE G., *Icone di Roma e del Lazio*, vol. I, Ill. n. 39, p. 133; Scheda 59, pp. 102-104; AA.VV., *Tavole miracolose. Le icone medievali di Roma e del Lazio del Fondo Edifici di Culto*, Rome, 2012, Ill., Scheda I.14, pp. 69-72; SCAVONE D., *Greek Epitaphioi and other evidence for the Shroud in Constantinople up to 1204*, in WALSH B.J. (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 Shroud of Turin International Research Conference*, Richmond, Virginia, op. cit., pp. 196-211, a pp. 199-200.

¹⁷⁵ APOLLONJ GHETTI B. M., *I Ss. Quattro Coronati*, Roma, 1964, p. 57; COPPINI L. – CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., p. 94, Ill. 3; PFEIFFER H., *Le piaghe di Cristo nell'arte e la Sindone*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 89-104, on p. 94.

¹⁷⁶ BELTING H., *L'arte e il suo pubblico. Funzione e forme delle antiche immagini della Passione*, Bologna, 1986, p. 105.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

crucifixion of Christ. They present the figure of the Man of Sorrows that stands out against the background of the cross. It is evident that these images are thought and used as an illustration of the crucifixion.

The same relationship between the image of the Man of Sorrows and the crucifixion is present in a small icon of the 12th century, of Constantinopolitan origin, but preserved in the Greek patriarchy of Jerusalem. Of the icon, which is now lost, only remains the frame of gold and precious stones that allows us to reconstruct its original look. On the frame there is the *Titulus crucis: o Basileus tes doxes* (the King of Glory), canonical inscription of the cross image in Byzantine art. This iconographic model, coming from Byzantium¹⁷⁸, spread throughout Christianity and in the West had a development lasting up to all the Renaissance¹⁷⁹.

An icon (16th century) preserved in Kolomenskoe Museum in Moscow is also particularly significant: it combines the representation of the *Mandyllion* with that of the *Imago pietatis*.

In all these images, the dead Christ, besides his arms crossed in front of his torso, always has his head reclined on the right side. Art historian Father Heinrich Pfeiffer S.J. pointed out that by joining the two folds existing on the Shroud at the neck height, a head flexion is obtained right to that side¹⁸⁰.

In the 12th century, depictions of the whole body of Jesus lying on a sheet start to appear. From this time on, the liturgical veil *aèr* of the Byzantine rite is embroidered with the figure of the lying Christ¹⁸¹.

The fresco in the church of the Mother of God *Source of Life* in Messenia, Peloponnese, which is the oldest example of *melismòs (fractio panis)*, is coeval¹⁸². On the sides of the cloth it is possible to notice the fringes, which recall those present on the ancient depictions of the *Mandyllion*. Only a sketch of G. Millet remains of the fresco, which is now lost.

Another example, also dating back to the 12th century, is on the enamel reliquary of the old Stroganoff Collection, now at St. Petersburg's Hermitage. This type of representation also appears on the Byzantine liturgical veil called *Epitáfios Thrênos* (funeral lament)¹⁸³ translated *Plaščanica* (Shroud) in Russian sacred art¹⁸⁴.

A precious *epitaphios* is the veil of Stefan Uroš II Milutin, king of Serbia between 1282 and 1321, today in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade¹⁸⁵. One particular to notice is the starry background, present in most *epitaphioi*.

Other important examples are the *epitaphios* of Thessaloniki (14th century) preserved in the Museum of Byzantine Civilization of Thessaloniki¹⁸⁶ and the *epitaphios* kept in the Stavronikita Monastery at Mount Athos (14th-15th century)¹⁸⁷: both the fabrics of the funeral sheets are characterized by the "herringbone" texture, exactly as it is observable on the original Shroud linen.

Another remarkable *epitaphios* is that of the Vatopedi Monastery of Mount Athos, dating back to the 14th century.

The reference to the texture of the Shroud is also evident in a Byzantine ivory (12th century) representing the *Threnos* (Lament on the Body of Christ) kept at the *Victoria & Albert Museum* in

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-46.

¹⁸⁰ PFEIFFER H., *Le piaghe di Cristo nell'arte e la Sindone*, op. cit., p. 92; PFEIFFER H., *La immagine della Sindone e quella della Veronica*, op. cit., tab. IX.

¹⁸¹ MORINI E., *Le «sindoni» ricamate. Simbologia e iconologia dei veli liturgici nel rito bizantino*, in ZACCONE G.M. - GHIBERTI G. (Eds.), *Guardare la Sindone. Cinquecento anni di liturgia sindonica*, Cantalupa (TO) 2007, pp. 229-257, on p. 233.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

¹⁸³ THEOCHARIS M., "Epitafi" della liturgia bizantina e la Sindone, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Eds.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 105-121, a pp. 106-108.

¹⁸⁴ CAZZOLA P., *Il Volto Santo e il Sudario di Cristo (Plaščanica) nell'arte sacra russa*, in COERO-BORGA P. (Ed.), *La Sindone e la Scienza*, op. cit., pp. 51-57; CAZZOLA P., *I Volti Santi e le Pietà*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Eds.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 158-163.

¹⁸⁵ WILSON I., *Icone ispirate alla Sindone*, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁸⁶ THEOCHARIS M., "Epitafi" della liturgia bizantina e la Sindone, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Eds.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 105-121, on p. 117.

¹⁸⁷ GUSCIN M., *La Sindone y la Imagen de Edesa. Investigaciones en los monasterios del Monte Athos (Grecia)*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

London¹⁸⁸. Below Christ the funeral sheet is visible, with a texture that recalls the “herringbone” weave of the Shroud.

Particularly interesting is the fresco of the deposition from the cross in the church of St. Pantaleimon in Gorno Nerezi, Macedonia, which dates back to 1164. In it, Jesus is depicted lying on a large sheet with geometric designs similar to those often accompanying the reproductions of Edessa's Image¹⁸⁹.

Considering the relative proximity of this place to the capital of the Empire, and considering that the image of the fresco is contemporaneous with the presence of the important relic in Constantinople, it is one of the most important testimonies of the identification between the Shroud and the *Mandyllion*.

The decorative motif, found in the iconography of the Edessa Image, can be seen, for example, in the Holy Face (13th century) kept in the cathedral of Laon, France.

Such a pattern is found in the sheet of the deposition of Christ of the *Psalter of Melisenda* f. 9r (1131-1143), kept in the British Library of London.

One of the best-known examples of image with evident Shroud inspiration is found in a miniature of the *Pray Codex* of the National Library of Budapest, dating back to 1192-1195¹⁹⁰. The depiction in the upper scene of the folio 28r is the anointing of Christ, who is laid down from the cross on a sheet: the body is completely naked and the hands cross to cover the lower abdomen. Some details of this miniature directly recall the Shroud. The hands of Christ are depicted without the thumbs. On the forehead there is a sign that remembers the analogous trickle of blood that can be observed on the Shroud. In the lower scene there is the arrival at the sepulcher of the pious women, the myrrhbearers, to which the angel shows the empty sheet. The top of the empty sheet has a design that imitates the “herringbone” fabric of the Shroud, while small red crosses cover the bottom. Under the foot of the angel there are two red winding traces that can depict two trickles of blood. On both parts of the cloth, there are some circles, arranged in the same sequence as a group of four burning holes that on the Shroud is repeated four times¹⁹¹.

This relic damage is certainly prior to the fire of 1532: in fact those signs are reproduced on a pictorial copy of Albert Dürer dating back to 1516, preserved in the Collegiate of St. Gommaire in Lierre, Belgium¹⁹².

In some representations, like the one in the church of the Annunciation of the Monastery of Gradač in Serbia (14th century), the *Mandyllion* is a big rectangle, much more wide than high, in the middle of which just Christ's head can be seen. The rest of the surface shows a grill of lozenges, each one with a flower in the middle¹⁹³. This is the usual decoration that frequently characterizes the *Mandyllion's* representation. At the edges, the fringes of the cloth can be seen. This representation makes Wilson's supposition plausible¹⁹⁴ that the cloth might have been folded many times, hence the employment of *tetrádiplon*¹⁹⁵ neologism; in fact, folding the Shroud eight times you get exactly the wide rectangle with the head in the middle that you can see on the copies of the *Mandyllion*, as in this case. This decoration with lozenges, that can be seen on the surface of the cloth¹⁹⁶, could be the memory of the gold ornament put there by Abgar¹⁹⁷.

Although on the *Mandyllion* we can always see just Jesus' face, sometimes the considerable dimensions of the cloth make us understand that it was not a little cloth. In addition to the previous

¹⁸⁸ WILSON I., *The Blood and the Shroud*, New York 1998, p. 147.

¹⁸⁹ WILSON I., *Holy Faces, Secret Places*, London (UK) 1991, p. 152.

¹⁹⁰ DUBARLE A.-M., *L'icona del "Manoscritto Pray"*, in COPPINI L. - CAVAZZUTI F. (Edd.), *Le icone di Cristo e la Sindone*, op. cit., pp. 181-188, on p. 181.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

¹⁹² FOSSATI L., *The Documentary value of the Lier Shroud*, in DOUTREBENTE M.-A. (Ed.), *Acheiropoietos. Non fait de main d'homme*, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

¹⁹³ On *Mandyllion* coverage mode, see: RODRIGUEZ-ALMENAR J.M., *El tipo iconográfico de la Imagen de Edesa. Hipótesis diacrónica*, in *Linteum* n. 59, July-December 2015, pp. 25-35.

¹⁹⁴ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., pp. 190-192.

¹⁹⁵ DUBARLE A.-M., *Histoire ancienne du linceul de Turin*, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

¹⁹⁶ WILSON I., *The Shroud. Fresh light on the 2000-year-old Mystery...*, op. cit., p. 229.

¹⁹⁷ WILSON I., *The Shroud of Turin. The burial cloth of Jesus Christ?* op. cit., pp. 100-101.

example, we also have the *Mandyllion* of the Christ *Pantocrator* church of the Dečani Monastery in Kosovo (14th century) and the *Mandyllion* of the *Panagia Forbiotissa* church in Asinou, Cyprus (14th century).

It is possible to perceive that the *Mandyllion* was not simply a small cloth even from the study of the Latin manuscript (*Ms. lat.* 2688) of particular interest, kept in the National Library of Paris, dating back to the 13th century¹⁹⁸. In the illuminated scenes of the text, the *Mandyllion* is presented as a long drape that falls down outside its frame¹⁹⁹.

As already mentioned, another iconographic motif that appears is that of the dead Christ on the cross. The presence of the *Mandyllion* in Constantinople explains the transition from the representation of the living Christ on the cross to that of the dead Christ. An example of a representation before this period is the crucifixion of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai (8th century), a surviving icon of the iconoclastic period, in which Christ, clothed with the purple dress called *colobion*, crowned with thorns, pierced at the side, is represented dead, but with a straight head.

Other works represent the dead Christ on the cross, but with a straight head. This is especially on Byzantine ivories. Two of them are kept at the Bode Museum in Berlin, one dating back to the beginning of the 10th century and the other from the Cathedral of Brescia, dating back to the 11th century. A third example, dating back to the 10th century, is preserved at the British Museum in London.

Moving on to the new iconographic type, that of the dead Christ, but with his head resting on his right shoulder (*Christus Patiens*), significant examples are: the fresco depicting the crucifixion in the Karanlik church in Cappadocia (11th century), an icon of the crucifixion in the Sinai Monastery (early 12th century) and the wall mosaic of the crucifixion in the main church of the Monastery of Hosios Lukas in Focide (1011-1012).

Examples coming from Italy are: the Staurotheke including an enamel of the crucifixion, kept at the Diocesan Museum of Cosenza, which was donated in 1222 by the Emperor Frederick II of Swabia to the Cathedral of that city; the precious cover of the Evangeliary called of Alfano, who was bishop of Capua between 1166 and 1198, guarded in the treasury of the cathedral of that city.

The representation of the crucifix alone in monumental dimensions found particular favor in the West. There are many examples in Italian art. Up until about 1210, however, Christ is always portrayed living on the cross. In fact, the Cross No. 20, attributed to a Byzantine master, kept in the National Museum of San Matteo in Pisa, the Maritime Republic with intense relations with the Byzantine world, dates back to that year. In it, the figure of the *Christus patiens* is surrounded by six *post-mortem* scenes, that start with the Deposition and end with the Descent to the Underworld. Since then, this new representation of Christ, known exactly as *Christus patiens*, found a great diffusion in Western art, especially thanks to the work of painter Giunta Pisano²⁰⁰. Important examples of his production are the lost Crucifix called of Brother Elias, dating back to 1236, for the Upper Basilica of Assisi and the Crucifix of Bologna painted in 1250 ca. for the church of San Domenico. In this last work the suffering Christ has his head reclined on his right shoulder and his eyes closed, while the body abandons itself to the weight of death. The Christ stands out on a cross-shaped, scenes-free background. It is suggestive to assume that the grid motif, with a carpet-like pattern, may refer to the aforementioned *Mandyllion* decoration.

¹⁹⁸ RAGUSA I., *The iconography of the Abgar cycle in Paris MS. Latin 2688 and its relationship to Byzantine cycles*, in *Miniatura*, n. 2, 1989, pp. 35-51; TOMEI A., *Il manoscritto lat. 2688 della Bibliothèque Nationale de France: la Veronica a Roma*, in: QUINTAVALLE A.C. (Ed.), *Medioevo: immagine e racconto, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, September 27-30, 2000*, Milan, 2003, pp. 398-406.

¹⁹⁹ RAGUSA I., *The iconography of the Abgar cycle in Paris MS. Latin 2688 and its relationship to Byzantine cycles*, op. cit., Ill. on p. 45-46-47; see also pp. III-IV.

²⁰⁰ Giunta Pisano (of whom we have news from 1236 to 1254 and do not know for sure the birth and death dates), was actually called Giunta di Capitino. Native of Pisa, he was active in the first half of the 13th century. In the past Giunta Pisano was referred to as the one who introduced the iconographic image of the dead Christ (*Christus patiens*) replacing with it the most ancient iconographic type of Christ depicted alive on the cross (*Christus triumphans*). This novelty was explained with a direct reference to Franciscan spirituality that tended to emphasize the humanity of Jesus. In reality the *Christus patiens* was present in Byzantine art since the 11th century. See: TARTUFERI A., *Giunta di Capitino detto Giunta Pisano*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 57, Catanzaro, 2001, pp. 67-73.

At the end of this research, the authors intend to emphasize how multidisciplinary is indispensable to know and understand the Shroud. This method is fundamental and must be taken into account by all researchers, scholars, academics, scientists, who deal with the Shroud. Forgetting this can be misleading. The humility needed to admit that a branch of knowledge needs the other, induces researchers to go beyond preconceived readings and allows everyone to collaborate in the composition of the mosaic that is scientific research, particularly on the Shroud. By re-evaluating the so-called ancillary sciences, the gap between the various branches of science is overcome, and this allows evidence, that is otherwise invisible when viewed only from a point of view, to emerge. The mosaic of knowledge can be composed thanks to the contribution of all sciences because through often-crossed analysis, the picture that will turn out will be more plausible.

The authors of this article come from completely different scientific fields and working together, they have come to a greater understanding of the problem examined.

The *Mandyliion*\Shroud identification is legitimate and it is also aided by the iconographic transformations, which seem to be clearly influenced by a progressive knowledge of the true nature of the *Mandyliion*, which can be deduced to be the Shroud.

The article accompanied by images can be found at this link:

https://www.academia.edu/34142677/The_Mandyliion_in_Constantinople_Literary_and_iconographic_sources