

The Beirut icon and the Shroud

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Abstract

An accurate reference of a shroud with image compatible with the Shroud of Turin took place in the church of Blachernae in Constantinople. Most experts on the Shroud of Turin agree that the Mandylion which was in Constantinople was actually the Shroud of Turin hidden as an icon of the face of Christ. Nevertheless, there are documents that lead to the impossibility of identification between Mandylion and that Shroud. As an alternative, we propose a path for the Blachernae Shroud from Jerusalem to Constantinople through Beirut. It was an image of Christ that represented his entire body with the wounds of the Passion. It was taken to the chapel of the Chalkê gate in Constantinople. The study of ancient documents allows the Icon of Beirut to be related to the Shroud of Turin.

This paper adds more data to the BSTS Newsletter paper version, issue No 88 of winter 2018/2019. Particularly, the evolution of the Chalkê door and the pollen correspondence.

Refutation of Mandylion as the Shroud

The testimonies of the Shroud of Turin present in Constantinople are robust. However, this paper does not deal with the transfer from Constantinople to France, but the transfer from Jerusalem to Constantinople. Then, we assume that the Shroud was in Constantinople. And an accurate testimony comes from the French knight Robert de Clari. As it is well known, he tells us about a "sydoines" (shroud) with the whole-body figure of Jesus Christ standing up that had wrapped him. This Shroud was in the church of Blachernae and could be the Turin cloth. This should be the main starting point for tracing the Shroud.

The de Clari record tells us about a Shroud with the figure of Jesus Christ's whole body that had wrapped him¹. This is the translation from the old French:

“...the Church of our Lady of Blachernae where was kept the shroud in which Our Lord had been wrapped, which every Friday was raised upright, so that one could see plainly on it the figure of Our Lord. And no one ever knew, either Greek or French, what became of this shroud after the city was taken.”²

We remark that he places the Shroud in the church of Blachernae, he informs us about the disappearing of the cloth, he does *not* describe the Shroud as an “*acheiropoieton*” (Greek *ἀχειροποίητον*, an image not made by human hands) and he does not link it to the Mandyllion in any way.

Can be the Blachernae shroud the cloth known as the Mandyllion? Let see it. Since Ian Wilson proposed that the Turin Shroud was the image of Edessa or Mandyllion, it was taken as the standard theory for the supposed early history of the Turin cloth³. However, we know that the Mandyllion was preserved in the chapel of Pharos of the imperial palace in the Byzantine city far away from the church of Blachernae. The Pharos chapel was its common “home” for centuries as pilgrims testify from the arriving to Constantinople until it left the city⁴. This chapel housed the most important collections of Christian relics⁵. A reference to the Mandyllion in Constantinople is given by the same Robert de Clari⁶. He saw the reliquary hanging off two silver chains still in the Pharos chapel. According to his account, the image was created in Constantinople when a mason was placing tiles on the house of a widow. Jesus Christ appeared to the man and He covered his face (only the face) with the cloth leaving the miraculous image impressed in it. The description of the legend associated with the image had nothing to do with Edessa, Abgar or the time of Jesus Christ. It was not an image of the whole body but only of the face. It had

¹ Robert de Clari (XI c.) ; *La Conquête de Constantinople. Croisades et Pèlerinages*. Robert Laffont. Paris . 788, 1997.

² The original old French: *medame Sainte Marie de Blakerne, ou li sydoines, la ou Nostres Sires fu envolepés, i estoit, qui cascuns desvenres se drechoit tous drois, si que on i pooit bien veir le figure Nostre Seigneur; ne ne seut on onques, ne Griu, ne Franchois, que chis sydoines devint quant la vile fu prise*. Robert de Clari. *La conquête de Constantinople*.

³ Wilson (2005) ; Wilson, I. *The Shroud of Turin*. Oxford 2005. Also Wilson (1998); *The Blood and the Shroud of Turin*. London 1998.

⁴ Barta (2018) ; Barta, C. “Le Mandyllion, le Linceul et la Sainte Chapelle“. *Cahiers sur le Linceul de Turin, Montre Nous Ton Visage (MNTV)* 58I (june 2018) 18.

⁵ For a thorough study of the Christ relic collection see Bacci (2003); Bacci, Michel. “Relics of the Pharos Chapel: A View from the Latin West” in Lidov (2003); Lidov, Alexei, ed., *Eastern Christian Relics*, Moscow 235–46, 2003. https://www.academia.edu/913214/Relics_of_the_Pharos_Chapel_A_View_from_the_Latin_West. See also Lidov (2012) Lidov, Alexei, “A Byzantine Jerusalem: The Imperial Pharos Chapel as the Holy Sepulchre”, in *Jerusalem as Narrative Space Erzählraum Jerusalem*, edited by Annette and Gerhard Wolf Hoffmann, Leiden-Boston 63–104, 2012.

⁶ Clari, Robert de (XIII c.) ; *La Conquête de Constantinople. Croisades et Pèlerinages*. Robert Laffont. Paris. 783, 1997.

nothing to do with a bloody burial cloth. But there is no place for doubts that the object was the same Mandylion because it was in the place where the records place the Mandylion, the story tell how Christ took the cloth and let his face impressed in it as in the original story of the Mandylion. There is not any reference to other sacred cloth that can take up the main place that took up the cloth Clarí saw. Moreover, it was associated with the *Keramion*; the tile portraying also the face of Christ transferred from the Mandylion in Edessa. Clarí describes two rich reliquaries in the middle of the Pharos chapel. In one, there was the cloth and in the other the tile. According to the testimony of Clarí, the tile ended to have the face image because the mason hid the cloth received from Christ under a tile until the evening. And when he removed the tile for leaving, he discovered the face impressed in it. For additional confirmation, the description of Clarí matches totally with the illustration in the codex Rossianus⁷ where Mandylion and *Keramion* are drew side to side (Fig 1).



Fig 1 Mandylion and Keramion. Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus. Manuscript Rossianus 251, f12 v° Vatican Library

After two and a half centuries since its arrival to Constantinople, all the characteristics that relate the Mandylion to the Shroud were removed from its story. The account had changed but the object remained. This is a perfect example of how the legends associated to sacred objects only try to explain what the object is but they

⁷ Manuscript Rossianus 251, f 12 v°. *Vie de Saint Jean Climaque par le moine Daniel*. Circa 11th century. Vatican Library

do not tell necessarily historical facts. In conclusion, we find evident that there were two different sites, Pharos and Blachernae, for two *different* relics, Mandylion and Shroud.

We can add more data. Although, Clarí tells that the shroud disappears after the city was taken, the Mandylion does not disappear, precluding again the identification with the shroud of Blachernae. The Mandylion was saved in the Imperial Treasury along with other important relics after the sack of the city. The Mandylion or Image of Edessa remained in the Byzantine city until 1248 when it was sent to Paris to remain in the Sainte Chapelle until the French Revolution. Jannic Durand, the Louvre curator, provides the most reliable analysis⁸. There are the Sainte Chapelle inventories and the official documents of the transfer well known that contradict the dominant theory. Even though many authors repeat that the Mandylion disappeared after 1204, this cannot be sustained. It is an error that contributes to keeping the hypothesis alive. However, the *Shroud of Blachernae*, as described by Robert de Clarí, disappeared during the sack of the city. This would allow for its secret transfer to France and its further expositions in Lirey.

To keep possible the identity of Shroud and Mandylion, one of the authors of this article (Barta) proposes two hypotheses as a conciliatory alternative. They are as follows: The object arriving at Paris was only the Byzantine empty reliquary and its contents, the cloth, would have been removed earlier, in Constantinople⁹. In other words:

1. The Shroud had to be removed from its reliquary before 1203 when Clarí saw it in Blachernae.
2. An empty reliquary was sent to Paris.

However, these hypotheses, with no documentary support, remained conjectural. Now, new information renders both hypotheses untenable.

⁸ Durand (2001) ; Durand, Jannic et Marie-Pierre Laffitte, *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Publication du Louvre. Réunion des musées nationaux. Paris 71, 2001. And Alexandre Vidier, « *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* » Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France, Paris (Tome 34), 190-192, 1908.

⁹ Rodriguez (2017); Rodriguez Almenar, J. M. and C. Barta, "The image of Edessa included the whole body but only its empty reliquary arrived at Paris". International Conference on The Shroud of Turin. Pasco, Washington (July 19-22) 2017. Also Barta (2012); Barta, C. "Lo que la Síndone es y no es". I Congreso Internacional de la Sábana Santa en España. Valencia (April 28-30) 2012.

1. Byzantines were prevented from removing the Mandyllion from its reliquary because of a superstition that arose after an earthquake occurred during a previous removal. (This is documented¹⁰.)
2. The reliquary in Paris was not empty. The content was just a 'Veronica'. (Again, this is documented.¹¹)

The Mandyllion was not removed from its reliquary. As we said, the Mandyllion was preserved in the chapel of Pharos. Exhibitions of the Image of Edessa in Constantinople can be found until the middle of the eleventh century. However, when the pilgrim who wrote their *Description* visited the city (around 1075-1099) a superstition preventing opening was already established. Therefore, if they follow that, by the time of the fourth crusade, the Mandyllion could not have been removed from its reliquary.

The reliquary in Paris was not empty. A more detailed analysis of the texts that describe what arrived in Paris leads us to conclude that the reliquary was not empty, and that the content was a 'Veronica'¹². Inside of the reliquary had a face on a cloth surrounded by a gold plate decorated with a “trellis”. This description matches well with an old representation of the Mandyllion¹³ and with the description in the *Narratio*¹⁴. In the 18th century, inventories of the collection of Paris the Mandyllion ended up being designated as a 'Veronica'. It was a canvas of the face of Christ mounted on wood and surrounded by a gold plate with rhomboid reliefs (Fig 2).

¹⁰ Ciggaar (1995) Ciggaar Krijnie N. « Une Description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55 » RBE 53 (1995) 117-140.

¹¹ Durand (2001), Durand, Jannic et Marie-Pierre Laffitte, *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Publication du Louvre. Réunion des musées nationaux. Paris 71, 2001, And Vidier (1908), Vidier, Alexandre, « Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle », Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France, Paris (Tome 34) 190-192, 1908.

¹² Barta (2018) ; Barta, C. « Le Mandyllion, le Linceul et la Sainte Chapelle ». Cahiers sur le Linceul de Turin Montre Nous Ton Visage, MNTV n. 58 (June 2018) 16-30.

¹³ Manuscript Rossianus 251, f 12 v^o. *Vie de Saint Jean Climaque par le moine Daniel*. Circa 11th century. Vatican Library

¹⁴ Barta (2018) ; Barta, C. « Le Mandyllion, le Linceul et la Sainte Chapelle ». Cahiers sur le Linceul de Turin, MNTV n. 58 (June 2018) 16-29.



<p>Paris. Reliquary box covered in gilded silver and with precious stones. Inside, in the centre the reproduction of the Holy Face and covered with a trellis (trelle) of gold around. (Veronica)</p>	<p>Constantinople. Inside a gold reliquary. Canvas of the face of Christ mounted on wood and surrounded by a gold foil with rhomboid reliefs</p>
	

Fig 2 Comparison of the description of the relic of the Sainte Chapelle of Paris and the description of the Image of Edessa or Mandylion and their respective reconstructions

Identifying the Mandylion as a 'Veronica' defines the precise nature of the image because, at that time, the reproduction of the Veronica's model in Europe was well known and fits the description of the object in the Sainte Chapelle. Consequently, we must conclude that the Mandylion in Constantinople and the image of Edessa in both cases were only a 'Veronica'.

To keep the Mandylion identity with the Shroud, some authors that know this data, propose that there were copies of the Mandylion and that one of these replaced the original in its reliquary while the authentic Mandylion, that would be the Shroud, was displayed in Blachernae in its true nature. In support of this last hypothesis it would be required to provide some documentary evidence for this supposed event. Otherwise, though possible, it remains speculation. There would also need to be an explanation for why the curators decided to forget the superstition that prevented the Mandylion to be opened for exhibition and why it became detached from the Edessa story. Other authors¹⁵ prefer to maintain the identity of Mandylion and Shroud of Turin by proposing that the reliquary sent to Paris contained the true Shroud and was only discovered as such when it was

¹⁵ Latendresse (2018); Latendresse, Mario. « Passage du Linceul par la Sainte Chapelle de Paris » Cahiers sur le Linceul de Turin, MNTV N. 57. And Durbarle (1985), Dubarle, Père A.M., O. P. *Histoire Ancienne du Linceul de Turin*. O.E.I.L. Tome 2, 85-96 1985.

eventually removed from its reliquary in the fourteenth century. As we said above, for us, the main reference is the Blachernae shroud and this would require that the shroud had already been removed from its reliquary *before* being sent to Paris.

For the Image of Edessa or Mandyllion we have much information that allows an interpretation that links the two pieces. For example, the *tetradiplon*, the ἄχειροποίητον, the whole body, the blood, etc. But many of these clues can be explained in another way¹⁶. For example, the word *tetradiplon* can derive from Arabic and may mean just four angles or square¹⁷. However, as we have indicated above, among the documents, there are also some of them that preclude the possibility of them being one and the same. The concordances between the image of the Shroud of Turin and the ancient representation of the Mandyllion only support that this last was inspired in the Shroud but not that it was the Shroud. The Mandyllion icons that reach our days are not actually a reproduction of the Shroud image but, in the best of the cases, only an old positive elucidation or interpretation of the original image.

We cannot honestly support any more the Wilson hypothesis identifying Mandyllion and Shroud. These difficulties in identifying the Mandyllion as the Shroud have led us to look for an alternative.

If we do not rely on the Mandyllion hypothesis, should we give up the idea that the Shroud of Turin was in Constantinople? Not at all.

Apart from the Mandyllion, there are traces of other images of Christ in Constantinople but the documentation and the iconography for these are scarce. One of the images of Camuliana could be a candidate¹⁸ because it can be described as “not made by human hand”. However, its transfer to Constantinople is not particularly well documented¹⁹ and it disappears too early from the record. We can take as a clue for the timing of the shroud’s arrival to Byzantium, the changes that began to appear in the representation of Christ in the city. (The *Epitaphious Threnos*, the Man of Sorrows, or the codex Pray). They started about the end of the 10th century

¹⁶ Cataldo (2018) ; Cataldo, Sébastien, *Le Linceul de Turin, du Mythe du Suaire à la Vérité Historique*, Inceitis, La Guiché 2018.

¹⁷ Cataldo (2014); Cataldo, Sébastien, “Le Mandyllion or the story of a man-made relic”. Conference of Saint Louis 2014, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlcataldopaper.pdf>, p. 11 (downloaded Nov. 2019).

¹⁸ Kitzinger (1954); Kitzinger, E. “The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm”. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, n. 8 114, 1954.

¹⁹ The date of 574 is provided by Dobschütz, but it is brought into question (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camuliana#cite_ref-7).

so we should assume that the “inspiration” or source for this development arrived in the city shortly before this period. This excludes the Camuliana candidate that arrived about the 6th century.

The iconography of the *epithaphios*, the Man of Sorrows and the codex Pray which we will comment below, are witnesses that back the presence of the Shroud of Turin being in the Byzantine city. Then, we have to search how and when the Shroud of Blachernae arrived in Constantinople. As a new plausible hypothesis, we have found promising clues in the icon of Beirut, an image of Christ which we will now examine.

The new clue of the icon of Beirut

There is an older story that involves an image of Christ, Jews and Christians. This account was read in the Second Council of Nicaea, of the year 787. In the fourth session of this Council of Nicaea a letter attributed (falsely) to Saint Athanasius of Alexandria († 373 AD) was read, in which the legend of the 'icon of Beirut' was narrated. In the council, Peter, bishop of Nicomedia, defending the need for the icon's veneration, presented the story of the miracle of the icon which took place in the city of Beirut. The icon in question, according to the story of the letter read in the council, was an image of the whole body of the Lord. First, it had belonged to a Christian and then to a Jew. It was mistreated: *the Christ feet and hands were nailed, Jews hit in the head and a spear pierced his side. But, suddenly, blood and water began to flow from the icon*²⁰. Here is a partial translation of the text from its Latin version²¹:

"There is a city called Beirut, located in the confines of Tire and Sidon, subject of Antioquia. In that city of Beirut there were many Jews. Well, next to the synagogue of the Jews, which apparently was very large, a certain Christian received from another a small room for rent. While he lived in it, the Christian fixed in front of his bed an image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was painted in an honest manner and represented Our Lord Jesus Christ in real size²². A short time later, out of necessity, that Christian searched for a larger room. Having taken everything, the image of the Lord was left behind. A Jew rented the house in which

²⁰ For a summary, see the website of the Orthodox Church of America: <https://oca.org/saints/lives/2007/10/11/108933-commemoration-of-the-miracle-of-the-icon-of-our-lord-jesus-chris>, under the title *Commemoration of the Miracle of the Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Beret*, which is celebrated on October 11. Cf. PG 28,795: “Admonitio in Historiam Imaginis Berytensis”. And Dobschütz (1899); Dobschütz, E. von: *Chritusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*. Leipzig 1899.

²¹ The translation from Latin is the work of Pedro Sabe academic in Latin and Greek texts.

²² *integrae staturae*.

the image of the Lord was. When he had moved in with all his belongings, he lived in the house, but he did not realize that the icon of the Lord was still there, because he had not inspected that place as he had just moved in there. One day, that same Jew invited one of his compatriots to dinner. While they were having lunch, the guest Jew, looking up, saw the icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ and said to the one who had invited him: "You, who are Jewish, how is it that you have an image of this kind?" And he left emitting many rude expletives against the Lord. Then, the one who had invited him, falling into account of the image, apologized to his Jewish guest, saying: "Until now I had not seen the image." His guest kept silent and went to meet the high priests with accusations against the Jewish tenant in the house where the image of the Lord was located. He said: "He keeps an image of the Nazarene in his house." When they heard this, they said, "Can you show it to us?" He answered: "In his house I will show it to you." Even very irritated, for that afternoon they calmed down, but when the morning arrived the chief priests and the elders took with them the outraged Jew and a large number of people and went to the house of the Jew, in which was the image of the Lord. Arriving at the place, the high priests and the elders, together with the whistle blower, rushed in, and saw the image of the Lord, standing. Then, exceedingly angry at the Jew who lived in the house, they excommunicated him from the synagogue, and throwing down the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they said: "Just as our fathers once mocked him, so we also mock him." At that moment they began to spit in the face of the holy image, giving blows, and saying: "Everything our parents did to him, let's do it in his image!". Then they said: "We heard that they nailed his hands and feet with nails" And then they nailed nails through the hands and feet of the image of the Lord. Once again, angry, they said: "We heard that they gave him vinegar and gall to drink with a sponge, let's do it ourselves!" And so they put in the mouth of the image of the Lord a sponge full of vinegar. Again, they said: "We were taught that our parents hit his head with a cane, let's do the same to him! Taking a reed, they hit on the head of the Lord. And, in addition, they finally said: "In every detail they taught us that they opened his side with a spear, we did not

omit anything! Let's pierce it too. "To do so, they charged one of them to take the spear and hit the side of the image of the Lord. Then a lot of blood and water flowed from him (...) »²³.

The story continues further, with great praises to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, the blood was collected in ampoules and sick people were anointed with this blood. Many were healed (Fig 3). Then, it tells the story of the confession of the Jews to the faith in Christ, who, in masse, go before the bishop. He received them all and baptizes them in successive days.



Fig 3 Composition based on 'The Miracle of the Crucifix of Beirut' by Jacopo Coppi. San Salvatore, Bologna.

²³ Lamberz (2012); Lamberz, Erich (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Series Secunda*, III,2, De Gruyter, Berlin-Bohn319; 321;323;325, 2012.

Of course, we should not take this legend literally and present it as a historical fact. It is not necessary to consider that it was really nailed, pierced, and that blood and water flowed out because the mistreatments. The legend tries to explain that the image included the whole body, with the blood and the wounds of the crucifixion (highlighting the wound on the side).

We emphasize that it is described as a painting of the whole body (*integrae staturae*) with the wounds of the Passion. Remarkably, it highlights the chest wound but makes no mention of the crown of thorns. In addition, the image had, initially, gone unnoticed by the Jew. Even today, many people need help to understand the image of the Shroud. As a negative image it not evident and it is difficult to discern if you are not from some distance. In the Table 1, we put the characteristics of the Shroud that the documents associate to the Icon of Beirut and to the Mandylion.

Characteristics of the Shroud image	Present in the Icon of Beirut	Present in the Mandylión
Whole body	Yes	Uncertain ^(a)
Mistreated face	Yes	Uncertain
Nails in the hands	Yes	Not
Nails on the feet	Yes	Not
Wound in the side	Yes	Uncertain ^(b)
Blood	Yes	Uncertain ^(c)

- (a) The whole body appears only as an interpolation in more recent versions in Constantinople and it was not in the Robert de Clarí testimony.
- (b) Only a particular interpretation of the Gregory Referendario could invoke the chest wound. It was neither in the Robert de Clarí testimony nor in any other.
- (c) The alternative story included in the Constantine VII *Narratio* places the image impression in the Gethsemane garden where Christ sweated blood. It was neither in the Robert de Clarí testimony nor in any other.

Table 1 characteristics of the Shroud that are present in the Icon of Beirut and in the Mandylion

Traceability of the icon of Beirut

The Latin translation of the miracle of Beirut by Anastasio the Librarian and written in the year 873 specifies the origin of this icon and its journey from Jerusalem as follows: Nicodemus, who participated in the burial of Jesus, would have made it with his own hands. When he died, he was handed over to Gamaliel, the teacher of St. Paul. When Gamaliel saw the end of his days approaching, he gave it to Jacques, Jacques to Simeon, Simeon to Zacchaeus. In this way the icon remained in Jerusalem until the ruin of the city in the year 70. Subsequently, the icon was taken by the Christians to Syria, and remained in Beirut until the year 975, as we shall see later.

This seems an addition to older versions but appears when the icon is still in Beirut. It could be based on a legend, according to which, Gamaliel, his son Simeon and Nicodemus would have picked up the shroud and the other relics of the Passion of Christ, hiding them in a safe place under Gamaliel's care somewhere near Jerusalem. First, Mary Magdalene, and subsequently, Simeon, Christian bishop of the city knew the hiding place. All this, according to the tradition collected by the ancient Christian authors Photius and Clement. It seems that Hegesippus, writer and Christian traveller of the second century reported such data with even more details. Hegesippus texts were available in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries but now seem to have disappeared completely²⁴. It should be noted that the interpolation associates the legend with the icon of Beirut although the source that mentions Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Simeon refers to relics and not to the icon. Therefore, it can be assumed that the author of the interpolation is considering that the icon is a relic. As we will see here below, there is an old reference affirming that Nicodemus made the icon remembering the image of the whole body that Christ left in the shroud used for his burial. However, the assumption of Nicodemus actually making a sculpture of Jesus Christ crucified has no one sense and it is out of context and totally anachronistic. Nicodemus as a Jewish would not make images. And, in the few years after Christ, there was no representation of Christ crucified. This artistic motif started only centuries later. The implication of Nicodemus in the story of the Beirut icon cannot be interpreted in the way that he was the author. It could be justified because he kept the cloth.

This legendary origin of the Shroud, in the case of the icon of Beirut, is, by far, much closer to the Gospel Christ burial descriptions than in the case of the Mandylion. At least Nicodemus participates in the burial and he is directly associated to the Shroud. While in the legend of the Mandylion, it is an Ananias in the service of the court of Edessa who picks up the Mandylion during a preaching of Jesus Christ while still alive. This Ananias does not appear in the Scriptures.

²⁴ Carnac (1984); Carnac, Pierre. *El Sudario de Turín*. Ed. Lidium. Buenos Aires p.33, 1984. We have not been able to verify the version referred by this author for which a further investigation is pending. The reference to Gamaliel and Nicodemus provided by the Patriarch of Constantinople Photius in the ninth century and by Clement only say that Nicodemus was baptized by St. John and St. Peter, together with Gamaliel and his son. [P.G. vol 103 CLXXI (171) p. 499-500 (Bibliotheca. Eustracio). English translation http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/photius_copyright/photius_04bibliotheca.htm]. And that Gamaliel was a martyr remaining among the Jews as a hidden disciple of the new faith [The Recognitions of Clement. [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0050-0150_Pseudo_Clemens_Recognitions_\[Schaff\]_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0050-0150_Pseudo_Clemens_Recognitions_[Schaff]_EN.pdf)]. On the other hand, we know that in the second century Hegesippus cited the Gospel of the Hebrews (Eusebius). A thing that can be interesting is he says that the "servant of the priest (servo sacerdotis)" is who receives the Shroud. It may refer to the servant of Nicodemus, who was a priest.

In our quest for the Shroud we should look for the truly part in the legend of the icon of Beirut. From the earliest days of Christianity, that city welcomed Christians. Indeed, Christ himself preached in Tiro and Sidon²⁵ (44 km from Beirut). Around 362 AD, Julian the Apostate burned the basilica that existed in Beirut, which was rebuilt shortly after (in 381). Thomas, bishop of Beirut, attended the Council of Constantinople in 381 and Eustace at the Council of Chalcedon in 451²⁶. It was even established as an autonomous diocese in the mid-fifth century. By the end of that century there were at least six churches in the city. Another new church was built precisely to commemorate the miracle of the bleeding icon²⁷. All this shows that the Christian presence in Beirut remained uninterrupted. If the testimony about the icon in the Second Council of Nicaea is of the eighth century, then the origin of the legend could date back to the fifth century, according to an editor of the 15th century Arab historian²⁸. The bishop of Beirut took the synagogue between 630 and 635 AD. These dates match with the year when Heraclius recovered Beirut and the year when the Arabs took the city respectively. The church would be Saint Saviour that, according to the tradition was before a synagogue and it was the church of Franciscans in the Middle Age to end as the Séreil mosque. The icon was already in the synagogue before the change of owner, that is, before 630 AD²⁹. Of course, it is not possible to think that a legend develops in a few decades, while the possible witnesses are still alive. For the development of a legend it is necessary for there to be a passage of some generations. Only then, can the legend become established. Moreover, an additional argument is that there is no reference to the Arab capture of the city around 635 which confirms that the story is earlier than that time.

The icon of Beirut is brought to Constantinople

That icon that must have carried the signs of the Passion was taken to Constantinople in 975. We are informed of such detail by another contemporary document of the events, whose author is Leon the Deacon, who

²⁵ Mc 7: 31.

²⁶ Kassir (2002); Kassir, S. *Histoire de Beyrouth*, Ed. Fayard, Paris p.51, 2003.

²⁷ Kassir (2002); Kassir, S. *Histoire de Beyrouth*, Ed. Fayard, Paris p.51, 2003.

²⁸ Cheikho (1902); Cheikho, Louis S.J. (ed.), Sâlih bin Yahyâ, *Kitab tarikh Bayrut*, Beirut, p. 17 nt. 2. 1902. The legend must be before 750, according to Paul Riant, *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitane, Lectiones Bergenses*, tome II. p 5. And it is already in a Greek dossier compiled in Rome in 774-775 according to J.-M. Sansterre (1999), *L'Image Blesée, l'Image Souffrante : quelques récits de Miracles entre Orient et Occident (VI^e-XII^e Siècle)*, Brussels-Rome, p. 117, note 14. And J.-M. Sansterre (1999), « Les images dans les sociétés médiévales : pour une histoire comparée », *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome*, n. 69, Bruxelles-Rome, 1999.

²⁹ Jabre (2019); Jabre-Mouawad, Ray, « La mosquée du Séreil à Beyrouth : histoire d'un lieu de culte », *Tempora : Annales d'Archéologie* 14-15 (2003-2004). For the dates interval, personal communication by e-mail 27 August 2019.

informs us of the transfer of this same icon to Constantinople by the Byzantine emperor John I Tzimiskes, during his military campaign in this region³⁰. Another testimony is a letter from Tzimiskes himself to Ashot III king of Armenia in which he mentions the obtaining of several relics in the conquered cities and, among them, the icon from which blood and water flowed. The letter has come to us through an Armenian chronicler of the twelfth century, Matthew of Edessa. It is one of the few documents that provides at least a minimal indication about the image's features. We will analyse this text some paragraphs below. For the current objective, the letter is a confirmation of the icon transfer to Constantinople. The date is important because it happened a short time before the representation of Christ's burial appeared in Byzantium.

Since that moment, any reference to the presence in Constantinople of an image similar to the Turin Shroud might refer to either the icon of Beirut or the Mandylion. The codex Pray (*Fig 4*), the Man of Sorrows (*Fig 5*), and the *Epitaphious Threnos* (*Fig 6*) refer to an image that has been related to the Shroud of Turin. However, they are more compatible with the Beirut icon than with the Mandylion.



³⁰ Niebuhr (1822); Niebuhr, B.G. (ed.), *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae*, Bonn, p. 168 1822. In. 3. Alice Mary Talbot (2005) and Denis F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, Washington, p. 209, 2005.

Fig 4 Codex Pray. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pray_Codex

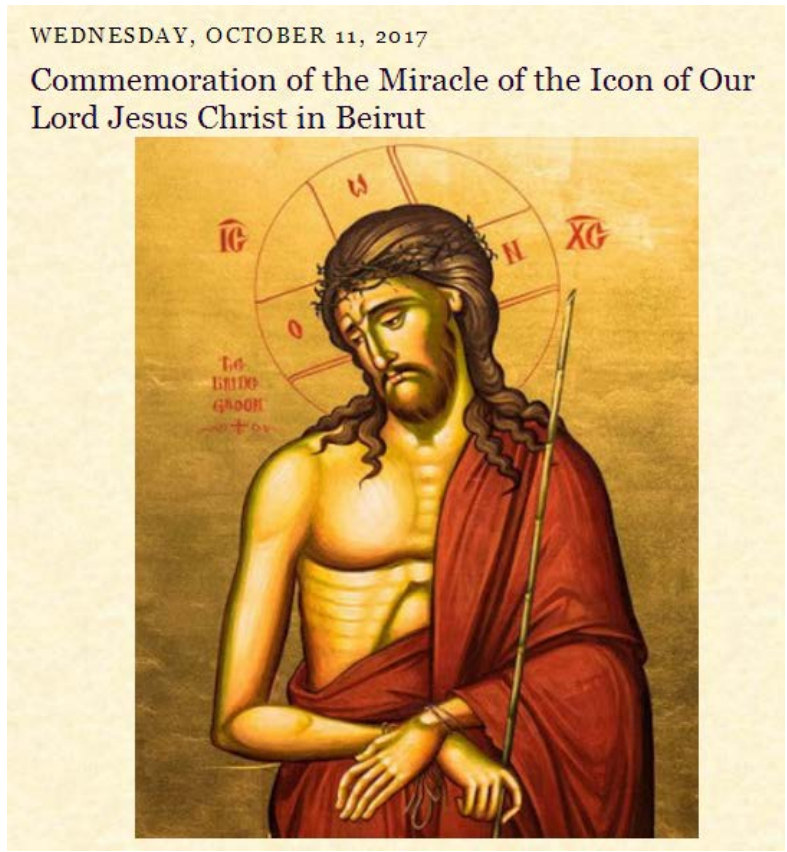


Fig 5 Illustration chosen by a website of the Orthodox Church for the commemoration of the Icon of Beirut. <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2017/10/commemoration-of-miracle-of-icon-of-our.html>



Fig 6 Stavronikita epitaphios

The simultaneous presence of both objects in the Byzantine capital makes it difficult to differentiate which of them would be the Turin Shroud. Note that there are only 31 years between the arrival in Constantinople of the Mandylion and the icon of Beirut. The reasoning line used to sustain the identification of Mandylion with the Shroud based on the iconographic novelty appearing in Constantinople after the tenth century can now also be used to sustain the identification of Beirut icon and Shroud. If the Mandylion's celebrity is much greater it can be explained because, for the imperial court, the image of Edessa also played a political and military role as a banner of the city. The icon of Beirut, on the other hand, had only a religious significance and did not attract the particular interest of the emperor.

At the end of the tenth century and specifically in Constantinople there are representations of the suffering and naked Christ with the signs of the crucifixion. We contend that they have their origin in the arrival of the Icon of Beirut with much more probability than in the arrival of the Mandylion which continues to be considered predominantly as an image of the face of Christ *alive*. The representative of the Pope, in 1054, excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople for, among other things, allowing Christ to be shown "dead" on the cross.³¹

As we have seen, the time of arrival of the icon of Beirut to Constantinople is close to the arrival of the Mandylion and this coincidence could contribute to the evolution of the legend associated to the Mandylion which ends up including an image of a full body and associated blood³². The legend of Beirut, however, incorporates these elements from the beginning.

When considering the icon of Beirut as a firm candidate to be identified with the Shroud, we realize that many of the claims applied to the Mandylion, such as the burial representations or the iconography of Jesus Christ, only tell us that the Shroud was known in the Antiquity, but not necessarily that it was the *Mandylion*. It could be another image that, in our hypothesis, would be the icon of Beirut.

³¹ Personal communication by Jorge Manuel Rodríguez Almenar, president of the Centro Español de Sindonología.

³² Cataldo (2014) ; Cataldo, Sébastien, « Le Mandylion or the story of a man-made relic », Conference of Saint Louis, p. 14, 2014. <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlcataldopaper.pdf> (downloaded May 2018). The legend of the Mandylion indicating the whole body appears in the same codex as that of the icon of Beirut: Vossiamus Latinus of the tenth century and could be a "contamination" of one legend on the other.

According to some authors³³, after the arriving in Constantinople, the icon was installed in the chapel of Christ the Saviour in the imperial palace. It was over or near the Bronze Gate (Chalkê). Above the main entrance of the Chalkê, there stood an icon of Christ which was a major political target for the iconoclasm. It was removed and replaced more than once. At the time of Tzimiskes, it was a mosaic probably on the façade³⁴. The chapel was different from that of Pharos where the Mandylion resided. The Bronze Gate gave entrance to the imperial complex from the main avenue of the city (*Fig 7*).

Little time after the arriving of the icon to the Chalkê in Constantinople, there are mentions of a healing cloth in this chapel. According to Mango³⁵, Alexios I emperor († 1118) and Alexios Komnenos, protosebastos († after 1182) were cured of illness by the application of a cloth that was in front of the Chalkê icon. This cloth, according to Glycas³⁶, also bore a portrait of Christ. This cloth was large enough to cover the emperor³⁷. The Latin translation describes the cloth as the most holy³⁸. Its healing function keeps the original legend role of the blood flowed from the icon. Even this sacred significance, the cloth was moved from the chapel to the emperor home. He had already moved the imperial palace to Blachernae. In our hypothesis, it would not be the last time the cloth went to Blachernae and was deployed there. As we will see below, this icon could be moved to Blachernae like the hair of John the Baptist³⁹. All these clues lead to identify the healing cloth of the Chalkê with the icon of Beirut. We have here other support to assume that the icon of Beirut was a textile with image.

³³ Durand (2001); Durand, J. and M. P. Laffitte, *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Ed. Louvre, Paris, p. 27, 2001. Also, A.M. Talbot (2005) and D. F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, Washington, p. 27, 2005. Also, *Patria of Constantinople*. English version in Berger (2013), Albrecht, *Accounts of medieval Constantinople: the Patria*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, Harvard University Press, p. 224-225, 2013.

³⁴ Mango (1959); Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen, p.122, 1959.

³⁵ Mango (1959); Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen p.132-133, 1959.

³⁶ Glycas, (XII c.) Michael. *Annales, Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantine*, p. 623: (1827-1897). Προσκομίζεται αὐτῷ τὸ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν ἐκτύπωμα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Χαλκῆν ἀνεστηλωμένου, ὃπερ ἦν ἐν πέπλῳ τινι πρὸ τῆς εἰκόνης ἀπηωρημένον.

³⁷ Zonaras, (XIII c.) John. *Epitomae historiarum*, XVIII, Vol III. Ed. Theodorus Buttner-Wobst, p. 751, (1897).

³⁸ Latin *Sacrosancto*. That means consecrated by religious ceremony, sacred, inviolable, most holy; venerable.

³⁹ Mango (1959); Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen p. 150 note 7, 1959.

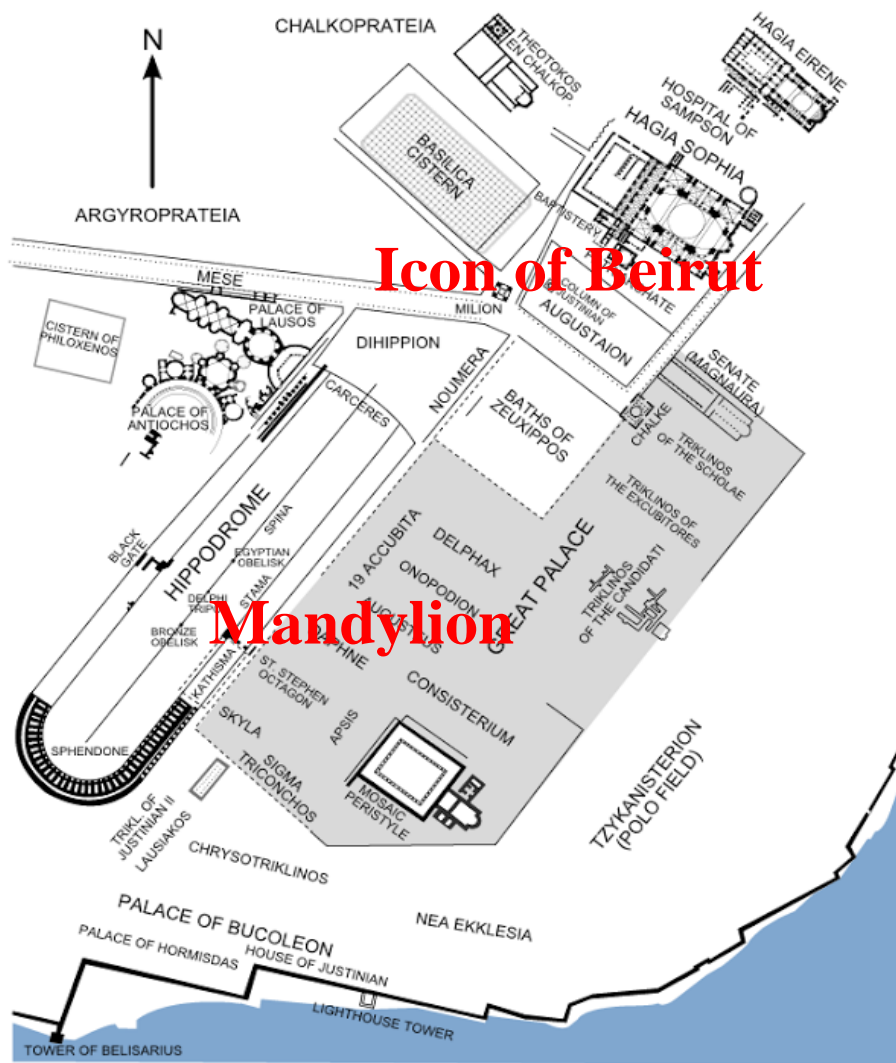


Fig 7 Location of the Mandyllion and the icon of Beirut in the imperial complex

The Shroud in Blachernae

When the fourth Crusade arrived at Constantinople in 1203, Robert the Clari saw the Shroud in Blachernae. As we said above, in our quest we take the Blachernae icon as the prime starting point of the Shroud existence before its appearance in France. But there is no other reference for an image of Christ in that church other than that of the 13th century de Clari testimony. In Blachernae, the most popular image was an icon or veil of the Virgin Mary.

Neither the Mandyllion nor the icon of Beirut were put in Blachernae as its usual place since they arrived at the city. If one of them were the Shroud, they had to be transferred to Blachernae. However, Clari testify that the Mandyllion remained in the Pharos chapel inside the Bucoleon complex. It remained there until its transfer to

Paris according to trustworthy documents. The Mandyllion was not in Blachernae and the Shroud that Clari saw was other cloth.

On the other hand, the same crusader says nothing about the Chalkê chapel. The icon of Beirut could remain in the Chalkê chapel or not. If this icon remained in the Chalkê chapel, the pilgrims who visited the city years later would tell us about it. We verified that, among the known accounts of later pilgrims, the icon of Beirut is not mentioned in the Chalkê sanctuary or in any other chapel of the city⁴⁰. This is completely compatible with the disappearance of the icon after the fourth Crusade. If, according to the Clari's testimony, the Shroud disappeared, and the icon of Beirut disappeared too, they both can be one and the same cloth. This fact is necessary, but it is not enough to justify the transfer from the Chalkê chapel to Blachernae.

Why Byzantines would have moved the icon of Beirut to Blachernae? Let's see a possible explanation. The chapel was something personal of John Tzimiskes without much future. Indeed, Romanos I Lekapenos (920-944) builds a small preliminary chapel attached to the Bronze Gate⁴¹. Then, John Tzimiskes (969-976) enlarged it and he adorned it magnificently in 971⁴² and places in it the icon of Beirut and the hair of John the Baptist in 975⁴³. He was buried in this chapel. But, Isaac II Angel (1185-1195 and 1203-1204) eliminated the Bronze Gate (Chalkê) before the end of the 12th century⁴⁴. The building lost its function as a door after 1200⁴⁵ and only retained its religious role. In fact, the architectural ensemble no longer mattered since the beginning of its renovation by Tzimiskes because its predecessor, Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969), surrounded the palace with a tighter wall laying the chapel outside⁴⁶. The chapel was never very important, except for John Tzimiskes, and when the Crusaders arrived, the chapel was in decline, which justified carrying his relics to the chapel of the new

⁴⁰ Khitrowo (1889) ; Khitrowo, B. de. *Itinéraires russes en Orient*. Paris. Leroux, 1889. And Majeska (1984), George P. "Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries". *Dumbarton Oaks*. Mango confirms the disappearance. Mango (1959); Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen, p.152, 1959.

⁴¹ Constantinopla, Arqueología, National Geographic, RBA Coleccionables, p. 60-62, 2017.

⁴² Talbot (2005); Talbot, Alice Mary and Denis F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, Washington, p. 207, note 38, 2005. Also <http://www.bisanzioit.blogspot.com/2018/08/la-chalke-costantinopoli.html>.

⁴³ Talbot (2005); Talbot, Alice Mary and Denis F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, Washington, p. 207, 2005. Also Mango (1959), Cyril. *The Brazen House*; p. 150 and n. 7, 1959.

⁴⁴ Constantinopla, Arqueología, National Geographic, RBA Coleccionables, p. 62, 2017.

⁴⁵ Mango (1959); Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen, 1959.

⁴⁶ Constantinopla, Arqueología, National Geographic, RBA Coleccionables, p. 60-62, 2017.

palace of Blachernae. The hair of St. John the Baptist that was placed in the chapel together with the icon by Tzimiskes was already just in Blachernae before the fourth Crusade⁴⁷. The same can be happened with the icon of Beirut. It could be also moved to Blachernae and seen by Clarí in 1203.

Pollen and other clues

Claims of another kind, such as pollen analysis, are also applicable to the Lebanese icon. It is known that the Shroud of Turin has pollen grains that can track the way from Jerusalem to the West. The list of 58 grains found by Max Frei⁴⁸, indicates the presence in nine differentiated geographic areas. Many plants have presence in several of the nine areas. Those with presence in Jerusalem or in Europe are useless to differentiate between *Mandyllion* and icon of Beirut as candidates to be the Shroud of Turin. Those pollen grains characteristic of Constantinople are useless too because both cloths were some time in the Byzantine capital. For example, the Lebanese Cedar, even its name points to Beirut, it is useless because it is present in the Mediterranean area and in the Constantinople and Jerusalem environs. Is there pollen that is not present neither in Jerusalem, nor in Europe, nor in Constantinople? If there is, it could differentiate the path of the Shroud of Turin between Jerusalem and Constantinople. According to the above-mentioned pollen list, only two species satisfy this condition: *Atraphaxis spinosa* and *Prunus spartioides*. To know the geographical distribution of these plants we use the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). It is an international organization those data are provided by many institutions from around the world. Its data are primarily distribution on plants and other biological species for the world. According to GBIF, the *Atraphaxis spinosa* is abundant in Asian countries to the East of Armenia and has some presence in the South of Israel. It does not confirm either Edessa or Beirut as places where the Shroud traveled. On the other hand, *Prunus spartioides* has very scarce instances. It was added by Frei to the list only at the end of his investigation in 1982⁴⁹. According to GBIF (Fig 8), it is present in the border between Syria

⁴⁷ Khitrowo (1889); Khitrowo, B. de. *Itinéraires russes en Orient*. Paris. Leroux, p. 100, 1889.

⁴⁸ Riedmatten (2018) ; Riedmatten, P. de. « Que penser aujourd’hui des pollens trouvés sur le Linceul? » MNTV, n.59, 20-21, 2018. The pollens table is an excerpt of Marion (1997), A et al. *Nouvelles découvertes sur le Suaire de Turin*, Albin Michel. 1997.

⁴⁹ Riedmatten (2018) ; Riedmatten, P. de. « Que penser aujourd’hui des pollens trouvés sur le Linceul? », MNTV, n.59, note 37 p. 19, 2018.

and Lebanon, at 75 km from Beirut. It is not present either in Jerusalem, or in Constantinople, or in the environs of Edessa. Its presence in the Shroud of Turin reinforces the correspondence with the icon of Beirut.



Fig 8. Geographic place for rare *Prunus spartioides*, one of the pollens found in the Shroud of Turin (GBIF)

Certain others claim used to support the Mandylion as predecessor of the Shroud correspond even better to the icon of Beirut, such as the Emesa's vase, because the city of Emesa is much closer to Beirut than to Edessa (Fig 8).

Santo Volto de Lucca and the icon of Beirut

References to the icon of Beirut in Occident are often known as the *Passio Ymaginis Domini*. It had a yearly liturgical celebration on November 9th. The recovery of the legend in Occident is developed throughout the 10th to the 12th centuries by the celebration of that fest and also throughout the Acts of the Nicaea II translations and the literature of pilgrims, that is, through text but no with images⁵⁰. We have no contemporary artistic copy of the original. However, the subsequent representation became a crucifix. In the study of Espí⁵¹, the author justifies that the original icon was represented as a crucifix due to theological trends in the Occidental world. The

⁵⁰ Bacci (2002); Bacci, Michele. "Quel Bello Miracolo onde si fa la Festa del Santo Salvatore. Studio sulla metamorfisi de una leggenda", 16-17. G. Rossetti (ed.), In *Santa Croce E Santo Volto: Contributi Allo Studio Dell'origine E Della Fortuna Del Culto Del Salvatore*, 16-17, 25-28, 2002.

⁵¹ Espí (2014); Espí Forcén, Carlos. "De Oriente a Occidente. La Leyenda Bizantina de la Passio Imaginis en el Siglo XV en la Corona de Aragón". *Estudios bizantinos* 2p. 205-229, 2014.

legend of the Santo Volto de Lucca (Fig 9) and other similar stories has, in fact, its echo in the original Beirut story⁵².



Fig 9. Volto Santo de Lucca (12th century)

The common feature shared is the authorship of the icon by Nicodemus. The relationship of the sculpture of Lucca with the icon of Beirut paradoxically gives us an additional relationship between the icon of Beirut and the Shroud of Christ. It is in the story of Gervase of Tilbury in his *Otia Imperiala* about the sculpture of Lucca⁵³. In that story written between 1210 and 1214, he tells us that when Christ was taken down from the cross, his figure appeared on the shroud on which they wrapped him. The cloth was greater than his whole body and that figure served Nicodemus as a model to sculpt the Holy Volto of Lucca. Gervase is based on older documents⁵⁴. All this describes with unambiguous precision what the Turin Shroud represents: the shroud that covered Christ crucified with his figure on it. According to Gervase, that shroud was the model for the crucifix of Lucca. But in reality, the model for the legend of Lucca's sculpture is the icon of Beirut story. As such, it is a possible vestige of the identification between the icon of Beirut and the Shroud of Christ.

Analysis of key texts

⁵² Bacci (2002) Bacci, Michele., "Quel Bello Miracolo onde si fa la Festa del Santo Salvatore. Studio sulla metamorfisi de una leggenda", 16-17. G. Rossetti (ed.), In *Santa Croce E Santo Volto: Contributi Allo Studio Dell'origine E Della Fortuna Del Culto Del Salvatore*, p. 7-86, 2002.

⁵³ Gervase of Tilbury (XII c.). *Otia Imperiala*, III, 24. German edition by F. Liebrecht. Hannover, p.19-20,1856.

⁵⁴ Dubarle (1985); Dubarle, A. M., O.P. *Histoire Ancienne du Linceul de Turin jusqu'à XIIIe siècle*, O.E.I.L., p. 61-66, 1985.

The Nicaea council

The legend of the icon of Beirut that was presented at the Second Council of Nicaea is originally written in Greek and then translated into Latin⁵⁵. It also appears in the Chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux (late eleventh century)⁵⁶. An analysis of the matter is also found in Von Dobschütz⁵⁷. The most modern edition of the Greek text is the critical edition of the council minutes by Erich Lamberz⁵⁸. It shows that the whole tradition goes back to four main Greek manuscripts⁵⁹. Regarding the Latin translation, the most ancient is Anastasius the Librarian and it was done in 873⁶⁰. It is very literal and allows us to go back to the Greek model used. For the Latin version there are also four main manuscripts⁶¹. In summary, the narrative follows the fundamental lines already indicated above under the title "The new clue of the icon of Beirut".

The Greek text is shown here below with its English translations in parallel according to the editions of Lamberz and according to the oldest edition of Mansi⁶². It analyses what the versions tell us about the nature of the image. Among them, the expression for the image differs: Painting on board or painted properly?⁶³

Greek version of Lamberz	Translation to English
(the numbering of the lines is of the Lamberz edition)	
¹¹ Πόλις ἐστὶ Βηρυτὸς καλουμένη ἐν μεθορίοις Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος κειμένη, τελοῦσα δὲ	¹¹ There is a city, called Beirut on the borders of Tyre and Sidon, which is subordinate
¹² ὑπὸ Ἀντιόχειαν. ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει Βηρυτῶ πλήθη πολλὰ ἦν τῶν Ἰουδαίων.	¹² to Antioch. In this city of Beirut there were great numbers of Jews.
¹³ πλησίον δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς αὐτῶν μεγάλης οὔσης σφόδρα χριστιανὸς τις ἔλαβεν	¹³ Near their synagogue, a very big one, a Christian rented a room

⁵⁵ PG 28,797-805

⁵⁶ PL 160,145A-C

⁵⁷ Dobschütz (1889) ; Dobschütz, E. von, *Chritusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, Leipzig p. 280-283**, 1899.

⁵⁸ Lamberz (2012); Lamberz, Erich. *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, series secunda*, III, 2, p. 318. Cf. BHG 780-88 and BHL 4227-30.

⁵⁹ Cassin (2011); Cassin Matthieu, "Erich Lamberz (éd.), Concilium uniuersale Nicaenum secundum, Concilii actiones I-III, edidit Erich Lamberz (Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Series secunda. Volumen tertium. Pars prima) [compte-rendu]": REB 69 (2011) 298-300: **H** *Londinensis Harleianus* 5665, End of eleventh century. **V** *Vaticanus graecus* 836, First half of twelfth Century. **T** *Taurinensis* B.II.9, Second half of thirteenth Century. **M** *Marcianus gr.* 166, Second half of thirteenth Century.

⁶⁰ Cassin (2011); Cassin, Matthieu, "Erich Lamberz (éd.), Concilium uniuersale Nicaenum secundum, Concilii actiones I-III, edidit Erich Lamberz (Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Series secunda. Volumen tertium. Pars prima) [compte-rendu]": REB 69 (2011) p. 299. Also E. von Dobschütz, *Chritusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, Leipzig p. 281-282, 1899.

⁶¹ Cassin (2011) ; Cassin, Matthieu, "Erich Lamberz (éd.), Concilium uniuersale Nicaenum secundum, Concilii actiones I-III, edidit Erich Lamberz (Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Series secunda. Volumen tertium. Pars prima) [compte-rendu]", REB 69 (2011). P. 299.

⁶² Mansi (1799); Mansi, G. D. *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XIII, p. 25, 1799.

⁶³ The translation and analysis of Greek text is the main involvement of Pedro Sabe

<p>¹⁴ ἐνοικίω κελλίον παρά τινος, ἐν ᾧ κατοικῶν ἀντικρὺ τοῦ ἀκουβίτου αὐτοῦ ἔπηξεν</p> <p>¹⁵ εἰκόνα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐν σεμνοῖς μὲν ἔξωγραφημένη, ὀλόστα-</p> <p>¹⁶ τον δὲ ἔχουσα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.</p>	<p>¹⁴ from someone. While living there he fixed opposite his bed</p> <p>¹⁵ an image of our Lord Jesus Christ, <u>depicted properly</u> representing</p> <p>¹⁶ our Lord Jesus Christ in <u>whole body</u>.</p>
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Greek version of Mansi	Translation to English
(...) ἀντικρὺ τοῦ ἀκουβίτου αὐτοῦ ἔπηξεν εἰκόνα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐν σανίσι μὲν ἔξωγραφημένη, ὀλόστατον δὲ ἔχουσα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. (...)	(...) opposite his bed he fixed an image of our lord Jesus Christ; <u>depicted on boards</u> , representing our lord Jesus Christ in <u>whole body</u> .

In Lamberz, line 15, **σεμνοῖς** makes no sense. It is an adjective in the plural with no corresponding noun. The word **σανίσι** in Mansi makes much better sense⁶⁴.

Lamberz, the editor of the text in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, has chosen in his edition the reading **σεμνοῖς**, perhaps for the simple fact of the overwhelming majority of three to one in the textual tradition. Among the four manuscripts that preserve this text, the manuscript *Vaticanus graecus* 836 (identified in the critical apparatus with a V), dated in the first half of the twelfth century, is the second oldest and the only one that disagrees.

The dominant version, **σεμνός**, in the general use of the Greek language, can mean 'holy', 'solemn', 'majestic', 'worthy of respect', 'venerable', 'noble'. But, in the Christian Greek, other uses are witnessed with other meanings as 'seemly', 'sober' and 'chaste'⁶⁵. Therefore, the interpretation can be even opposite. According to *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*,⁶⁶ applied to images, a better meaning should be '*properly*'. In fact, the Latin translator chose this word, i.e. *honeste*. In this way ἐν σεμνοῖς would be an adverbial expression. Indeed, of the two Greek versions published by the Greek Patristics of Migne⁶⁷, with their corresponding Latin translations in parallel, the

⁶⁴ It also the assessment of Mark Guscini who was editor of the Shroud Newsletter and he is Master in Greek and Latin.

⁶⁵ Lampe (1961); Lampe, G.W. H., *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford, p. 1229, 1961; item σεμνός, meaning 5.

⁶⁶ Forcellini (1940); Forcellini, A. *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*. Vol II, p.671; *Honeste*, meaning II, improperly applied to images, means *concinne*. "properly", 1940.

⁶⁷ PG 28,797A-805B; 805C-812C

second edits σεμνῶς⁶⁸, and the adverb of derived mode ('properly'). Therefore, ἐν σεμνοῖς is an adverbial expression that expresses the way in which the image has been painted: '*properly*'. In a more complete way, the phrase ἐν σεμνοῖς μὲν ἐζωγραφημένη, would be literally 'painted proper'⁶⁹.

The variant σανῖσι = 'boards', discarded and relegated to the apparatus, while attested only by the ms. V, is, however, linguistically easier. In fact, used in the plural, it usually means, precisely, 'paintings'. But, given the use of the verb ζωγραφέω, which indicates the pictorial action, its use is somewhat superfluous, redundant in a certain way in that it expresses even more what has already been said with the verb. On the other hand, it makes clear that it is a painting. The fact that it is made on wood seems to have been suppressed from the text early and replaced by "*sober*"⁷⁰. The word "*board*" only appears in a manuscript although it makes more sense. If it was not kept and it was substituted systematically by solemn or sober, it can indicate that the copyists did not agree to write board because they had information that the icon was not on a board.

It should be noted that the use of the participle ἐζωγραφημένη is curious and probably relevant. Ζωγραφέω, properly, is 'painting portraits' or 'painting landscapes', but in the usual use of the language it can be used in a general way to express a pictorial representation of any nature. However, together with ὁλόστατον, a whole neologism attested only in this text⁷¹, seems to suggest the idea of an almost *photographic* representation.

The indication of the "whole body"⁷² is another particular characteristic that reinforces the suggestion that the icon of Beirut is the Shroud. On the other hand, the term 'icon', with which the image is systematically named, is compatible and not contradictory with the term and the idea of the *sindone*⁷³.

The Tzimiskes letter

⁶⁸ PG 28,805D

⁶⁹ Mark Guscini in personal communication proposes also that σεμνοῖς with reference to the icon can mean "in an exact, faithful way".

⁷⁰ Mark Guscini suggests that σανῖσι tries to simplify the original difficult expression because copyists simplified complex texts, but rarely complicated simple texts.

⁷¹ The word is not in the classical Greek lexicons

⁷² The Latin translator used *integrate statura* that is "real size". ὁλόστατον is also life-size. G.W. H. Lampe (1961), *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford p.950, 1961.

⁷³ Lampe (1961); Lampe, G.W. H. *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford, p. 1229, 1961; item εἰκόν, meaning D3d and D5 where the image of Edesse is included.

The other important text is the letter of John Tzimiskes to the Armenian king Ashot III in which he mentions the icon of Beirut. It is one of the few documents that provides a minimum indication about the image features. It is included in the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa. It has come to us through this Armenian chronicler of the twelfth century. Although the letter would be written in Greek we only have the old Armenian translation. Thanks to Tara L Andrews⁷⁴, the main specialist today in this document, we have the most reliable edition of the required paragraph. The Armenian text is shown here below, with its English translations in parallel, according to the editions of Andrews.

Armenian version of Andrews	Translation to English
<p>և գտաք յայնմ քաղաքին ի Գաբաւոնն զսուրբ հողաթափն Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ մերոյ, որով և շրջեցաւ իսկ ի վերայ աշխարհի.</p>	<p>And in that city Jabala we found the holy sandal of Christ our God, with which he indeed walked over the land.</p>
<p>և նոյնպէս և գաատկերն փրկչին, զորս հրեայքն յետ ժամանակի խոցեալ էին, ուստի վաղվաղակի ել արիւն և ջուր, և գխոց⁷⁵ տիգիւն ոչ⁷⁶ գտաք.⁷⁷</p>	<p>And likewise the icon of the Redeemer, which the Jews had pierced some time ago, whence all of a sudden blood and water came out and we did not find⁸⁰ the wound of the lance.</p>
<p>գտաք⁷⁸ և⁷⁹ յայնմ քաղաքին զպատուական հերս գլխոյ <u>Կարապետին</u> և <u>գԱկրոտչին Յովհաննու</u>, և առեալ <u>տանիմք ի պահպանութիւն</u> աստուածապահ քաղաքին մերոյ:</p>	<p>And in that city we found the venerable hair(s) of the head of the Forerunner and the Baptist Johannes, and we took them and are carrying them off for protection in our city protected by God.</p>

This text confirms that the icon was taken to Constantinople. But the emperor mentions the side wound to say that they did not find it. In the Italian cloth the side wound is the most remarkable sign. It is not possible to miss it, even more so at Tzimiskes' time when the cloth did not yet incorporate the burn marks from the 1532

⁷⁴ Andrews, Tara L. (2019). “The Letters of Ioannēs Tzimiskes in the Chronicle of Matt’ēos Urhayec’i”, in *Armenia between Byzantium and the Orient: Celebrating the Memory of Karen Yuzbashian (1927 – 2009)*, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity, Volume: 16, edited by Bernard Outtier, Cornelia B. Horn, Basil Lourie, Alexey Ostrovsky. (TSEC). Leiden: Brill, p 259–287, 2019.

⁷⁵ գխոց] but խոց in Z= •Venice, Mekhitarist Library MS 917 (Z), copied probably during the seventeenth century. This was another one of the exemplars for Dulaurier's copy of the text.

⁷⁶ ոչ] but omitted in A •Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 1896 (A), copied in 1689. This text served as the base text for the Vařarřapat edition of 1898.

⁷⁷ գտաք.] But omitted in B

⁷⁸ գտաք] om. AB

⁷⁹ գտաք և] om. FV

⁸⁰ we did not find] we found; *omitted*.

fire. If so, the chosen translation excludes our proposed hypothesis of identification between icon of Beirut and Shroud of Turin. However, there is a translation into English⁸¹ that says the wound was visible. This happens, as indicated in the notes, by the *omission* of “not”. So, the reading “found” rather than “not found” occurs in one manuscript, Matenadaran 1896, copied in 1689. This text served as the base for the Vałaršapat edition of 1898. This one is reliable in many respects, but its scribe did occasionally engage in “improvement” of the text, and that could be the case here⁸².

This is not the only difficulty for that paragraph of the letter. Its near-neighbour manuscript (Matenadaran 1731) omits the “found” entirely, which gives a translation “...and likewise the icon of the Redeemer, which the Jews had pierced some time ago, whence suddenly blood and water came out and the wound of the lance not [...] and in that city...” There is a blank space left where you might expect the word “found” to appear.

Most of manuscripts led us to accept that the wound was not found. However, to be rigorous, they do not say that the wound *was* not in the image. We do not know what Tzimiskes intends to tell. Maybe the particular zone of the cloth was hidden by the way the icon was stored. Moreover, it would be very interesting to know which Greek word exactly Tzimiskes used, but the best clue we have is that Armenian version. In conclusion, the objection provided by this text is strong, but it is not necessarily decisive.

Possible verification

As we explained, the icon of Beirut, for its history and its journey, could be the Shroud of Blachernae. This hypothesis is better justified than the *Mandylyon* hypothesis. The surprise is that this could be verified by physical analysis. In January 967, before the arrival of the icon to Constantinople, Nicephorus Phocas brought to the city blood from the icon of Beirut. At present time, two relics of the Holy Blood coming from Constantinople, survive in Venice. One of these relics is a thread dyed with blood and water that flowed from the side of Christ⁸³

⁸¹ Matthew of Edessa's Chronicle's (XII c.); translated into English by Robert Bedrosian (2017), *Sources of the Armenian Tradition*, Long Branch, N.J., 2017, p29.

⁸² Personal communication of Tara Andrews by messages 2 July 2018.

⁸³ Durand (2001); Durand, Jannic and Marie-Pierre Lafitte, *Le Tresor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Publication du Louvre. Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, p. 27 and 67, 2001. Also Mango (1959), Cyril. *The Brazen House; a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen p.151, 1959. Two ampoules (glass containers) with that blood of Christ were transferred from Constantinople to the *Saint Chapelle* in Paris. Sadly, those relics disappeared during the French Revolution.

(Fig 10). Therefore, it would be possible to verify if that thread can come from the Shroud of Turin. Such a check would only be decisive in case of a positive result (if the thread were from the Turin Shroud). If not, it would not be conclusive, since in Constantinople there was probably more than one relic of the blood of Christ. There are varieties of ampoules in other locations that have been attributed also to the blood of Christ.

Conclusion

Among the abundant documentation for the *Mandyllion* there are some of them dated at the end of its story in Constantinople that lead to the incompatibility between its image and the Shroud of Turin. On the other hand, with the combination of ancient documents (in Greek, Latin and Armenian) which have often been ignored or passed over we have reconstructed a probable trace of the Shroud of Blachernae from Jerusalem to Constantinople through Beirut. It was an image of Christ that represented his whole body and included the wounds of the Passion. It was transferred to Constantinople shortly before the beginning of Christ's representation as depicted in the image on the Shroud of Turin (i.e. the Man of Sorrows). It was kept in the Chalkê gate chapel where a large healing cloth with an image of Christ is mentioned. It disappears after the Fourth Crusade. Gervase of Tilbury relates some way the Icon of Beirut with the image of Christ impressed in His Shroud. Due to such data, it corresponds well with the Holy Shroud of Turin. There are a few documents about it but none of them can dismiss our hypothetical identification. We do not claim to have found indisputable proof of the origins of the Shroud. It is only a hypothesis to be considered as a possibility, especially if the historical facts cause us to reject the other theories. It remains to deepen the study of the texts cited and other texts and ensure their reliability. It maybe could be confirmed by analyzing the thread preserved in Venice.



Fig 10. Reliquary of the Blood of Christ. Basilica of San Marcos: Treasure and Sanctuary of San Marcos. http://www.meravigliedivenezia.it/es/objetos-virtuales/CAT_205.html