

# Constantinople Documents As Evidence Of The Shroud In Edessa

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## Authors

[Daniel Scavone, Ph.D.](#) - Presenter

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## Abstract:

In 944 Edessa's cloth-image of Jesus arrived in Constantinople. It remained there until the 13th century. Of the Edessan sources, the most important was the 6th c. *Acts of Thaddaeus*, which attests to a faint image of Jesus' face on a cloth imposed during His ministry. Importantly, the cloth was referred to as a *sindon tetradiplon*, literally a "burial cloth folded in eight layers." In Constantinople, the Edessa cloth-image was named, described, and/or depicted in art in at least 17 documents. Some writers saw only the face of Jesus visible on the folded cloth (Mandylion). Other eyewitnesses describe blood and full body on the cloth. My study of these texts provides strong evidence that the imaged cloth from Edessa to Constantinople was the cloth known today as the Shroud of Turin.

1. 944. *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*, composed under eyewitness Emperor Constantine VII, described the faintness of the image, now with the evidence of blood on the face. He preferred the image formed during Jesus' Passion.
2. 944. *Chronographia* of Simeon Magister confirms the faintness of the image.
3. 944. Sermon of Gregory Referendarius refers to the perspiration on the face with drops of blood and also blood and water from the side-wound, evidence that Edessa's relic was really a full-length shroud in contact with a bloody body.
4. 958. Letter of Constantine VII to troops with a supply of holy water which had touched the relics of the Passion, including the burial linens—first direct mention of Jesus' shroud.
5. Ca. 960. *Liturgical Tractate* records the ritual secrecy in which the Mandylion was kept in Edessa.
6. Late 11th c. The *Chronicon* of Jean Skylitzes contains a naive drawing of the Edessa cloth delivered to Constantinople.
7. 1095. Emperor Alexius Comnenus invites Western rulers to protect the wealth of Constantinople against the Moslems. Jesus' burial wrappings are specifically named.
8. Ca. 1100. In Constantinople the *threnos* and *epitaphios* art begin, both displaying Jesus' full body on cloth.
9. 1150. List of relics by an English pilgrim names the "mantile" and the burial *sudarium* as separate objects.

10. 1157. List by Icelandic monk Nicholas Soemundarson names the “bands and the *sudarium* and blood of Christ.”
11. 1171. List by William of Tyre names the *sindon* of Christ.
12. 1192-1195. The *Pray Codex* contains an illustration which clearly manifests aspects of the Shroud of Turin.
13. 1200. Inventory of Antonius of Novgorod lists both *linteum* and *linteum* bearing the face of Christ.
14. 1201. Inventory of Nicholas Mesarites, overseer of the imperial treasuries, describes the *sudarium* and the burial *sindons* wrapping Jesus’ naked body.
15. 1203. Crusader Robert de Clari describes an imaged shroud (*sydoines*) of Jesus made to “stand up” every Friday in the Blachernes Palace chapel.
16. 1205. Letter of Theodore of Epirus to Innocent III complaining that the Crusaders had removed Jesus’ shroud to Athens.
17. 1247. Bull of Emperor Baldwin ceding relics to Louis IX of France.