

# The Shroud of Turin

The Mandylion Or  
The Story Of A Man-Made Relic



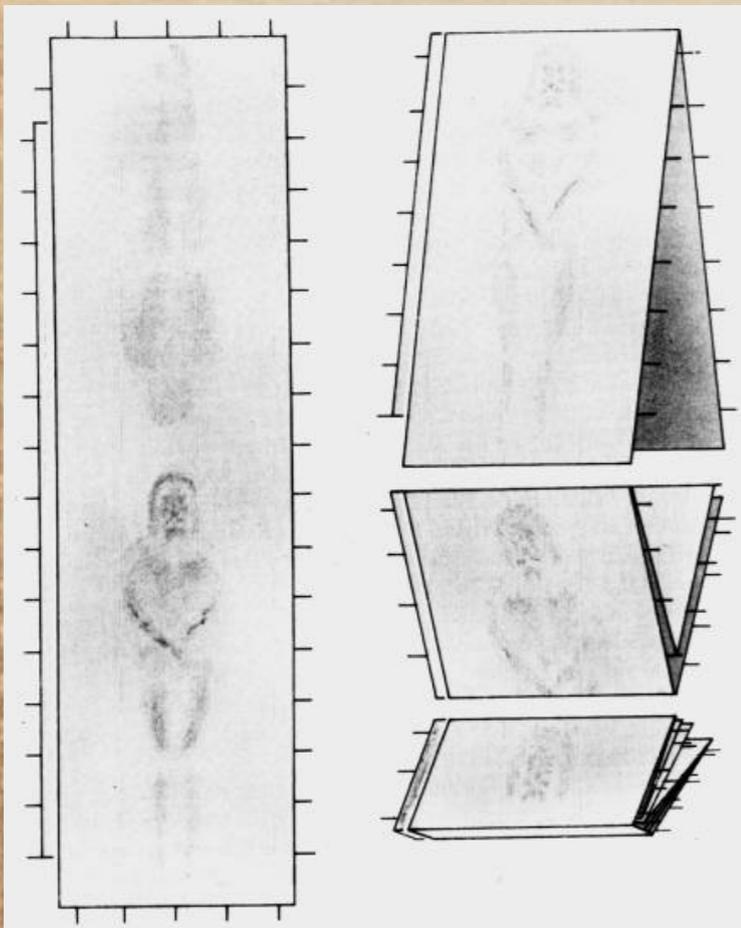
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# Introduction

Ian Wilson's hypothesis :

The portrait of Christ that appeared in the city of Edessa would have been the Shroud of Turin folded in such a way that only the face was visible.



## The Abgar legend :

« Abgar was afflicted with a skin disease and would have sent a letter to Christ, in order for him to come to Edessa to heal him. Jesus also answered in a letter.

Jesus told the king that he cannot come to Edessa, but promised him to send one of his Apostles to heal the king and to preach him the Gospel.

Jesus also send to Abgar an image of his face miraculously imprinted on a cloth after he used it to wash his face.

This image will heal the king and will serve as a protection against Edessa's ennemies. »

Point 1 :  
The political and religious context in which the  
Abgar legend was written.



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→ In 202, the kingdom of Edessa becomes officially Christian with the conversion of his king, Abgar IX.

→ The theological debates and the questions concerning the nature of Christ, was a fertile ground for the coming up of new « heresies ».

→ For the church of Edessa, it was important to bring the evangelization of the city back to the apostolic age.

→ It's in that context of religious turmoil that appears in Edessa, most probably at the end of the Third Century A.D., the Abgar legend.

Point 1 : The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

 The **oldest written version** is the one of Eusebius of Caesarea at the beginning of the **Fourth Century A.D.**

*« King Abgar being afflicted with a terrible disease...sent a message to him (Jesus) by a courier and begged him to heal his disease. But he did not at that time comply with his request; yet he deemed him worthy of a personal letter in which he said that he would send one of his disciples to cure his disease, and at the same time promised salvation to himself and all his house. Not long afterward his promise was fulfilled. For after his resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ. »*

Point 1 : The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

But the **theology** contained in the Abgar legend, indicate that it's largely inspired by the canonical Gospels :

→ 1 -The exploitation of the theme of **believing without seeing**.

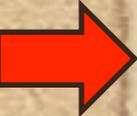
*«Blessed are you who have believed in me without having seen me . » Jesus to Abgar*

→ 2 – the exploitation of the theme of **seeing without believing**.

*« For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me . » Jesus to Abgar*

Point 1 : The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

In the Abgar legend **some themes that reflect the struggle** of the Church of Edessa **against** certain **heretical currents**.  
For example :

 - Against **the Manicheans** .

- **Addai**, the name of a real Manichean missionary  
-> like the Apostle Addai sent to Abgar by Jesus.

- **Mani**, the founder of the sect, **wrote** also **a letter** to the city of **Edessa**  
-> like Jesus sent a letter to Abgar

- The followers of **Mani venerated his painted portrait**  
-> like the theme of the **painted portrait of Christ** sent to the king Abgar by Addai in **the Fifth Century A.D.**

Point 1 : The political and religious context in which the Abgar legend was written.

## Conclusion of the Point 1

There is therefore in this legend a desire to affirm :

- An **apostolic filiation** of the Church of Edessa.
- The **fight against the numerous Christian heresies.**
- The legend **was invented** at the end of the **Third Century** A.D.
- **No image or portrait of Christ**

Point 2 :  
Why a portrait of Christ only appears  
in the story at the beginning of  
the Fifth Century A.D.?



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1- **First addition** to the primitive legend :  
At the end of the Fourth Century A.D., Egeria visited Edessa

*“no enemy shall again become master of it forever”*

Because **at his time Edessa** had **never been invaded**  
by the Persians

4<sup>th</sup> Century

In Eusebius version,  
it's Abgar who is  
blessed by Christ

Transfer

End of 4<sup>th</sup> Century

In Egeria's version, it's  
the city who is blessed  
by Christ

Point 2 : Why a portrait of Christ only appears in the story at the beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.?

→ 381 A.D - Council of Constantinople, **the dogma of the two natures of Christ**, human and divine, is proclaimed.

→ 1- **Second addition** to the primitive legend :  
Fifth Century A.D ., **a painted portrait of Christ.**

« Hannan was not only archivist, he was also the king's painter.  
When he saw that Jesus spake to him like this, he painted a likeness of Jesus with choice paints, and brought it with him to Abgar the king, his master.

And when Abgar the king saw the likeness, he received it with great joy, and placed it with great honour in one of his palatial houses.

After the Ascension of Christ, Judas Thomas sent to Abgar Addai the Apostle, one of the seventy-two disciples. »  
(personal translation).

Point 2 : Why a portrait of Christ only appears in the story at the beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.?

## Conclusion of the Point 2

In the **post-Council of Constantinople** context of the era :

- **The portrait of Christ** was **invented** and **used** by the Church of Edessa :

-> **To counter the heresies** by showing **Jesus with a complete human aspect** to **confirm the dogma** of the two natures of Christ, and **particularly of his human nature.**

Point 3 :  
Why this painted image was transformed into  
an image « not made by human hands »?



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→ 550 A.D - The painted portrait :  
-> wasn't considered as having been **created miraculously**  
-> nor as having « **protective powers** ».

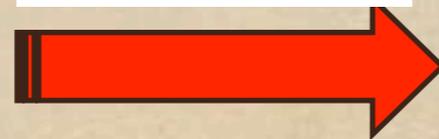
→ End of the 6th Century A.D  
3- **Third addition** to the primitive legend :

*« the image that has not been made by the hand of men »*

6th Century

The portrait of Christ  
is a picture **painted by  
a human hand**

Transfer



End of 6th Century

The portrait of Christ  
is **not made** by human  
hand.

Point 3 : Why this painted image was transformed into an image « not made by human hands »?

➔ 1 – The divine protection in Jesus letter to Abgar is « transferred » to the portrait.

➔ 2 – A particular event during the battle could be attributed to God and thus to the image :

*the water that revives the fire « with greater activity than the oil would have »*

➔ 3 – The attribution of a miracle by an another image of Christ in 503 A.D, in the town of Amid, providing a precedent :

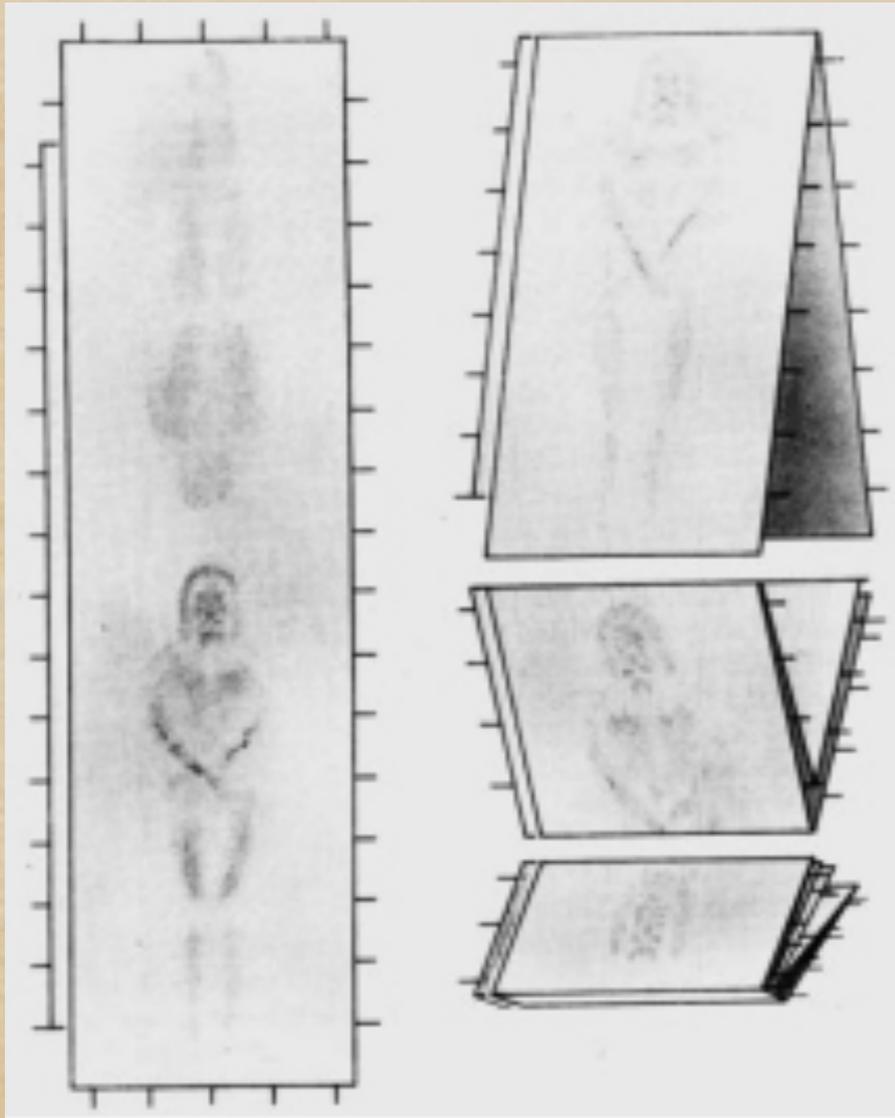
*« (the image) delivered the city to the Persians because of his (the city) sins »*

➔ 4 – A first miraculous image at the end of the 6th Century A.D gives the victory of the Byzantines against the Persians served as a precedent :

*« (the image in the city of Kamuliana) made by miracle, and without the art of the Embroiderers, nor the Painters. »*

Point 4 :

Is it possible to claim that this Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?



?

==



Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

→ **7th Century A.D** – A miraculous image made by Christ himself was certainly an attempt to unite all the points of view of the different christian religious currents.

→ **7th Century A.D** – In The Acts of Thaddeus we discover how the image not made by human hands would have been created.

It is written that Jesus washed his face with a cloth and that his image has been immediately imprinted on it in a miraculous way:

*« And He knew as knowing the heart, and asked to wash Himself; and a **tetradiplon** was given Him; and when He had washed Himself, He wiped His face with it. And His image having been imprinted upon the linen, He gave it to Ananias, saying: Give this, and take back this message, to him that sent thee: Peace to thee and thy city! »*

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

TETRA - DIPLON

« 4 »

« folded in two »

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

« Hannan, who was a painter ... took a square board and painted on it  
Our Lord the Christ »

« **square** » in Arab language possess  
the same root as the Syriac word « **four** »

« **mbr'** »      **==**      « **square** »  
In Syriac      same root      In Arab  
   **==**

**Greek translator** of the Acts of Thaddeus took the same  
**Syriac term** used by this Arab author, but this time he  
translated it by « **tetra** » (four) instead of « square »

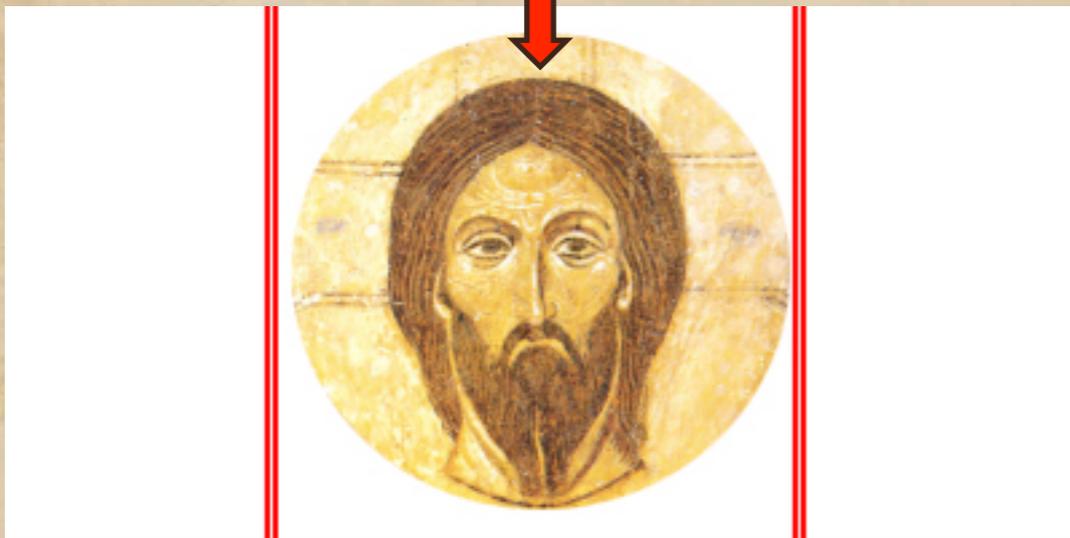
« **mbr'** »      **==**      « **square** »      **==**      « **tetra** »  
In Syriac      same root      In Arab      **==**      In Greek

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

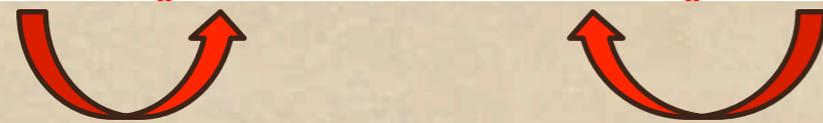
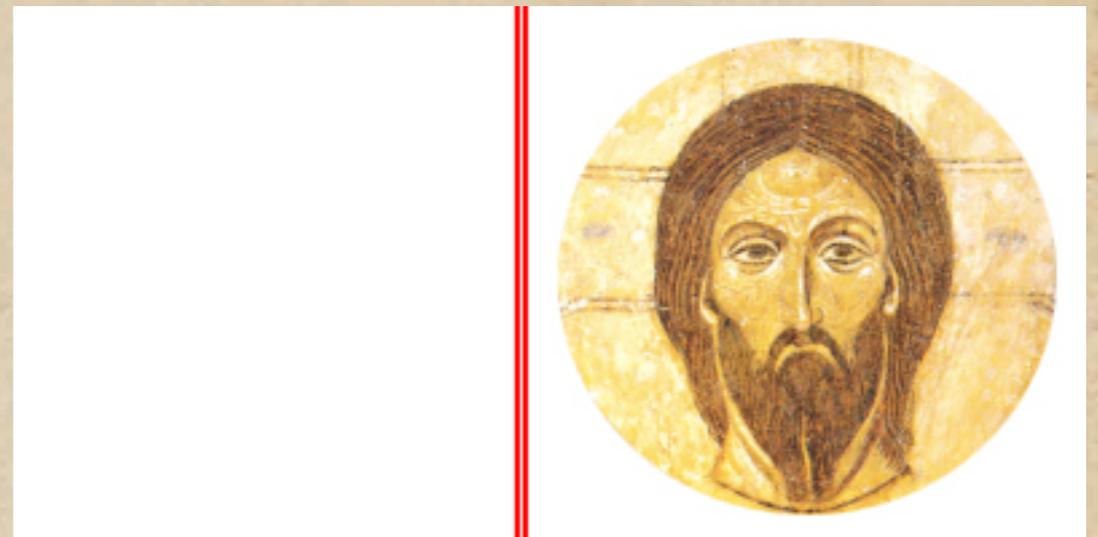
TETRA - DIPLON

« 4 » or "square"

« folded in two »



or



« folded in two »

« folded twice »

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

The **Image of Beirut** was used **against the Iconoclasts** during the second council of Nicea **in 787**.

« *The Jews of Beirut ... outraged the image of Christ, they **nailed his hands and feet**, they passed on his mouth a sponge soaked in vinegar and, finally, they **pierced his side** with a spear stab. Immediately, **blood and water gushed out...** »*

**10th century** - Codex Vossianus Latinus introduces  
In Abgar's legend

« *If you want to physically see my person, I am sending you **this towel** on which you can see **not only** the appearance of **my face**, but the state, printed miraculously, of **my whole body...** »*  
(personal translation)

Point 4 : The Mandylion was a burial shroud folded « 4 time double », bearing traces of blood and the image of an entire body?

**10th century** - Codex Vossianus Latinus contains :

The Abgar legend,  
**translated from Syriac**  
documents  
of the **8th Century**

+

The legend of  
**the Image of Beirut.**



1- The **entire body** of Christ  
to make reference to the  
dogma of the **Incarnation**



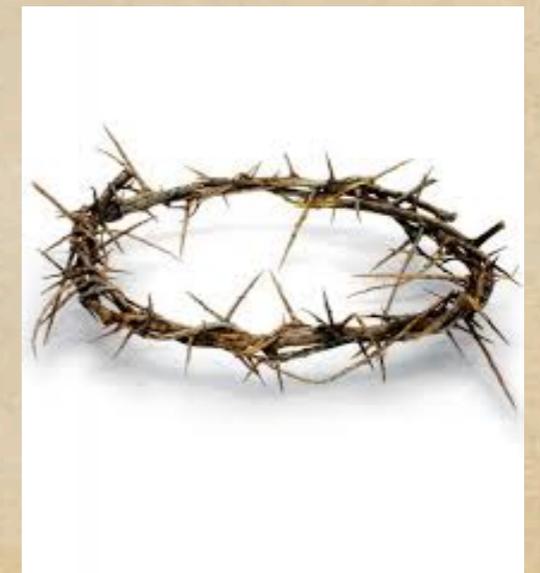
3- The **blood and the water**  
to signify  
the **Eucharist** and the **Baptism**

2- The **miraculous image** of  
the face of Jesus himself  
to affirm the **divinity** of Christ

=

all this coming **from icons**  
to affirm the importance of their role in the religious practice.

Point 5 :  
The Mandylion and the relics of the Passion.



944, the Image of Edessa passed into the hands of the Emperor of, Romanos I Lekapenos, in Constantinople.



« For the Most Powerful, transforming this embarrassment in ease and facility, brought the painter, ask for water and sprinkles his face. His creator. He takes a towel to wipe his face, and printed immaterially – miracle! – the shape that the hand did not do... »

4th addition to the legend :

An exact replica of the **image** would have been miraculously  
**imprinted on a tile**

*« ...the replica of the image is imprinted on one of the tiles,  
spontaneous replica, without the intervention of the hand,  
without recourse to drawing... »*  
(personal translation).

*« Oh power of the model, as it also gives the tile its colors! »*  
(personal translation).



« The crown of thorns, the mantle, the whip, the stick, the sponge, the wood of the cross of Our Lord, the nails, the lance, the blood, the robe, the belt, the sandals, linen **and the shroud of the entombment.** »

English pilgrim in end of 11<sup>th</sup> Century

« **Christ's Image of Edessa, 2 clay ceramics,** the marble basin of the Lord and another one smaller... »

Nicolas Mesarites in 1200/1201

« The legislator himself drawn as a first impression, **printed on the towel** and chased in the **brittle ceramic art** as a graphic elaborated not by the hand ... **The gravecloths of Christ, they are in linen...** »

Nicolas Mesarites in 1200/1201

« For there were two rich vessels of gold hanging in the midst of the chapel by **a tile and in the other a cloth** who heavy silver chains. In one of these vessels there was. »

Robert de Clari 1203

Guardian of the relics , **Nicolas Mesarites in 1200**

« The **gravecloths** of Christ, they are **in linen**... because they wrapped **after the passion** the incomprehensible dead man **nude** covered with myrrh. »

**Nicolas Mesarites in 1200**

---

French knight, **Robert de Clari 1203**

« ...where there was the **Shroud** in which our **Lord had been wrapped**, which every Friday **raised itself upright** so one could **see the body** of our Lord on it. »

The **Mandylion and the tile** always in Constantinople after 1204:

« ...the cross and the foot rest **are here**. They present the braided crown of thorns, the sponge, the lance and the reed... **The indescribable**, who appeared among us in the likeness of man, drawn as in a first imprint, **printed on the towel** and we chased in **the brittle ceramic** like a graphic art not elaborated by the hand. »

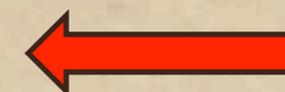
Nicolas Mesarites in 1207

1200

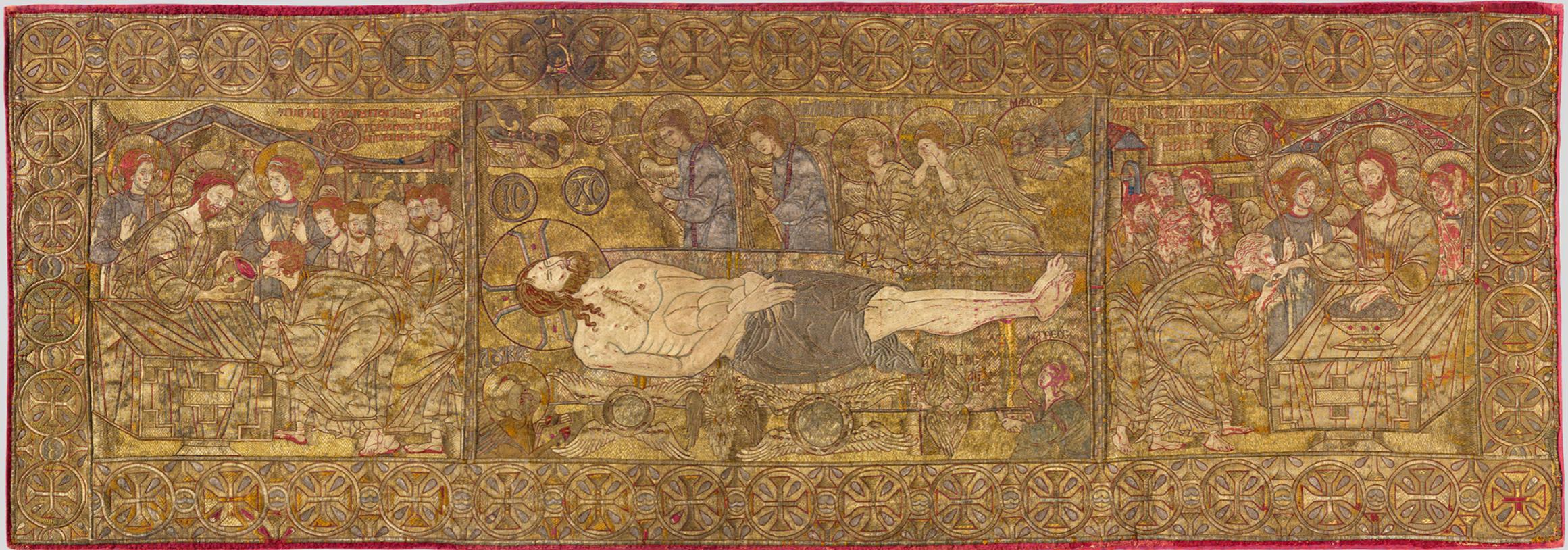


RELICS OF THE PASSION PRESENT IN THE CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE PHAROS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY	GOLDEN BULL OF BAUDOIN II TO AUTHENTICATE THE SELLING OF RELICS TO LOUIS IX (1247)
The shroud (sydoine ou syndon), accompanied by others burial cloths.	A part of the shroud (sudarii) in which the body of Christ was enveloped in the tomb (probably one or more linen strips)
A cloth (or towel) and a tile (or ceramic). <hr/>	A sacred cloth insert into a table (or a board) <hr/>
2 large pieces of the true cross	A piece of the true cross + Another piece of the true cross
The crown of thorns	The crown of thorns
The blood of Christ	Le sang du Christ
The spearhead	The spear
The tunic	The purple mantle
The reed	The scepter (probably the reed)
The sponge	The sponge
A stone coming from the tomb	A stone coming from the tomb
A towel used to wash the Apostles' feet	A towel used to wash the Apostles' feet
2 crucifixion nails	

1247



# The « epitaphios » trail



# The « epítaphios » trail



"Epítaphios Procession Beginning at Great Saturday Mattins"

by RassaphoreGeorge - Own work. Wikipedia

# The « epitaphios » trail

7<sup>th</sup> Century

In Jerusalem, people venerated a shroud of Christ

« On this cloth are **embroidered** certain representations of the Twelve Apostles, and there is shown **an image of the Lord Himself**. On one side, the color of this cloth is dark brown and, on the other side, in certain parts, the color is green. »

944

1 - **Mandyllion** had been produced with the drops coming from Christ's **sweat of agony**  
2 - Another **image or relic** had been produced by the drops of **blood** from his side.

945

« *the image of the Persians* »

« **kiss the image of the Holy Tablecloth** that the patriarch raised and that he presents to the sovereigns so they can kiss it. »

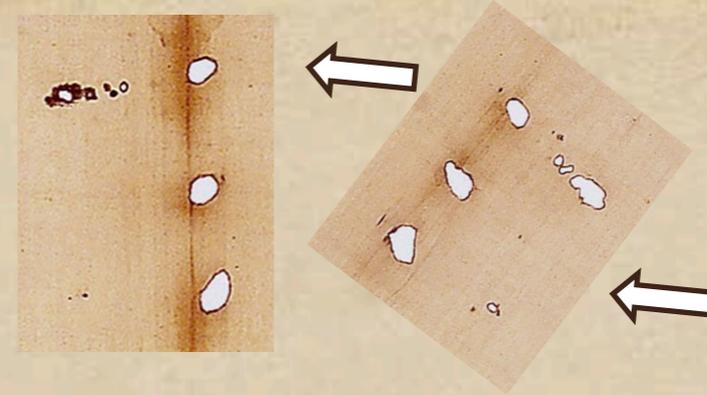
# The « epitaphios » trail

Pray Codex  
between 1192 and 1195

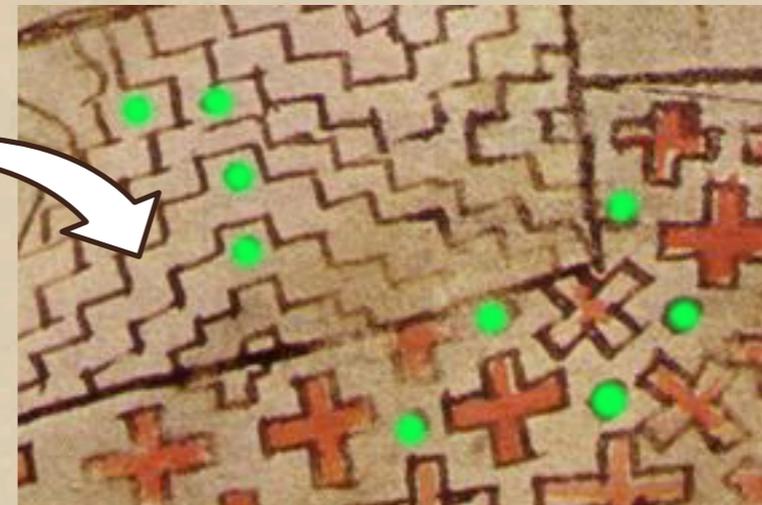


# The « epitaphios » trail

Pray Codex – between 1192 and 1195



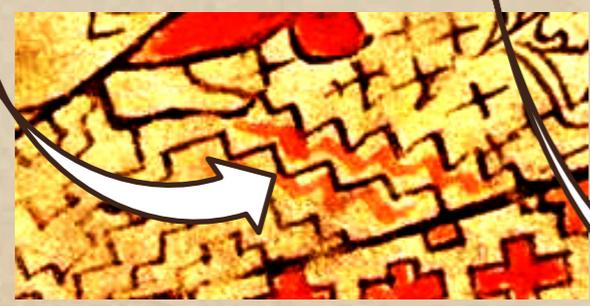
Holes on the Shroud of Turin



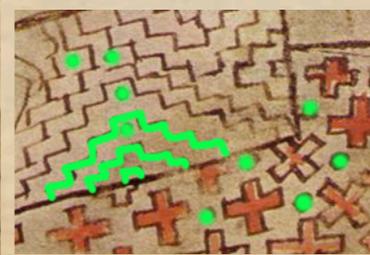
Epitaphios  
14th Century



Epitaphios - 14th Century



Epitaphios - 1300



Pray Codex



Shroud of Turin

## The « epitaphios » trail

7th C.



- Veneration of a shroud of Christ in Jerusalem
- Cloth long enough to contain the complete image of Christ's body

944



*A "relic" with blood*

945



*"kiss the image of the Holy Tablecloth"  
In Constantinople*

12th



The Pray Codex « with blood and burn holes »

13th



A shroud of Christ bearing distinctly the complete image of Christ's body

# Conclusion

The image of Edessa and the Abgar's Legend were most probably invented to back-up the dogmas of the Church and to counter the numerous heresies.

3rd



- An apostolic filiation of the Church of Edessa.
- The fight against the numerous Christian heresies.
- No image or portrait of Christ

5th



The image was introduced as a painted portrait in order to confirm the dogma of the Incarnation

6th



The image became a miraculous image « not made by human hand » to confirm the dogma of the Incarnation and the divinity of Christ

10th  
and  
12th



Few allusions to an entire body and bloodstains are only rare and isolated texts that served, each time, a certain theology.