

The Beirut Icon and the Shroud

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Refutations of Mandyllion

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 cloth. However, one of the authors of this article (Barta) participated in the location and analysis of the pieces of relics that St. Louis IX of France sent to his relative Ferdinand III of Spain. These relics' samples are preserved in the cathedral of Toledo. They came from the collection of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris and these, in turn, from the Imperial Treasury of Constantinople. Upon this research, we learned, to our surprise, that the Mandyllion or Image of Edessa was in fact sent to Paris. It contradicted the dominant theory. To keep possible the identity of Shroud and Mandyllion, Barta proposes two hypotheses as a conciliatory alternative. They are as follows: The object arriving in Paris was only the Byzantine empty reliquary and that its contents, the cloth, would have been removed earlier, in Constantinople²⁴. In other words:

²⁴ Rodriguez Almenar, J.M. and Barta, C. 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, C. Lo que la Síndone es y no es. I Congreso Internacional de la Sábana Santa en España. Valencia, 28-30 abril 2012.

1. The Shroud had to be removed from its reliquary before 1203 when Clari 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.

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 documented²⁵.)
2. The reliquary in Paris was not empty. The content was a 'Veronica'. (Again, this is documented.²⁶)

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'²⁷. 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 Mandyllion²⁸ and with the description in the *Narratio*²⁹. In the 18th century inventories of the collection of Paris the Mandyllion was designated a 'Veronica'. It is a canvas of the face of Christ mounted on wood and surrounded by a gold plate with rhomboid reliefs. (Figure Identifying the Mandyllion 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 have to conclude that the Mandyllion in Constantinople and the image of Edessa in both cases was only a 'Veronica'.

We can add more data. We know that the Mandyllion was preserved in the chapel of Pharos of the imperial palace in the Byzantine city. 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 1075-1198 - the superstition preventing opening was already established. It

²⁵ Ciggaar Krijnie N. Une Description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55. In: Revue des études byzantines, tome 53, 1995. pp. 117-140;

²⁶ Jannic Durand et Marie-Pierre Laffitte, Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle, Publication du Louvre. Réunion des musées nationaux. 2001, p. 71 et Alexandre Vidier, Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle, Mémoires de la société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France, Tome 34, 1908, p. 190-192

²⁷ Barta, C. Le Mandyllion, le Linceul et la Sainte Chapelle. Cahiers MNTV, n° 58, June 2018. p16-30

²⁸ Manuscript Rossianus 251, f12 v°

²⁹ See Cahiers MNTV, n° 58, June 2018, p16-29

therefore follows that, by the time of the fourth crusade, the Mandylion could not have been removed from its reliquary. One of the last references to the Mandylion in Constantinople is given by Robert de Clari. 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 nothing to do with a bloody burial cloth. After two and a half centuries since its arrival in Constantinople, all the characteristic that relate the Mandylion to the Shroud were removed from its story. The account had changed but the object remained. We cannot honestly support any more the Wilson Mandylion hypothesis.

However, the de Clari record is the most accurate testimony in Constantinople about a shroud with figure similar to that of the Turin cloth. This should be the main starting point for tracing the Shroud. Robert de Clari tells us about a Shroud with the figure of Jesus Christ's whole body that had wrapped him³⁰. It was not linked to the Mandylion in any way. 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.”³¹

It is significant that it was *not* described as an “acheiropoieton” – an image not made by human hands. Moreover, it was placed in the church of Blachernae, far from Pharos chapel where the Mandylion was kept. 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. The Mandylion was saved in the Imperial Treasury along with other important relics after the sack of the city and until it was sent to Paris. However, the *Shroud of Blachernae*, as described by Robert de Clari, disappeared during the sack of the city. This would allow for its

³⁰ Clari, Robert de, La Conquête de Constantinople. *Croisades et Pèlerinages*. Robert Laffont. Paris. 1997. p. 788

³¹ 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 Francois, que chis sydoines devint quant la vile fu prise*. Robert de Clari. La conquête de Constantinople. Robert de Clari

secret transfer to France and its further expositions in Lirey. We contend that acceptance of this description of events accords best with the known facts. i.e. There were two different sites for two *different* relics.

These difficulties in identifying the Mandylion as the Shroud have led us to look for an alternative. Some authors propose that there were copies of the Mandylion and that one of these replaced the original in its reliquary while the authentic cloth was displayed 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 be opened for exhibition and why it became detached from the Edessa story. Other authors³² 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 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 Mandylion we have much information that allows an interpretation that links the two artefacts. For example, the *tetradiplon*, the ἄχειροποίητον, the whole body, the blood, etc. But many of these clues can be explained in another way³³. However, as we have indicated above, among the documents, there are also some of them that would preclude the possibility of them being one and the same.

If we do not rely on the Mandylion hypothesis should we give up the idea that the Shroud of Turin was in Constantinople? Not at all. Besides the Blachernae shroud, there are also other clues that back the presence of the Shroud of Turin being in the Byzantine city. Witness the iconography of the *epithaphios*, (Figure 13) the Man of Sorrows (Figure 14) and the codex Pray (Figure 15). 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* which we will now examine.

³² Mario Latendresse MNTV n° 57 and Père A.M. Durbarle. Histoire Ancienne du Linceul de Turin. Tome 2. p85-96

³³ Sébastien Cataldo, Le Linceul de Turin, du Mythe du Suaire à la Vérité Histrique, Inceitis 2018

The Shroud in Blachernae

Aside from the Mandylion 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 candidate³⁴ because it can be described as “not made by human hand”. However, its transfer to Constantinople is not particularly well documented³⁵ and it disappears too early from the record. We can take as a clue for the timing of the shroud’s arrival in Byzantium by 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 start about the end of the 10th century so we should assume that the “inspiration” or source for this development arrived in the city shortly before this.

In our quest we take the Blachernae icon as the prime starting point 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. However, our research has uncovered a translation of the Anthony of Novgorod description of Constantinople that implied that a Jew was associated with the Christ icon of Blachernae³⁶. This eventually proved to be a misinterpretation but, in the process of investigating the question, our search for an image involving a Jew, a Christian and Christ had born some fruit.

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

³⁴ Kitzinger, E. (1954). *The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 8, p114

³⁵ The date of 574 is provided by Dobschütz, but it is brought into question (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camuliana#cite_ref-7).

³⁶ The translation of the testimony of the pilgrim Anthony of Novgorod provided by Marcelle Ehrhard, *Le Livre du Pèlerin d'Antoine de Novgorod*. Paris 1932, p.58 could be read as the Saviour image was in Blachernae. When Anthony was in the imperial complex, he mentions that the Odegretia icon was carried out to the the Blachernae church. In the following sentence, he tell about: «The image of the Saviour that the Christian Theodore lent to the Jew Abraham». The translation to the French by Ehrhard led to think that the image was in Blachernae, but it is not the good interpretation. Cf. Paul Riant: *Exuviae sacrae Constatinopolitanae*, II, p. 224.

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 was stuck in his side. But, suddenly, blood and water began to flow from the icon*³⁷. Here is a partial translation of the text from its Latin version³⁸:

"There is a city called Beirut, located in the confines of Tiro 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 from another received 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 size³⁹. 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 the image of the Lord was. When he had gone 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 your 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.

³⁷ 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-christ>, under the title *Commemoration of the Miracle of the Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Beret*, which is celebrated on October 11. Cf. tb. PG 28,795: *Admonitio in Historiam Imaginis Berytensis* y E. von Dobschütz :

³⁸ The translation from Latin is the work of Pedro Sabe who helps in all the Latin and Greek texts of the argument.

³⁹ *integrae staturae*.

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 (...) »⁴⁰.

The story continues further, with great praises to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Then the collection of ampoules with the blood to anoint sick people is mentioned and the consequent cure of many of them. (Figure 2). Then, it tells the story of the confession of the Jews to the faith in Christ, who, en masse, go before the bishop. He received them all and baptizes them in successive days.*

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. This detail is compatible with the subtle and barely detectable impression that the Shroud has, especially if it was a latent image, as several researchers claim, that would not then have been fully revealed. In the following table, we put the characteristics of the Shroud that are present in the Icon of Beirut and in the Mandylion.

⁴⁰ Erich Lamberz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, series secunda, III,2, De Gruyter 2012, pp. 319; 321; 323; 325

Characteristics of the Shroud	Present in the Icon of Beirut	Present in the Mandylion
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 Clari testimony.
- (b) Only a particular interpretation of the Gregory Referendario could invoke the chest wound. It was neither in the Robert de Clari 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 Clari testimony nor in any other.

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 completely⁴¹. It should be noted that the interpolation associates the legend with the icon of Beirut although the source that mentions Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Simeon speaks of relics and not of 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 was of the whole body of Christ set in the shroud used for his burial. It is undeniable that no other ancient reference points more directly towards the Shroud of Turin.

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.

In our quest for the Shroud it seems we should justifiably look for clues 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 Sidon⁴² (44 km from Beirut). Around 362 AD C. Julian the Apostate burned the basilica that existed in Beirut and 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 451⁴³. 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 icon⁴⁴. 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

⁴¹ Carnac, Pierre. *El Sudario de Turin*. Ed. Lidium. Buenos Aires. 1984. p 33. We have not been able to verify the sources used by this author for which a further investigation is pending. We know that in the second century Hegesippus cited the Gospel of the Hebrews. A thing that can be interesting is he says that the "servant of the priest (servo sacerdotis)" is the one who receives the Shroud. It may refer to the servant of Nicodemus, who was a priest. On the other hand, according to Eastern Christian traditions collected by the Patriarch of Constantinople Photius in the ninth century, Gamaliel was baptized by St. John and St. Peter, together with his son. Migne P.G. vol 103 CLXXI (171) p.499-500 (Bibliotheca. Eustracio).

⁴² Mc 7,31.

⁴³ S. Kassir : « *Histoire de Beyrouth* » - Fayard - 2003. p.51

⁴⁴ S. Kassir : « *Histoire de Beyrouth* » - Fayard - 2003. p.51

editor of the 15th century Arab historian⁴⁵. 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 suggests 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 informs us of the transfer of this same icon to Constantinople by the Byzantine emperor John I Tzimiskes, during his military campaign in this region⁴⁶. 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. According to some authors⁴⁷, the icon was installed in the chapel of Christ the Saviour in the imperial palace. It was in or near the Bronze Gate (Chalke). It was a chapel 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. (Figure 12).

Since that moment, any reference to the presence in Constantinople of an image similar to the Turin Shroud might refer to the either the Icon of Beirut or to the

⁴⁵ Louis Cheikho S.J. (ed.), *Sâlih bin Yahyâ, Kitab tarikh Bayrut*, Beirut 1902 p. 17 nt. 2. Louis. 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. Santerre, *L'Image Blessée, l'Image Souffrante : quelques récits de Miracles entre Orient et Occident (VI^e-XII^e Siècle)*, p117, note 14. *Les images dans les sociétés médiévales : pour une histoire comparée*, Bruxelles-Rome, 1999 [Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome, 69].

⁴⁶ B.G. Niebuhr (ed.), *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae*, Bonn 1822, p. 168 ln. 3. Alice Mary Talbot y Denis F. Sullivan : « *The History of Leo the Deacon* » - Washington, 2005, p.209.

⁴⁷ J. Durand. M. P. Laffitte, *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Ed. Louvre, Paris 2001, p.27. Also, A.M. Talbot y D. F. Sullivan, « *The History of Leo the Deacon* » - Washington, 2005. p.27.

Mandyllion. The *Epitaphious Threnos* (Figure), the Man of Sorrows (Figure 5) and the codex Pray (Figure 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 Mandyllion. The simultaneous presence of both objects in the Byzantine capital makes it difficult to differentiate between which of them would be the Turin Shroud. Note that there are only 31 years between the arrival in Constantinople of the Mandyllion and the Icon of Beirut. The reasoning line used to sustain the identification of Mandyllion 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 the Beirut icon and Shroud. The only references that could distinguish between both candidates would be those between 944 and 975. If the Mandyllion's reputation 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 Mandyllion 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.⁴⁸

As we have seen, the time of arrival of the Icon of Beirut in Constantinople is close to the arrival of the Mandyllion and this coincidence could cause confusion and the eventual attribution to the Mandyllion of an image of a full body and associated blood. The legend of Beirut, however, incorporates these elements from the beginning.

Santo Volto de Lucca and the icon of Beirut⁴⁹

References to the icon of Beirut are often confused with the legend of the Santo Volto de Lucca and other similar stories. However, they are, in fact, an echo of the original Beirut story. 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*

⁴⁸ Personal communication by Jorge Manuel Rodríguez Almenar, president of the Centro Español de Sindonología.

⁴⁹ Many of these difficulties aroused from the discussion with Ignacio Villar, member of the Centro Español de Sindonología

Imperiala about the sculpture of Lucca⁵⁰. 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 documents⁵¹. All this describes with unambiguous precision what the Turin Shroud represents: the shroud that covered Christ crucified. 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

The Nicaea Council

The legend of the icon of Beirut that was presented at the Second Council of Nicaea is originally related in Greek and then translated into Latin⁵². It also appears in the Chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux (late eleventh century)⁵³. An analysis of the matter is also found in Von Dobschütz⁵⁴. The most modern edition of the Greek text is the critical edition of the council minutes by Erich Lamberz⁵⁵. It shows that the whole tradition goes back to four main Greek manuscripts⁵⁶. Regarding the Latin translation, the most ancient is Anastasius the Librarian and it was done in 873⁵⁷. It is very literal and allows us to go back to the Greek model used. For the

⁵⁰ Gervase of Tilbury. *Otia Imperiala*, III, 24. German edition by F. Liebrecht. Hannover, 1856. p19-20

⁵¹ A. M. Dubarle, O.P. *Histoire Ancienne du Linceul de Turin jusqu'à XIIIe siècle*, O.E.I.L., 1985. p 61 a 66

⁵² PG 28,797-805

⁵³ PL 160,145A-C

⁵⁴ E. von Dobschütz : «*Chritusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* » - Leipzig - 1899 pp. 280-283**.

⁵⁵ Erich Lamberz. *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, series secunda, III,2, p. 318. Cf. tb. BHG 780-88 y BHL 4227-30

⁵⁶ 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]": *Revue des Études Byzantines* 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.

⁵⁷ C. 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]": *Revue des Études Byzantines* 69 (2011). p 299. Also E. von Dobschütz : «*Chritusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* » - Leipzig - 1899 p. 281-282.

Latin version there are also four main manuscripts⁵⁸. 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 Mansi⁵⁹. 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?⁶⁰

Greek version of Lamberz (the numbering of the lines is of the Lamberz edition)	
¹¹ Πόλις ἐστὶ Βηρυτὸς καλουμένη ἐν μεθορίοις Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος κειμένη, τελοῦσα δὲ	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.	...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	Near their synagogue, a very big one, a Christian rented a room...
¹⁴ ἐνοικίω κελλίον παρά τινος. ἐν ᾧ κατοικῶν ἀντικρὺ τοῦ ἀκουβίτου αὐτοῦ ἐπηξεν	...from someone. While living there he fixed opposite his bed...
¹⁵ εἰκόνα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐν σεμνοῖς μὲν ἐξωγραφημένη, ὀλόστα-	...an image of our Lord Jesus Christ, <u>depicted properly</u> representing
¹⁶ τὸν δὲ ἔχουσα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.	...our Lord Jesus Christ in <u>whole body</u>.
Greek Version of Mansi	
(...) ἀντικρὺ τοῦ ἀκουβίτου αὐτοῦ ἐπηξεν εἰκόνα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐν σανίσι μὲν ἐξωγραφημένη, 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>	

⁵⁸ C. 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]": *Revue des Études Byzantines* 69 (2011), p. 299

⁵⁹ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XIII, p. 25.

⁶⁰ The translation and analysis of Greek text is the main involvement of Pedro Sabe

In Lamberz, line 15, **σεμνοῖς** makes no sense. It is an adjective in the plural with no corresponding noun. The word **σανῖσι** in Mansi makes much better sense⁶¹.

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'⁶². Therefore, the interpretation can be even opposite. According to *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*,⁶³ 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 Migne⁶⁴, with their corresponding Latin translations in parallel, the second edits **σεμνῶς**⁶⁵, 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'⁶⁶.

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

⁶¹ It also the assessment of Mark Guscin who was editor of the Shroud Newsletter and he is Master in Greek and Latin.

⁶² G.W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford 1961, p. 1229, item **σεμνός**, meaning 5.

⁶³ Forcellini, A. *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*. Vol II, (1940), *Honeste*, meaning II, improperly applied to images, means *concinne*. properly, p.671.

⁶⁴ PG 28,797A-805B; 805C-812C

⁶⁵ PG 28,805D

⁶⁶ Mark Guscin in personal communication proposes also that **σεμνοῖς** with reference to the icon can mean "in an exact, faithful way".

replaced by “sober”⁶⁷. If the word “board” only appears in a manuscript although it has more sense, and if it was substituted systematically by solemn or sober, it can indicate that the copyists had information that the icon was not on a board.

It should be noted that the use of the participle ἐξωγραφημένη 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 ὀλόστατον, a whole neologism attested only in this text⁶⁸, seems to suggest the idea of an almost *photographic* representation.

The indication of the “whole body”⁶⁹ 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*⁷⁰.

The Tzimiskes letter

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 Andrews⁷¹, 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.

⁶⁷ Mark Guscini suggests that σάνσι tries to simplify the original difficult expression because copyists simplified complex texts, but rarely complicated simple texts.

⁶⁸ The word is not in the classical Greek lexicons

⁶⁹ The Latin translator used *integrate statura* that is real size. ὀλόστατον is also life-size. G.W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford 1961, p.950

⁷⁰ G.W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexikon*, Oxford 1961, p. 1229, item εἰκόν, meaning D3d and D5 where the image of Edesse is included.

⁷¹ To be published in 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)*, edited by Bernard Outtier, Cornelia B. Horn, Basil Lourié, Alexey Ostrovsky. (TSEC). Leiden: Brill.

Armenian version of Andrews

և գտաք յայն քաղաքին ի Գաբաւոնն գաւորք հողաթափն Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ մերոյ, որով և շրջեցաւ իսկ ի վերայ աշխարհիի.

And in that city Jabala we found the holy sandal of Christ our God, with which he indeed walked over the land.

նոյնպէս և **գպատկերն** փրկչին, զորս հրէայքն յետ ժամանակի խոցեալ էին, ուստի վաղվաղակի ել արիւն և ջուր, և **գխոց**⁷² տիգիւն ոչ⁷³ գտաք.⁷⁴

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 find⁷⁵ the wound of the lance.

գտաք⁷⁶ և⁷⁷ յայն քաղաքին գպատուական հերս գլխոյ Կարապետին և գՄկրտչին Յովհաննու, և առեալ տանիւք ի պահպանութիւն աստուածապահ քաղաքին մերոյ: **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.**

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 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 English⁷⁸ that says the wound was visible. This is achieved, 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 text 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 here⁷⁹.

⁷² զխոց] 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.

⁷³ ոչ] but omitted in A •Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 1896 (A), copied in 1689. This text served as the base text for the Vałaršapat edition of 1898.

⁷⁴ գտաք.] But omitted in B

⁷⁵ we did not find] we found; *omitted*.

⁷⁶ գտաք] om. AB

⁷⁷ գտաք և] om. FV

⁷⁸ Matthew of Edessa's Chronicle, Translated into English by Robert Bedrosian, Sources of the Armenian Tradition, Long Branch, N.J., 2017, p29.

⁷⁹ Personal communication of Tara Andrews by messages 2 July 2018.

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 all of a sudden 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.

The majority 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 *Mandylion* hypothesis. The surprise is that this could be verified by physical analysis. In January of 967, before the arrival of the icon in Constantinople, Nicephorus Phocas brought to the city blood from the icon of Beirut. Two ampoules with that blood of Christ were transferred from Constantinople to the *Saint Chapelle* in Paris. Sadly, those relics disappeared during the French Revolution. But, at the present time, two relics of the Holy Blood, also coming from Constantinople, survive in Venice. One of these relics is a thread dyed with blood and water that flowed from the side of Christ⁸⁰ (Figure). 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 *Mandylion* 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 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

⁸⁰ J. Durand. op. cit, p27, y 67

body and included the wounds of the Passion. It was transferred to Constantinople shortly before the stories of Christ's representation as depicted in the image on the Shroud of Turin (i.e. the Man of Sorrows). It disappears after the Fourth Crusade. Gervase of Tilbury links some way the Icon of Beirut with the image of Christ impressed in His Shroud. Due to such data, it corresponds perfectly with the Holy Shroud of Turin. There are only 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 taken into account for its evaluation among those proposed by others. It remains to deepen the study of the cited texts and ensure their reliability. It could possibly be confirmed by analysing the thread preserved in Venice.

Figures



<p style="text-align: center;">Paris</p> <p>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 style="text-align: center;">Constantinople.</p> <p>Inside a gold reliquary. Canvas of the face of Christ mounted on wood and surrounded by a gold foil with rhomboid reliefs.</p>
	

Figure 1 - 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.



Fig. 2 based on 'The Miracle of the Crucifix Beirut' by Jacopo Coppi. San Salvatore, Bologna

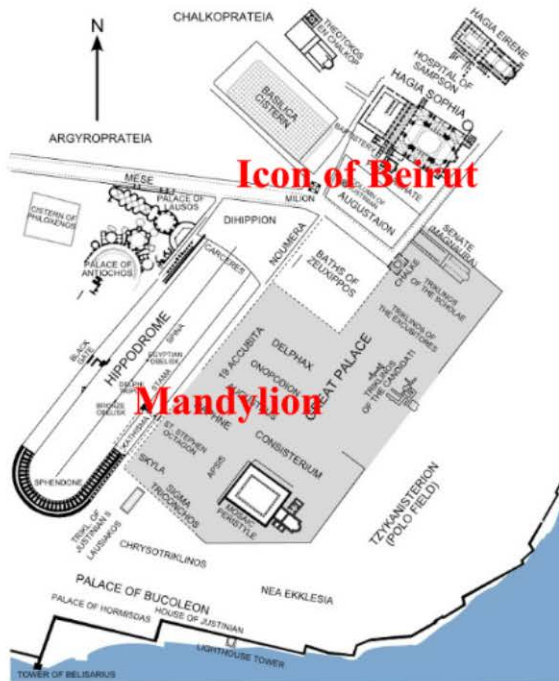


Figure 3 Location of the Mandylion and the icon of Beirut in the imperial complex



Figure 4 Stavronikita epitaphios

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

Commemoration of the Miracle of the Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Beirut

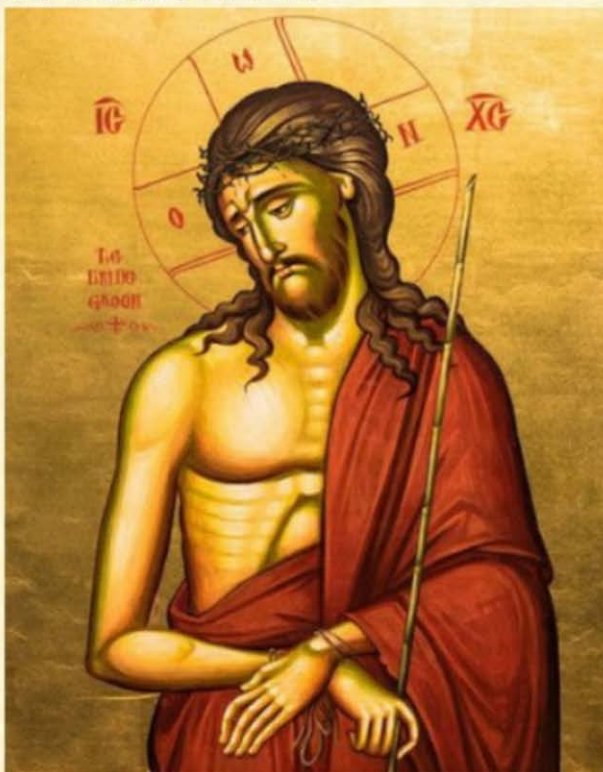


Figure 5 Illustration chosen by a website of the Orthodox Church for the commemoration of the Icon of Beirut. <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2017/10/commemoration-of-miracle-of-icon-of-our.html>



Figure 6 Codex Pray. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pray_Codex



Figure 7. Volto Santo de Lucca (12th century)



Figure 8 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