

Shroud Presentations and News within the Eastern Orthodox Church

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1. [A talk by Deacon Stephen Muse, 'Holy Image, Holy Blood'](#) (link to online video and transcript). (Also available in a stand-alone [PDF version](#)) — This talk has a great deal to recommend it. The video is unfortunately just done from a stationary video camera, so it is hard to make out most of the images he talks about, but one could find them through online searching.

On page 8 of the PDF, Deacon Muse references St John of Damascus:

Now St. John Damascene in 730, he mentions—this is really, except for some other oblique references, the first definite historical reference that the Shroud was the whole body. He does this [in] *On Holy Images*, he describes a long grave-cloth that he had experienced personally with—and this may be its first mention. Pope Stephen III in 752, not long after that, writes that Christ had

“...spread out his entire body on a linen cloth that was as white as snow. On this cloth, marvelous as it is to see... the glorious image of the Lord’s face, and the length of his entire most-noble body, has been divinely transferred.”

In 1201, Nicholas Mesarites, the sacristan of the parish chapel where the image of Edessa was kept, described the ceremony in which he says:

“Here he rises again and the sindon or shroud is clear proof: still smelling fragrant of perfumes, defying corruption because they wrapped the mysterious naked body from head to feet.”

I doubt that the perfumes on the Shroud, 1200 years later, were myrrh or anything else they put on there. It was the holy relic, and so there is a different fragrance that was there.

St John of Damascus is especially important because he was the great defender of the icons during the iconoclast controversy, and theologically was the first to link icons to the Incarnation of the Word of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. Was his defense of the holy icons amplified and strengthened by his encounter with the Holy Mandylion, the Image of Edessa, the Shroud? I think we may safely say that is was.

2. [The Holy Mandylion \(Napkin\) of Christ \(Not-made-by-hands\)](#), an excellent gathering of articles, icons and Orthodox hymns from the Orthodox blog, **‘Full of Grace and Truth’** (Also available in a stand-alone [PDF version](#)) — This combines hymnography and history of the Holy Mandylion - the ‘Image Not Made by Human Hands’ - which is, of course, very likely the Shroud in its Tetradiplon folded status as it was venerated in the Christian Church from the sixth century through the sack of Constantinople in 1204. There is much Orthodox material in this collection, plus embedded links.

3. One of the only serious studies of the Shroud by an Orthodox writer: [The Shroud of Turin: A Mystery Across the Ages](#) (link to online version) by **Fr Alexey Young** (Also available in a stand-alone [PDF version](#)) — Somewhat dated in terms of the science, but some deep, serious reflections on the meaning of the Shroud, including why it might have been providentially preserved to our day, when science itself has to struggle with the mystery of how the Image was created. This article also draws out references to the Shroud embedded in Orthodox hymnography and worship, especially in the Holy Week services.

4. Additional Articles and Podcasts - While there is little officially said or written on the Shroud from within the Orthodox Christian community, there have been some serious reflections on it by recognized pastors and teachers in the Church. Some key examples:

['Not Made by Human Hands'](#), podcast by **Fr Thomas Hopko** - August 28, 2008 Length: 16:04 (transcript soon to be available) - Fr. Thomas relates the story of the icon not made by hand which is celebrated each August after the Dormition of the Theotokos. Could it actually be the Shroud of Turin?

[Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev leads worship at Shroud of Turin](#), an article relating the veneration in 2010 of the Shroud in Turin by **Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)** of the Moscow Patriarchate (and his brief remarks), who is head of the Russian Orthodox Church Department of External Church Relations. He is greatly respected as a theologian, and is also a composer of classical music. He is perhaps the most important Russian Orthodox hierarch after Metropolitan Kirill of Moscow and All Russia (who also has venerated the Shroud in Turin, and who himself held the same position which Met. Hilarion does now).

['Moscow Patriarchate's Position on Shroud of Turin'](#), October 2009 - Interesting timing, preceding by some months the public veneration of the Shroud in Turin by Met. Hilarion Alfeyev (see above). "The attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Shroud 'remained unchanged, along with its standpoint on the previous research which had proved that the Shroud of Turin is not a fake'."

['Proof of the Resurrection'](#), a podcast (with transcript) by **Clark Carlton**, Orthodox Christian philosopher - April 26, 2007 Length: 12:15 - "For the people in Constantinople [in the 10th through 12th centuries] who viewed the shroud at first hand, it was not a circus attraction or a museum piece. It was not kept on display. It was, rather, a tangible way of entering into the reality of Christ's passion. Only to the extent that we enter into that reality can we also enter into the reality of his resurrection."

['The Shroud of Turin: Evidence for Everything?'](#) by **Fr Dwight Longenecker**, Aug. 9, 2015 - While a Roman Catholic, and therefore not in communion with the Orthodox Church, Fr Longenecker's article is especially worth including in this collection. He boldly argues, based largely on the ENEA study of the Shroud, that the resurrection of Christ is the only possible explanation for the image formation, and challenges skeptics and atheists based on what we know and what scientists continue to discover as to how the Image was formed. — "Those who ask for evidence for the existence of God should take the time to examine the Shroud of Turin. The atheists who I conversed with dismissed such an idea scornfully. Should they ever be unbiased enough to explore the relic objectively. What they find may at least budge them from their atheism into agnosticism, and from there it is only a short hop to believing in everything."