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Fig. 1: The messenger Ananias shows the divine face to a man who stops him on the road. In today's parlance, Christ presents himself to the man in the street. This picture is the frontispiece in the booklet.

A UNIQUE MANUSCRIPT
ON THE
IMAGE OF EDESSA

DOROTHY CRISPINO

The Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris has a single and perhaps the only copy of *L'Image d'Edesse selon un MS du VI^e ou VII^e siècle* (The Image of Edessa According to a Manuscript of the VIth or VIIth Century). To examine it one must repair to a hushed, gated and secluded sanctum crannied apart from the muffled whispers in this immense pantheon of the written word. Therein thrones a watchful guardian who proffers, as if it were some jewel-encrusted unicum from Byzance, a thin limp little booklet covered in faded grey-green paper.

Way back in the 50s, the Redemptorist priest, Father Edward Wuenschel, considered these 20 pages important enough for his research to have a copy made, but by now the print is virtually invisible; for this issue of *Spectrum*, the document was studied *sur place*.

The booklet is an extract from an article that appeared in *L'Illustration* on the 18th of April 1908. The original article described a Greek manuscript of the VIth or VIIth century, a long scroll of gazelle skin (Fig. 2) on which the story of King Abgar and the miraculous Image of Jesus is presented in a series of miniatures.

This unique and priceless parchment was discovered by the Abbot Gaffre (evidently known to readers)¹ in a village in Upper Egypt (not identified): he "brought it back" in the winter of 1908. That is what we are told in the preface of the booklet. I suppose we could find out if a copy of *L'Illustration*, 18 April 1908, still exists. Far more interesting would be the original manuscript, but about that there is only the remark that the Abbot Gaffre had entrusted it to Mr. Boyer d'Agen, artist, who collaborated with him in composing *Le Divin Visage*, promised for 1909.

Were it not for the truly unusual and very convincing contents of this strange scroll, and the authority of Father Wuenschel, not to mention the chary custody of the booklet in the Bibliothèque Nationale, a scholar's first inclination in this our skeptical milieu would be to pigeon-hole such an unsubstantiated text; much as has been done concerning the elusive veil of Antinoë, which undeniably did exist but was, a mere luster before the discovery of the Edessa MS, irretrievably lost.

The first six pages of the booklet—which is, remember, only an

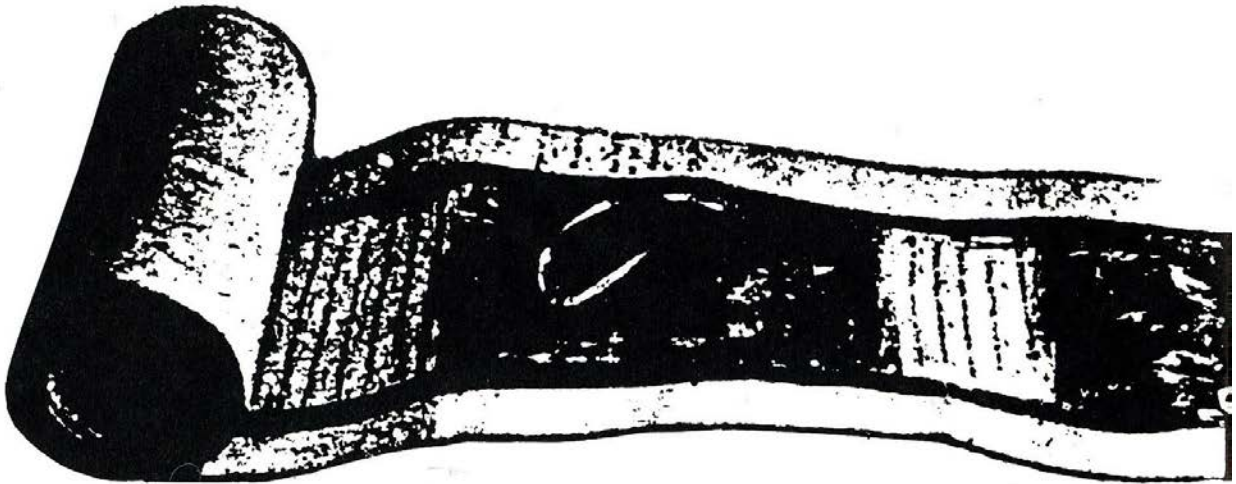


Fig. 2: The scroll.

extract from the (lost?) article in *L'Illustration*, describing a (lost?) Greek document—introduce the Abgar legend, assuring readers that the versions of Abgar's letter to Jesus and Jesus' response do not differ from the correspondence copied by Eusebius of Caesarea (Ica. 339) in the Edessan Record Office, and the Armenian historian Moses of Khoren.² Best known for his *History of Armenia*, Moses of Khoren died in A.D. 492.

The Greek scroll is prefaced by a miniature representing Emperor Constantine and Empress Helen, holding a cross. On one side is written (Vulgate) Psalm 90, *You who dwell in the help of the Most High, abide in the protection of the God of the Heavens*, a guarantee of protection for those who put their trust in God; and on the other side (Vulg.) Psalm 34, *Lord, judge those who wrong me*, a shield of defense against the enemies of the person carrying one of these holy pictures as an amulet. For, the authors explain, early Christians carried these pictures as a talisman, bestowing portions on the newlyweds of the family. In fact, near the head of the scroll is an acrostic charm (Fig. 4) that Jesus Himself, in a postscript to King Abgar, devised and wrote with his own hand, explained its meaning, put his signature, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, made known in two natures, Perfect God and Perfect Man", then sealed the missive with seven seals.

Mystical acrostics were popular in ancient times: two examples are familiar:

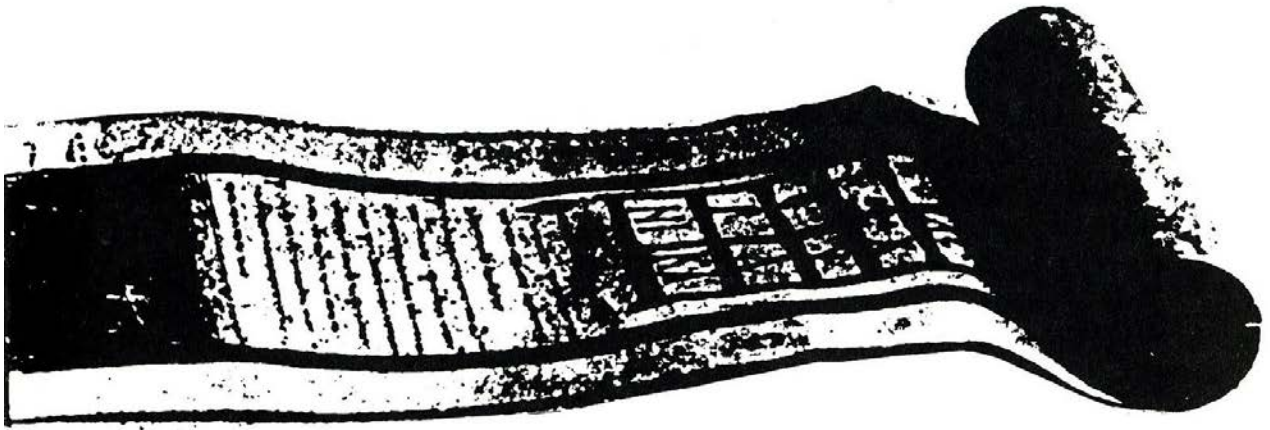
The Greek *fish*:

I = Jesus
X = Christ
Θ = God's
Σ = Son = Savior

and in Latin:

SATOR (The good
AREPO farmer guides
TENET the plow
OPERA well.)
ROTAS

Nothing has changed since ancient days when inscriptions, holy



pictures of Jesus and of saints, were carried as amulets; the same holds true today. But it is far more likely that what the Abbot Gaffre found was a Byzantine Model Roll.

Model Rolls were as essential to the manuscript illuminator as were his paints. On horizontal strips of parchment successive episodes of a narrative, religious or secular, were depicted in the accepted manner, each episode being explained by a brief textual notation. Working together, the artist, scribe and patron chose the scenes to be used in a new manuscript. Model Rolls were treasured possessions, legally bequeathed, perpetuating iconographical styles and traditions for generations. In the workshops, apprentices were taught *Nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum* (No innovations, only what is transmitted). Some Rolls enjoyed great authority. If the design for a Sicilian church was attributed to Saint Peter, what can we say about the talisman at the head of this scroll, written by Jesus Himself!

The parchment we are examining is a narrow leather ribbon reported to be 3 m. 40 x 0.06. Eleven feet long, 2½ inches wide! The XVth century Golden Fleece Roll is only half that length. The miniatures on our scroll are placed vertically with inscriptions above and below, identifying the *personae* and their actions. In format and episodic character, the scroll is distinct from manuscript leaves of continuous text decorated by miniatures.

The only color mentioned is red. Originally, one presumes, there must have been gold in Jesus' halo, purple in the king's mantle, and other distinguishing colors according to the symbolism. Due in part to frequent rolling and unrolling, large areas of paint have flaked off, leaving the figures too impaired to ascertain whether the facial traits of Jesus, who is always seated, turned three-quarters, can be associated with the "traditional" image. The toparch is seen to be wearing a Byzantine, not a Syrian, crown.

In the booklet, the miniature of Constantine and Helen does not appear. Besides the frontispiece (Fig. 1), the talisman (Fig. 4) and the open scroll (Fig. 2), nine miniatures are reproduced. They are 2½ inches to nearly 3 inches wide; the lengths vary between 3½ and 5

inches. Underneath some are a few lines of script slashed off just anyhow, depending on the page layout. A "rigorously literal" translation from Greek to French explains what is happening (see Annex A). Imbedded in the brief texts are what **I** interpret to be specific instructions to the artist on how the scene is to be precisely represented. **I** will respect the schematic inconsistencies of the picture captions and accompanying texts, only marking "Instructions" as a separate item. Caption = **C**; Instructions = **I**; Text = **T**.

1. **C** - Portrait of Abgar the Righteous.

I - In the margins, R & L, in red characters: The prince is represented handing a letter to the messenger, Ananias, who holds a staff, symbol of a voyage.

2. **C** - Portrait of the Apostle Thaddeus. Written at the left, in red characters.

T - In capital letters: Letter of the Righteous Abgar, king of Edessa, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, carried by Ananias to Jerusalem. Three lines in lower case letters: Abgar, toparch of the city of Edessa, to Jesus, just man and thaumaturge, in Jerusalem. Greetings. [Abgar's letter follows.]

3. **C** - Jesus receives the letter.

T - In red letters; Having received Abgar's letter, he writes the following response, sending it by Ananias, Abgar's messenger. [Letter follows.]

4. **C & I** - Jesus sends a postscript. He is holding a gospel, and before him stand two young men.

T - In the L margin, in red: Having given Ananias the letter for Abgar, Jesus bids him leave, after adding a postscript. [The P. S. is the acrostic talisman referred to above.]

5. **I** - Abgar is seated, wearing the royal crown, his right hand on his heart, and before him stands a servant.

C - Left margin, red letters: Abgar, having received the letter from the Lord.

6. **C** - Abgar, having received the letter from the Lord, is overcome with joy. Then he learns that the Jews want to kill him.

7. **I** - Abgar, lying on a bed, wearing his crown. In the background, a house with a curtain. Before the king, a servant dressed in red and Ananias holding a picture.

T - Left margin, red letters: Abgar, sick in bed, invites (...) to reign. Abgar sends a messenger to Jesus, who tells him, 'You are a spy...' Then Jesus invites the messenger to enter the synagogue and paint his portrait while he teaches the crowds. Messenger can't. Jesus calls Thaddeus, takes water, wets face, dries it on a towel (*manutergium*). "His divine image is imprinted...." Messenger takes it to Abgar.

8. **I** - Jesus at the left; at the right, a man holds the towel. At left, in red characters: Having washed his face and dried it, Jesus gives the cloth to the messenger.

T - Messenger takes the veil, starts on his way. When he reaches Heliopolis [Baalbek], he stops for the night at a brick kiln, hides the cloth with the "divine and human" imprint under a brick. At nightfall a column of fire reaches from the sky to the place where the portrait of Jesus Christ is hidden.

9. **I** - From the fortress at left, two soldiers see the column of fire, which is at the right.

T - The guardian of the tower cries out; people come crowding; they accuse the messenger of starting the blaze; he tells them of the letter and shows the veil.

The authors say that there are four more miniatures illustrating the transfer of the holy image to Abgar. The last is described thus: "Lying in his bed, the toparch receives it from the hands of his messenger." At this point the MS has been cut. Oftentimes a scene would be cut out of a roll to be inserted into manuscript; if it was too large, it would be folded. But in this case, was the roll cut? Or was it simply the end? In the VIth or VIIth century, before the transfer to Constantinople, what more would there have been to tell?

A palaeographic study might determine the antiquity of this parchment, giving us some clue not only as to when it was composed but also further confirmation of the early appearance in Edessa of a cloth with Jesus' face imprinted on it.³ No mention of a portrait is found in the Syrian *Edessa Chronicle*,⁴ covering the political/ecclesiastical history from A.D. 202 to 540. Eusebius, in Book I (before A.D. 311) of his *History*, presents copies of the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar, but he knows nothing of an image on cloth.⁵

However, he has seen a portrait.... In Book VII, he describes the bronze statue in Paneas as representing Jesus and the woman with a hemorrhage, whom he does not name; the "shrewd discerner of the dubious"⁶ accepted the local belief associating the monument with the miracle reported in Matthew (9:20), Mark (5:25) and Luke (8:43). By this time it had been forgotten that these statuary groups (for there were a score of others) had been erected by the emperors Hadrian and Trajan to personify their protective rule over the suppliant provinces. Eusebius' description of the Paneas monument tallies perfectly with the statues' representation on the imperial *restitutor* coins. And it is in this paragraph that he mentions that "the features of ... Paul and Peter, and indeed of Christ Himself, have been preserved in colored portraits which I have examined."⁷

Likewise, by the time the legend appeared explaining the presence in Edessa of a veil imprinted with the holy face, it could be

accepted because no one remembered that the first Edessan king to embrace Christianity was Lucius Aelius Septimius Megas Abgar IX bar Ma'nu, who reigned from 179 to 216.⁸ Contemporary, then, neither with Christ nor the Apostles by whatever name: Jude Thaddeus, or Jude or Thaddeus or Lebbaeus or Addai or Thomas....

The truth of this is transparent. The contents of the letter attributed to Abgar, as reported both in Eusebius and in the parchment before us, follow almost word for word the gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke (see Annex B). Jesus' response reflects his remark to Thomas—the Apostle who evangelized Edessa: *Blessed are those who believe without having seen....* (John 20:29).

The authors dated the scroll to the VIth or VIIth century, without specifying what elements allowed them to reach that conclusion. Obviously, a *terminus a quo* cannot be set earlier than A.D. 451, for Jesus' "signature" on his postscript to King Abgar is word for word the theological definition established at the Council of Chalcedon, held in that year. A splendid location for a Council, Chalcedon was a fine suburb of Constantinople, facing it across the Bosphorus. It is now a Turkish village called Kadiköy.

Here one touches upon an aspect of the Abgar legend which has not received much attention. In Christendom's formative centuries, the healing powers of Christ had a strong hold on the minds of the populace. The wondrous remedy that effected Abgar's cure soon passed to the hands of Veronica, whose astonishing career spawned myriad legends before settling down to a quiet devotional status. In their elementary substance, the two groups of legends, Abgar's and Veronica's, carry one single theme: salvation through Christ Thaumaturge, whose healing powers and promise of salvation would continue to operate, as foretold in the three-fold refrain of (Vulg.) Psalm 79: *Lord, let your face shine upon us and we will be saved*. The mere sight of the face imprinted on Veronica's veil cures:

1. **Tiberius**, who was suffering, says the legend, from an incurable disease. Suetonius (para. 68) reports: "Tiberius enjoyed excellent health almost to the end of his reign, even though after the age of 30 he never called in a doctor or asked one to send him medicine."
2. **Vespasian**, who had worms in his head or a wasp-nest in his nose. Suetonius (para. 20) says Vespasian "...enjoyed perfect health..."
3. **Claudius** had leprosy. Suetonius (para. 31): "...health was excellent except for violent stomach aches..."
4. **Veronica** herself was afflicted with leprosy! And even she was cured when the Madonna held up to her a veil with the face of Jesus crucified; a legend of the XIIth century, by which time the devotion to a "suffering Christ" had displaced the pre-Passion portraits.

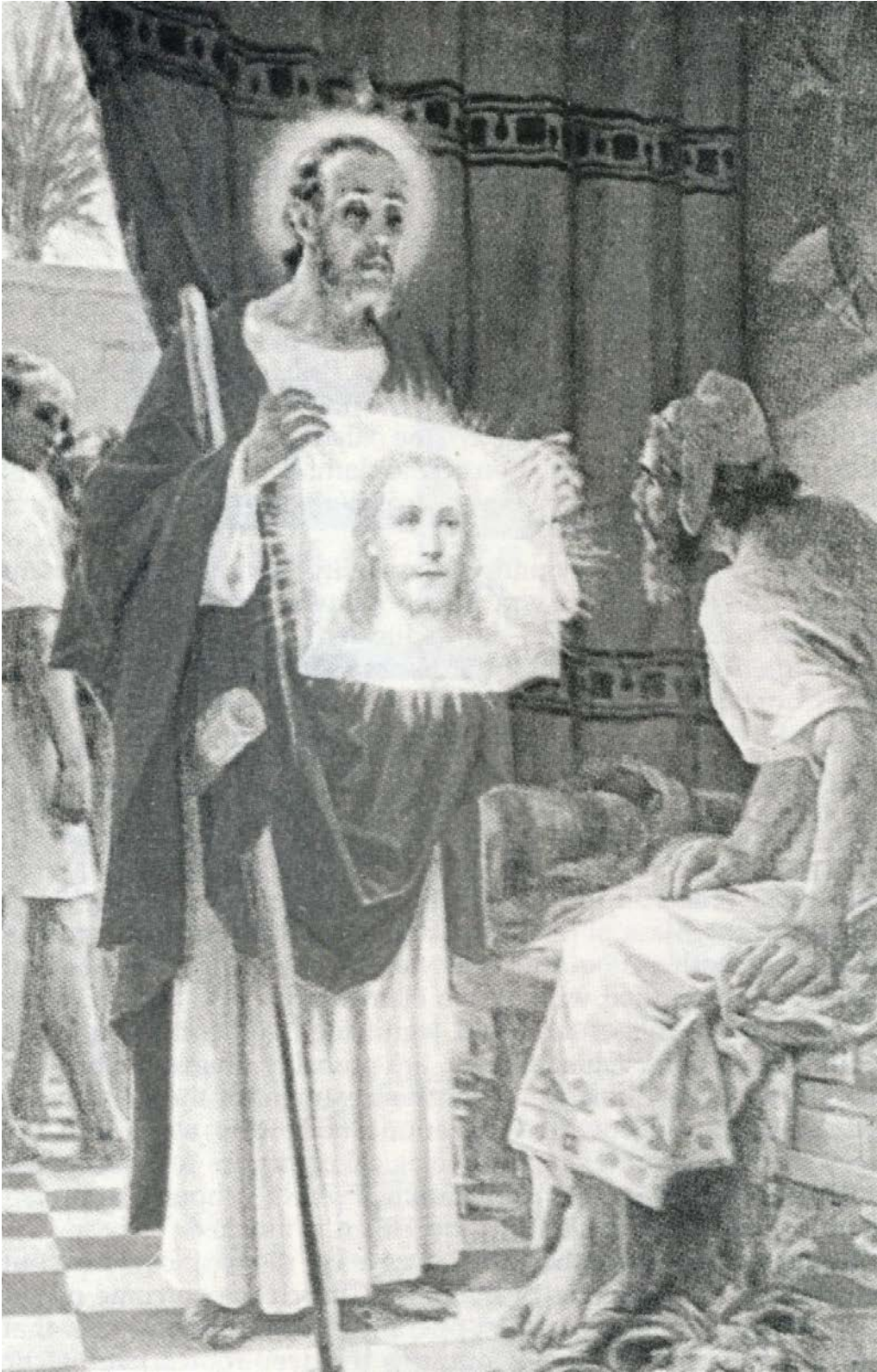


Figure 3: St. Jude Thaddeus displays the Face of Christ to King Abgar, who is thereupon cured of his disease. The golden-haired Image is brilliant with light. The XIXth century painting hangs above the altar in the Carmelite church of St. Jude Thaddeus, Rome.

Challenging my guess that this scroll might be a Model Roll is the non-existence, so far as I know, of any illuminated manuscript narrating the story of King Abgar of Edessa. There is the Sinai panel painting flattering the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus as King Abgar holding the imaged Mandylion on his lap; there is a XIXth century painting that shows St. Jude Thaddeus holding the cloth with the lambent face before Abgar who, cured and converted, rises from his sickbed (Fig. 3). Examples do not abound.

But soon after the transfer of the Edessa Image to Constantinople, some skillful Byzantine goldsmith was commissioned to make a frame and to decorate it with small square gold-plated reliefs illustrating the salient episodes of the legend. Besides the storied frame, an oklad⁸ was designed to surround the holy face with gold, symbol of divine light. By the same token, the oklad covered the gold letters of the ancient Syriac inscription on the cloth: *Christ-God, who hopes in thee will not be deceived*,⁹ a paraphrase of (Vulg.) Psalm 30, line 2 (and parallel in Psa. 70).

It is easily within the bounds of possibility that a Greek document could be discovered in Egypt. It is not beyond credibility that the scroll had been cherished by some educated Christian from, or passing through, the caravan city of Edessa, or even an uneducated, non-Christian who had it in his bag of wares to sell in some bazaar. Or maybe it did not even come from the kingdom on the Orontes, but from some Greek city?

If the famous Image was in Edessa in the VIth or VIIth century, why is King Abgar wearing a Byzantine crown? And why does the talisman, devised by Jesus Himself, ratify the *prosphore*, the Eucharistic bread imprinted with the symbol of Jesus Christ Victor offered in the Mass of St. John Chrysostom? Who was the patron consulting with scribe and artist to create this Greek redaction piously compounded with Syrian elements?

Questions of this order, while legitimate in a description of the manuscript's observable features, are probably unanswerable. We cannot fail to see, however, that the treatment of the narrative is unmistakably didactic. The Byzantine borrowers wove into the story the hard-won tenets of theological certitudes to be accepted and practiced throughout the Church. Even the imperial approbation of their own Constantine and Helen is invoked.

Could we but pierce the blurry motives of the past; could we but understand the struggles of the Early Church to overcome pagan superstitions and idol-worship, operating in the consciousness that Christendom must gradually outgrow the deep-rooted pantheistic fictions; could we but realize the constant vigilance against hydra-headed heresies, anguished gropings for the truth; we might forgive those who used unsophisticated methods to educate and strengthen the Christian communities to live in the orthodoxy of their faith. Only in the historical context of the Early Church will the Image of Edessa reveal its true character, its *raison d'être*.

* * *

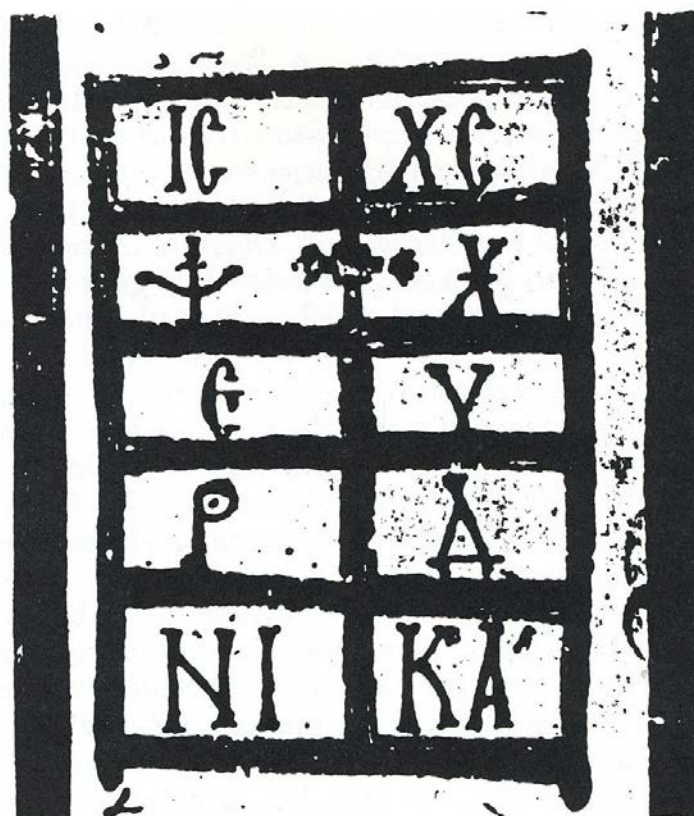


Fig. 4: The Talisman. Jesus' explanation of his acrostic:

The cross signifies that I was attached voluntarily. The first line shows that I am not only an ordinary man, but also perfect man and perfect God. Line 2 means that I lay myself down upon [word(s) missing]. The third line signifies that first of all I am God and that outside of me there is no other. Line 4 shows that I am a powerful king and the God of gods. Line 5 means that I was the Savior of all mankind. In its totality, [the talisman] signifies that I live entirely and eternally and that I endure and reign now and forever. Amen.



The *prosphore*, or Eucharistic bread.

Ultimately of course, we want to know if this manuscript can be of use to us in our studies of the Shroud. To scrutinize the face on the veil that the messenger presents to view leads nowhere. It is a pre-Passion, non-suffering, eyes-open face without much character; a representation, not a portrait. The story that unfolds on the scroll is reflected, with slight variations, in the ten squares decorating the Palaeologan frame of the Genoa icon, claimant of the title "Edessa Icon". But the proverbial "kernel of truth" that generated the story must have been a mustard seed which leafed out so luxuriously that any "truth" was choked and withered on the vine.

However, the one constant in all the fabulous versions of the Abgar and Veronica legends is that the holy face was imprinted on a veil, or towel or napkin or handkerchief or mandylion or manutergium or sudarium or simply a "small piece of cloth" (see Annex C).

About the same time this scroll was made, the Byzantines— court and ecclesia, theologians, historians, travelers and monks—knew of the existence of the Shroud; they knew, or at least believed, that it was in Jerusalem, in the church that Constantine had constructed over the Holy Sepulchre. They knew it was a full figure, on a burial linen; and that is why Emperor Justinian (r. 527-565) sent "capable and trusted" men to Jerusalem to measure the height of Christ on the Shroud, and from this measure, 183.5 cm, he fashioned a cross; and it was erected in the Church of Santa Sophia.

It was still common knowledge in the VIIIth century; during the iconoclastic controversy, St. John of Damascus defended the cult of images, citing the Edessa Icon as example; in his Third Oration likewise listing the *sindon*, along with Mt. Sion, Nazareth, Golgotha, the cradle of Bethlehem, the lance, the sponge, the tunic, the Holy Sepulchre.... And Robert de Clari, in 1203, saw the Shroud displayed every Friday in the Church of St. Mary of the Blachernae, but he also describes the urns, hanging in the Holy Chapel of the Boucoleon palace. One, he was informed, held the "toile" (towel), and the other the "tuile" (tile or brick).

These are all familiar items in sindonic literature. They are all documented facts, entirely safe for us to use in our historical considerations.

What, then, was the Edessa Image? To raise to such veneration a certain image when, as Eusebius wrote to Constantia, sister of Constantine the Great, pictures of Christ were for sale in the bazaars of Palestine.... To weave a story around this particular image and to associate it with a pre-existent, piously invented written and signed letter from the Lord Jesus, bears witness to the pre-eminence of the object, perhaps even its rarity. And so we might be permitted to raise yet another question: Could the Edessa Image have possessed the saving qualities of a 'true effigy', an *acheiropoietos*, by virtue of having been touched to the Shroud in Jerusalem? A *brandeum*, such as exists beneath the Genoa icon? Or could it even have been a 'true relic', a small piece of cloth, a scrap cut from the Shroud itself?

Scholarly research laid good foundations in the past, and in recent years many relevant texts from source material have been cited and partially published. Nevertheless, the subject is not yet satisfactorily clear. If we believe that the origin and the fate of the Edessa Image can help us in reconstructing the history of the Shroud, then valid research must, and surely will, continue.

NOTES

1. DERVIEUX: *Bibliografia della SS. Sindone di N.S.G.C.*, lists Abbot Gaffre as author of *Portraits du Christ* (1903). Bettica-Giovannini mentions Abbot Luigi Gaffre as discoverer of a manuscript in Upper Egypt, "Due Immagini del così detto 'Christo di Edessa'", *Sindon* 12-13, 1968, p. 46.

2. While Mons. Savio (*Ricerche Storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, pp. 335, 341) refers to Mosis Chorenensis, *Historiae Armeniacae*, mentioning also a translation from Armenian to Italian (I'm surprised none of our Italian colleagues have followed up on this!), Oscar von Gebhardt and Adolf Harnack (*Teste und Untersuchungen*, below) cast doubt on Moses' account of the Abgar/Jesus letters, saying that at the time of Moses' visit to Edessa, ca. 433, the records no longer existed (pp. 50-51, note 3).

3. According to Savio, the first mention of a portrait appears in a later addition to *The Doctrine of Addai*.

4. *Untersuchungen über die Edessenische Chronik*, translated from the Syrian text, Leipzig, 1892. In GEBHARDT & HARNACK: *Teste und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literature*, Leipzig, vol. IX, 1893.

5. Jesus' letter to Abgar, given in full by Eusebius, tells the king that "when I am taken up I will send one of my disciples to cure you and bring life to you and those with you". He does not say he will send his portrait, nor has Abgar requested one. The letter is followed by a rather long account in Syriac relating the arrival of Thaddeus, sent by "Judas, also known as Thomas". Thaddeus cures Abgar by the laying-on of hands; the king then desires to learn about Jesus. The part that interests us here is Thaddeus' teaching that Jesus "was crucified, and descended into Hades". This phrase was included in the Symbol of Aquileia, the Catholic Creed at the end of the IVth century, but not definitely

accepted in the Roman Church until the Lateran Council of 1215. Although Michael Palaeologue accepted the phrase for political reasons in 1274, it never entered the Byzantine liturgy. It is not in the Creed of St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) although in the Preparation (*La Divine Liturgie de Saint Jean Chrysostome*), while the deacon incenses the altar he recites: "You were in the tomb corporally, in Hell, with your soul, as God, in Paradise with the thief..."; and at the Consecration the priest repeats these words. Nevertheless, from the VIIth century onward, the Anastasis, or Descent into Limbo, or Harrowing of Hell, served pictorially to combat Monophysitism and remained in the iconic repertoire of Byzance, as well as in the West.

6. The phrase is from Guy Schofield, quoted by G. A. Williamson in his Introduction to his translation of Eusebius' *History of the Church*.

7. Interesting that Eusebius says "colored", i.e., painted, portraits.

8. Abgar's full name is given in *Untersuchungen...* (note 4 above) along with A.D. 202 as the probable date of his conversion to Christianity. It is ironic that Eusebius gives Abgar V Uchama (Ourkhâma, Ouchamà, the Black) as the king who wrote to Jesus, but farther on (Bk. IV, 30) he writes about Bardesanes the Syrian. It is helpful to read page 61 in Henry Chadwick's *The Early Church* (Dorset Press, 1968): "During the second century a Christian community was established in Edessa. Its most prominent member, Bardesanes, was intimate with King Abgar IX the Great who was also converted to Christianity". One might also refer to Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, Chapter 10, concerning Abgar V in A.D. 49.

9. Oklad is a Russian word (оклад) meaning "icon cover". I use oklad because in English we do not have a word for this overlay. The Greeks must have had a word for it, and the Italians, who use the overlay so lavishly, call it *rivestimento*, as the French *revêtement*, both with several meanings. The only specific term that has come to my attention is the Russian *oklad*.

10. *Il S. Sudario*, descriptive booklet of the Barnabite Fathers of S. Bartolomeo degli Armeni, Genoa.

ANNEX A

The pictures described are not consistently reproduced. Here are the captions of the pictures shown in the booklet; those described are followed by D.

1. King Abgar, sick, sends his messenger Ananias to Jesus Thaumaturge. D#1
2. Jesus receives Abgar's letter. D#3
3. Abgar, toparch of Edessa, sends his ambassador to Marinus, tribune of Caesar in Phoenicia and Palestine.
4. Jesus responds to Abgar's message. D#4
5. Abgar, sick, receives the response of Jesus Thaumaturge.
6. Having received again the messenger Ananias, Jesus gives him an imprint of his divine face.
7. The messenger Ananias presents the divine face to a man who stops him on the road (Fig. 1 and the frontispiece of the booklet).
8. The messenger Ananias lets the man venerate the divine face, then continues on his way.
9. The miracle of the brick kiln in flames. D#9
10. King Abgar sends his messengers to Jesus.
11. King Abgar receives the image of Jesus and recovers his health.

ANNEX B

Manuscript:

Abgar, king toparch of the
town of Edessa, to Jesus...
You heal the sick
 give sight to the blind
 make lame to walk
 make deaf to hear
 cast out devils
 cure chronic diseases
 healed the Haemorissa
 raise the dead
So either you are God himself...
or the Son of God.

Luke 7:22

[Jesus] had just healed many
people of ills, infirmities and evil
spirits. The blind see
 lame walk
 lepers are healed
 deaf hear
 dead are raised

Eusebius:

Abgar Uchama the Toparch
to Jesus... You make
 blind to see
 lame to walk;
 You cleanse lepers
 drive out demons
 cure chronic diseases
 raise the dead
Either you are God
Himself...or God's Son...

Matthew 11:5

The blind see
 lame walk
 lepers are healed deaf hear
 dead are raised

Manuscript: "The woman afflicted with an issue of blood was healed on touching you." Mt 9:20, Mk 5:25, Lk 8:43

ANNEX C

A baker's-dozen years ago, the Edessa Image was described in two diametrically opposite ways. At the II International Congress of Sindonology, the Archimandrite Georges Gharib presented a study on "The Feast of the Holy Mandylion in the Byzantine Church"; he spoke immediately after Ian Wilson, who had proposed that the Edessa Icon was in fact the Shroud, a hypothesis developed from his publication in *The Tablet* of 20 April 1974. Although Gharib's reference was based on a traditional liturgy and Wilson's on a startling intuition, the two descriptions touched common ground on one word: *tetradiplon*.

In his book *The Turin Shroud*, published just prior to the Congress, Wilson called attention to the use of this word in the *Doctrine of Addai*, where it describes the towel on which Jesus imprints the image of his face. Wilson states that this word is extremely rare. He did not find it in the Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon and concluded that the word was used exclusively for the Edessa Image, and from this came his intuition that the Edessa Image was nothing less than the Shroud, "doubled in four", tacked onto a panel and stretched in a frame with a circular opening showing only the face, as in a Roman *imago clipeata*. The hypothesis has been almost universally accepted. Much research in these intervening years has turned up new material—literary and iconographical—that can be accommodated to it.

In the meantime, the information given by the Prelate from the East has not enjoyed such popularity. And yet, liturgical documents of this fifth class feast define the icon's place in Byzantine veneration, not only for itself but also because, more than any other relic, it symbolized the joyous triumph over iconoclasm. But what is directly to our purpose, in his Conclusion Gharib writes that the names of the relic are indicated as: sindon, piece of cloth folded in four and mandylion, Siriac and Arab name for hand towel, handkerchief, sudarium. "It must be remarked that these names do not permit us to assign a precise configuration to the relic." The phrase *rakos tetradiplon* (ράχος τετράδιπλον), which Gharib translates as "a little piece of cloth folded in four" [layers] is the phrase used in the *Doctrine of Addai*, the text Wilson cites for his discovery of *tetradiplon*. He merely omitted to mention its function as an adjective, modifying "rakos", a little piece of cloth.

It occurred to me to consult the dictionaries. First, I looked for *tetradiplon* in my Divry Greek-English Pocket Dictionary, and there it was, right in line with four-score other tetras. So it cannot be all that rare. The definition: simply "fourfold". It's true we don't use 'fourfold' every day. Nor is it in Hickie's Greek-English Lexicon to the NT, although St. Luke (19:9) used τετράπλου where

Zacchaeus is glad to say that if he wrongs someone he makes it up in quadruple. Then I consulted the

ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΟΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ.

Ἄσιας ἐν Λυκαονίᾳ, ἀναφερομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου (Γεωγρ. V, 4, 8), ἡ αὐτὴ μὲ τὸ Τυριάειον (νῦν Ἰλγούν) τοῦ Ξενοφῶντος. Α Θ. Ξ.

τετράδιπλος, —η, —ον· δημοτ., τετραπλοῦς ἢ τετραπλάσιος: «παννὶ τετράδιπλο» τὸ ἐκ τεσσάρων ἐπαλλήλων στρωμάτων, ἢ τὸ τετράκις μεγαλύτερον ἄλλου.—Ἐπίρρ. **τετράδιπλα.**

τετραδισταί (οἱ) [Ἰδρχ.]. Κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τετραδισταὶ ἐκαλοῦντο ἐν γένει οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ἐκ μοίρας προωρισμένοι ἵνα διέλθωσι τὸν

Literally translated: *Cloth of four successive layers*; or, four times larger.

This brings to mind the Veil of Antinoë, as described in the catalog of the 1902 exposition at the Guimet Museum, Paris: "This sweat-cloth (*suaire*, from *sudarium*), folded in four [layers] served as a veil over the face of the deceased so that the image was imprinted four times." The veil was of fine linen and measured 2 m 40. It is to be understood that the cloth was square.

The Sudarium of Oviedo, whatever its origin, was also folded, but only once, making two layers, on both of which are seen the bloody imprints so amply described by Mons. Ricci.

When Ian Wilson, back in 1974, seized upon that word *tetradiplon* as having some significance for the Shroud, it seemed that he had found one end of a ball of tangled thread that might unwind to lead us out of the labyrinth of confused, conflated legends. While expressing gratitude to Wilson and others for swelling the dossier of the Shroud/Edessa/Veronica problem with recent contributions, we still do not feel enlightened. For not only has earlier research, especially by Savio, been ignored, but no systematic breakdown of the myriad elements has been attempted. Indeed, so many "proofs" of the relationships have only produced a classic case of trying to explain the *obscurus per obscuriorem*.

NOTE FOR WOULD-BE RESEARCHERS

Since the late Dorothy Crispino wrote this article it has come to light that the 'unique and priceless parchment' which is its subject is neither as unique nor as untraceable as Dorothy's early twentieth century sources led her to believe. It is a still extant amulet roll preserved in two sections. The main part of it is preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, New York, as manuscript M.499. Excellent images of it, together with detailed scholarly information, can be studied online via the Library's CORSAIR website. A further section, one that was originally attached to it at its head, is kept in the University of Chicago Library as Ms Cod. 125. Dorothy was also misled by early estimates of the manuscript's date. The present scholarly consensus, based on handwriting style and other indicators, is that it dates from the third quarter of the fourteenth century.

Ian Wilson (January 2015)