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## THE SHROUD/MANDYLION DURING CONSTANTINOPLE SILENCE (944 - 1242)

### Abstract

For no other relic was the transfer to Constantinople preceded by such careful research of the archives, as that for the Mandylion of Edessa. Together with the research there were interviews with prominent Edessene and a military expedition was prepared.

The transfer of the Mandylion was to be in the Menology of 16<sup>th</sup> August 944, with a special liturgy. The fear of having a false object caused the Sacred Image to be inspected at least twice during the transfer (Samosata, Thema Optimatum), because it was not exactly according to tradition. The image, in fact, did not appear to be produced by the humour of water, which was according to tradition, but by sweat and blood produced during the agony (the face) and by water and blood (the side which was pierced), compelling the authority to assume that it was produced during the agony.

The novelty, which from one point of view favoured the iconographic development of the deposition from the cross (Akratapeinosis: facial zone; Epitaphios, dorsal region), from the other put aside the official Syrian tradition of only the Face.

The events following the 16<sup>th</sup> August, the deposition of the Emperor Romano I, and of the sons Stephanos and Constantinos, created doubts as to the effectiveness of Palladium attributed to the image, as also that of the care of the city, undermined by earthquakes, and of the empire. The fact that the image was not according to tradition, induced the authorities to hide its real nature and to seal the reliquary, favouring the involution of its history. That decision obliged the authorities to obtain possession of the Keramidion of Jerapolis (968) and the Epistole of Christ to Abgar (1032), and probably also of the two copies venerated in Edessa by the Nestorians (VI century) and by the Monophysites (VII—VIII centuries), already examined in 944, that could be identified with the Mandylion of Genoa and with that of S. Sylvester in Capite in Rome.

It is possible that to avoid the suspicion that the Mandylion might be the Holy Burial Shroud, the Linteamina and Sudarium might have been transferred to S. Maria in Boukoleon, and no one has passed on that the image of Christ was impressed on them.

The barrier of silence was providential in that it preserved the Mandylion from relic speculators, thieving and movements. In the Occident the Mandylion will be called the Holy Shroud only when the clergy, in the absence of a tradition, and having examined the contents of the unsealed reliquary, declared its real nature in the XIV century.