

Many questions concerning the Mandylion hypothesis proposed by Ian Wilson !!!

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In order to summarize all the problems I've found regarding the hypothesis of Ian Wilson concerning the Mandylion, I will ask you a bunch of questions based on HISTORICAL FACTS coming from ancient documentary sources or artistic sources. If someone still pretend that Wilson's hypothesis is correct, he must find a rational answer for every question I ask here !!!

Before we start, here's an advice for you, the reader : Please try to forget all the speculations, extrapolations and special assumptions you've read before on the subject (coming mainly from Wilson himself, but also from the partisans of his ideas) and read the facts I give you with an open mind. And trust me, these are all facts that I've found in historical papers and books on the subject, so you can be sure that I give them to you with honesty and with absolutely no intention of tampering the evidence. Be sure that I didn't invent any of the facts you'll find in this paper...

This being said, I think we can start right now. Ok ? Here we go :

Fact #1 : Every known reproduction of the Mandylion ALWAYS represent a living Christ with his eyes wide open and without any signs of injuries, bruises or bloodstains. The most important thing to note is the fact that many of them were done during the time the relic was kept in Constantinople and publicly showed at least once a year, from 944 until 1090 (at least). Many of these copies were probably done by artists who were able to see the relic with their own eyes, or at least, who were able to get precise information about his physical aspect from eyewitnesses who had seen it in Constantinople. But despite that fact, absolutely none of these copies that have survived until this day represent a bloody and beaten Christ, easily associated with his Passion, the way we see it on the Shroud of Turin. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #2 : While it is certain that the original Mandylion had an important influence versus the artistic depictions of the living Christ (not only in orient, but probably also in occident), there's absolutely no signs of one bit of influence that this image could have had on the depictions of the Passion of the Christ, especially the Byzantine representations of the Passion, during all the time the relic was well known and preserved, first in Edessa (at least from the 6th century until 944), and then in Constantinople (from 944 until, at least, the sack of the city in 1204). Note that the relic was even publicly processed through the streets of Constantinople in more than one occasion. This historical fact proves that the Byzantine crowds knew exactly the appearance of the image that was on it. And the most important thing to note is that during this period of time when the relic was kept in Edessa and in Constantinople, at the exception of one single icon of the crucifixion dated from the 8th century and kept in the St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai desert, there was absolutely no depictions of the Passion (whether it would be a crucifix, an icon, a frescos, etc.) that were made representing a suffering Christ with bruises and/or bloodstains in the face. These kinds of bloody representations of a suffering Christ first appeared in Europe, mostly after the return of the crusaders from the 4th crusade at the beginning of the 13th century, when they became more and more popular among the faithful. Note also that these kinds of bloody representations of Christ were extremely rare in the Byzantine art before the 14th century (the 8th century icon mentioned earlier is really an exception). **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #3 : The hypothesis of Ian Wilson claim that the Image of Edessa (Mandylion) was probably found in 525, after a great flood destroyed part of the city of Edessa. The Image was supposedly hidden in a wall since the first century... Note that this hypothesis is not accepted by all of Wilson's supporters... Instead of Wilson's idea, some of them claim that the Image was found during the attack of the city by the Persian army in 544 (or shortly before) and served as a Divine Palladium to protect the city against the invaders. This later history of the finding of the relic come from an account concerning the defence of the city that is

found in the manuscript about the History of the Church written around 593-594 by Evagrius Scholasticus. But the big problem with these 2 possible finding accounts of the relic is the FACT that, around 550 (meaning after the 2 events proposed by Wilson and the defenders of his hypothesis), Procopius of Caesarea, a well-respected historian of that time, wrote a manuscript where he talk about the great flood of 525 and where he also talk about the attack of the Persian army in 544. And what is the most important thing to note is the fact that, all along his manuscript, he NEVER talk about the finding of that important relic, supposedly not made by human hands (if we believe the story found in the manuscript of Evagrius). In fact, Procopius never even talk about the Image of Edessa anywhere in his manuscript, despite the fact that he mentioned the 2 letters exchanged by Christ and Abgar in relation with the Abgar legend and the defence of the city of Edessa against the Persian army. It's clear that this author wasn't aware of any miraculous image of Christ in relation with the great flood of 525 or the attack of the Persian army in 544. More than that, concerning the personal idea of Wilson, even Evagrius (along with Procopius) never mentioned this great finding in relation with the terrible flood of 525 ! Based on the historical source of Procopius, it's quite clear that no one was aware that a miraculous image was found hidden in a wall of Edessa before the middle of the 6th century. There's only 2 rational possibilities to explain this fact : 1- The Image appeared in Edessa after 550 (and probably before 593-594, if Evagrius account of the Image is really from him; this later fact is presently contested among historians), but we have absolutely no way to know how and when exactly it arrived in the city (leaving the door wide open for a false relic created during the second half of the 6th century). Or 2- The Image was already there when Procopius wrote his manuscript, but at the time, it was not considered as a miraculous image, not made by human hands, but more probably like a painted portrait of Christ (that would explain why Procopius don't mention this manmade object in his account of the attack of Edessa by the Persian army). **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Here, it's important to note that, up until 550, there is a NO manuscript that mentioned a miraculous image linked with the Abgar legend. Effectively, all the known manuscripts written before that time talks only of an exchange of letters between Jesus and Abgar or, at best, along with these letters, some talks also about a painted portrait of Jesus, made by the artist of the king...

Fact #4 : The first 2 known epitaphios artworks are dated around 705 and were located in a chapel build by pope John VII in the Vatican. These artworks show a depiction of the body of Christ being deposit in his Shroud and there are many details that agreed with the Shroud and his body image. Among which there is the fact that we don't see the thumbs, while we can see 4 long fingers on each hands. Also, the hands are crossed over the pubis, just like we see on the Shroud. It is highly unlikely that there is absolutely no connection (direct or indirect) that exists between these 2 depictions of Christ being put in his burial shroud and the body image we can see on the Shroud. Here, we have to remember that the hypothesis of Wilson pretend that, at that time, the Image of Edessa was, in reality, the Shroud folded 4 times to show only the region of the face, while nobody was aware of that. Keeping this in mind, the most important thing to note is the fact that these 2 full-length depictions of the body of Christ were done at the beginning of the 8th century, while the Image of Edessa (Mandylion) was still kept in that city and was known to show only the face of Christ, and not his complete body. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #5 : The first known images of a bearded Christ with long hair are located in the Roman catacombs and are dated from the 4th century. While we know that, before that time, the first depictions of Christ were showing him beardless with short hair, a lot like a young Greek or Roman citizen, it is highly unlikely that the sudden appearance of these images of a bearded Christ with long hair, a very long time after his death, is not related (directly or indirectly) with the image of the face we can see on the Shroud of Turin. On this subject, we have to remember that there was no contemporary of Jesus at that time who could have made a precise description of his appearance ! So, these images must have come from another source than an eyewitness account. This being said, the most important thing to note is the fact that these images of a bearded Christ with long hair were done during the 4th century, at a time when, according to Wilson's hypothesis, the Image of Edessa (Mandylion) had (supposedly) been completely lost and forgotten for a very long time. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Note that this is a fact that the Image of Edessa (Mandylion) was not known during the 4th century, because the first 2 manuscripts that tells the story of the Abgar legend (written by Eusebius of Caesarea and the pilgrim Egeria) are dated from that time and

only mentioned an exchange of letters between Christ and the king. These 2 writers didn't mention any image of Christ (miraculous or not) in relation with their account of the Abgar legend.

Fact #6 : After the 4th century and the first 2 known manuscripts that tells the story of the Abgar legend, it is interesting to note that every known manuscripts from the 5th century that speak about the Abgar legend did mentioned the presence of a painted portrait of the living Christ (manmade portrait of his face only) in relation with the legend. Here, the most important thing to note is the fact that these few manuscripts (the Doctrine of Addai is the most known of them) that talks about a painted portrait of Christ were written at a time when, according to Wilson's hypothesis, the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) had (supposedly) been completely lost and forgotten for a very long time. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Since they were written BEFORE the first known accounts of a miraculous image, note that these manuscripts should be considered, historically speaking, as being more probably closer to the reality concerning the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion). One thing's for sure : The fact that there was, at first, some accounts mentioning that the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) was a painted portrait BEFORE there was accounts telling that it was a miraculous image instead, that open the door widely for the possibility that this later version of the Abgar legend (with an image not made by human hands) was just a "supernatural" literary extrapolation of the previous version of the legend (with a manmade image of Christ). Also note that this is not the first time in history that we see a "supernatural" addition being made in a legend. The same thing happened for the legend of the Veronica Vail, which was, in the first versions of the legend (dated around the 8th century), a painted portrait of the living Christ, made before his Passion by Veronica herself, and then, in a later version of the legend, this manmade painting was transformed into a miraculous image of Christ, which was formed during his way to Calvary...

Fact #7 : This is a complementary fact versus the previous one. Up until the end of the 11th century, there's many manuscripts that refers to the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) as a painted portrait, and not as a miraculous image. I have found 6 manuscripts like that in my research. Some of them even specify that it was the artist sent in Jerusalem by King Abgar who did this artwork. The most important thing to note is the fact that some of these manuscripts that claim the image was painted were written AFTER the end of the 6th century, when the first accounts of a miraculous image, not made by human hands, appeared (i.e. the History of the Church written by Evagrius Scholasticus, the Acts of Thaddeus, the Acts of Mar Mari and also possibly the Epistula Abgari). And there's even one list of relics from Constantinople, written at the end of the 11th century by an anonymous pilgrim who was an eyewitness of this relics, and who clearly mentioned that the Mandyllion was a towel bearing the painted face of Christ. So, even if, after the middle of the 6th century, there were accounts stating that the formation of the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) was miraculous, some ancient writers have remain convinced that the image was really a manmade painting and have stuck to this fact in their writings. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is it so ???**

Fact #8 : There is absolutely no ancient source that describe the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) as being the authentic burial cloth of Jesus-Christ and/or as being a cloth directly linked with his Passion. The closest thing we found in some ancient texts, like the Sermon of Gregory Referendarius or the Narratio de Imagine Edessena, is an alternative version of the Abgar legend locating the formation of the image during the agony of Christ at Gethsemane. It's important to note that, in those texts, the emphasis is put on the sweat of Christ as being the product he used to form the image of his face on the cloth, and not the blood that could have been present in the sweat. And more than that, the most important thing to note is the fact that even this alternative version never pretends that the Image of Edessa (Mandyllion) was directly related to the Passion of the Christ that took place the next morning, AFTER the agony at Gethsemane. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Here, we must understand that, in the region of the face on the Shroud, one of the most striking features that we can easily distinguish is the bloodstains in the hair and on the forehead. And there's no doubt that, for any Byzantine Christian like Gregory Referendarius (who was an Archdeacon) or the emperor Constantine VII (the one who commanded the writing of the Narratio de Imagine Edessena), these bloodstains could have been easily interpreted as a result of the crown of thorns that was applied on Jesus head during his Passion. If these Byzantine Christians would had seen the bloody face that is on the Shroud, any rational person would expect that they would have talked about the

Passion and death of Jesus in association with this very particular image, instead of his agony at Getsemane... But that's not the case !

Fact #9 : In 726 or 730, John Damascene wrote an important manuscript entitled *De Imaginibus*, in which he defend the veneration of Holy Images against the Iconoclast philosophy. In the first book of this manuscript (that count many books), he talks about the Image of Edessa being an image of only the face of the living Christ, and link it with the Abgar legend. Then, in the 3rd book of the SAME MANUSCRIPT, he wrote an extensive list of relics, all related to the Passion of the Christ, that were venerated at that time by the Christians, among which we found the burial cloths of Christ (in the plural), without any reference to the presence of a body image on them and/or to the Abgar legend, making it clear that these burial cloths were completely different than the Image of Edessa. What is the most important thing to note is the fact that, in the eyes of Damascene (who was a well-respected writer, later named "Doctor of the Church" by the Vatican), the Image of Edessa WAS NOT AT ALL a relic related to the Passion of the Christ, since he didn't include this cloth in his exhaustive list of relics associated with the Passion, while, at the same time, he did include the burial cloths of Christ in his list. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #10 : In an official liturgical book called the Synaxarion, used by the Byzantine Church from the 11th century on, we can read a chronicle about the Abgar legend and the Mandylion. In the introduction of that particular part of the book, we can read this (translated in English from the original Greek text by Mark Guscini) : "In life you wiped your form onto a linen cloth. In death you were placed in the FINAL LINEN SHROUD. A manmade tile bears your form, not made by human hands. My Christ, creator of all." What is the most important thing to note is the fact that this part of the Synaxarion makes a very clear distinction between the Mandylion (first phrase), the Shroud of Christ (second phrase), and finally, the Keramion (3rd phrase). This kind of literary distinction between these 3 relics of Christ leaves absolutely no place for other interpretations. It's 100% clear that, in the mind of the Byzantine author(s) of this liturgical text, the Mandylion, the Keramion and the Shroud of Christ were 3 different objects, and that the image on the Mandylion was form during the lifetime of Christ, making this cloth a relic of the living Christ (exactly what we see in every copy of the Mandylion), completely unrelated to the Passion of the Christ. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Note that the Keramion was an exact copy of the image present on the Mandylion, but resting on a tile, instead of a linen cloth. The story of this other relic of Christ is told in some ancient manuscripts, like the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*.

Fact #11 : At the end of the 11th century, a manuscript known as *Anonymous of Mercanti* (named after the first editor of this manuscript) was written by a pilgrim who saw many relics in Constantinople. The most important thing to note is the fact that this author, who was an eyewitness of the relics, made a clear distinction between the Mandylion and the Shroud of Christ in his descriptive list of relics. Note also that, for this author, the Mandylion was clearly not a relic associated with the Passion of the Christ, but it was, instead, an image of only the face of the living Christ. In fact, he even state that this relic was a painted portrait of Christ and not a miraculous image not made by human hands !!! **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???** Note that this is the same testimony that I mentioned earlier (fact #6). So, for this anonymous author, not only the Mandylion had nothing to do with the Shroud of Christ, but it was a manmade portrait !

Fact #12 : In 1150, an anonymous English pilgrim wrote a description of the relics he saw in Constantinople. The most important thing to note is the fact that this author, who was an eyewitness of the relics, made a clear distinction between the Mandylion and the Shroud of Christ in his descriptive list of relics. Note also that, for this author, the Mandylion was clearly not a relic associated with the Passion of the Christ, but it was, instead, an image of only the face of the living Christ. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #13 : In 1190, another anonymous pilgrim wrote a description of the relics he saw in Constantinople. The most important thing to note is the fact that this author, who was an eyewitness of the relics, made a clear distinction between the Mandylion and part of the burial cloths of Christ in his descriptive list of relics. Note also that, for this author, the Mandylion was clearly not a relic associated with the Passion of the

Christ, but it was, instead, an image of only the face of the living Christ. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #14 : In 1200 or 1201, Nicolas Mesarites, the official guardian of all the relics kept in the Pharos chapel in Constantinople, wrote a descriptive list of these relics. In his list, he talks about the Mandylion, along with the Keramion. Independently from these 2 relics, he also talks about the burial cloths of Christ (in the plural) and, while talking about them, he made an indirect reference to the presence of a complete body image on one of the cloths (using the term "nude" in reference to Christ's corpse that was enveloped in it after his death). The most important thing to note is the fact that this person, who was an eyewitness of the relics, made a clear distinction between the Mandylion, the Keramion and the burial cloths of the Christ. Also note that this same Mesarites made, in 1207, another description of the relics he was in charge of and, again, he made the same clear distinction between, on one side, the burial cloths of Christ, and on the other side, the tandem of relics showing Christ's face known as the Mandylion and the Keramion. Note finally that, for this person, the Mandylion and the Keramion were clearly not relics associated with the Passion of the Christ, but they were, instead, images of only the face of the living Christ. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #15 : In 1204, Robert de Clari, a French knight, wrote a descriptive list of the relics he saw while visiting Constantinople, the previous year (1203). In his list, he mentioned clearly and specifically that he saw a Shroud of Christ that was showing a complete body image on it. This Shroud was exposed every Friday in the Blachernes Church. Then, independently from this Shroud, he talks about the fact that the Mandylion and the Keramion were kept, not in the Blachernes Church, but in the Pharos chapel, the same place where Nicolas Mesarites said they were kept 2 or 3 years earlier. The most important thing to note is the fact that this person, who was an eyewitness of the relics, made a clear distinction between the Mandylion, the Keramion and the Shroud of Christ. Note also that, for this person, the Mandylion and the Keramion were clearly not relics associated with the Passion of the Christ, but they were, instead, images of only the face of the living Christ. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #16 : In the first half of the 14th century, Nicephorus Callistus wrote a manuscript in which he talks about many relics that were kept in Constantinople. The most important thing to note is the fact that this author made a clear distinction between the Mandylion and the burial cloths of Christ in his descriptive list of relics. Note also that, for this author, the Mandylion was clearly not a relic associated with the Passion of the Christ, but it was, instead, an image of only the face of the living Christ.. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #17 : There are at least 9 ancient documents, often written by eyewitnesses, where we can read the presence of a Shroud of Christ (or burial cloths in the plural) in a list of the relics associated with the Passion of the Christ and where there's absolutely no reference (direct or indirect) to the Mandylion and/or to the Abgar legend. Most of these texts have been written after the transfer of the Mandylion in 944, from Edessa to Constantinople. In sum, the most important thing to note is the fact that, among these documents, absolutely none of them have also included the Mandylion in their list of the relics related to the Passion of the Christ and none of them have made a direct (or just an indirect) link between the Shroud of Christ (or burial cloths in the plural) that we found in their list and the Mandylion (or the Abgar legend). This clearly demonstrates that, for these writers, the Mandylion had nothing to do with the Shroud of Christ (or burial cloths) described in their list of relics, and on a more general level, this relic had nothing to do with a relic of the Passion of the Christ. It's also very important to note that, in a letter he wrote to his troops in 958 (some 14 years after the arrival of the Mandylion in Constantinople), the emperor Constantine VII, the father of the manuscript *Narratio de Imagine Edessena* and someone who knew the Mandylion very well, wrote a list of many relics of Christ, all related to his Passion. In his list, he talks about a Shroud of Christ, but there's absolutely no mention concerning the Mandylion, which is another clear evidence that this cloth had nothing to do with a relic associated with the Passion of the Christ. And this is just one example among the 9 manuscripts of that kind I've found in my research. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #18 : After the Mandylion was transferred to Constantinople in 944, there's only one known manuscript (The Epistula Abgari) that was still using the term "sindon" (that can mean different sorts of cloths, among which a burial shroud) to describe the relic, while this term was used in some manuscripts written prior to the transfer. And more than that, some researchers (like Karaulashvili for example) have even questioned the dating of this Epistula Abgari (around 1032) and pretend that, in reality, it can be much older than this and can have been written around the same time than the Acts of Thaddeus (which is one of the first known manuscript to used the term "sindon" to describe the relic). If this is true, that means that, after the transfer of the relic to Constantinople in 944, absolutely no ancient writer would have thought that the term "sindon" was appropriate to describe the Mandylion. What is the most important thing to note is the fact that some of these manuscripts that have been written after the transfer of the relic, were based on more ancient sources (like the Acts of Thaddeus for example) that were using the term "sindon" in association with the Image of Edessa (Mandylion), and despite that fact, their authors decided to CHANGE the term "sindon" for another word (like "pakoc" – meaning a cheap cloth – that we found, for example, in the version of the Narratio de Imagine Edessena written by Symeon Metaphraste around the middle of the 10th century, using the Acts of Thaddeus as a source). It's a fact that, after the transfer of the relic to Constantinople, most (if not all) of the writers who were talking about it, were using other terms than "sindon" to describe it, and some of them even changed this term "sindon", which they found in ancient sources, for another more appropriate term. Note that all the other terms used by the Byzantine writers to describe the Mandylion don't refer at all to a burial cloth (no question about that), which is totally consistent with all the known lists of relics related to the Passion of the Christ (that exclude the Mandylion) and also totally consistent with all the known surviving copies of the Mandylion (that show an image of the living Christ with no clear sign of the Passion). **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ???**

Fact #19 : Around the time the Byzantine troops came to Edessa to take away the Image of Edessa (Mandylion), there were at least 2 painted copies of the relic that were carefully kept in the city. One of these was in possession of the Orthodox Church of Edessa (or maybe of the Monophysite Church) and the other one was surely kept by the Nestorian Church of Edessa. In the Narratio de Imagine Edessena, written shortly after the arrival of the relic in Constantinople, we learn that, before the Byzantine army can take the relic to transfer it to Constantinople, some trusted persons of the group compared it closely to the other 2 copies, in order to make sure they were not taken a copy instead of the true relic. The most important thing to note is the fact that these 2 painted copies were so close to the original that the trusted persons sent by the Byzantine emperor had to be extremely prudent and they had to do a close examination of the relic, to make sure it was the right one. This fact lead to one rational conclusion : The true Mandylion must have looked pretty much like a painting. **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY the Byzantine had to make a very close examination of the relic, to make sure they were getting the true Mandylion ???** Everyone who had seen the Shroud up close know very well that his image doesn't look at all like a painting and is quite easy to distinguish from an artwork of this kind... On this same topic, we can also ask another question : **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY there would have been 2 exact copies of the Mandylion made in Edessa (surely showing bloodstains and bruises in order to look like the true relic) and no other exact copy like that (showing at least bloodstains) would have been made after the transfer of the relic in Constantinople in 944 ???**

Fact #20 : A manuscript written by Michael the Syriac (A.K.A. Michael the Great) informs us that, during the 8th century, the Monophysites wanted to put their hands on the authentic Image of Edessa (Mandylion), that was kept by the Orthodox Church since the time this Image first appeared in the city (during the 5th or 6th century). They managed to get it and put it in their Baptismal chapel. And for some time, the authentic Image of Edessa was kept and venerated by this group of heretics Christians who were denying the human nature of Christ (Incarnation). **If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY a group of heretic like that would have wanted to get this kind of bloody relic and venerate it ???** We must understand that the bloody and beaten face of Christ that we see on the Shroud is one striking proof of his human nature, and an image like that would have surely been considered by the Monophysites in total contradiction with the philosophy they were promoting.

Fact #21 : In the official list of relics that were sold by the Latin emperor Baudouin II to King Saint Louis of France in 1247, there is one relic that can be easily understand as being the Mandylion. There's no doubt

that this relic was only a facial image of the living Christ, resting on a linen cloth. The most important thing to note is the fact that almost all the relics that were sold to Saint Louis, King of France, were taken from the Pharos Chapel of Constantinople, exactly were Nicolas Mesarites (in 1200 or 1201) and Robert de Clari (in 1203) said that the Mandylion was kept before the sack of the city. Taking that into account, we have to think that the Mandylion that was bought by Saint Louis also came from the Pharos Chapel. There's no good reason to think that this particular relic would have come from another place in the city. If this assumption is true (and the probability that it is so rank very high), then it is highly unlikely that this relic could have been just a copy of the original Mandylion. It's much more probable that this relic was the authentic Mandylion. Effectively, WHY the Byzantine would have kept a copy of the Mandylion in the same chapel where they conserved and venerated the original Mandylion ??? And more importantly, WHY Saint Louis, King of France, would have accepted to buy, at a high cost, a simple copy of the original relic (a false relic in sum), while he sent trusty men in Constantinople in order to verify the authenticity and the state of the relics he wanted to buy ??? And also, WHY the Latin emperor of Constantinople at the time, Baudouin II, would have wanted to sell a false relic like that to one of his most important allies in his fight against the Greek, who wanted to take back Constantinople at that time ??? In sum, **if Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY a relic that was described exactly like the authentic Mandylion, and that was most probably kept in the same Chapel where the authentic Mandylion was kept at the time of the sack of Constantinople in 1204, would have been bought at high cost by Saint Louis king of France in 1247 and preciousy kept in the Sainte Chapelle of Paris until the French revolution, when it disappeared ???** Note that this relic was probably destroyed by the revolutionary, most probably because they considered it as a false painted relic.

Fact #22 : Whether it be the work of the 1973 scientific team of Italians, or the work of the STURP team in 1978, or the work of the 2002 restoration team, or the personal work done by credible Shroud scientists like Ray Rogers, Al Adler and many others, using authentic Shroud samples; it is very telling that all these independent analyses never produced any kind of result that would prove that there really is a noticeable difference in the physical and/or chemical content of the Shroud concerning the region of the face versus the other parts of the cloth (whether it would be a presence of more dirt, more dust, more oxidation of the linen fibers leading to a greater yellowing of the non-image fibers, etc.). In fact, the only proven difference of that kind was found between the region where the C14 sample was cut and the rest of the cloth, but there is nothing of that nature for the region of the face versus the rest of the cloth. The most important thing to note is the fact that before he died in 2000, Adler was able to make very precise spectroscopic analyses of some threads coming from the Shroud. During that time, he did one particular spectroscopic test, using a non-image thread coming from the face area, another non-image thread from the chest area, another one from the knees area and a last one from the feet area, in order to verify if there was some noticeable chemical differences between these areas on the cloth. His result was clear and he was able to conclude that there was absolutely no noticeable difference in the chemical content of all these fibers, showing that these different areas of the cloth were most probably homogeneous in their chemical content and their level of oxidation was pretty much the same. If Wilson's hypothesis is correct, WHY is this so ??? Here, we have to remember that, if Wilson's idea is right, the Shroud would have been folded 4 times in order to show only the face region. This mean that this part of the cloth would have been the only area of the cloth to be directly exposed to air, light, dust, etc. And this situation would have stayed that way for at least 350 years, and most probably more than that. Even if the relic was almost constantly kept inside a reliquary, in the dark, during all these years, the region of the face would have been the only one exposed to air and dust (the reliquaries of that time were far from being airtight), making it impossible that this part of the cloth would not have showed some noticeable differences in its physical and/or chemical content in comparison with the rest of the Shroud. And there's no doubt that these differences would have been easily detected by all the scientists who did a close examination of the relic since 1973... In fact, any rational person would expect that these well-respected scientists (some of them were top-notch imagery expert, by the way) would have even been able to detect that kind of physical and/or chemical differences with their own eyes, without having to use any microscopic instruments... Most probably, it would have been evident for scientists like them. But that's not the case ! Let's not forget that the region of the face is one of the area that was the most analysed the by STURP team in 1978, while they were in presence of the Shroud for 5 days and nights, and also after their return in America. There's absolutely no doubt that even just an very small

difference in physical and/or chemical content would have been easily detected by the team and carefully reported in the scientific papers they published at the beginning of the 80s. If it would have not been possible to detect something anomalous in the region of the face with their own eyes, there's absolutely no doubt that all their precise instruments would have been able to do so... But that's not the case !

That's it... For the moment ! I say this because I'm totally convince that if I keep on searching, I will probably come up with other historical or artistic facts that would permit to questioned the hypothesis of Ian Wilson even more. But anyway, I think I've brought you well enough facts that permit to questioned this hypothesis very seriously. In fact, I really think there's so many problems related to this hypothesis that any rational and honest person should consider it as being most probably incorrect (or at the very least, extremely questionable), especially when someone take a global view of all the facts I brought you here. There's no doubt in my mind that, in front of all these facts, it's pretty easy to build a solid case against Wilson's hypothesis...

And if you still want Wilson hypothesis to have some chances to be correct, you MUTS give a rational and solid answer to EVERY questions I've asked above. You cannot let one question on the side. You MUST give a good answer to EVERY one of them. And when I talk about a rational and solid answer, I'm not talking about an answer mainly based on speculation, extrapolation and/or special assumption. I talk about a real good answer that can rely on FACTS and/or CREDIBLE TESTIMONIES (like, for example, a list of relics written by an eyewitness) that are not mixed with legendary and/or theological stuff...

Final note : If, as I think, the hypothesis of Wilson is truly incorrect versus the Shroud of Turin, that doesn't mean at all that the artistic portrait of a living Christ that was on the Mandylion was not based (directly or indirectly) on the Shroud itself ! In fact, based on Vignon and Whanger's comparative analyses between the image of the face on the Shroud and many surviving copies of the Mandylion, I have no doubt at all that this Mandylion was truly link with the image present on the Shroud of Turin in some way, making the Shroud a true relic of Antiquity (most probably the authentic burial Shroud of Jesus of Nazareth) ! On that simple base, I don't know why the partisans of Wilson's hypothesis should be afraid of starting to search elsewhere for a better explanation concerning the Shroud's obscure years (before 1350).

Here's the principal documentary sources I've used for this paper :

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- André-Marie Dubarle, « Histoire ancienne du Linceul de Turin, Tome 1, jusqu'au XIII^e siècle », Paris, 1985, 175 pages.
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- Sebastian Brock, Article « Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Christ », Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies, 18, 2004, pages 46 to 56. Article available here : http://www.syriacstudies.com/AFSS/Syriac_Articles_in_English/Entries/2011/3/3_Transformations_of_the_Edessa_Portrait_of_Christ_Professor_Sebastian_Brock,_Oxford_University.html.

Note : There was some other sources used, but these are the most important. And for the information concerning Alan Adler's spectroscopic analyses, I found them in his book "The Orphaned Manuscript", Effata editrice, Torino, Italy, 2002. You can buy this book online here : <http://holyshroudquild.org/orphaned-manuscript.html>. You can also listen, online and for free, a presentation he did at a Shroud conference in Dallas in 1998, where he explains the results of his numerous analyses (one of them being the one I mentioned in this paper), by following this link : <http://shrouduniversity.com/podcasts/aladler.mp3>.