



Summary :

The Mandyllion, a piece of cloth on which, according to the legend, the image of Jesus Christ had been miraculously imprinted, was initially kept in Edessa of Syria as an *acheiropoietos* (not made by human hands) icon of Christ. On August 15th, 944 it was transferred to Constantinople as a precious holy relic and its cult assumed a political meaning too. The arrival of the relic in the capital became a religious feast and was celebrated each year on August 16th.

Date

early or mid-July - August 15th-16th, 944

Geographical Location

Asia Minor - Constantinople

1. The cult of icons and relics in Byzantium

The cult of the holy icons was widely spread in the bosom of the Orthodox Church, especially in the period after [Justinian I](#) (527-565) and was one of the most important demonstrations of piety of the Byzantines. Meanwhile the cult of the holy relics (holy bodies of saints or martyrs and objects which had been sanctified through contact with them) continued undiminished throughout the Middle Ages. In the eve of the [Iconoclasm](#) the cult of relics and icons was that popular that it turned out to be a dangerous superstition and resulted in the outbreak of Iconoclasm.

[Constantinople](#) possessed the greatest treasure of relics in the Christian Medieval world.¹ One of the most important relics of this treasure was the [Holy Mandyllion](#), a piece of cloth on which, according to the legend, the characteristics of the face of Jesus Christ were imprinted. It was considered to be an *acheiropoietos* (not made by human hands) icon to which miraculous qualities were attributed. The Mandyllion was initially kept in [Edessa](#) (mod. Urfa, Turkey), where it remained after the conquest of the city by the Muslims in 639. It was transferred to Constantinople in the middle of the 10th century, when [Romanos I Lakapenos](#) (920-944) was emperor and Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus (908-959) was co-emperor.

2. The hand-over and translation of the Mandyllion

In 944 the city of Edessa was besieged by the Byzantines and the Arab authorities were forced to hand over the relic to general [John Kourkouas](#). In exchange the Byzantines released 200 Muslim prisoners and were bound by a treaty not to make any raids in the area of the city in the future. The translation of the Mandyllion is described in detail in the *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*, a text which is attributed to Constantine Porphyrogenetus and was written probably in 945, for the celebration of the first anniversary of the arrival of the Mandyllion in Constantinople.² According to this text, along with the icon, a letter of Jesus addressing to king Abgar (king of Edessa in the 1st century AD, during the rule of whom the acquirement of the Mandyllion is dated) was given to the Byzantines.³

The holy relic was transferred with a luxurious escort to [Constantinople](#). The itinerary of the translation could be in general lines reconstructed as follows: the procession followed a 12 miles long road on foot and reached the Syrian side of river Euphrates, where they embarked on a ship, in order to reach the city of [Samosata](#) on the opposite bank. Then it crossed Asia Minor. The last stop of the procession was made at the Monastery of Theotokos which was at the site of *Ta Eusebiou*, on the river Sangarios ([Theme of Optimaton](#)).⁴

It seems rather plausible that the procession did not follow the crowded diagonal road, which passed from [Nicaea](#), but a more eastern road which connected Sykees ([Galatia](#)) with [Nicomedia](#). This road crossed the valley of river Gallos, and then crossed the bridge of Justinian I on Saggarios and the northern bank of Sophon or Boane lake (*Lacus Sophonensis*, today Sabanca). At



Sangarios the Mandyliion was officially received by a delegate of Romanos Lakapenos, the **parakoimomenos** Theophanes.

3. Reception and procession of the Mandyliion at Constantinople

The reception of the Mandyliion at the Byzantine capital on 15th August 944 became a major religious festival. The Mandyliion was initially transferred at the church of the **Blachernai**, where it became an object of pilgrimage and worship and then it was moved to the chapel of the Pharos, in the **Great Palace**. The next day (16th August) the reliquary with the image and the letter of Jesus were loaded on the imperial ship (royal **trireme**), which sailed around the city and anchored outside the western wall. The escort disembarked and entered through the **Golden Gate** in Constantinople, where it was received by the sons of emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, co-emperors Constantine and Stephanos, and the patriarch Theophylaktos (933-956). The triumphal procession crossed the city, while a big crowd attended this unique spectacle, reached the forum, which was in front of the **Augustaion**, and ended at the Palace. There the image was initially placed on the imperial throne at the hall of the **triclinium** and finally it was placed in the church of Theotokos of the Pharos.⁵

The ceremony (arrival, procession and litany of the image), which clearly sought to sanctify the city and the state and to promote the image as the protector of Constantinople and of the emperor, was celebrated every year on 16th August in Constantinople.⁶ The relic remained at the imperial capital until the 13th century, when, according to one version, it was sold to King Louis XIX of France by the **Latin emperor** Baldwin II and was transferred to Sainte Chapelle in Paris, from where it was lost (or destroyed) during the French Revolution.

4. The political exploitation of the Mandyliion by Porphyrogenetos

The translation of the Mandyliion to Constantinople was a major event which was carried out thanks to the initiative of emperor Romanos I Lakapenos. The reception of the image by his sons and mainly its placing on the imperial throne during its litany had a clear political meaning and aimed to connect the holy relic with the dynasty of Romanos, as a kind of legalization. In reality, Romanos I had put aside **Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos**, and, having crowned his sons as co-emperors, wanted to establish a dynasty of his own.⁷

A few months after the arrival of the Mandyliion at the capital however, in December 944, Romanos I Lakapenos was dethroned by his two sons, co-emperors Constantine and Stephanos, and imprisoned in a monastery on the island of Prote. In January 945 Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos arrested and exiled the two usurpers, remaining the sole sovereign ruler and free to exercise his imperial office. A few months later the *Narratio* was written, by himself or on order, in order to commemorate the first anniversary of the arrival of the Mandyliion in Constantinople. In this text the effort to present Porphyrogenetos as a pious emperor who fulfils his spiritual duties by taking care of the obtention of holy relics and their transfer to the city is evident. The image, on the other hand, is presented as a protector of Porphyrogenetos' right to power: it is characteristic that one of the miracles of the image is made only when a believer applauds Constantine Porphyrogenetos as the sole emperor, failing to mention the name of Romanos.⁸

After all the *Narratio* is not an isolated example of the effort of Porphyrogenetos to exploit politically the Mandyliion and its transfer to Constantinople. On a triptych of the mid-10th century from the monastery of Saint Catherine of Sinai we see, on the upper zone of the left wing, **king Abgar receiving the Mandyliion**. It has been proven that Abgar is depicted under the facial traits of Porphyrogenetos, practically promoting the latter as the successor of the first in the possession of the holy relic.⁹

1. See Talbot, R. F. - Kazhdan, A., "Relics" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* III, Kazhdan, A. (ed.), (New York - Oxford 1991), pp. 1779-1781.

2. Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*, *Patrologia Graeca* 113, col. 421-454.



3. The legend for this letter is in fact older than the one of the Mandylion and is already documented by Eusebius in his *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία* (1st half of the 4th century AD).
4. Janin, R., *Les Églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins : Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galésios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique* (Paris 1975), p. 93.
5. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I : Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique*, v. III: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris 1969), p. 232.
6. Grumel, V., "Léon de Chalcédoine et le canon de la fête du saint Mandilion", *Analecta Bollandiana* 68 (1950), pp. 135-152. Cf. Cameron, Av., "The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story", in *Okeanos. Essays presented to I. Ševčenko, Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), pp. 91-93.
7. Ostrogorsky, G., *Ιστορία του Βυζαντινού Κράτους*, vol. 2, transl. Παναγόπουλος Ι. (Αθήνα 1997), pp. 147-8.
8. Patlagean, E. "L'entrée de la Sainte Face d'Édesse à Constantinople en 944", in Vauchez, A. (ed.), *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam)*, Actes du colloque (Nanterre, 21-23 juin 1993) (Coll. de l'École française de Rome 213, Rome 1995), pp. 21-35. Cf. also text 2 in the Appendix.
9. Weitzmann, K., "The Mandylion and Constantine Porphyrogenitus", *Cahiers archeologiques* 11 (1960), pp. 183-184.

Bibliography :

	Janin R. , <i>Les églises et les monastères des Grands Centres Byzantins. Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galésios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique</i> , Paris 1975
	Belting H. , <i>Bild und Kunst Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst</i> , München 1990
	Grabar A. , <i>Les revêtements en or et en argent des icones byzantines du Moyen Age</i> , Βενετία 1975
	Pallas D. , <i>Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz</i> , München 1965, <i>Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia</i> 2
	Vasiliev A.A. , <i>Byzance et les Arabes, 2 La dynastie Macédonienne (867-959). Extraits de sources arabes</i> , Bruxelles 1950, <i>Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae</i> 2/2, Grégoire, H. – Canard, M. (trans.)
	Weitzmann K. , <i>The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons, I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century</i> , Princeton, New Jersey 1976
	Cameron A. , "The History of the Image of Edessa. The Telling of a Story", <i>Harvard Ukrainian Studies [= Okeanos. Essays presented to Ihor Sevcenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students]</i> , 7, 1983, 80-94
	Fiey J. , "Image d'Édesse ou Linceul de Turin", <i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i> , 82, 1978, 271-77
	Restle M. , "Mandilion", <i>Lexicon des Mittelalters</i> IV, München, Zürich 1993, 189
	Grabar A. , <i>The Sainte Face de Laon. Le Mandylion dans l'art orthodoxe Seminarium Kondakovianum</i> , Prague 1931
	Grumel V. , "Leon de Chalkedoine et le canon de la fete du saint Mandilion", <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> , 68, 1950,



	135-52
	Patterson-Ševčenko N.P. , "Mandyliion", Kazhdan, A. (ed.), <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , 2, New York – Oxford 1991, 1.282-1.283
	Kazhdan A., Talbot R. F. , "Relics", Kazhdan A. (ed.), <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> 3, Oxford - New York 1991, 1779-1781
	Weitzmann K. , "The Mandyliion and Constantine Porphyrogenitus", <i>Cahiers archéologiques</i> , 11, 1960, 163-184
	Patlagean E. , "L'entrée de la Sainte Face d'Édesse à Constantinople en 944", A. Vauchez (ed.), <i>La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam), Actes du colloque (Nanterre 21-23 juin 1993)</i> , Rome 1995, Coll. De l'École Française de Rome 213, 21-35

Glossary :

	acheiropoietos
	Icon, usually of Christ, which-according to the legend-was non-hand made. Several legends concerning <i>acheiropoietes</i> icons appeared in Byzantium since the 6th c. and refer to objects which miraculously preserved the imprint of the face or the body of Christ, after having come in contact with Him. The most famous is the Holy Mandyliion of Edessa. During the middle byzantine period most of those <i>acheiropoietes</i> icons of Christ are forgotten, though many legends emerged concerning <i>acheiropoietes</i> icons of saints.
	parakoimomenos
	The guardian of the imperial private chambers. This high office was given usually to eunuchs that were persons of confidence, since they could not ascend to the throne. From the 9th and up to the 11th century, this office assumed a great importance and there were παρακοιμώμενοι that played important roles in the course of the empire, such as Joseph Bringa.
	triclinium
	Hall for symposia where three anaklintra were placed around the three sides of a square table. During the Late Roman period it was the main reception area of both houses and palaces (the term is maintained in the Byzantine era).
	trireme
	Anc. oblong war ship (37 m. length and 5.5 m. width) which used 170 oarsmen who sat in three levels. It could quickly cover long distances and ram the ships of the enemy. Byz. the largest type of dromon, powered by three banks of rowers. In "De ceremoniis" of Constantine VII, there are references to this large type of dromon which had banks of oars for 230 rowers. The length of these large tenth-century dromons has been estimated at 60 m, their breadth at 10 m, and their height from the keel to the top of the bow and stern towers as 5–6 m. Their draft was 1.5 m. With a displacement of more than 100 tons, these vessels could cruise at 5 knots and developed a battle speed of 7 knots.

Sources

Κωνσταντίνος Πορφυρογέννητος, *Narratio de Imagine Edessena*, Migne, J.P. (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 113, cols. 421-454. [Edition of the text with an english translation in Guscini, M., *The Image of Edessa* (Leiden-Boston 2009), pp. 8-69.]

Σκυλίτζης, *Σύνοψις Ιστοριών*, J. Thurn (ed.) *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis Historiarum*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin 1973), pp. 231-2.

Quotations

1. Transfer and litany of the Holy Mandyliion

ἀλλὰ τοῦ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἀρχηγοῦ, ὑφ' ᾧ τὸ πᾶν τῆς ἐξουσίας ἀνέκειτο, ἐμμένειν τοῖς ὁμολογημένοις κρίνοντος δεῖν καὶ ἐκπροῦν τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν, ἐξῆι τῆς πόλεως τὸ τιμαλφέστατον ἀπεικόνισμα καὶ τὸ χριστόγραφον ἐπιστόλιον καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἐνταῦθα



διεκομίζετο.

καὶ δὴ τὴν ὁδὸν διανύοντες, οἱ ταῦτα ἐπιφερόμενοι τὸν Εὐφράτην κατέλαβον [...] ἢ γὰρ ναῦς, μεθ' ἧς τὸν Εὐφράτην περαιωθῆναι αὐτοῖς προὔκειτο, ἔτι πρὸς τὰ τῆς Συρίας ὀρμιζομένη μέρη, ὡς μόνον εἰσῆλθον ἐν αὐτῇ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα καὶ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐπικομίζομενοι, ἔτι τοῦ σάλου τοὺς στασιώτας κατέχοντες, ἐξαίφνης χωρὶς ἐρετῶν χωρὶς τοῦ κυβερνῶντος ἢ ἔλκοντος πρὸς τὴν ἀντιπέρας κατῆρε γῆν μόνω τῷ θείῳ κυβερνωμένη βουλήματι, ὃ δὴ τοὺς προστυχόντας καὶ ἰδόντας ἄπαντας θάμβους ἐπλήρωσε καὶ ἐκπλήξεως καὶ ἐκόντας παραχωρήσαι τὴν ἔκπεψιν ἔπεισεν·

ἐντεῦθεν καταλαμβάνουσι τὰ Σαμόσατα οἱ τῶν φερομένων διάκονοι· ἦσαν δὲ ὁ τῶν Σαμοσάτων καὶ ὁ τῆς Ἐδέσης ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ ὁ τούτου πρωτοπρεσβύτερος καὶ ἕτεροὶ τινες τῶν ευλαβεστέρων Χριστιανῶν, οἷς καὶ ὁ τοῦ ἀμηρᾶ ὑπηρέτης συνῆν, ὃς ἀπὸ Ἰώμης κατανομάζετο· ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τινὰς ἡμέρας χρονοτριβήσαντες πολλῶν ἐκείσε θαυμάτων γεγονότων εἶχοντο τῆς ὁδοῦ· καὶ πάλιν ἄπειρα θαύματα ἐτελείτο ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὑπὸ τῆς ἱεραῆς εἰκόνας καὶ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ [...]

ἤδη οὖν τὸ πολὺ τῆς ὁδοῦ διανύσαντες φθάνουσι καὶ εἰς τὴν τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου μονῆν, ἣ τὰ Εὐσεβίου κατονομάζεται ἐν τῶν Ὀπτιμάτων λεγομένῳ τυγχάνουσαν θέματι [...]

τῇ πέμπτῃ ἐπὶ δεκάτῃ τοῦ Αὐγούστου μηνὸς συνήθως τῶν βασιλέων τὴν ἐορτὴν ἀγόντων τῆς μεταστάσεως τῆς ἀειπαρθένου καὶ θεομήτορος ἐν τῷ πανσέπτῳ ταύτης κατὰ Βλαχέρνας ναῶ, περὶ δέιλῃς ὀψίας κατέλαβον ἐκείσε οἱ τῶν τιμίων τούτων διάκονοι καὶ ἀπετέθη ἐν τῷ ὑπερῷ εὐκτηρίῳ τοῦ τοιοῦτου θείου ναοῦ ἡ ἔνδον ἔχουσα τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν κιβωτός· καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ βασιλεῖς ἔξωθεν ταύτην σεβασμίως ἠσπάσαντο προσκυνήσαντες, εἶτα μετὰ τιμῆς καὶ δορυφορίας καὶ λαμπάδων συχνῶν πρὸς τὴν βασιλείον τριήρην ταύτην διακομίσαντες σὺν αὐτῇ κατέλαβον τὰ βασίλεια καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐκείσε θείῳ ναῶ, ὃς Φάρος ὠνόμασται ἰσως διὰ τὸ οἶον ἰμάτιον λαμπρὸν κεκαλλωπίσθαι, αὐτὸν περιττῶς ταύτην ἀπέθεντο·

τῇ δὲ ἰκνουμένη ταῶν ἡμερῶν, ἧτις ἐξκαιδεκάτῃ τοῦ μηνὸς ἦν, μετ' αἰδοῦς καὶ εὐλαβείας πάλιν τὸν ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τὴν προσκύνῃσιν ποισάμενοι καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὴν ἐκείθεν οἱ τε ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ νεάζοντες βασιλεῖς – ὃ γὰρ γέρων οἰκουρὸς δι' ἀσθένειαν κατελείπετο – μετὰ ψαλμῶν καὶ ὕμνων καὶ δαψιλοῦς τοῦ φωτός διὰ τῆς πρὸς θάλασσαν καθόδου εἰς τὴν βασιλείον τριήρην αὐθις ἐνθέμενοι, τῆς πόλεως ἐν χρῶ σχεδὸν τὴν εἰρῆσιν ποιούμενοι, ἵνα τρόπον τινὰ διαζώσῃ τὸ ἄστυ διὰ τῆς ἐν θαλάσῃ πορείας αὐτῆς, ἐκτὸς τοῦ πρὸς δύσιν τείχους τῆς πόλεως προσωρμίσθησαν· ἐνθα τῆς νεῶς ἐκβάντες πεζοποροῦντες οἱ τε βασιλεῖς καὶ πάντες οἱ τῆς γερουσίας βουλῆς καὶ ὁ τῶν ἱερῶν κατάρχων μετὰ παντός τοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πληρώματος τῇ προσηκούσῃ δορυφορίᾳ ὡς ἄλλην κιβωτόν, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ ταύτην, τὸ τῶν ἀγιωτάτων καὶ τιμίων φρουρὸν σκευὸς παρέπεμπον καὶ τὰ ἐκτὸς τοῦ τείχους μέχρι τῆς Χρυσῆς διελθόντες Πύλῃς· εἶτα ἐκείθεν ἐντὸς γεγονότες τοῦ ἄστεος μετὰ μετεώρων ψαλμωδιῶν καὶ ὕμνων καὶ ᾠδῶν πνευματικῶν καὶ ἀπίου λαμπάδων φωτὸς τὴν πάνδημον συγκροτοῦντες παραπομπὴν διὰ μέσης τῆς πόλεως τὴν πορείαν διήνουν, ἀγιασμοῦ μεταλαβεῖν καὶ κρείττονος σθένους τὴν πόλιν διὰ τοῦτο πιστεύοντες καὶ ἀβλαβῆ καὶ ἀπόρθητον εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα συντηρηθήσεσθαι· τοῦ δὲ σχολάζοντος ὄχλου πρὸς τὴν θέαν συντρέχοντος καὶ ὥσπερ κύματα μακρὰ τοῦ δήμου πολλαχόθεν κινουμένου τε καὶ συρρέοντος ἄνθρωπος τις τὰς βάσεις παρεμμένος καὶ ἀσθενῆς ἀπὸ χρόνου μακροῦ τοῖς οἰκειοῖς διακόνοις ἐπεριεδόμενος διανέστη πρὸς τὸ τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα διερχομένην ἰδεῖν καὶ ἅμα τῇ θεᾷ παραδόξως ὑγιωθείς καὶ γνοὺς ἰσχυροποιηθέντα τῶν βάσεων αὐτοῦ τὰ σφυρὰ προσέδραμεν [...] τὴν πρὸ τοῦ Αὐγουστείου τοῖνον φθάσαντες ἀγορὰν οἱ τῆς πανηγύρεως ἔξαρχοι καὶ τῆς εὐθείας ὁδοῦ μικρὸν πρὸς τὰ λαῖα παρεκνέυσαντες τὸ τῆς θείας Σοφίας θεοῦ ἐπώνυμον ἱερὸν καταλαμβάνουσι τέμενος καὶ τῶν ἀδύτων τοῦ ἰλαστηρίου ἐντὸς τὴν τιμίαν εἰκόνα καὶ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἀποτίθενται· ἐνταῦθα δὲ παντὸς τοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πληρώματος προσκυνήσαντος καὶ τὰ εἰκότα τιμήσαντος ἐξήλθον πάλιν ἐκείθεν μετὰ τοῦ φόρτου τοῦ ἱεροῦ οἱ τελοῦντες τὴν πρόοδον καὶ τὰ τῶν βασιλείων καταλαβόντες ἀνάκτορα ἐν τῷ κατ' ἐπώνυμιαν Τρικλίνῳ Χρυσῷ ἐπὶ τοῦ βασιλείου θρόνου, ἐν ᾧ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων χρηματίζειν εἰώθασιν, τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα τέως ἰδρῶσιν ἀγιασθῆναι πάντως καὶ τὴν ἀνακτορικὴν καθέδραν καὶ δικαιοσύνης ὁμοῦ καὶ χρηστότητος ἐπιεικῶς μεταδοῦναι τοῖς ἐπὶ ταύτης ἐφεζομένοις οὐκ ἀπεικώτως πιστεύσαντες· ἐκτενοῦς δὲ συνήθως γεγονυίας δεήσεως ἤρθη μετὰ τὴν ταύτης συμπλήρωσιν ἐντεῦθεν πάλιν ἡ θεία εἰκὼν καὶ ἐν τῷ προρηθέντι τοῦ Φάρου ναῶ ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς ἀνιερώθη καὶ ἀνετέθη μέρει εἰς δόξαν πιστῶν, εἰς φυλακὴν βασιλέων καὶ εἰς ἀσφάλειαν ὅλης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν καταστάσεως.

Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De imagine Edessena*, 49-64, *Patrologia Graeca* 113, col. 448-452.

2. The prophecy on Porphyrogenetos' sole rule of in one of the miracles of the icon

ἤδη οὖν τὸ πολὺ τῆς ὁδοῦ διανύσαντες φθάνουσι καὶ εἰς τὴν τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου μονῆν, ἣ τὰ Εὐσεβίου κατονομάζεται ἐν τῶν Ὀπτιμάτων λεγομένῳ τυγχάνουσαν θέματι· ἐν τῷ ναῶ δὲ τοῦ τοιοῦτου φροντιστηρίου ἀγιοπρεπῶς ἡ τὴν τερατουργὸν εἰκόνα κρύπτουσα θήκη ἐναποτίθεται καὶ πολλοὶ προσελθόντες ἐξ εἰλικρινοῦς διαθέσεως ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκειῶν νόσων ἰάθησαν· ἐνθα καὶ τις προσῆλθεν ὑπὸ δαίμονος ἐνοχλούμενος... τέλος καὶ τάδε οἰονεῖ ἀπεφοίβαζεν «ἀπόλαβε», λέγων «Κωνσταντινούπολις δόξαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ σὺ, Κωνσταντίνε Πορφυρογέννητε, τὴν βασιλείαν σου»· καὶ τούτων ῥηθέντων ἰάθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀπελύθη παραχρῆμα τῆς τοῦ δαίμονος ἐπιθέσεως.



Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De imagine Edessena*, 53-4, *Patrologia Graeca* 113, col. 448-9.

3. The story of Mandylion from the Arab's perspective

En l'année 331 [15 sept. 942 - 3 sept. 943], les armées grecques arrivèrent dans le Diyar Bekr, réduisirent en captivité un grand nombre de ses habitants et s'étant emparés d'Arzan, dévastèrent la totalité du pays et arrivèrent près de Nisibe. Ils demandèrent aux habitants de leur remettre la sainte image du «mandil» conservée dans l'église d'Édesse avec lequel N.-S. Jésus le Messie s'était essuyé le visage et sur lequel les traits de sa face étaient restés imprimés.

Les Grecs leur offrirent, s'ils leur livraient ce «mandil», de mettre en liberté, parmi les prisonniers musulmans qu'ils détenaient entre leurs mains, le nombre qu'ils leur indiqueraient. On écrivit à ce sujet à Muttaqi à Bagdad. Le vizir Abu 'l-Hasan b. Muqla présenta au calife la lettre qui venait d'arriver en ce sens, et lui demanda de lui indiquer ce qu'il devait faire. Muttaqi lui ordonna de convoquer les qadis et les jurisconsultes, de leur demander une consultation juridique à ce sujet et d'agir suivant leur réponse. Le vizir fit venir ces personnages ainsi que 'Ali b. 'Isa et les principaux fonctionnaires de l'administration. Il les mit au courant de la lettre qui était arrivée au sujet de l'affaire et leur demanda leur opinion. Il y eut alors une longue discussion. L'un des assistants exposa la question du «mandil»; il dit qu'il était depuis très longtemps dans l'église d'Édesse et que jamais aucun roi de Rum ne l'avait encore réclamé. Le lui remettre, disait-il, serait humilier l'islam, alors que les Musulmans méritent plus que quiconque de posséder le «mandil» de Jésus ('Isa) - que le salut soit sur lui! - 'Ali b. 'Isa dit qu'il était bien plus nécessaire et méritoire de délivrer les prisonniers musulmans et de les faire sortir du pays des Infidèles où ils endurent toutes sortes de souffrances et de maux. Un grand nombre des assistants se rangèrent à son avis et il conseilla, avec plusieurs qadis des Musulmans, d'échanger, contre le «mandil» les prisonniers musulmans au pouvoir des Rum, puisque le gouvernement ne pouvait rien pour eux et n'avait aucun moyen de les arracher aux mains de l'ennemi. Le vizir fit rédiger un acte en ce sens et le fit signer par tous les assistants. Puis, il le présenta à Muttaqi, qui ordonna de rédiger la réponse prescrivant aux habitants d'Édesse de se conformer à cette décision.

Le traité fut conclu entre les habitants d'Édesse et les Rum aux conditions suivantes: les Rum remirent aux gens d'Édesse deux cent Musulmans qu'ils avaient faits prisonniers, s'engagèrent envers eux à ne pas faire à l'avenir d'incursions dans leur pays et conclurent avec eux une paix perpétuelle.

Les Rum prirent possession du «mandil» et l'emportèrent à Constantinople, où il fut introduit le jeudi 1er du mois de Ab (août). Stéphane, son frère le Patriarche Théophylacte et Constantin fils de l'empereur Romain, se rendirent à la Porte d'Or pour y recevoir le «mandil». Il fut apporté à la grande église de Sainte-Sophie (Agia Sufia), précédé de tous les dignitaires de l'empire, qui marchaient en tenant de nombreux cierges à la main; de là, il fut transporté au Palais (al-Balat). Cette cérémonie eut lieu dans la 24^e année du règne de Romain l'ancien, empereur conjointement avec Constantin, fils de Léon.

From the work of the Arab historian Yahya ibn Sa'id, in Vasiliev, A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II: *La dynastie Macedonienne (867-959)*, Deuxième partie: *Extraits des sources arabes* [= Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 2.2], transl. H. Gregoire and M. Canard (Bruxelles 1950), pp. 91-92.