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A LIFE ABOVE REPROACH

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A LIFE ABOVE REPROACH: STYLITES IN
BYZANTIUM
(5TH TO 12TH CENTURIES)

A Master's Thesis

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(5TH TO 12TH CENTURIES)

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“A LIFE ABOVE REPROACH”: STYLITES IN BYZANTIUM (5TH TO 12TH
CENTURIES)

By Ayşe Nergiz

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

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ABSTRACT

SPATIALITIES OF STYLITES

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This thesis delves into Byzantine stylites and their ascetic practices within the 'Spatial Turn,' unveiling the interplay of asceticism, religious symbolism, and spatial dynamics in the Byzantine Empire. First, by applying Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad model, this research examines literary spaces through a concentrated analysis of the travel and movement narratives within the hagiographic accounts of three stylites from the fifth to twelfth centuries: Symeon the Elder, Daniel the Stylite, and Lazaros of Mount Galesion. The aim is to illustrate the contribution of literary spatial elements to the formation of the sacred identities of stylites. Subsequently, attention turns to the examination of material remnants, focusing on the spatial arrangements of Qal'at Sim'an and souvenir tokens from the religious site. The goal is to unveil the interconnected relationship between space and stylite. By integrating both literary and material perspectives, this thesis aims to highlight the multifaceted spatial features of Byzantine stylites.

Keywords: Asceticism, Space, Spatial Triad, Spatial Turn, Stylites.

ÖZET

SÜTUN AZİZLERİNİN MEKANSALLIKLARI

Nergiz, Ayşe

Tarih Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Luca Zavagno

Kasım 2023

Bu tez, Bizans sütun rahiplerini ve asketik uygulamalarını, ‘Mekansal Dönüş’ çerçevesinden ele alarak, Bizans İmparatorluğu’ndaki asketizm, dini simgelemenin ve mekansal dinamiklerin etkileşimini inceliyor. İlk olarak, Henri Lefebvre’in mekânsal üçlü modelini kullanarak, bu araştırma beşinci ile on ikinci yüzyıl arasında yaşamış üç sütun azizi, Aziz Yaşlı Simeon, Aziz Daniel ve Aziz Lazaros Galesiotes’in hagiografik anlatılarındaki seyahat ve hareket hikayelerine odaklanarak, edebi mekansal unsurların sütun azizlerinin kutsal kimliklerinin oluşturulmasındaki katkılarını inceliyor. Ardından, mekan ve sütun azizi arasındaki iç içe geçmiş ilişkinin incelenmesi için, Qal’at Sim’an’daki mekansal düzenlemelerini ve hatıra kalıntılarını analiz etmeye odaklanıyor. Bu tez edebi ve materyal bakış açılarını birleştirerek, Bizans sütun azizlerinin çok yönlü mekansallıklarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Asketizm, Mekan, Mekansal Dönüş, Mekan Üçlemesi, Sütun Azizleri.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It was Immanuel Kant who first argued in 1781 on the essentiality of time and space as *a priori* conceptual representations that condition our ability to understand the world around us.¹ While time has been favored in the studies of historical societies as a parameter of analysis, it was argued that space has not received the same focus.² However, in recent decades, a rising interest has been shown towards space, spatial paradigms and practices.³ Starting in the second half of the twentieth-century, the rapid globalization driven by the technological developments, market-oriented concerns including accessing and controlling resources, and the social and cultural changes triggered by the movement of humans, information, and ideas collectively reshaped the geo-political landscape. At the same time, the existing spatial order's inability to answer to the challenges posed by globalization as well as the realization that there is not one, standard view of space and time resulted in scholarly discussions on the understanding of space. Rather than limiting the understanding of space to its geographical attributes such as coordinates, physical features, or locations, there has

¹ Cited in Myrto Veikou, "Space in Texts and Space as Text: A New Approach to Byzantine Spatial Notions," *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (2016): 142–75., p. 142.

² Veikou; Jo Heirman and Jacqueline Klooster, "Introduction: The Ideologies of 'Lived Space', Ancient and Modern," in *The Ideologies of Lived Space in Literary Texts, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Jacqueline Klooster and Jo Heirman (Academia Press, 2013), p. 3.

³ According to Fredric Jameson it was possible to wait for 'the new spatial logic of the simulacrum' to have a significant impact on what used to be historical time and postmodern is 'a culture increasingly dominated by space and spatial logic' Jameson, 1984, p. 66, 71. Edward Soja claims the likelihood of space and geography displacing the primacy of time and history as significant interpretive dimensions of the contemporary period. (1987, 289).

been an acknowledgment that space can be multifaceted and encompasses various dimensions beyond the strictly geographical. Referred to as the “Spatial Turn”, this new way of thinking about space rests on the premise that multiple spatial frameworks coexist simultaneously.⁴ Recognizing the dynamic and intricate relationship between space and societal phenomena, the Spatial Turn emphasizes the need to consider the various ways in which space is constructed and experienced. This perspective rejects a singular, static understanding of space, instead highlighting its fluid and contingent nature. By acknowledging the coexistence of diverse spatial frameworks, this paradigm encourages scholars across disciplines to explore the nuanced interactions between space, culture, and power dynamics.⁵

While the inception of this epistemological shift, also known as the re-theorization of space, originally manifested within the field of geography, over time, various disciplines have progressively recognized the significance of space as a crucial dimension within their respective domains.⁶ For example, as argued by Denis Cosgrove, “A widely acknowledged ‘spatial turn’ across arts and sciences corresponds to post-structuralist agnosticism about both naturalistic and universal explanations and about single-voiced historical narratives, and to the concomitant recognition that position and context are centrally and inescapably implicated in all constructions of knowledge.”⁷ Starting in the 1990s, this spatial advocacy started to spread into the social sciences and humanities, expanding its influence beyond the confines of

⁴ Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, “Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization,” *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (2010): 149–70, pp. 154–55.

⁵ Barney Warf and Santa Arias, “Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities,” in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias (Routledge, 2009); Heirman and Klooster, eds., *The Ideologies of “Lived Space”, Ancient and Modern*, (2013).

⁶ Warf and Arias, “Introduction,” p. 1.

⁷ Denis Cosgrove, “Introduction,” in *Mappings* (London: Reaktion, 1999), p. 7.

geography; philosophy, sociology, anthropology, architecture, art history, and literary studies can be listed among some.

Space functions as a realm of knowledge across various endeavors, yet in conceptualization, it also serves as an active engagement with the material reality. The way in which individuals think about space influences the definition, value, relate and interaction with the material world.⁸ The recognition that space functions as a realm of knowledge and an active engagement with material reality echoes the fundamental tenets of the spatial turn in history. This intellectual shift underscores the importance of spatial considerations in understanding historical phenomena.⁹ It is argued that spatial approaches can prove to be means for alternative interpretations of human agencies and also offer various opportunities for discussions on areas of contemporary social life, such as natural-resources management, private and public-space planning and more.¹⁰ At the same time, this comprehensive understanding of space serves as a foundation for investigating historical developments with a focus on the spatial aspects of historical culture.

Within this context of the Spatial Turn, stylites appear to be a useful opportunity for discussions about space and spatialities in Byzantine culture not simply because of the fundamentality of the usage of body and space in their practice, but also for the various instances of spatial symbolism, significance and the socio-religious influences that shaped their practices. In their search for isolation and extreme hardships, these ascetics ascended to their pillars and stood on it, completely exposed

⁸ Marijn Nieuwenhuis and David Crouch, eds., *The Question of Space* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), p. ix.

⁹ Warf and Arias, "Introduction," p. 3.

¹⁰ Myrto Veikou, Ingela Nilsson, and Liz James, "(Byzantine) Space Matters! An Introduction," in *Spatialities of Byzantine Culture from the Human Body to the Universe*, ed. Myrto Veikou and Ingela Nilsson (Brill, 2022), pp. 1-2.

to the elements of the nature like freezing cold and scorching hot, without having to obey their bodily needs, the stylites did not only symbolically lead a life of angels, but actually embodied it. Ironically, it was the stylites' rigorous practices and ascetic abilities that translated into the immense attention they received. Moreover, as they mounted higher pillars as a sign of their advancement in their spiritual journeys, they became more visible to the world below.

On the other hand, it is not just the spatiality of their practices that renders stylites interesting for an investigation of space and spatial practices, but also their agency on space which had been presented with different dimensions within the hagiographical accounts of the saint's life. The intentional choices of the stylites in selecting elevated locations for their ascetic lifestyle and the unique spatial experiences they cultivated contribute to a rich understanding of the interplay between individual agency and spatial dynamics. Furthermore, their influence extends beyond the physical occupation of space; it encompasses the symbolic and cultural realms, as evidenced by the narratives and symbolic representations embedded in their practices. These *Lives* include a wide range of examples from everyday life to the imperial affairs, numerous accounts of representations of space that illustrated through the journey of the stylite as well as the constant encounter of the sacred in a number of different locations such as the human body, the church, the cell, the pillar, the desert, the open-air etc. Because of this multifaceted spatiality, stylites and their *Lives* would prove to be a rich source.

This thesis examines the three Byzantine stylites who lived between the fifth and twelfth centuries and the spatial aspects of these stylites, by primarily using written sources as well as the archaeological remains. The aim is to provide a general examination on these spatial aspects which can be found both in the hagiographical accounts of the saints' lives and the architectural evidence through the application of

Lefebvre's spatial model, which consists of the three aspects of space, namely *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* space in order to possibly draw attention to potential of the stylites as a topic for the discussions on Byzantine spaces and spatialities. In this context, the analysis will be conducted on two levels. Firstly, a close examination of the literary spaces within the *Lives* will be undertaken, with a focus on accounts detailing the movement and travel employed by the hagiographers. This exploration aims to elucidate how these narrative elements contribute to the construction of the stylites' holy identities. By scrutinizing the literary depictions of the spatial experiences generated by movement, my aim is to seek to uncover the ways in which the hagiographers utilized these concepts to construct the identities of their subjects within their respective images.

Secondly, a discussion on the material remains, particularly the archaeological remnants of the cult site associated with the stylites, will be carried out. This aspect of the analysis delves into the material remains identified with stylites and, if existed, their communities. Unfortunately, the archaeology of the stylite has been deemed to be 'still in its infancy' and in need of systematic research, primarily due to the disparate levels of attention given to literary and material sources.¹¹ The most extensively studied archaeological sites, Qal'at Sim'an and the Wondrous Mountains, still remain as the only religious sites of stylites known today.¹² Due to the limited information of the material evidence, the focus will be on Qal'at Sim'an, the religious complex built around Symeon the Elder's pillar. Through an analysis of the archaeological findings, the primary aim of this part is to understand the spatial organizations and features that reflect the stylite's lived experience at Qal'at Sim'an. The physical layout of the

¹¹ Lukas Amadeus Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite," *Late Antique Archaeology* 6, no. 1 (2010AD): 329–97, p. 376.

¹² *Idem.*, p. 375.

complex, materials used in the structures, and the material remains associated with the cult site will be examined in order to have a better picture on the embodied spatial practices of Symeon which then will be used to consider how material remains correlate or challenge the literary presentation of the stylite.

This dual approach, encompassing both literary and material perspectives, promises a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of the stylites' impact on space and identity within the cultural and religious contexts explored in the *Lives*. The literary narratives construct a spatialized identity, describing how these ascetics navigated and occupied space, and also, the ways in which the hagiographer's utilized certain spatial elements to create and communicate the stylite's identity. The material remains provide tangible insights not only into the stylite's practice, but also the physical transformations of the surrounding landscape which had been impacted by the popularity that he and his practice attracted. In this sense, when both literary narratives and material remains are considered together, it can help to highlight the interplay between imagined and lived spaces, acknowledging the dynamic relationship between the stylites, their constructed identities, and the physical spaces they inhabited. By intertwining these examinations, I aim to contribute to the broader understanding of spatial aspects of Byzantine stylites. However, it should be noted that the present thesis does not intend to offer a complete picture of every single details in the spatial aspects and practices of stylites; but rather, it examines the present data on the stylites and attempts to draw attention to the abundance of spatial features inherent in both the practice itself and in the written records of the stylite for a possible study of the spaces of stylites.

In Chapter II, I will be providing information on the theoretical shift in the historical and cultural studies referred to as the Spatial Turn and its incorporation into

and the development within the various areas of research by referencing the works of the monumental figures in the thinking of space. Later on, the methodological examination of the *Lives* of three stylites will be given. In Chapter III, firstly, a brief historical background on the stylites in reference with the key features of their practice as well as the impact of the given landscape on the Syrian ascetic tradition. Following this, the summaries of these hagiographical texts will be provided. Chapter IV will be examining the intersection of stylite and space in the literary and material sources. First, in order to have a better understanding of the framework of the spatial studies, the ‘Spatial Turn’ and then, its core tenet, social space and the spatial triad as an analytical tool to approach space will be provided. In the following, the ways in which the four hagiographers employed spatiality, more specifically the utilization of mobility and travel in the hagiographical narratives to communicate stylite’s identity to the readers will be examined. As a result, it will be argued that, utilizing the intricate and unusual connection between the stylite’s body and his use of space, the hagiographers employed this interplay in their narratives in order to underscore their heroes’ various identities. The dynamic interplay between the stylite’s immobility and the mobility of the visitors who traveled to see him, the physical and symbolic attributes of his elevated position against the secular world and its hierarchy, and stylite’s mobility against his practice’s inherent immobility were portrayed in the narratives to display the holy men as a spiritual and charismatic leader, protector, and spiritual teacher. Nevertheless, it should be noted that my aim here is to highlight examples where the utilization of movement and travel in the narratives of the three stylites might provide a useful topic for the future research on the spatialities of the stylites and their *Lives*. Finally, revisiting the archaeological dimension of the stylite phenomenon, this part delves into the material remains of Symeon the Elder, shedding

light on the interconnected dynamics of space, ascetic practice, and sanctity. Positioned atop his pillar at Qal'at Sim'an, Symeon's legacy extends beyond a physical testament, offering a rich tapestry of material artifacts and architectural features.¹³ Through an exploration of souvenir tokens, the layout of Qal'at Sim'an, and the mysterious funding of the complex, this study unravels the layers of meaning within these material remnants. In this part, an in-depth examination of how Symeon's ascension, both physical and spiritual, becomes inseparable from his revered status as a stylite will be provided. Lastly, Chapter V will provide the concluding remarks.

¹³ Lukas Amadeus Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite," *Late Antique Archaeology* 6, no. 1 (210AD): 329–97, p. 379.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE SOURCES

2.1. Historiography

The intersection of Byzantine stylites and Byzantine spaces constitutes a compelling area of scholarly investigation that unveils the intricate layers of ascetic practice, spatial dynamics, and religious symbolism within the Byzantine Empire. As a product of early Syrian ascetic tradition, stylitism emerged as an extraordinary practice which essentially consisted of the usage of body and space. Asceticism is characterized by a physical withdrawal within a confined space, while engaging in a dialogue with the natural and social environment.¹⁴

Stylitism and stylites have received considerable attention in modern scholarship, with various significant works dedicated to its study.¹⁵ Moreover, this absence of scholarly interest on the examination and analysis of space was not specific to the stylites but, as Veikou states, “the Spatial Turn, which has been developing in many other areas of research and remains most relevant to the present day, has been

¹⁴ Myrto Veikou, “Space and Identity: A Located Negotiation,” in *Spatialities of Byzantine Culture from the Human Body to the Universe*, ed. Myrto Veikou and Ingela Nilsson (Leiden: Brill, 2022), p. 99.

¹⁵ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, vol. 14 (Subsidia Hagiographica, 1923); Loosley Leeming, “The Historiography of Qal’at Sim’an,” in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 28–32; Meaghan McEvoy, “Emperors, Aristocrats, and Columns: Christian Imperial Politics in the Late Fifth Century CE as Reflected in the Life of Daniel the Stylite,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 15, no. 2 (2022): 428–61, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jla.2022.0023>; Antony Eastmond, “Body vs. Column: The Cults of St Symeon Stylites,” in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Routledge, 2016); S. Ashbrook Harvey, “The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 4 (December 1988): 376–94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1584285>.

somewhat overlooked in the study of Byzantine culture.”¹⁶ The Spatial Turn, a theoretical and methodological shift in historical and cultural studies that emphasize the significance of space as a central framework for understanding social, cultural, and historical dynamics has emerged in the 1960s¹⁷, as a response to the traditional approaches to time as the primary parameter of analysis, has been argued to be useful in offering new perspectives and alternative means to interpret human agencies.¹⁸

In his essay ‘*Of Other Spaces*’, which was written in 1967 but published in 1984, Michael Foucault has prophesied the upcoming domination of space over time in the twentieth century.¹⁹ Following Foucault, Henri Lefebvre introduced his discussions on space and its nature; arguing that up until the twentieth century, space had a strictly geometrical meaning which had stemmed from the Cartesian logic of space and time held as two categories that facilitated naming and classing of the evidence of senses, which had attributed space with a notion of absolute.²⁰ Arguing against the perception of space as fixed or a neutral background, Lefebvre suggested that space should be seen as a socially produced entity intertwined with power, culture, and individual experiences, and introduced his spatial triad model of absolute, relative and relational space to as an analytical tool to investigate space.²¹ Starting from the 1990s, a cumulative and powerful diffusion of a spatial perspective across nearly every discipline, the Spatial Turn started to rapidly flourish in the academic scene.²² With the works of David Harvey, an incorporation of social theory sparked a significant re-evaluation of how we think about space and spatiality in social contexts. This shift

¹⁶ Veikou, Nilsson, and James, “(Byzantine) Space Matters!,” p. 4.

¹⁷ Edward W. Soja, “Taking Space Personally,” p. 16.

¹⁸ Veikou, Nilsson, and James, “(Byzantine) Space Matters!,” p. 3.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986), p. 752.

²⁰ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 1.

²¹ Idem., p. 32-38.

²² Soja, “Taking Space Personally,” p. 23.

repositioned the understanding of space as something already there to viewing it as something that's created, highlighting its important role in shaping society and showing how it's tied to issues of power.²³ This spreading interdisciplinary spatial advocacy was described by Edward Soja, who suggests his theory of Thirdspace,²⁴ as 'a spatially lifeless periphery was becoming actively spatialized, rather superficially in some areas but much more deeply energizing in others.'²⁵ From that point, the interest in space and spatiality in various research areas in Humanities and Social Sciences.²⁶

However, given the unanimous grievances expressed by scholars,²⁷ it appears that the absence of attention to the Spatial Turn in Byzantine studies had become striking. It has been argued that while there has been works that approach historical research with space, the works with a clear focus on research of space have been missing.²⁸ Anxious to miss out on the transdisciplinary study opportunities that

²³ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

²⁴ "Thirdspace" is a spatial concept by Edward Soja that encompasses the dynamic interrelation of physical, mental, and social dimensions of space. His theory views three urban spaces; physical (firstspace), mental (secondspace), and the thirdspace encompasses both the material and the imaginative, as well as the interplay between them. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

²⁵ Soja, "Taking Space Personally," p. 24

²⁶ Jo Heirman and Jacqueline Klooster, "Introduction: The Ideologies of 'Lived Space', Ancient and Modern," in *The Ideologies of Lived Space in Literary Texts, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Jacqueline Klooster and Jo Heirman (Academia Press, 2013); Robert T. Tally, ed., *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Barney Warf and Santa Arias, eds., *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009); Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); M. Crang and N. Thrift, *Thinking Space* (London: Routledge, 2000).

²⁷ Robert Ousterhout, "At Home in Cappadocia," in *Spatialities of Byzantine Culture from the Human Body to the Universe*, ed. Myrto Veikou and Ingela Nilsson (Brill, 2022); Myrto Veikou, "Space in Texts and Space as Text: A New Approach to Byzantine Spatial Notions," *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (2016): 142–75.

²⁸ Veikou, Nilsson, and James, "(Byzantine) Space Matters!," p. 3.

investigate within the Spatial Turn, scholars have attempted to underline this to be a growing gap between the Byzantine studies and other areas of research.²⁹

2.2. Sources

2.2.1. Primary Sources

There are two types of primary sources to understand and construct the lifestyle and environment of the stylites; the hagiographical texts and material remains. Among these, the *Lives* of the stylites offer the most information. Written to commemorate and venerate, these biographic accounts typically present the holy men's virtues, practices, challenges, and miracles while providing insight into their vocations and, if existed, their cults.³⁰ In other words, they are produced for various purposes to communicate the stylite to the future readers. In the most basic sense, hagiography as a literary genre can be defined as the literature which in a particular style idealizes and celebrates the deeds, miracles, and sayings attributed to holy figures.³¹ Starting in the fourth century, namely with Anastasios' Life of Antony, hagiography became a prominent form of religious literature, undergoing changes and transformations influenced by socio-cultural dynamics while experiencing nearly continuous

²⁹ Mihail Mitrea, ed., *Holiness on the Move: Mobility and Space in Byzantine Hagiography* (Taylor & Francis, 2022); Veronica Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature, and the Sacred in Byzantium* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jelena Bogdanović, *The Framing of Sacred Space: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Benjamin Anderson and Fotini Kondyli, eds., *The Byzantine Neighbourhood: Urban Space and Political Action* (Routledge, 2021); Dunia Filippi, *Rethinking the Roman City: The Spatial Turn and the Archaeology of Roman Italy* (Routledge, 2022).

³⁰ "Hagiography," *ODB*, pp. 897-89.

³¹ Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Introduction," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Periods and Places*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis, vol. I (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 1.

expansion in literature throughout the Byzantine era.³² Over this period, the hagiographical discourse exerted its influence on various narrative forms and did not limit itself to a uniform format. These various forms collectively constitute what is now known as the corpus of hagiographical texts.³³ Additionally, as a discourse, hagiography was deeply connected to and influenced by the societal, religious, and political contexts due to its inherent link with the society. For example, martyrdom and monasticism, two foundational elements in historical origins of Christianity were argued to provide the driving force for the literary output of hagiography.³⁴ Furthermore, in subsequent periods, shifts within the literary discourse seem to be in dialogue with the societal, political, and religious changes. A period of expansion and growth generated in the hagiographical discourse was generated by the state's support in the rise of Christianity to the status of a world religion, then a period of decline and transformation was forced onto the discourse due to the hardships of the Dark Ages, following the revival of hagiography in the late-eighth century, hagiographic texts became structured and homogenous with inclusions of high rhetoric discourses.³⁵ Finally, middle Byzantine hagiography was characterized with its dominance of highly structured and homogenous discourse which relied to a great extent on stock elements, often referred to as literary *topoi*.³⁶

³² Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Introduction," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Genres and Contexts*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis, vol. II (Routledge, 2014), p. 3.

³³ *Idem.*, p. 10.

³⁴ *Idem.*, p. 3.

³⁵ When the empire suffered a shrink and faced with the threat of the cultural decline of the Dark Ages, hagiography too experienced a decline. As all the creative forces were confined to Constantinopolitan elites during this period, hagiography underwent a significant change in terms of style, language and form. Following the revival of hagiography in the late-eighth century, a structured form with high rhetoric discourses appeared within the narratives. Moreover, the prestige that the hagiographic accounts received among the members of ecclesiastical and political elites, especially after the icon veneration was argued to be explanatory for the usage of these texts as historical documents in their times. Also, during this period, the need to highlight the subject's involvement in minor and major crises of the empire became apparent. *Idem.*, pp. 10-11.

³⁶ *Idem.*, p. 11.

Starting from its emergence, hagiographical texts were created for various purposes, often reflecting religious, cultural, and political objectives. The period between the fourth to the seventh centuries saw the development of Christian cults dedicated to saints, focusing specifically on the ascetic labors and miraculous abilities of the holy figures.³⁷ The middle Byzantine period witnessed a notable shift towards more elaborate and sophisticated narrative structures, incorporating established literary conventions and rhetorical patterns. Miracle narratives gained prominence, becoming integral to the glorification of saints.³⁸ Primarily written to venerate and commemorate the lives of holy figures while providing a model of piety, faith, and moral conduct for the edification and inspiration of the believers, Byzantine hagiography has been characterized as repetitive, generic or continuously repeating itself by reproducing clichés which earned it a reputation for timelessness, feeble credibility, and triviality.³⁹ Indeed, the prominent characteristic of the modern interpretation of hagiography is most likely the replicated integration of the hero into a series of *topoi* and clichés interwoven into a highly encomiastic discourse.⁴⁰ The literary *topoi* refers to recurring themes, motifs, or rhetorical conventions that are commonly used in hagiographical narratives.⁴¹ Due to the heavy usage of *topoi*, hagiographical narratives have been approached with a bias concerning the historical reliability of its content. Moreover, the *topos* as itself is often viewed as completely fiction.⁴² However, the author's use of *topoi* does not inherently label the content as

³⁷ Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 707.

³⁸ Efthymiadis, "Introduction," in *Genres and Contexts*, p. 11.

³⁹ Efthymiadis, "Introduction," in *Periods and Places*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Efthymiadis, "Introduction," in *Genres and Contexts*, p. 3.

⁴¹ Thomas Pratsch defines *topos* as a consistent literary element formed by recurring leitmotifs. Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Th. Pratsch, *Der Hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten Imittelbyzantinis*," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100, no. 1 (2007): 247–50, p. 251.

⁴² Thomas Pratsch, "Exploring the Jungle: Hagiographical Literature between Fact and Fiction," in *Fifty Years of Prosopography: The Later Roman Empire, Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. Averil Cameron (British Academy Scholarship Online, 2003), p. 62.

fiction. Rather, understanding the hagiographer's *topoi* choices is crucial to interpreting how the saint is presented and appreciating the nuanced intentions behind the use of literary conventions. While the employment of *topoi* in hagiographical accounts of saints may have rendered the narratives of these texts repetitive or seemingly unreliable to the contemporary reader, scholars have argued for the significance of considering *topoi* as a narrative tool that constructs the saint's holiness in a certain way and simultaneously reflects the social and cultural contexts from which they originated.⁴³ In this sense, the use and function of literary *topoi* and the ways in which presented in the texts can be beneficial in adding depth into the information they provide. When approached to the *topoi* with a different goal in mind which is instead of examining the historical credibility, focusing on the way the *topoi* was presented in order, the hagiographer's choices of *topoi*, its narrative form and language can be more insightful. The hagiographers strove for the perfect imitation of holiness in their narratives of their subjects, and repetition of the saints' lives, deeds, miracles, and sayings rendered them present through the narrative.⁴⁴ The specific way in which the hagiographer desired to picture the saint can be understood through the presence of *topoi*.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the hagiographer's language and the choice of *topoi* can provide information on the hagiographer. The level of the text's language and the knowledge of the source material might be informative on the educational and social background of the hagiographer, since education was connected with one's social status.⁴⁶ Also evidently, the narration of *topoi* can be helpful for understanding the intended audience of the hagiographer.

⁴³ Efthymiadis (ed.), *Periods and Places*, (2014); Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); Thomas Pratsch, *Der Hagiographische Topos* (De Gruyter, 2005).

⁴⁴ Efthymiadis (ed.), *Periods and Places*, p. 256.

⁴⁵ Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, p. 6-7

⁴⁶ Efthymiadis (ed.), *Periods and Places*, p. 256.

Hagiography is one of the Byzantine literary genres that encompass an abundance of diverse spatial elements and dynamic transformations such as relocation, mobility, space constructions (and re-constructions) and accounts of spaces.⁴⁷ Relocation and mobility can appear in a wide range of travel and mobility narratives, including stories of pilgrimage to distant sacred places, accounts of saints' journeys and wanderings, as well as miraculous, posthumous movements of saints' remains and imagined mobilities, which include dream visions involving visits to sacred places or encounters with saints.⁴⁸ Additionally, narratives of space constructions frequently appear in texts through the various accounts such as transformations of profane spaces into sacred places through spiritual and physical descriptions, portrayal of heavenly places, as well as depictions of natural landscape with spiritual connotations and allegorical uses of natural landscapes to represent spiritual concepts.⁴⁹ Moreover, Byzantine saints' *lives*, the hagiographic accounts of a saint's path to holiness and sanctification, have been seen as excellent opportunities for an investigation of lived spaces since they include a wide range of spatially and socially defined human agencies as well as information on the rhetorical context in which the texts were used.⁵⁰

In this thesis, four primary sources for three stylites will be examined; two accounts for Symeon the Stylite the Elder, and the other three are, Daniel the Stylite, and Lazaros of Mount Galesion. Covering a time period between the fifth and the eleventh centuries, each *Life* supplies the image of the ascetic who took a stance on a pillar for his longing to 'fly up to heaven and to be separated from this life on earth'⁵¹ but found himself tangled with the world around as a result of the extremity of his

⁴⁷ Veikou, "Space and Identity," p. 99.

⁴⁸ Mihail Mitrea, "Introduction", p. 2

⁴⁹ Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, *Desert Ascetics of Egypt* (ARC Humanities Press, 2023).

⁵⁰ Veikou, "Space in Texts," p. 154.

⁵¹ Theodoret, 26.12

practices. In each text, the profound and inescapable attention drawn by the stylite emerges as a key concept that portrays the stylite's holy identity. On the one hand, the attention that the stylite receives is utilized by the hagiographers to construct and present the sanctity and holiness of their subject through the illustration of the extent to which the stylite generated movement and mobility in the form of visitors even though he is located in difficult and barren places. On the other hand, in each *Life*, the portrayal of movement and mobility in connection with the stylite seems to play a role in crafting an even more distinctive and unique identity for the individual.

2.2.1.1. The *Lives* of Symeon Stylite the Elder

There are three major hagiographical sources for Symeon Stylite the Elder: Theodoret of Cyrrhus' account of Symeon, written during the lifetime of the saint; *The Syriac Life of Symeon the Elder*, written by Symeon's disciples after his death; and the Greek *Life* written by Antonios, allegedly another disciple following his death.⁵² All of the sources were produced in the fifth century and appear to provide a coherent biography of the stylite with varying amounts of details. However, it should be kept in consideration that each source was written to serve a different purpose, therefore while a coherent representation of Symeon's life and practice is presented, each source focused on their respective concerns.

The first written account of Symeon belongs to Theodoret of Cyrrhus, the Antiochian theologian and church historian.⁵³ Born in 396, he was heavily exposed to ascetic life and monks during his childhood.⁵⁴ Also, his education in Greek grammar

⁵² Unfortunately, this source was inaccessible to me.

⁵³ R.M. Price, "Introduction," in *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R.M. Price (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2008), pp. x-xiv.

⁵⁴ Theodoret recounted the stories of her mother; her diseased eye was cured by Peter the Hermit as well as their weekly visit to Peter when Theodoret was a child, and, after thirteen years of a childless

and classics was argued to have a significant impact on his theological views and writings.⁵⁵ He became a monk in his early twenties and later on, he was made the Bishop of Cyrrhus in 423 where he lived until his death in 466.⁵⁶ He was also renowned within the ecclesiastical milieu with his involvement in the Nestorian Controversy.⁵⁷ During this debate which lasted nearly two decades, Theodoret produced numerous theological writings as well as ecclesiastical and religious history.⁵⁸ One of them is *Historia Religiosa*, or *A History of the Monks of Syria*, the compilation of the stories of twenty-eight ascetics from Syria written in 440 (or 444).⁵⁹ Written based on his personal encounters, Theodoret presents the fourth and fifth century ascetics who embodied the values of discipleship which were based on rigorous physical training in

marriage, she was prophesied by Macedonius to have a son if she would dedicate her son to the service of God. Theodoret, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, IX, XIII.

⁵⁵ The Attacized style and vocabulary of *Historia Religiosa* was argued to be an example of this influence. Price, "Introduction," *A History of the Monks of Syria*, p. xii; Istvan Pasztori-Kupan, *Theodoret of Cyrus* (Routledge, 2006), p. 4; Derek Krueger, "Writing as Devotion: Hagiographical Composition and the Cult of the Saints in Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Scythopolis," *Church History* 66, no. 4 (December 1997): 707–19, p. 709.

⁵⁶ By the age of twenty-three, he lost both of his parents which led him to dispose of all his belongings and enter monastic life in Nicerte, about a hundred kilometers from Antioch. He stayed there for four years while continuing his career as a writer. Price, "Introduction," *A History of the Monks of Syria*, p. xii

⁵⁷ The political and theological debates of the fifth century concerning the applicability of the term *theotokos* (i.e. 'God-bearer') to Mary, and concerning the two natures of Christ. Initially, the dispute was between the two patriarchs of the Empire; Nestorius, the newly appointed patriarch of Constantinople, and Cyril, who had been the patriarch of Alexandria since 412. After his appointment to the position of patriarch, Nestorius began to preach about his theological views regarding the nature of Christ as well as debating on the adequacy to title Mary as *theotokos*. He offered two possibilities on the matter; either Mary should be titled *theotokos* (God-bearer) and *anthropotokes* (man-bearer) simultaneously, as the former was given attributively, or simply using *Christotokos* (Christ-bearer) which comprises both terms in one. On the surface level, the dispute appeared to be fueled by theological disagreement however, it was argued that the actual reason was personal. The emperor had previously appointed the patriarch of Constantinople to investigate a situation in Alexandria, including the sudden deaths of a few of Cyril's opponents. Wishing to eliminate a possible investigation from Nestorius, Cyril started a theological dispute on him, trying to prove that he was a heretic because he was denying the divinity of Christ, and thus, unfit to investigate his case. Istvan Pasztori-Kupan, *Theodoret of Cyrus* (Routledge, 2006), pp. 7-8.

⁵⁸ Ten discourses of *On Divine Providence*, a series of *Commentaries* on the *Psalms*, the *Canticle*, the *Prophets*, and the *Pauline Epistles*, *A History of the Monks of Syria (Historia religiosa)*, and a *Church History* can be listed as some. Pasztori-Kupan, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, p. 18; Barry Baldwin, "Theodoret of Cyrrhus," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford University Press, 1991). Some of the work that are still extant can be found in Pasztori-Kupan, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁹ "Theodoret of Cyrrhus," *ODB*, p. 2049.

the pursuit of a higher life.⁶⁰ These ascetics variously portrayed the ideal of extreme solitude in the wilderness, strict fasting with a harsh diet, and various types of mortification of the body.⁶¹ His position as an ecclesiastical official, his native tongue of Syriac, and his close proximity to the ascetics allowed him to have frequent and easy conversations with them and learn about their cults.⁶² Due to this privileged position generated by his religious career and nativity to the language, Theodoret was able to provide reliable and detailed accounts of their lives and practices. On the other hand, the strength of *Historia Religiosa* as a series of portraits has been mentioned by R. M. Price in the introduction of his translation of the work. Drawing attention to the lack of distinctiveness in the stories of the holy men and the monotony in reiteration of the ideal of saintliness, Price regards *Historia Religiosa*'s defect as its weakness as a series of portraits while praising its quality as a series of stories.⁶³ He furthermore questions the comprehensiveness of *Historia Religiosa*'s treatment of holy men and cenobitic foundations in Syrian Orient, and points out some of the omissions, which he believes are due to Theodoret's insufficient knowledge of the history of Syrian monasticism.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," p. 4; Among Theodoret's thirty ascetics, the examples of practices which characterized Syrian asceticism could be found plenty fold. James of Nisibis lived in the wilderness, slept in the open and had a diet of wild, raw plants (1.2.), Julian Saba lived in a cave (2.2), John, Moses, Antiochus, and Antoninus mortified their bodies under extreme cold (23.1-2.). Theodoret, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. Price.

⁶¹ Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," p. 4.

⁶² Philip Rousseau, "The Identity of the Ascetic Master in the 'Historia Religiosa' of Theodoret of Cyrrhus: A New 'Paideia'?", *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998), pp. 235-36.

⁶³ Price, "Introduction," p. xv.

⁶⁴ Price refers to the list of the twenty-three most outstanding hermits of the late fourth century given by Theodoret in his *Ecclesiastical History* IV .28 (25). Of this list, only two, Paul of Apamea and Zeugmatius of the region of Cyrrhus are not mentioned in *Historia Religiosa*. When compared, the contemporary *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen (VI.33-34) also appears to be more comprehensive than *Historia Religiosa* since there are several monks in the former who are not referenced in the latter. Lastly, he finds Theodoret's treatment of cenobitic foundations 'obviously patchy' due to the brief and casual manner in which Theodoret mentions the cenobitic foundations that he must have known. Idem., pp. xvii-xviii.

Nevertheless, *Historia Religiosa* has been viewed as a valuable source for the understanding of early Syrian asceticism not only for its realistic accounts of the Syrian holy men but also for its presentation of their tradition through Hellenized lenses. His education in classical Greek is thought to have shaped his perspectives on Syrian asceticism, influencing how he perceived and understood it. His vocabulary as well as the structure in which he understands and describes his holy men was argued to be generated from the Hellenistic tradition.⁶⁵ The image of an athlete in the Olympic Games and his vigorous training were frequently utilized by Theodoret to describe the monks of Syria as the new athletes of God.⁶⁶ Rendering the image of strength and vigor in his ascetics, Theodoret focuses on the physical aspect of their practices and places the primary emphasis on the body, especially the renunciation of the flesh.⁶⁷

Theodoret presents Symeon within this framework of the Hellenistic tradition, as one whose soul and body are at odds with one another in a battle of will, and he positions this battle in the central point in Symeon's life.⁶⁸ In parallel with Plato's arguments about the importance of the treatment of the body and the soul, Theodoret characterized Symeon's vocation as *philoponia* and *philosophia*, love of labor and love of wisdom.⁶⁹ He understands Symeon's ascetic practices as the means by which he trained his body, and presented him with 'a life of true philosophy, in pursuit of the higher virtue of the soul.'⁷⁰ Explaining Symeon's reason to mount a pillar as the

⁶⁵ Price, "Introduction," p. xv; Rousseau, "The Identity," pp. 232-35.

⁶⁶ Theodoret, *A History of the Monks of Syria*. Same usage can also be found in the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, Frederick Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 35 (1915): 103-98; Rousseau, "The Identity," pp. 236-37.

⁶⁷ Antony Eastmond, "Body vs. Column: The Cults of St Symeon Stylites," in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Routledge, 2016), p. 88.

⁶⁸ S. Ashbrook Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder," *Vigiliae Christianae* 42, no. 4 (December 1988): 376-94, p. 379.

⁶⁹ Theodoret, 26.1.

⁷⁰ Theodoret, 26.1, 23; Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite," p. 379.

exhausting attention of the countless visitors, Theodoret views Symeon's pillar as the means by which he subjected his body to his will, thus enabling his soul to ascend.⁷¹

Written by two of Symeon's disciples in 473 A.D, the Syriac *Life* is the most detailed source on Symeon.⁷² It contains in depth descriptions of Symeon's practices, challenges and miracles as well as information on his cult site at Telneshe.⁷³ There are three known manuscripts of the *Life*. The earliest known one dates to 473 and is currently located at the Vatican Apostolic Library.⁷⁴ The other two sixth century manuscripts are located in the British Museum and they were bound together in the same volume, Add. 14484, by the nineteenth century curators in the British Library but they were actually produced separately.⁷⁵ All three versions share a unified material on Symeon's life and follows the same structure for the narration but each presents the varying accounts of the events and in a unique order.⁷⁶ While scholars have attempted to establish which manuscript recounts the version closest to the original, a consensus has not been reached yet.⁷⁷ When examined together, each

⁷¹ He explains Symeon's behavior by reminding the times when God had given unusual commands for 'the benefit of the more easygoing.' Some of the stories that he recounts are the ones when Isaiah was ordered to walk naked and barefoot (Is 20:2); when Jeremiah put a wooden collar on his neck (Jer 13:1) and later on, an iron one Jer 28:12); when Ezekiel lied on his right side for forty days and on his left for one hundred and fifty (Ezk 4:4-6). Theodoret, 26.12; Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite," p. 379.

⁷² I will be following Frederick Lent's translation of Add. 14484, folios 48v-133v. Also, in order to cite the source, the page numbers provided in Lent's translation, which they refer to the pages of Paul Bedjan's text, will be cited. Frederick Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 35 (1915): 103-98, p. 103. For the original manuscript in Syriac see, Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Leipzig, 1894; vol. IV, 507-644.

⁷³ Loosley Leeming, "The Historiography of Qal'at Sim'an," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, p. 28.

⁷⁴ This manuscript was transcribed and translated into Latin by S. E. Assemani in *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum* (Rome, 1748), Vol. II, pp. 273-394. Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites," p. 103; Dina Boero, "Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 73 (2019): 25-68, p. 25-26 n.3.

⁷⁵ The number of two manuscripts are Add. 14484, folios 48v-133v (B1) and the other Add. 14484, folios 134r-152v (B2). The unique handwritings of the two manuscripts and the papers' size differences support this claim. Dina Boero, "Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult," p. 26 n.6.

⁷⁶ Boero, "Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult," p. 26.

⁷⁷ Nöldeke and Peeters advocated for the primacy of the Vatican manuscript based on the date given in the manuscript while Lent and Torrey preferred Add. 14484 (B1) due to its high literary style. T. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, trans. J. A. Crichton (W. Drugulin, 1904), p. xiii; Paul Peeters, "Orient et Byzance: Le Tréfonds Oriental de l'Hagiographie Byzantine," *Subsidia Hagiographica* 26

manuscript in turn highlights the importance of local residents, pilgrims, and monks. The Vatican manuscript presents Symeon's life as shaped by the authors' personal contacts with Symeon and the stories of Symeon's associates, which stresses the local details and figures of the village and the physical aspect of Symeon's being. B1 manuscript from the British Library renders the image of Symeon that could be easily introduced to the pilgrims and to the veneration of the stylite, while B2 casts him as a spiritual father worthy for the veneration among the brethren.⁷⁸

The authors of the *Life*, Bar Hatar and Simeon bar Apollon who were also disciples of Symeon, did not specify the purpose of writing.⁷⁹ However, it was argued that the *Life* was written to promote the cult site in Telneshe in the absence of his bodily relics after they were transferred to Antioch upon the request of the people who wished to have the saint as the protector of the city.⁸⁰ Since the possession of the bodily of a saint enhanced a cult site's authority and influence,⁸¹ the absence of Symeon's relics would have posed a threat for the continuity of the cult site at Telneshe due to the difficulty of preserving a connection with the saint.⁸² It was suggested that the two disciples composed the Syriac *Life* in order to promote the site by highlighting the

(1950), p. 112-18; Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites," p. 103; Charles C. Torrey, "The Letters of Simeon the Stylites," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (1899): 253-76, pp. 275-76.

⁷⁸ Boero, "Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult," p. 62.

⁷⁹ Lent, p. 110.

⁸⁰ Dina Boero, "Promoting a Cult Site without Bodily Relics: Sacred Substances and Imagined Topography in the Syriac Life of Symeon the Stylite," in *Religious Competition in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Nathaniel P. DesRosiers and Lily C. Vuong (Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), p. 235; Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites," p. 641.

⁸¹ Arnold Angenendt, "Relics and Their Veneration," *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 2011, 19-26, pp. 19-21.

⁸² The material substances referred in the Syriac *Life* are water (Chaps. 35, 38, 56, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 89, 91, and 97), dust (Chaps. 33, 34, 35, 36, 89, 91, and 93), oil (Chaps. 29 and 88), hmana, which is a mixture of dust and other materials from the shrine combined with oil and water, (Chaps. 38, 39, 61, 63, 64, 71); Boero, "Promoting a Cult Site without Bodily Relics," p. 235-38.

distribution of material substances from the cult site as a means of accessing the saint's powers.⁸³

2.2.1.2. The Life of Daniel the Stylite

The *Life of Daniel the Stylite* is the hagiographic account of the fifth century stylite who accumulated fame on an imperial scale by his perpetual stance on his pillar in Constantinople. It was written for the veneration of the stylite, shortly after the death of Daniel, presumably some time between 494 and 496.⁸⁴ It was first published by Hippolyte Delehaye twice, in 1913 and 1923.⁸⁵ He argues that there were two versions of the original text, shorter and longer, which may have been composed by the same author considering the similar writing habits between the two texts.⁸⁶ The precise date of composition for both texts is unknown but the general consensus agrees on the period between 494 and 496.⁸⁷ In this thesis, I will be following the version translated and edited by Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes in *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*.⁸⁸

The identity of the hagiographer is unknown, yet scholars have attempted to uncover it by analyzing the source material.⁸⁹ He states his purpose of writing was ‘the

⁸³ Boero, “Promoting a Cult Site without Bodily Relics,” pp. 235-38. For the reflections of the distribution of these substances in the wider traditions of relic veneration see, Gary Vikan, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010).

⁸⁴ Lane Fox, ‘The *Life of Daniel*’ pp. 202-10; Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, p.6; Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, p. xxxv

⁸⁵ *Analecta Bollandiana* 32 (1913), pp. 121-216; Delehaye (1923), pp. 1-147.

⁸⁶ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ The shorter version was thought to be the earlier of the two, Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, pp. 119-122. For the production date of the *Life*, see, Lane Fox, ‘The *Life of Daniel*’ pp. 202-10; Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, p.6; Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, p. xxxv.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes, eds., “The Life and Works of Our Holy Father, St. Daniel the Stylite,” in *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, trans. Elizabeth Dawes (Mowbrays, 1977).

⁸⁹ Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, vol. 14 (*Subsidia Hagiographica*, 1923); Lane Fox, “The *Life of Daniel*,”; Michel Kaplan, “Un Saint Stylite et Les Pouvoirs: Daniel Le Stylite († 493),” in *Figures de l’Autorité Médiévale: Mélanges Offerts à Michel Zimmermann*, ed. Pierre Chastang, Patrick

edification and profit of the many’⁹⁰ while citing his sources as what he gathered from the disciples of the stylite before him and the events he witnessed himself.⁹¹ The usage of the first person plural in the later accounts of the *Life* has been interpreted by the scholars as probable evidence signaling the hagiographer’s identity as one of Daniel’s disciples.⁹² Also, it has been accepted that he did not use a written source for his content and wrote from his memory, thus confirming his personal knowledge of the events.⁹³

When compared to the contemporary sources, the *Life* presents an unparalleled level of detail for the political and religious matters of this period.⁹⁴ The *Life* spans over a time of the reigns of three emperors, Leo I, Zeno, and Anastasius, while the first two emperors receive the most attention from the hagiographer. Daniel appears as a figure of authority and influence in various events such as the Great Fire of 465, the Vandal attacks, and the uncovering of Aspar’s plot against Leo and Basiliscus’ revolt against Zeno’s reign that took place during the reigns of the two emperors. Furthermore, the *Life* stands out by the inclusion of the various prominent names in its narration, setting it apart from contemporary sources of its time and the *Lives* of other stylites.

Simultaneously, the hagiographer’s knowledge of the events and familiarity with the figures of the period has attracted scholarly attention for several reasons. First, it has been interpreted as a potential indication of the hagiographer’s professional

Henriet, and Claire Soussen (ED SORBONNE, 2016). The hagiographer deliberately chooses to remain anonymous, contending that his identity holds no significance compared to that of Daniel’s. *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 1.

⁹⁰ Idem., Ch. 1.

⁹¹ Idem., Chaps. 1, 12.

⁹² Delehay, *Les Saints Stylites*; Lane Fox, “The *Life of Daniel*,”; Michel Kaplan, “Daniel Le Stylite.” For the chapters where the hagiographer uses ‘we’ see, *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 91, 95, 96.

⁹³ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 120; Baynes, “Introduction”, p. 6.

⁹⁴ Meaghan McEvoy, “Emperors, Aristocrats, and Columns: Christian Imperial Politics in the Late Fifth Century CE as Reflected in the *Life of Daniel the Stylite*,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 15, no. 2 (2022): 428–61, p. 429; Lane Fox, “The *Life of Daniel*,” pp. 178–80.

background prior to becoming a member of the brethren. Since he is not only well-versed with the facts and the chronology of the events, but also with the succession lines of emperors and bishops, this familiarity has led the suggestion that the hagiographer might have had an affiliation with the administrative circles, where he would have had the opportunity to interact with prominent individuals from the court and ecclesiastical officials.⁹⁵ Another interpretation of this high involvement of figures of authority and influence was regarding the intended audience of the material and its initiator. In his examination on the *Life*, Robin Lane Fox refers to the positive manner in which the two archbishops, Anatolius and Acacius, and the all three emperors were described in while proposing the possibility that the *Life* might have been initiated by the archbishop of Euphemius as an attempt to integrate the stylite's public holiness via various means including govern the ceremonial of his death.⁹⁶

Another point of interest for the scholars has been the missing information on the monastic community that grew around Daniel's column and the absence of the above mentioned period of seventeen years. Despite the fact that a sizable monastic community had formed around Daniel's column, the hagiographer does not recount anything about the community aside from a couple mentions of Daniel's disciples and the complex of buildings around the column.⁹⁷ It is unknown who succeeded after Daniel or what happened to the community after his demise.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 120; Lane Fox, "The *Life of Daniel*," p. 190.

⁹⁶ Lane Fox, "The *Life of Daniel*," p. 210.

⁹⁷ The hagiographer recounts in one occasion that the community was large enough to send spare brethren to assist help in the foundation of another monastery at Parthenopolis, upon the request of a chamberlain named Calopodius, who founded a monster to the Archangel Michael, *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 89.

⁹⁸ The empress Licinia Eudoxia's safe return to Constantinople in 461/2, the Great Fire of 465, the wars with the Vandals in 468-70, the death of Leo in 471, Zeno's troubled succession, and the usurpation of Basiliscus are some of the stories that Lane Fox proves chronological correctness. Lane Fox, "The *Life of Daniel*," p. 188.

2.2.1.3. The Life of Lazaros of Mount Galesion

The *Life of Lazaros of Mount Galesion*⁹⁹ is the hagiographic account of the eleventh century stylite who spent the last forty years of his life living atop a pillar on the barren and inhospitable Mount of Galesion. Written by Gregory the Cellarer, a disciple of Lazaros, the *Life* was described by Kazhdan as ‘the last great example of eleventh-century hagiography’ due its lengthy and insightful accounts for contemporary monastic life.¹⁰⁰ It is produced in a period which is typically viewed as ‘particularly unproductive and disappointing’ in regard to the declining number of *Lives* of the new saints compared to the production of original hagiographic texts about saints of the period of Iconoclasm in the preceding centuries.¹⁰¹ Against this backdrop, *Life of Lazaros* came to be regarded as one of the most important hagiographic sources for the eleventh century.¹⁰²

Gregory the Cellarer was a close associate of the holy man. He was first Lazaros' disciple, then a monk at the monastery of the Resurrection on Galesion, and later held the office of cellarer.¹⁰³ It is not much known about Gregory, except from what he reveals about himself in the *Life*. He originated from Constantinople,¹⁰⁴ and

⁹⁹ I will be following the translation by Richard P. H. Greenfield in *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh-Century Pillar Saint*, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000). The edition used for the translation is taken from (BHG 979) *Acta Sanctorum Novembris* 3 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1910), 508-88.

¹⁰⁰ A. P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1990), p. 201.

¹⁰¹ Symeon A. Paschalidis, “The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Volume I: Periods and Places*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (USA: Routledge, 2016), p. 143; Paul Magdalino, “The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century,” in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. Sergei Hackel (NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), p. 52.

¹⁰² Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843-1118* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁰³ Earlier, he had been appointed as *trapezopoios*, a position in charge of setting the table or acting as a server in the refectory. Chap. 209; *Trapeza* refers to a refectory in a monastery, and the monk or nun in charge of the *trapeza* was called the *trapezarios*. In the *Life*, the holder of the *trapezopoios* position appears as a subordinate to the *trapezios* or to the cellarer, carried out several tasks in the pantry, and was also responsible for taking Lazaros his food. For the mention of this office see, Chaps. 82, 131, and 211. The discussion on the material concerning Gregory the Cellarer can be found in, Delehay, AASS, Nov 3; 504A-C.

¹⁰⁴ His mother was still living there and sending letters to him after he joined the community on Galesion, and also, he had friends from Constantinople, some of whom visited the monastery. *Life of Lazaros*, Chaps. 96-98.

based on the style and language of his work, Greenfield suggested that he had a reasonable education prior to his admission to the monastery.¹⁰⁵ Dating back to the end of the eleventh century,¹⁰⁶ Gregory the Cellarer's version of the *Life* has been accepted as the primary source for the other versions.¹⁰⁷ There are known two manuscripts of the primary *Life*. First one was found on Mount Athos, preserved in a single, fourteenth century manuscript in which the *Life* is found on folios 81 through 293.¹⁰⁸ This version was published by Hippolyte Delehaye in 1910 in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and the translation of this edition is what is being examined in this thesis.¹⁰⁹ The second manuscript which was a late copy of the first, dating to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, was found in the monastery of Saint Anne in Athos, n.6, folios 145-307.¹¹⁰ According to the note that the scribe of the earlier manuscript left at the end of the *Life*, it was copied at the monastery of Anastasis in Constantinople for the Great Lavra on Athos.¹¹¹ Moreover, the note also included that the original text on which the copy was

¹⁰⁵ Greenfield, "Introduction," p. 53.

¹⁰⁶ Since Gregory did not mention the year of production, the internal evidence from the *Life* had been utilized to determine a date. In Chap. 98, Gregory refers to an old friend who was involved in the revolt of Isaac Komnenos against Michael VI Stratiotikos. The mentioned revolt took place in the uncertain political environment in the Empire after Theodora's death in 1056 and, consequently, the extinction of the Macedonian dynasty. Although on her deathbed Theodora nominated Michael VI, an aging member of the civil aristocracy, eventually a revolt led by the dissatisfied army chiefs and aristocracy broke out. Along with the support of Michael Keroularios, the patriarch of Constantinople, Isaac Comnenus was chosen to head the revolt. The revolt only began after the proclamation of Isaac as emperor on 8 June 1057 at Kastamon in Paphlagonia. The success of the rebel army was ensured near Nicomedia at the end of August 1057 which was followed by the coronation of Isaac Comnenus as emperor on 1 September 1057. This would suggest that Gregory cannot have completed his work before late 1057, at least four years after Lazaros' death. For further information on the mentioned events see, Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History*, 2nd ed. (1985; repr., USA: Longman, 1997), pp. 70-73; Timothy E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium, 306-1453* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 252-53.

¹⁰⁷ There are four other sources dealing with Lazaros. As Greenfield states, the most substantial one among them is the thirteenth century reworking by Gregory of Cyprus, the patriarch of Constantinople. Since this version differs from the primary *Life* on important topics such as Lazaros' death and the finances of the construction of the monastery of the Resurrection on Galesion, it has been suggested that these differences might be due to Gregory of Cyprus' possession of a reworked version of the *Life*.

¹⁰⁸ It is found in Lavra I.127 of the fourteenth century. Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, p. cvi.

¹⁰⁹ (BHG 979) *Acta Sanctorum* Novembris 3 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1910), 508-88.

¹¹⁰ Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, p. cvi.

¹¹¹ The text of the manuscript note and the discussions on it as well as the details of the omissions are published by Delehaye in *AASS*, Nov. 3:503.5. Unfortunately this source was inaccessible to me. Richard P. H. Greenfield, "Introduction," p. 49 n. 243.

based on had been sent from Galesion, but due to the sack of “barbarians” (Turks) the text was incomplete, since it fell into the hands of a ‘perfumer’ who had torn the pages from the book to use as a wrapping paper. It is not known how the perfumer came into possession of the manuscript, but it appears that considerable damage did not take place as the missing parts, although important, do not appear to be substantial when compared to the length of the surviving document.¹¹²

There are seven major omissions in the *Life*, six of which appear to deal with the opposition to Lazaros or issues concerning his foundations. According to Greenfield, the missing parts occur at the Chaps. 170, 202, 223, 230, 237, and 245, and two of them are in relation with Lazaros and his opponents, one is concerned with Gregory’s plan to leave Galesion and the possible dangers of the monastery breaking up, and the other three contain the stories on the hostility shown toward Galesion by the church authorities at Ephesus.¹¹³ While it is not possible to know for sure what happened to the text, the fact that some of the omissions occur at significant points in the history of Lazaros’ foundations raises the possibility that they may have been intentionally removed by someone who wanted to get rid of the material that could have been damaging in the disputes surrounding Lazaros’ foundations.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Idem., p. 49.

¹¹³ Idem., p. 50 n. 244

¹¹⁴ Idem., p. 51.

CHAPTER III

THREE BYZANTINE STYLITES (5TH CENTURY TO 12TH CENTURY)

3.1. Historical Background

Stylitism, living a life atop a pillar (*stylos*), was an extreme form of asceticism, first documented in the fifth century Syria.¹¹⁵ Initiated by Symeon Stylite the Elder, also known as the Elder, who mounted his first pillar in 412, this tradition flourished down to the nineteenth century.¹¹⁶ During his lifetime, countless visitors flocked to the holy man as it was attested in the fifth century sources but his popularity grew even more after his death when his pillar became an important pilgrimage destination.¹¹⁷ It was the intensity and uniqueness that attracted this immense attention to Symeon; his zeal was exceeding the bounds of human nature. Confined in a very small space on top of his pillar but completely open to elements of nature as well as the gaze of the viewers, Symeon stood on his pillar for the last forty years of his life, midway between heaven and earth and proved that *angelikos bios*, the ‘life of the angels’ could be achieved.¹¹⁸

The word asceticism derived from the Greek word *askesis*, meaning “to train” or “to exercise” in the sense of a training in which an athlete undergoes to obtain

¹¹⁵ Theodoret, 26.

¹¹⁶ For an historical outline see Hippolyte Delehaye’s fundamental work on stylites, “Les stylites à travers les âges,” (1962), and Peeters (1950) 93-136 .

¹¹⁷ According to Theodoret of Cyrhus the pillar was a pilgrimage destination even during the lifetime of Symeon. Idem., Ch 26.17.

¹¹⁸ Morris, *Monks and Laymen*, p. 94.

physical ability and mastery over the body.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in the same context of a sports athlete, the words athlete and training have been employed within the literature by hagiographers in the descriptions of ascetics.¹²⁰ The life of asceticism was primarily characterized by the exercise of renunciation which can be broadly described as the renunciation of everyday life.¹²¹ While the forms of ascetics practices diversified vastly, the most common were ‘renunciation or restriction of nourishment, sexual abstinence, renunciation of possessions, seclusion from society, self-inflicted suffering, and renunciation of everything that might be conducive to joy’.¹²² The way of life for the early ascetics was modeled by the chief sayings of Jesus on the subject of discipleship; a follower of Christ should have no material possessions or a residence, he should break away from his family, and he must ‘bear his daily cross’.¹²³ Their lifestyle was shaped by the desire for an imitation of Christ’s passion; a training of his will to dominate his passions and human strivings and, by the means of which, he manifests the divine will with his obedience unto death.¹²⁴ It was not only abstaining from food or drink, but it was a way of denying oneself, bodily needs and passions in order to humble the soul¹²⁵ and seek a more intimate relationship with God.¹²⁶

In the fourth century, the withdrawal of St. Antony of Egypt from the world, seeking isolation in the desert, paved the way for countless ascetics to tread in his

¹¹⁹ Burabari Sunday Deeza, “Asceticism: A Match towards the Absolute,” *IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (2017): 85–98, p. 87.

¹²⁰ Theodoret frequently described his subject monks as athletes, Theodoret *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R.M Price. Same usage can also be found in the Syriac *Life* of Symeon, Lent, “The Life of St. Simeon Stylites.”

¹²¹ Morris, *Monks and Laymen*, p. 1.

¹²² Markus E. Fuchs, “Asceticism,” in *The Brill Dictionary of Religion* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 137.

¹²³ New Testament, Luke xii; xiv 33; John xv 19. Moses, Elijah, Paul and Christ were the favored models, Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1958), p. 147.; Brock, “Early Syrian Asceticism,” p. 4.

¹²⁴ Han J. W. Drijvers, “Hellenistic and Oriental Origins,” in *The Byzantine Saint: Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1980*, ed. Sergei Hackel (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1981), p. 32

¹²⁵ Psalm 35:13

¹²⁶ John Binns, *The T&T Clark History of Monasticism: The Eastern Tradition* (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020), p. 20.

footsteps. Written soon after the holy man's death, *The Life of St. Antony* recounts the story of his withdrawal from the world around him in order to pursue a religious life and solitude in the uninhabitable settings.¹²⁷ According to the source, when Antony was set out on his ascetic journey the desert was an unfamiliar location for isolation.¹²⁸ He was born about the year 250, around the age of twenty he decided to renounce the world and follow the Savior.¹²⁹ For the next fifteen years, he slowly withdrew himself from the world; first, he dwelled near his house, then left to see another ascetic in the next village but eventually decided to not go back in order to separate himself completely from the ties from his life before asceticism.¹³⁰ He kept vigils, fasted rigorously with a strict diet, deprived his body from rest, and remained in constant prayer.¹³¹ His next step was to retreat to the tombs at some distance to the village where he remained until the age of thirty-five.¹³² Desiring to indulge himself even more into his *ascesis*, he set out for *the Inner Mountain* (modern day Mount Clysma) towards the Red Sea and settled down in a deserted Roman fort.¹³³ After spending twenty years

¹²⁷ Athanasius. *The Life of St. Antony*. Translated by Robert T. Meyer, New York, N.Y., Newman Press, 1978.

¹²⁸ The *Life* mentions that there were not many monasteries when Antony began his journey in 270 and while there were monks who disciplined each in isolation, they would not go far from their villages. The barren and inhabitable environment of the Egyptian desert contrasted sharply with the settled land. Antony's ascetic journey in the desert grew gradually until he reached his retreat where his followers settled around. He first dwelled in a tomb at a considerable distance from the village for a period of time. At the age of thirty-five, he retreated further into the desert with a determination for absolute isolation and settled in a deserted Roman fort called Pispir (now Der-el-Memun) with as little as possible contact with the outside world. When he came out from his seclusion after twenty years of extreme asceticism and solitude, people who witnessed the physical state of Anton, for 'he was the same man they had known before his retirement, were persuaded to take up the monastic life. Athanasius, *The Life of St. Antony*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (New York: Newman Press, 1978), Chap. 8, 10, 11, 14. For the argument on the contrasting environments of the desert and inhabitable land and its influence on the emergence and development of the holy man figure in the Late Antiquity see, Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101.

¹²⁹ Antony started to practice asceticism after the death of parents. He sold all of his belongings, distributed those among the poor, placed his sister with nuns and devoted himself completely to ascetic life, Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony*, Chap. 3; Robert T. Meyer, "Introduction," in *The Life of St. Antony*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (New York: Newman Press, 1978), p. 3.

¹³⁰ Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony*, Ch. 3.

¹³¹ Idem., Ch. 7.

¹³² He arranged one of his acquaintances to bring him bread at long intervals and be in charge of the tomb's door, Idem., Ch. 8.

¹³³ Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony*, Ch. 12; Binns, *History of Monasticism*, p. 35.

of solitude, Antony came forth from his seclusion so that he could be the teacher of those who wished to imitate his lifestyle.¹³⁴ Anastasius also recorded that during Antony's twenty years in solitude, the inhibition of desert by the monks became more widespread with the arising of monasteries in the mountains.¹³⁵ While neither the practice of asceticism nor the existence of monks were not uncommon¹³⁶ Anastasius' composition of Antony's life accredited Antony with the title of the founder of monasticism and he became known as the paradigm of the eremitic monasticism.¹³⁷

This marked the beginning of a trend where the desert transformed into a favored abode for those seeking to advance their spiritual journey, embracing extraordinary challenges out of love for Christ; over time. Peter Brown comments on the impact of the contrast, or the lack thereof, between desert and settled land in shaping the structure of the ascetic ideals in the Syrian Orient.¹³⁸ He argues that the contrast between the desert and settled land in Egypt was harsh and absolute enough both in reality and the imagination of the Egyptians; the desert symbolized a certain death while survival was possible only with the formation of communities. Contrary, the landscape of the desert of Syria was not as vicious and life-threatening as the Egyptian; occasional rains assured that water was always near the surface and the ruins

¹³⁴ It is noted that Antony was forced to depart his isolation when the wanna-be ascetics broke down his door to have him as their teacher, Athanasius, *Life of St. Antony*, Ch. 14.

¹³⁵ Antony came forth from his solitude in the beginning of the 4th century. According to the *Life*, in total he spent thirty-five years or so in his practice. He was believed to be born in 250 and at the age of eighteen or twenty when he started to live as an ascetic near his house. Based on the timeline provided in the *Life*, he must have accepted his first followers in the year 305 or 307. Ibid.

¹³⁶ There were groups of men known as *apotaktikoi* or "renunciants" who lived communally in a similar fashion to widows and virgins but also combined a life of personal renunciation with service in the church. It has been suggested that the earliest use of the term *monachus* in Egyptian papyri (mentioned in f.1) was possibly denoted a member of this movement, Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹³⁷ Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism* (USA; UK: Blackwell Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 2-3.

¹³⁸ Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101, pp. 83-84.

of deserted Roman forts provided enclosure. Thus, allowing Syrian ascetics to pursue the “free floating ideal of the ‘angelic life’.”¹³⁹

Asceticism in the Syrian Orient had been notorious for the cultivation of its harsh and seemingly bizarre forms of ascetic tradition.¹⁴⁰ Aside from the practices that became nearly synonymous with asceticism such as fasting, withdrawal from the material world and various forms of bodily mortifications, Syrian asceticism produced some of the most extreme forms of practice. One can have an idea of the variety of these forms through the ascetics of Theodoret of Cyrrhus in *Historia Religiosa*; living in the open-air or in a cave in the wilderness, completely exposed to the forces of nature, or residing in a small cell with walls around in order to deprive from human company, yoking the neck to heavy weights, chaining body parts to restrict movement or to force the body to remain in a certain position, or chaining the whole body to rocks, night vigils, and perpetual prayer were some of the most commonly adopted practices of the Syrian ascetics.¹⁴¹ It seems safe to assume that the focus on the body, specifically the mortification of the flesh, clearly appears as the shared theme of the practices, which are recognized as a distinctive feature of Syrian ascetic tradition. Peter Brown argues that the visible and literal withdrawal from the society and its involvements bestowed on the holy man a sense of objectivity that would otherwise be unobtainable for a member of the society. His separation, coupled with the self-

¹³⁹ Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man,” p. 83.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 332; Sidney H. Griffith, “Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism,” in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (Oxford University Press, 1998), 200–238, p. 220; Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, p. v; David Brakke, “The Body in Early Eastern Christian Sources,” *American Society of Papyrologists* 37, no. 1/4 (2000): 119–34, pp. 128–29.

¹⁴¹ A significant number of the ascetics in *Historia Religiosa* lived in the open air. For forty-five years, Macedonius lived in the wilderness, constantly moving in order to escape from the attention and, instead of a cave or a hut, he dwelled in deep holes. (XIII.2.) Marcianus lived in the small cell which he had built just at the size of his body so he could not move at all and a wall surrounding the cell to deprive himself from human company. (III.2). Theodosius yoked his neck (X.2) and, in addition to the yokes, Eusebius of Teleda chained his body in a way that he would always remain in a seated position on the ground. (IV.6)

imposed ascetic practices which symbolized his sanctity, rendered the holy man as the ideal mediator for the problems of the villagers, those of both earthly and spiritual.¹⁴²

3.2. A Summary of the Lives

3.2.1. Symeon Stylite the Elder

The first known stylite, Symeon Stylite the Elder, was born 390 A.D., in a village named Şiş (Sisa) located near Antioch.¹⁴³ His introduction to asceticism took place when he was thirteen which was followed by his entrance to the monastery of Teleda where he started to develop his rigorous ascetic practices very early on in his spiritual journey.¹⁴⁴ However, after nine years in the monastery, his steadfastness in continuing the extremity of his practices eventually resulted in his dismissal from the monastery.¹⁴⁵ In 413, Symeon traveled northward until he reached the village of Telneshe where he would remain for the next forty-seven years until his death in 459.¹⁴⁶ He spent his first five years in a cell on the hill top near the village, of which three were spent in complete isolation, and in the following five, he stood on a platform in a corner in the mandra which started to develop around his enclosure due to his increasing popularity.¹⁴⁷ However, this was only the beginning of the immense attention that Symeon would attract throughout his life; once he left his enclosure and ascended to his first open-air pillar, his renown would exceed the borders of the Empire.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man," p. 85; Drijvers, "Hellenistic and Oriental Origins," pp. 32-33.

¹⁴³ Theodoret, 26.2; Lent, p. 111.

¹⁴⁴ Theodoret, 26.3; Lent, p. 124.

¹⁴⁵ Theodoret, 26.3; Lent, p. 123.

¹⁴⁶ Theodoret, 26.4; Lent, p. 182.

¹⁴⁷ Theodoret, 26.9-10.

¹⁴⁸ 'Not only do the inhabitants of our part of the world flock together, but also Ishmaelites, Persians, Armenians subject to them, Iberians, Homerites, and men even more distant than these; and there came

Over the span of thirty-seven years, Symeon stood a total of four pillars; each one was higher than the previous and none of them included a shelter or a roof of any form, leaving him completely exposed to the forces of nature. In the first seven years, he mounted three pillars, the first was eleven cubits tall (5 meters), the second one was seventeen (7.5 meters) cubits, and the last one was twenty-two (10 meters) cubits. His final and tallest pillar was forty cubits (18 meters) long, which was a symbolic reference to the number forty that was once shown to him in a dream back when he was residing in Telanissus. He remained on this pillar for the last thirty years of his life, until his death in 459. Even though Symeon stood on the same spot for forty-seven years, after his death, his body was transferred and buried in Antioch approximately ninety kilometers eastward.¹⁴⁹

3.2.2. Daniel the Stylite

Daniel the Stylite was born in a small village called Meratha in the territory of Samosata in Mesopotamia in 409.¹⁵⁰ His birth was a miracle to his parents; he was conceived upon his mother's prayer for a child, whom she dedicated to God.¹⁵¹ At the age of five, he was given the name 'Daniel' by the abbot of a monastery near by the village and at the age of twelve, he departed from his home to join the same monastery; he received the monastic habit, and remained there for the next twenty-five years.¹⁵² When he was thirty-seven, he joined the group of all archimandrites of the East, who were ordered to assemble in Antioch, and traveled with them to the village of

many inhabitants of the extreme west, Spaniards, Britons, and the Gauls who live between them. Of Italy it is superfluous to speak. It is said that the man became so celebrated in the great city of Rome that at the all entrance of the workshops men have set up small representations of him, to provide thereby some protection and safety for themselves.' Theodoret, 26.11.

¹⁴⁹ Lent, p. 189.

¹⁵⁰ Near modern-day Adiyaman. *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 2.

¹⁵¹ Idem., Chap. 2.

¹⁵² Idem., Chaps. 3-5, 101.

Telanissos where Symeon the Stylite was standing on his pillar.¹⁵³ Here, Daniel had the opportunity to witness the stylite himself, which, in hindsight, marked the initial interaction that would later develop into a close bond between the two holy men.¹⁵⁴ Following this meeting with Symeon, Daniel returned to his own monastery but his stay was not long. Since he was already eager to leave the monastery and ‘wishing to travel to the holy places and to worship in the church of the Holy Sepulchre and afterwards to retire to the inner desert’,¹⁵⁵ the news of his appointment as abbot was perceived by him as the sign of his freedom.¹⁵⁶ Leaving the monastery, Daniel started his journey toward Jerusalem; when he reached the enclosure of Symeon he remained there for two weeks. However the destination of his journey was changed quickly as he was advised to go to Constantinople instead of Jerusalem due to the dangerous environment caused by the revolt of the Samaritans.¹⁵⁷

He was forty-two when he reached Anaplus.¹⁵⁸ First, he stayed at the nearby oratory dedicated to the archangel Michael for seven days, then moved to a haunted church at the shore and remained there for the next nine years while his fame circulated

¹⁵³ Idem., Chaps. 6-7.

¹⁵⁴ As it will be mentioned briefly, Daniel spent two weeks in Symeon’s enclosure over his journey to Jerusalem. According to the hagiographer, Symeon tried to persuade Daniel to stay with him which Daniel responded by assuring that he is always with Symeon in spirit and left the monastery. Furthermore, the hagiographer mentions in the brief summary at the end of the *Life* that Daniel would used to stand on the capital of a column in the haunted church near the shore, and thus train himself beforehand. Considering that Symeon also trained himself in his enclosure before mounting his first pillar, it seems reasonable that Symeon could have informed Daniel about his practices *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 9, 101.

¹⁵⁵ Daniel had already persistently asked his superior’s permission on this matter. His superior denied his wish, but allowed him to join the archimandrites on their journey to Antioch. *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 6.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Thereupon he said to himself ‘At last you are free, Daniel, start boldly and accomplish your purpose.’ The unusualness of Daniel’s response for the news of his appointment was mentioned by the translator. Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes, eds., “The Life and Works of Our Holy Father, St. Daniel the Stylite,” in *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, trans. Elizabeth Dawes (Mowbrays, 1977), Chap. 9, p. 74.

¹⁵⁷ “Samaritans,” *ODB*, pp. 1835-36.

¹⁵⁸ Anaplos or Sosthenion (modern-day Istinye) is a small bay, located northward on the European side. *ODB*, p. 313. *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 13

into other regions.¹⁵⁹ His career as a stylite began in 459 following the arrival of Symeon's disciple, Sergius, in Constantinople to announce the death of Symeon, however Sergius' unsuccessful attempt in getting a hearing with the emperor led the two men's paths to cross which later marked the beginning of Daniel's stylite career.¹⁶⁰ The two men, along with the help of an imperial guardsman, erected Daniel's first pillar a short distance from the haunted church.¹⁶¹

Differing from the other stylites, Daniel's clientele included various names from aristocracy and dignitaries of Constantinople. As Robin Lane Fox described, Daniel's story is one of the "high life" in more than one way; not only in the sense of his pillar-dwelling but also in terms of the members of the high society that appear in multiple accounts.¹⁶² Cyrus the Poet, archbishops Anatolius and Acacius, empress Licinia Eudoxia and her son-in-law Olybrius, and Basiliscus present the diverse range of Daniel's high-society visitors.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, Daniel's most prominent visitor appears to be the emperor Leo, who frequently visited the stylite and also funded the constructions of the marty-chapel of St. Symeon as well as the monastery for the brothers and pilgrims, and also gifted Daniel with a double column.¹⁶⁴ He was venerated by Leo's successors, Zeno and Anastasius as well.¹⁶⁵ Over the span of his career, Daniel witnessed several political and religious upheavals. Possibly the most important event of Daniel's life would be his descent from his pillar during the usurpation of Basiliscus, as a protest.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, he also anathematized the Creed of Chalcedon, favoring Monophysitism and promoted the first three ecumenical councils;

¹⁵⁹ Idem., Chaps. 13-15.

¹⁶⁰ Idem., Ch. 22.

¹⁶¹ Idem., Ch. 23.

¹⁶² Lane Fox, 'The *Life of Daniel*' p. 178.

¹⁶³ Cyrus' accounts, (31-33, 36); archbishops Anatolius and Acacius (17-19, 27, 64, and 81-83); Licinia Eudoxia (34-35); Olybrius (35). *Life of Daniel*.

¹⁶⁴ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 23.

¹⁶⁵ Idem., Chaps. 72-77

¹⁶⁶ Idem., Chaps. 55, 65, 85, 95

Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus, which essentially initiated his descent.¹⁶⁷ Not being able to remain impartial, Daniel descended from his pillar one night and began his journey to the Holy Church, during which Daniel was being carried on the shoulders of the crowd since his feet were not in a condition to walk and performed healing miracles along the way to the church and back. After returning to his pillar, Daniel remained on his spot until his death in 490.

3.2.3. Lazaros Of Mount Galesion

Lazaros of Mount Galesion, whose secular name was Leo, was born in the vicinity of Magnesia on the Meander as the fifth child of peasant parents.¹⁶⁸ The exact date of his birth was not given however Gregory mentions that Lazaros was eighty-six years old at the time of his death on 7 November 1053 which puts his birth date between 966/977.¹⁶⁹ The theme of traveling and constant movement that argued to be key features of Lazaros' life began in his early years when he was sent to a local priest named Leontios to start his education at the age of six; three years later, at the age of nine, he went to study with a notary called George at the nearby monastery of Oroboi; and, at the age of twelve, he went to live with his uncle Elias who was a monk at another neighboring monastery of Kalathai.¹⁷⁰ During his time at Kalathai, he had a compelling desire to travel to Jerusalem which later on resulted in his unsuccessful attempt to run away from the monastery. He remained at Kalathi for two years until he was sent to another monastery of Strobilion where he studied to be a notary under the guidance of a monk named Nicholas.¹⁷¹ After spending three and a half years there, he

¹⁶⁷ "Basiliscus 2", *PLRE*; *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 72

¹⁶⁸ *Life of Lazaros*, Ch. 2.

¹⁶⁹ *Idem.*, Ch. 254.

¹⁷⁰ *Idem.*, Ch. 4.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

finally succeeded in escaping for the East at the age of eighteen.¹⁷² His journey across Asia Minor must have taken several months and presumably in 984 or 986, Lazaros reached Attaleia.¹⁷³ He spent a total of seven years in Attaleia, associated with a monastery in the vicinity where he was tonsured, received the monastic habit, and took the religious name of Lazaros.¹⁷⁴ Here, he first experienced solitary life in a cave near the monastery, formed a small community, as well as gaining considerable local reputation as a holy man.¹⁷⁵ Remaining there until the pressures of his growing popularity became intolerable, Lazaros departed from Attaleia for his life-long dream of visiting the Holy Land.¹⁷⁶

Lazaros spent the first six years in Jerusalem as a monk at the lavra of St. Sabas which at this time was a large monastic community a short distance from Jerusalem; but after disobeying the superior for his determination to pursue a solitary life in the desert during Lent, he was expelled.¹⁷⁷ He then moved to the monastery of St. Euthymios, which was also quite near Jerusalem and remained there for an unspecified amount of time until he realized that the standards of monastic life there did not match with his.¹⁷⁸ Returning back to the lavra of St. Sabas, with the help of the archdeacon of the church of the Resurrection in the Holy Sepulchre¹⁷⁹ complex in Jerusalem who was also his initial sponsor for his first admittance to St. Sabas, and remained there until the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre on the order of the Fatimid

¹⁷² Idem., Chaps. 5-6, 254.

¹⁷³ Idem., Ch. 9.

¹⁷⁴ Idem., Chaps. 9-10, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Idem., Chaps. 10-13.

¹⁷⁶ He must have been around the age of twenty-five or twenty-six when he reached Jerusalem, sometime between 991 and 993. Idem., Chaps. 14-15.

¹⁷⁷ During his time at the monastery of St. Sabas, Lazaros held the office of *kanonarches*, the precentor of the monastic choir who led the singing and directed choir offices, together with another monk. Idem., Chaps. 16-17.

¹⁷⁸ Idem., Ch. 17.

¹⁷⁹ According to Greenfield, this patriarch can be identified as Orestes Hieremias, who held the office between 986 and 1006. Greenfield, "Introduction," p. 8. n. 19.

caliph which is generally dated to September 1009.¹⁸⁰ During his second stay at St. Sabas, he not only became a fully professed monk but was also ordained priest by the patriarch, and at the same time he was developing his rigorous ascetic practices.¹⁸¹ After spending a period of time between sixteen and nineteen years in the Holy Land, Lazaros left St. Sabas and Jerusalem and set out for Asia Minor again, probably at the age of forty-two or forty three.¹⁸² He traveled northward toward Asia Minor while making stops to visit various pilgrimage sites; he visited the “Wondrous Mountain” at Antioch where Symeon the Stylites the Younger had resided as a stylite, then he continued up through Cilicia into Cappadocia and then northward again to visit pilgrimage sites in Pontus, finally he turned west and returned first to Chonai and then to Ephesus.¹⁸³

According to Gregory the Cellarer, twenty years passed between Lazaros’ departure from his homeland and the time he returned back which puts the date of his return prior to 1009; however, as pointed out by Richard Greenfield, this dating appears to be impossible if Lazaros witnessed the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and he argues that Lazaros must have spent more than twenty years away from the area, possibly twenty-five or twenty-seven years.¹⁸⁴ Upon his return to

¹⁸⁰ *Life of Lazaros*, Ch. 19.

¹⁸¹ Greenfield dates Lazaros’ ordination to a date prior to 1001 based on Orestes’ absence in Jerusalem from 1001 onward, having gone to Constantinople as an ambassador from Fatimid caliph to sign a peace treaty with Basil II and remained there until his death. Thus, Lazaros’ ordination must have taken place before 1001. Greenfield, “Introduction,” p. 8 n. 19.

¹⁸² *Life of Lazaros*, Ch. 20.

¹⁸³ His long and difficult journey illustrates the problems and dangers of a solitary traveler at the time. Lack of basic resources, dangers from not only strangers but also from nature and wildlife are some of the rigors for a solo traveler. Idem., Chaps. 21-30.

¹⁸⁴ He proposes that if Lazaros fled Jerusalem in the fall of 1009, he was probably on Mount Argeas near Caesarea in Cappadocia in the early spring of 1010, and on the way to Euchaita in Pontus by early March of that year; since he had another six hundred miles or more to travel before reaching to the region of Ephesus, it seems possible that Lazaros returned back to his homeland region in the end of 1010 or the beginning of 1011. (*Life of Lazaros*, Chap. 28) Based on the *Life*, Delehaye (*Stylites*, p. cxv), Janin (*Eglises centres*, p. 242 n. 6) and Foss (*Ephesus*, 128) suggest the dates 1005 and 1006. Greenfield, on the other hand, proposes the possibility that Gregory might have heard the number from Lazaros himself or found it in the *typhon* (Chap. 246) and mistakenly took it as a reference to the time Lazaros was away from his homeland in the Ephesus region. He argued that this explanation would

Oroboi, he had a short visit to his home village where he and his mother were united once more, and briefly stayed at a monastery above the village of Kepion, just outside Ephesus.¹⁸⁵ Eventually, he decided to settle in a small hermitage dedicated to St. Marina which was occupied by two brothers.¹⁸⁶ These men built Lazaros' first pillar, and it was here that Lazaros' renown as a stylite began for he spent the next seven years on top of his pillar at St. Marina.¹⁸⁷ His reputation quickly spread to the point where it attracted enough attention for a small monastery to be constructed with the help of the local benefactors.¹⁸⁸ At first, their food supply was provided by the donations of the locals, but they were able to produce their food once the metropolitan of Ephesus granted some land to the community.¹⁸⁹ Over time, the situation of the monastery beside the main road was not suitable for spiritual training due to the noise coming from the road.¹⁹⁰

After seven years at St. Marina, Lazaros decided to settle on the neighboring mountain, Galesion, which was barren and inhabitable. He left his pillar and settled in a cave that had been previously occupied by a holy man named Paphnoutios.¹⁹¹ His first stay lasted for only six months before he was ordered off the mountain by the metropolitan of Ephesus; however, he returned shortly after by taking advantage of the

make sense since Lazaros left Attaleia sometime between 991 and 993. Greenfield, "Introduction," pp. 9-10; n.24. For detailed comments on the mileages of Lazaros' journey see, Greenfield, pp. 108-113 n. 131-146.

¹⁸⁵ His identity was revealed when he asked questions about his family as well as his first teacher, George. When George heard about Lazaros, since it was the former's son to whom Lazaros talked, he recognized his identity, and sent someone to get Lazaros' mother to see her son, for she was still alive but his father had passed. *Life of Lazaros*, Chap. 30.

¹⁸⁶ Initially, his teacher George suggested the monastery at Kepion for Lazaros to settle but for an unspecified reason, Lazaros did not wish to live there. Also, St. Marina was located at the foothills of the mountain called Koumaron. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Idem.*, Ch. 31.

¹⁸⁸ *Idem.*, Ch. 33.

¹⁸⁹ This metropolitan was identified as Theodore II of Ephesus who is listed by M. Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus* (Paris 1740; repr. Graz 1958), 1:686 cited in Greenfield, n. 176.

¹⁹⁰ *Life of Lazaros*, Chap. 36.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

metropolitan's absence.¹⁹² Considering the initial six months, Lazaros' permanent move to Galesion can be dated to 1019.¹⁹³ In a short time, the brethren at St. Marina built him a pillar near the cave of Paphnoutios and eventually the community known as that of the Savior grew up around Lazaros' pillar and, in the course of time, came to have resident monks and a church.¹⁹⁴ After spending twelve years at the Savior, Lazaros decided to move higher up on the mountain to a new pillar, following a disagreement with some of his monks over the constant visits of a nun from Ephesus.¹⁹⁵ His move to his second pillar, that of the Theotokos, must have taken place in 1030 or 1031.

Following the same pattern, a community gradually began to develop around his pillar at the new site which, simultaneously, rendered the site unsuitable for Lazaros' requirements for an unspecified reason, though it could be possible that it became too cramped.¹⁹⁶ Neither the duration of his residence at the Theotokos nor the date of his third move was mentioned; nevertheless, based on the indications that it may have occurred in mid 1042.¹⁹⁷ Around his last pillar, that of the Resurrection, which was the largest and most enduring community on Galesion. On 7 November 1053, after being ill for around three years, Lazaros died on his pillar at the monastery of the Resurrection.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Idem., Chaps. 41, 53.

¹⁹³ Greenfield, "Introduction," pp. 11-12.

¹⁹⁴ *Life of Lazaros*, Ch. 56.

¹⁹⁵ Idem., Chaps. 57-58.

¹⁹⁶ According to the *diatyposis* in Chapter 246, the monastery of the Theotokos was at the same size as the Savior and was a small establishment at the end of Lazaros' life.

¹⁹⁷ Greenfield points out to Chapters 229-30 for the evidence to establish the earliest possible date for Lazaros' move. He considers the narrative of an anonymous monk who was sent to Constantinople by Lazaros for a mission; it was mentioned that Lazaros had already moved to the pillar of the Resurrection when the anonymous monk returned to Galesion. The anonymous monk was in Bulgaria during the rebellion of Peter Deljan which took place in 1040-41. The monk 'wandered about' for some time after returning to Galesion until he received Lazaros' permission to go on the mission. Chapter 102 also tells the story of a mission that went to Constantinople from Galesion in April 1042. Thus, it seems likely that Lazaros' final move took place between late 1041 and sometime after June 1042, when the anonymous monk returned. Greenfield, "Introduction," n. 40.

¹⁹⁸ *Life of Lazaros*, Chaps. 206-207.

CHAPTER IV

SPACE AND STYLITE

4.1. Spatial Turn

As the discussions on the nature of space started to develop and new ways of approaching space and its intricate involvement in human life, the prioritization of time over space as a parameter of analysis was seeming to cease. It was Henri Lefebvre and Michael Foucault, the two major figures, who were the first ones to develop their ideas on the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical relations between space and time which later on would give rise to the theoretical movement referred to as ‘the Spatial Turn.’ In the framework of this movement, space has been viewed as a comprehensive concept constituted by the integration of various dichotomic attributes of space such as absolute and relative, relational and materially-sensed, physical and social, conceptualized and lived space, and it has been attributed a complex involvement in historical developments.¹⁹⁹ Arguing against the typical consideration of space as a mere background or a container for the social process, or as a static and marginalized, the works of these two scholars were based on the view of space as relative and relational, space as socially constructed by people.²⁰⁰

The two front names in this reassertion of space are Henri Lefebvre, and Michel Foucault, who propounded their rethinking of the relations between time and space. Following his claims on the ‘epoch of space’ in his 1967 speech, Foucault introduced

¹⁹⁹ Veikou, Nilsson, and James, “(Byzantine) Space Matters!,” p. 1.

²⁰⁰ Soja, “Taking Space Personally,” pp. 18-19.

the concept of ‘heterotopias.’²⁰¹ Underlining the necessity to recognize the centrality of space as it appears ‘to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems,’²⁰² he argues that by tracing the history of space in Western thought, it is possible to dissect the ‘hierarchical ensemble of places’ of the Middle Ages such as sacred and profound, urban and rural, protected and open places.²⁰³ Focusing on the spatiality of social life, lived spaces and the relations between them, he identified the space as not only a container of individuals and objects, but as involving individuals, history and time, and suggests that ‘we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.’²⁰⁴ According to Foucault, it is possible to describe the different spaces of sites by examining the set of relations that give the site its definition.²⁰⁵ Moreover, his discourse on space was further developed by the involvement of power struggles. In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), the intertwined relation between power and knowledge continues to underscore the significance of space in understanding social structures and power dynamics.

In his view, he identifies two main types of spaces; the utopias, which are idealized and perfected form of society itself but ‘fundamentally unreal spaces’, and the heterotopias, the contrasting space for the utopias, which are a mix of both real and unreal places which create a space of illusion which in a way reflects the world outside.²⁰⁶ He argued that these are the real sites that are constituted in every society with diverse forms that are ‘simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted,’ and

²⁰¹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” p. 22.

²⁰² Idem., p. 21.

²⁰³ Idem., pp. 21-22.

²⁰⁴ Idem., p. 22.

²⁰⁵ Idem., p. 23.

²⁰⁶ Shymchyshyn, “Geocriticism” in *Spatial Literary Studies*, p. 21.

exist outside the conventional norms and structures of society.²⁰⁷ They are created to serve for various needs of the society; in the primitive societies, according to him, these heterotopias were reserved for the individuals who are in a state of crisis such as the elderly, menstruating women, and expecting mothers.²⁰⁸ In the modern world, these heterotopias of crisis were replaced with what he called '*heterotopias of deviation*', designated for individuals 'whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required norm.'²⁰⁹

In 1974, Henri Lefebvre proposed his considerations of space and its nature in *The Production of Space*. Arguing that up until the twentieth century, space had a strictly geometrical meaning which had stemmed from the Cartesian logic of space and time held as two categories that facilitated naming and classing of the evidence of senses, which had attributed space with a notion of absolute.²¹⁰ "As Object opposed to Subject, as *res extensa* opposed to, and present to, *res cogitans*, space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies."²¹¹ His criticism for the prevailing views on space was primarily centered on their inadequacy in capturing the complex nature of space. He claimed that these views often reduced space to abstract mathematical concepts, ignored the diversity of spatial experiences across cultures, and failed to consider the influence of social practices, everyday life and activities, and power relations in shaping space.²¹² What is essential, according to Lefebvre, was an approach that aims to discern the dialectical interplay between spatial arrangements and social organization itself.²¹³ For this reason, he focused on the conflicts related to

²⁰⁷ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," p. 24.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," pp. 23-24.

²¹⁰ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 1

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Idem., pp. 2-15.

²¹³ Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 157.

the meaning of space and explored how cultural meaning was attributed to interactions across territories.²¹⁴

Within his theoretical framework, space has been posited as the primary point of lived experience of the world, shaped through an approach, which translates it from the mental realm to the materiality of our engagement with the world.²¹⁵ His view on space was based in terms of its social production; theorizing space as a site of ongoing interactions of social relations which is created and influenced by social, economic and political means, Lefebvre propounded that ‘(social) space is a (social) product.’²¹⁶ It is a product of the human body, continually shaped by both conceptual and perceptual activities that transpire within it.²¹⁷ It is, therefore, the performed activities such as how people use and interact with space, how they move through it, and how they allocate it for various purposes that attributes space its form, function, and meaning. In his words, space is a ‘process of production,’²¹⁸ rather than simply the product. Since space has an ever-changing nature that is perpetually transformed by the certain activities that it contains, he suggested that attention should be placed on this process of manufacturing.²¹⁹

Furthermore, the act of producing space was seen as a shared characteristic and fundamental aspect in each society. He suggested that ‘every society produces a space, its own space,’²²⁰ in order to highlight the dynamic relationship between society and the spaces it inhabits. Lefebvre contends that every society actively constructs their spaces influenced by its cultural, historical, and social relations. This means that

²¹⁴ Idem., p. 146.

²¹⁵ Ceri Watkins, “Representations of Space, Spatial Practices and Spaces of Representation: An Application of Lefebvre’s Spatial Triad,” *Culture and Organization* 11, no. 3 (2005), p. 209.

²¹⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 26.

²¹⁷ Awelani Moyo, “‘Knowing One’s Place,’” in *The Question of Space*, ed. Marijn Nieuwenhuis and David Crouch (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), p. 29.

²¹⁸ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 36.

²¹⁹ Idem., pp. 36-37.

²²⁰ Idem., p. 31.

different societies, at different points in time, will produce unique spatial organizations, meanings, and practices that reflect their specific contexts. The production of space involves a complex dialectical relationship, where economic, social, and cultural influences, with spatial practices that range from urban planning to everyday spatial activities of both individuals and communities contributing to this process.²²¹ Additionally, the pivotal role of representation and symbolism in the production of space has been acknowledged; spaces are often represented in various forms such as maps, literature and art, they embody the way in which these spaces are perceived and understood. Moreover, he emphasized the involvement of power dynamics and ideology in this production and how some certain groups may gain influence and control over space which might create issues of spatial inequality and exclusion.²²² Due to this multifaceted nature of the interrelated dynamics, what he aimed to provide was not a single discourse on space, but rather to 'expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory.'²²³

4.2. Social Space and Spatial Triad

In *The Production of Space* (1974/1991), Henri Lefebvre's introduces his views on space and its nature with a critical tenet that space should not be seen as merely a neutral backdrop or the physical arrangements of objects and places but should be viewed as a site of ongoing interactions of social relations which reflects the societal interactions, power dynamics, and cultural influences.²²⁴ He posits space as

²²¹ Idem., p. 32.

²²² Idem., p. 33.

²²³ Idem., p. 16.

²²⁴ '...the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, escapes in part from those who would make use of it.' Idem., p. 26.

the primary point of lived experience of the world, shaped through an approach to space, which translates it from the mental realm to the materiality of our engagement with the world.²²⁵ Central to his view, he argues that space gains its form, function, and meaning through performed practices. In this vein, he proposes that space should be seen as a process of production, rather than a mere outcome, and because of that the attention should be on how space becomes, rather than what is space.²²⁶ Lefebvre contends that space is continually shaped by the social interactions transpiring within it and based on this, he argues that every society produces its own space through their own spatial practices.²²⁷ Because of its multilayered and interwoven nature, an examination on space and the processes that give space its form can offer deeper understanding of historical societies and cultures.

Furthermore, highlighting the importance of examining space as itself, Lefebvre proposes his triad spatial model, consisting of *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived space*, as an analytical tool for establishing the process of space production.²²⁸ In order to analyze the process of production of space, he considers every experience to be consist of three interrelated aspects of space, a three-dialectic of *spatial practices* (which can be perceived), *representations of space* (which can be conceived) and *spatial representations* (which can only be lived).²²⁹ In this context, *spatial practices* constitute the tangible aspect of space that includes the material environment and places people inhabit and interact with;²³⁰ *representations of space* refers to the mental and symbolic construction of space, which includes how societies perceive, conceptualize and represent space through means of maps, plans, and images; lastly,

²²⁵ Watkins, "Representations of Space," p. 221.

²²⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 26.

²²⁷ Watkins, "Representations of Space," pp. 209-11.

²²⁸ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, pp. 38-39.

²²⁹ Idem., pp. 31-33.

²³⁰ Idem., p. 33.

spaces of representation reflect the social and lived experiences of space which contains the ways in which space is used, appropriated, and given meaning by individuals.²³¹ Within this framework, all three aspects are interrelated and mutually constitutive; spatial practices are influenced by representations of space, while spaces of representations are carefully balanced between spatial practices, shaping and being shaped by both.²³² This model offers a comprehensive lens through which spatial practices and their complexities can be understood. At the same time, its interplay between these aspects creates a platform for different areas of research to come together and, thus, allows for nuanced analysis for the intricate relationships between physical environments, human perceptions, societal dynamics, and symbolic meanings.

4.3. Mobility and Travel in the *Lives*

The *Lives* of stylites appear as an interesting case for an examination of how mobility and movement appeared and functioned within the narratives. While the practice of stylitism might initially convey a sense of immobility and fixity that characterizes the lives of stylites, and consequently their stories, the relationship between stylites and movement appears to be an interconnected and dynamic one, in constant dialogue with the social and political context of their time. This could be the movement of the stylite, either vertical, as they ascend to higher pillars or horizontal, as they seek more suitable locations. It could also encompass the movement of others, including lay people who traveled from unusual distances²³³ to see the stylite with

²³¹ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 33; Watkins, “Representations,” pp. 209-10; Veikou, “Space in Texts,” p. 148.

²³² Veikou, “Space in Texts,” p. 148.

²³³ According to Theodoret of Cyrillus, Symeon the Elder drew visitors from a wide array of regions, including ‘Ishmaelites, Persians, Armenians subject to them, Iberians, Homerites, [...], Spaniards, Britons and the Gauls.’ Moreover, his reputation was so widespread in Italy that it was ‘superfluous to

various reasons, high-profile visitors such as ecclesiastical or imperial officials, or those aspiring to become his disciples and learn from him. The stylite withdrew himself from the physical world by ascending upwards in a remote and unbarren location in order to find solitude, however, at the end, it was his practice, and the extraordinary spectacle that it portrayed that attracted the world to him.

The primary focus in this chapter is on the narrative role of literary spatiality, specifically the representations of this complex relationship between stylite and the world in spatial terms. As it will be discussed below, mobility, movement, travel, and relocation are employed in different ways as a narrative strategy by the hagiographers to communicate the stylite's holy identity. The four hagiographical texts in this chapter will be examined to show how these spatial terms are utilized within the narratives to construct the stylite's identity. The textual analysis involves two key aspects; an exploration of how mobility and travel are portrayed in the narratives and a discussion on how these elements function as a narrative strategy to communicate the stylite's holy identity to the readers.

When analyzing the two accounts of Symeon the Elder's life, it becomes evident that mobility and travel are employed to communicate Symeon's identity as a figure of authority and power, not only on an individual level but also within an empirical context. Although the texts present Symeon in their respective senses, it appears that both texts display a similar picture of him; the holy man who stood on his pillar in the land of Roman, attracting visitors all over the world. The abundant portrayal of non-Roman visitors and their reverence for Symeon imparts to the reader the breadth of Symeon's renown and influence, suggesting that his spiritual authority transcended geographical boundaries. This depiction is repetitively portrayed with the

speaking,' since he became incredibly renowned in Rome to the extent that small representations of Symeon were put at the entrance of the workshops for protection and safety. Theodoret, 26.11.

accounts of Symeon's visitors, demonstrating the veneration and respect he received to emphasize his spiritual and charismatic authority over them. Simultaneously, this portrayal appears to position the stylite on the borderland, constantly standing between the Roman land and the non-Romans, both attracting and compelling anyone regardless of spiritual and civic affiliations.

The narrative frames in both Theodoret's account and the Syriac *Life* present a similar portrayal of Symeon's life. Each narrative begins with Symeon's conversion as a youth to the ascetic life, followed by his incompatibility with the communal monastic life, his subsequent solitary asceticism and then his eventual life as a stylite.²³⁴ During his lifetime, Symeon traveled on a couple of occasions for short periods of time and only in the beginning of his monastic career; when he left his home to join the monastery, when he left the brethren to find solitude in the wilderness and when he departed for good which was followed by his settlement in the village of Telneshe. Compared to the rest of his career, both texts mentioned these travels quite briefly while portraying that these movements were in a way forced on Symeon. Although the details of the events are depicted with slight differences, the reason for his departure from the monastery was given as the idiorhythmic extremes of his practices and his tenacity to these practices which diverged from the established order adhered to by the other members of the community, posed a threat to their communal harmony. Other than these, the stylite's only movement was upwards with the four pillars increasing in height. The hagiographers' *apologia* for Symeon's unusual practice and thus their explanations for his movement differ.

²³⁴ The key divergence between the two texts lies in the account of Symeon's death. The Syriac *Life* concludes the narrative by describing the funeral rites by which Symeon was buried whereas Theodoret's account lacks this, as he wrote long before Symeon's death. Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "The Stylite's Liturgy: Ritual and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, no. 3 (1998), pp. 527-28.

Theodoret explains the reason for Symeon's movement upwards as a result of the crushing, both metaphorically and literally, attention of the visitors.²³⁵ In the years following his arrival in Telneshe, Symeon completed three years as a recluse in his cell, spending the forty-days of the Lent in complete isolation without partaking any food or water, and then repairing to the hill-top, he settled in his enclosure on the hill-top.²³⁶ During this time, his renown was already circulating everywhere, attracting people from "every side and every road resembling a river."²³⁷ The endless visitors would come to him, asking the stylite to provide remedy for their various requests. However, the visitors were beyond counting and none of them were well-behaved, as "they all tried to touch him and reap some blessing from his garments of skins."²³⁸ Exhausted from the excess attention, Symeon found the solution in standing on a pillar, separating himself from the weight of the world which was flocking to him. Theodoret expounds the increasing heights of his pillars with his desire to be separated from the world, "for he yearns to fly up to heaven."²³⁹

The Syriac *Life* follows an overall similar narrative for Symeon's early years as a recluse albeit with more details but the explanation for Symeon's vocation is different than Theodoret's. According to the hagiographers, Symeon was already a known name within the vicinity of the region prior to his ascend; he would receive visitors from neighboring villages and cities,²⁴⁰ his sanctity was powerful enough to perform miracles by the invocation of his name.²⁴¹ The narrative follows with

²³⁵ Theodoret, 26.12.

²³⁶ Theodoret, 26.7-10.

²³⁷ Idem., 26.11.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Theodoret, 26.12.

²⁴⁰ A man and his paralyzed daughter from the village of Yathlaha which was about three miles from Telneshe, two paralytic boys from Antioch, a man with his son who was possessed by evil spirits came from Halab, and a boy from Antioch who had bladder stones. Lent, pp. 125-28.

²⁴¹ A deacon who was about three miles away from the cell was able to save the boy with him from getting hurt by a serpent by evoking his name. Idem., pp. 128-29.

Symeon's seclusion on the hill-top which lasted for a year and a half and the opening of the doors of his enclosure once the time had passed.²⁴² It was after the opening of the doors that the very first step of Symeon's vocation took place when he set up a stone of two cubits high (a little higher than a meter) so that he could stand on it.²⁴³ The hagiographers of the *Life* explains Symeon's actions by presenting him against the model of a prophet in the Old Testament; they remind how Isaiah walked naked, Jeremiah wore yoke and thongs, Ezekiel acted like he was insane, and Hosea married a harlot.²⁴⁴ They did not merely proclaim God's word but they acted it out, whether through tangible acts like serving, healing, or patronage, or through symbolic behavior that disturbed and shook their community.²⁴⁵ Moreover, they received God's word when they went apart to commune with God to high places such as mountains. Symeon's unusual practice was explained against this model. During his seclusion on the hill-top, a series of divine visions guided Symeon to the revelation that this is God's will. He was presented with two models; first, Moses, as he is told, "Just as I was with Moses, so also I will be with you,"²⁴⁶ and then Elijah, who gave the crucial instruction for Symeon to ascend the pillar.²⁴⁷ Symeon was called to restructure God's world, assuming the roles of a new Moses who dispensed new Law from his figurative Mount Sinai to God's people and a new Elijah who fearlessly stood before kings and judges, openly reproving the powerful while advocating for the poor and oppressed.²⁴⁸ Therefore, Symeon became a stylite because it was God's command.

²⁴² Idem., p. 128.

²⁴³ Idem., p. 132.

²⁴⁴ Idem., p. 184.

²⁴⁵ Lent, p. 184; Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite," p. 382.

²⁴⁶ Lent, p. 152.

²⁴⁷ Idem., pp. 152-53.

²⁴⁸ Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite," p. 382.

The same model appears in Theodoret's account as well. Following his explanation of Symeon's unusual solution to the excessive attention, Theodoret asks the "fault-finders to curb their tongue"²⁴⁹ because he believes that it was God's will for Symeon to stand on the pillar. He reminds the readers the prophets of the Old Testament and how the strangeness of their actions were intended by God to attract the attention of men, and to "make the proffered exhortation persuasive to those who come [...] and the man who comes to look departs instructed in divine things."²⁵⁰ Indeed, Theodoret's description of Symeon on the pillar follows exemplifies his explanation. He describes Symeon as a 'dazzling lamp' whose rays had been sent out in all directions because numerous non-believers, whether they were Muslims or pagans, were illuminated by the sight of him standing on the pillar.²⁵¹ It was a common sight to see Iberians, Armenians, and Persians arriving at his pillar to receive baptism.²⁵² Furthermore, he received particular reverence from the Ishmaelites, who would come in groups of hundreds, renouncing their faiths and destroying their idols in the presence of the pillar before receiving baptism.²⁵³

To illustrate the extent of Ishmaelites' veneration of Symeon, Theodoret recounts one of his memories in which he was swarmed by the Ishmaelites who rushed to him in a barbaric manner upon hearing Symeon suggest that they should go up to Theodoret and his blessings. As he was being pulled from everywhere, he recounts how he might have suffocated if Symeon had not shouted to disperse the crowd.²⁵⁴ However this was not the only time when such barbaric behavior was seen in front of the stylite. Theodoret describes another occasion with two Ishaelite tribes, both of

²⁴⁹ Theodoret, 26.12.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Theodoret, 26.13.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Theodoret, 26.14.

which sought Symeon's prayers and blessings for their own leaders. The long dispute about which tribe will receive the stylite's blessings turned into a "barbarian quarrel," and eventually they went for each other. Describing himself as unable to calm a fight between the enemy tribes, Theodoret recounts how Symeon was able to defuse the dispute by "threatening them from above and calling them dogs."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the scope of Symeon's renown was not limited to 'barbaric' people or to non-Romans visitors who were illuminated by his sight. In fact, Symeon's guidance and prayers were sought out by various high-society clientele. Theodoret recounts how the queen of the Ishmaelites, who had been unable to conceive, miraculously became pregnant after Symeon's prayers.²⁵⁶ He also notes the keen interest shown by the king of Persia upon hearing the accounts relayed by his envoys. According to Theodoret, the king expressed a desire to learn more about the stylite, and the queen requested the holy oil from Symeon's sacred site.²⁵⁷

The Syriac *Life* provides a more extensive view of Symeon's visitors, encompassing both the distances they traveled and their societal statuses. Among the approximately thirty-two miracles in the *Life*, around nine miracle accounts recount the visits of prominent and distant individuals. In one account, a governor of a city in Palestine was healed by Symeon and received baptism.²⁵⁸ In another, a governor who was also the son of the ruler of Armenia was cured of sudden paralysis. To emphasize the governor's high status, the hagiographers describe how he was transported to the stylite's location in a litter, accompanied by a retinue of armed and horsemen, and servants. Additionally, three elders and five deacons who were accompanying the group brought letters from the country's bishops, who wrote to Symeon seeking his

²⁵⁵ Idem., 26.15.

²⁵⁶ Idem., 26.21.

²⁵⁷ Idem., 26.20.

²⁵⁸ Lent, p. 139.

blessings and prayers.²⁵⁹ His renown had extended to the nobility of the western regions and also spread to the opposite direction, reaching Persia.²⁶⁰ At one point, he received a *chorepiscopus* who was sent by one of the Persian kings to seek healing from the stylite for his paralyzed son. The story narrates not only the miraculous recovery of the boy but also the subsequent baptism of the boy, his mother, and his sister as a result of this extraordinary event.²⁶¹

The hagiographers included two stories that depict the extraordinary lengths to which people went to visit the stylite. One narrative recounts the journey of a man from Sheba who suffered from a severe illness. In this account, the hagiographers mention the dangers and difficulties of the travel from Sheba to the cult site; the country was a difficult desert, the Arab marauding bands were known to attack people, and wild animals were abundant in that region.²⁶² The second story revolves around a group of Easterners who embarked on a grueling journey that spanned thirteen months. Upon their arrival, the group threw themselves in front of the pillar and besought Symeon, mentioning the remoteness of their land.²⁶³ What these stories share in common is the emphasis on the divine protection that seemingly guided and safeguarded these travelers on their journey to Symeon. In both stories, the safe journey of the traveler is commented on by explaining it as a miracle of God for their dedication.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Idem., p. 143.

²⁶⁰ One of the narratives features the story of a man “from the order of the nobles” who embarked on a journey from the west to visit Symeon upon hearing about his renown. Idem., p. 138.

²⁶¹ Idem., p. 142.

²⁶² Idem., p. 141.

²⁶³ Idem., pp. 143-44.

²⁶⁴ In the first story, the hagiographers inform the reader that the safe journey was a miracle of God because, in addition to the possible dangers of the travel, no one in the group knew the way. Yet, they arrived without getting lost or harmed. In the second narrative, Symeon personally attributes their safe journey to the divine, affirming that it was God who protected their path. Idem., pp. 141, 143-44.

Furthermore, both texts appear to employ the sense of centrality and stability that radiated from both Symeon and the image of him on the pillar, in order to highlight the image of Symeon as the holder of authority and power. In this sense, it appears that both Theodoret and the hagiographers of the Syriac *Life* aimed to present Symeon as the holy man who stood on his pillar, attracting visitors and admirers all around the world while being in constant interaction with foreigners. In fact, when the sources are considered in terms of provision of the visitor accounts, based on their nationalities, one can easily sense the international renown of the saint. Moreover, in Theodoret's case, his frequent representations of 'barbarians' – Ishmaelites, Saracens, and other unnamed tribes – who gather at the foot of the pillar, beseeching miracles and even fighting with each other for the blessing and prayers of the stylite and the authority Symeon had over them portray the extent of his authority.

Here, Antony Eastmond's argument on the dynamic between Symeon and his pillar in the shaping of the image of Symeon, depicted by Theodoret appears to be in line with this suggestion. In his examination of the ways in which pillar and Symeon's body was employed in the text, Eastmond proposes that Symeon's column, along with other public monuments, could be reminiscent of the triumphal pillars associated with Roman emperors, noting that Symeon ascended on his pillar in the early fifth-century, when "Constantinople was at the height of its column-building programme."²⁶⁵ Suggesting that the visual resemblance between the stylite who stands on his pillar and the statue of an emperor is undeniable, he underlines the possible similarities between the way in which they function; in the same way that the emperor's statue acted as an object of veneration and signified the imperial authority, in the case of Symeon, it was him that became the image within his cult site.²⁶⁶ And in the same way that the imperial

²⁶⁵ Eastmond, "Body vs. Column," p. 97.

²⁶⁶ Idem., p. 98.

image became a powerful symbol of authority, so too could Symeon's image on the pillar can become a symbol of justice and guidance.²⁶⁷

Similar to the narratives of Symeon the Elder's life, movement appears as a significant tool in the *Life* of Daniel the Stylite as well. This fifth-century stylite resided in Anaplus, situated on the outskirts of Constantinople, where he stood atop his pillar for an impressive thirty-three years and three months.²⁶⁸ Given the pillar's close proximity to the imperial center, Daniel's story has been characterized as a representation of the "high life" in more than one way.²⁶⁹ It is not merely in the sense of his pillar-dwelling existence, but also in terms of the prominent members of high society that constitute his clientele in the hagiography.²⁷⁰ The *Life* presents a wide range for the stories of various significant names from high society elites, as well as secular and religious authorities. Moreover, the ways in which the interactions and dynamics between these prominent figures are narrated to communicate the identity of the stylite as the ultimate leader and protector of the city whose charismatic and spiritual authority is above anyone else, including the emperor.

The structure of the *Life* consists of three parts. The first part delves into the early stages of Daniel's ascetic lifestyle in Syria, his journey to Constantinople, and his eventual residence at the haunted church (2-20). The second part encompasses the years between 460 and 476, providing detailed accounts of Daniel's influence on the political life of the period (21-85). The third part recounts various accounts of several miracles and his teachings, and concludes with an account of the deaths of the emperor Zeno and Daniel, both of which were predicted by the stylite (86-101).²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 101.

²⁶⁹ Lane Fox, 'The *Life of Daniel*,' p. 178.

²⁷⁰ McEvoy, "Emperors, Aristocrats, and Columns," p. 480.

²⁷¹ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 123.

Much like Symeon the Elder, Daniel's movement and mobility appears in the early stages of his ascetic life, prior to his career as a stylite. At the age of twelve, he entered a monastery which was at a distance of ten miles from his village. He spent twenty-five years there, eventually rising to the position of abbot, after which he abandoned monastic life in order to embark on a journey to Jerusalem.²⁷² His first stop on the road was the enclosure of Symeon the Elder where he stayed for two weeks before he went on to travel again. Although Daniel initially intended to continue his journey to the Holy Land, due to political turmoil in the region, he was persuaded to redirect his travels toward Constantinople instead.²⁷³ When he reached Anaplis, he first stayed in the oratory of Michael the Archangel, then moved to a haunted church near the sea where he stayed in solitude for the next nine years.²⁷⁴ According to the hagiographer, Daniel's fame first began to spread during his residence in the church, primarily because his holy presence had a transformative effect on the location. He describes how a place, which was formerly inhabited by demons who often sank ships and injured passersby to the point where the road was impassible, was now transformed into such calm by the "patience of the just man Christ was now glorified day and night."²⁷⁵ Simultaneously, it was during this time that Daniel's clientele started to establish. The hagiographer narrates the admiration of Archbishop Anatolius for Daniel and the friendship between him and an imperial guardsman named Mark, who provided the stylite with his first pillar.²⁷⁶ Yet, his most prominent visitors would begin to visit him when he was standing on his pillar.

²⁷² *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 2-9.

²⁷³ *Idem.*, Ch. 13.

²⁷⁴ *Idem.*, Ch. 14.

²⁷⁵ *Idem.*, Ch. 16.

²⁷⁶ *Idem.*, Chaps. 20, 23.

In the second part of the *Life*, the hagiographer presents the reader with multiple well-known individuals from the political and religious landscapes of the period. Among the approximately twenty names mentioned, one can find various important figures ranging from figures of authority, high-ranking officials and members of aristocracy. Noteworthy among these are the two emperors, Leo I (457-474) and Zeno (474-475 and 476-491), the usurper Basiliscus, imperial and political figures such as the empress Eudoxia, her son-in-law and the later emperor in the west Olybrius, ex-consuls Cyrus and Dagalaiphos, the patrician Herais, and the four archbishops of Constantinople, namely Anatolius (449-458), Gennadius (458-471), Acacius (471-489), and Euphemios (490-496).²⁷⁷ Additionally, there are various mentions of Daniel's relations with imperial officers, courtiers, and soldiers.²⁷⁸ In fact, considering the substantial space allocated in the narrative to Daniel's interactions with members of Constantinople's elite and ecclesiastical authorities compared to the accounts of his lay-visitors, the reader can easily sense the degree of Daniel's prominence among the high-society and his role as an imperial counselor, which was not a status commonly shared by the most holy men.²⁷⁹

In her analysis of the *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, Meaghan McEvoy argues that the hagiographer's choice to focus on Daniel's notable elite visitors who possessed imperial connections and those who are the members of former imperial families who

²⁷⁷ It should be noted that the emperor Anastasius (491-518) and the empress Ariadne are mentioned in a positive light. The hagiographer states that after the emperor Zeno's death, Daniel had prophesied that his wife Ariadne, who later on married Anastasius, would rule the Empire along with an ideal emperor who "loved Christ and had devoted his whole life to hymns to God ... a model of sobriety to all men ... will govern the State impartially and honestly, and throughout his reign he will grant peace and confidence to the most holy Churches and to the order of the monks." Nevertheless, Anastasius and Ariadne were not seen visiting the stylite, and because of that, they are not examined. *Idem.*, Ch. 91.

²⁷⁸ The jurist Sergius from Thrace (or some other neighboring region) (29), the officer in charge of the imperial stables (49), the *cubicularius* named Kalapodios (49, 89), and Hippasios who was most likely served in the military. *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Richard Greenfield, "Drawn to the Blazing Beacon: Visitors and Pilgrims to the Living Holy Man and the Case of Lazaros of Mount Galesion," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), p. 235.

were not currently in power in the East was a deliberate one to present Daniel as the holy man whose monastery was worthy of patronage by emperors or aristocrat for the future benefactors.²⁸⁰ Moreover, these accounts portray the desire and competition for becoming a patron of Daniel, highlighting the importance of being affiliated with him. Appearing in the Chapter 35, the empress Eudoxia heard about Daniel from her son-in-law Olybrius who had known the holy man prior to his pillar-dwelling and she wished to move the stylite to one her lands.²⁸¹ While driven by her devotion, it has been argued that the relocation of Daniel's column onto her estate would have symbolized the elevation of the owner's status due to the spiritual authority of the holy man.²⁸² The patrician Dagalaiphus, a *magister militum* who had been consul in 461 was also a further family member who was the father-in-law of the empress' granddaughter and of the emperor Olybrius' daughter, appears in Chapter 80, saving Daniel from being mobbed by the enthusiastic crowds during his journey into Constantinople to confront Basiliscus.²⁸³ According to the *Life*, after seeing that the stylite being nearly crushed, Dagalaiphus had him carried to his house for a rest and asking for Daniel's blessings for his house.²⁸⁴ Highlighting the familial links between the empress Eudoxia, Olybrius and Dagalaiphus, McEvoy suggests that despite the hagiographer not stating it, this connection would not have escaped the attention of elite Constantinopolitan readers.²⁸⁵ The other "disenfranchised imperial family in the city" is represented with Herais who is also Daniel's most prominent female patron.²⁸⁶ She first appears in Chapter 82 when she heard about the stylite's presence in the city.

²⁸⁰ McEvoy, "Emperors, Aristocrats, and Columns," p. 480.

²⁸¹ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 35.

²⁸² Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 164.

²⁸³ *Life of Daniel*, Chap. 80.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ McEvoy, "Emperors, Aristocrats, and Columns," p. 440.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Longing for a child, she “threw herself on the ground and seized the holy man’s feet [...] She gave him a little cord and begged him to wind it round his inflamed foot and give it to her.”²⁸⁷ Daniel not only fulfilled Herais’ wish but also predicted the birth of a son to her whose name will be Zeno.²⁸⁸ Although the hagiographer does not mention Herais’ husband yet describe her as *patricia*, her husband has been identified as Procopius Anthemius who was the son of the western emperor Anthemius and the grandson of the eastern emperor Marcian.²⁸⁹ Therefore, their son was also a descendant of an imperial family. After persistently requesting, she was also granted permission from Daniel to oversee the preparations for lowering his body from the pillar following his demise.²⁹⁰

Moreover, the hagiographer provides the reader with information about the other patrons (or potential patrons) of the stylite. This includes the archbishop Anatolius who wished Daniel to reside with him or to build Daniel a small monastery in the suburbs; the imperial guardsman Mark who supplied the stylite with his initial pillar; Gelanius, the steward of the imperial table, who built Daniel’s second column.²⁹¹ The other prominent figure to appear as a patron to Daniel is Cyrus, the ex-consul, prefect, and bishop, who had been visiting Daniel from his time in the church.²⁹² He was reportedly indignant at not being given the opportunity to personally

²⁸⁷ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 82.

²⁸⁸ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 82. Scholars have interpreted Herais’ meeting with Daniel and his forecast of the birth of a son named Zeno as an illustration of Daniel’s boldness, especially at a time when the emperor Zeno had been deposed by Basiliscus and when others rarely dared to mention the displaced emperor’s name. McEvoy, 441. Also see, Brown 1971, 92–93.

²⁸⁹ *PLRE II*, p. 99; Christoph Begass, 2018, 77.

²⁹⁰ She provided a coffin made of lead, a spiral structure for descending the body from the pillar, candles, oil, wood and gold for distribution to the people. *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 94, 100.

²⁹¹ See, respectively, *Life of Daniel*, 20 for Anatolius, 23 for Mark, and 30 for Gelanius.

²⁹² *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 31

erect the pillar for Daniel. However, he eventually convinced the stylite to permit him to inscribe a poem in Daniel's honor on the pillar.²⁹³

Among all the prominent characters that appear in the text, the emperor Leo I and the usurper Basiliscus are the two key imperial figures in the construction of Daniel's identity as a holy man in the text. In the *Life*, the hagiographer narrates Daniel's relationship with Leo to shape the layers of his identity, while his relationship with and actions toward Basiliscus, allows for the demonstration of all the layers in one combined. This is notably evident in the chapters narrating Daniel's descent from his pillar as an act of condemnation of Basiliscus. As it will be examined in the following, the hagiographer communicates the stylite's identity as the imperial advisor, the ultimate protector and the venerable leader of the empire's capital city and the one above all authorities. In order to achieve this, first, the hagiographer utilizes Leo's movements towards Daniel to portray the emperor's veneration of the holy man and his recognition of Daniel's authority to the extent to which in one account Leo placed himself in a position inferior to that of Daniel. Moreover, Daniel's political role and his significance for Leo are highlighted in multiple accounts through the actions of the actants. Secondly, the hagiographer narrates the relationship between Daniel and Basiliscus in a way which puts Daniel's identity in performance in front of the inhabitants of the city. At the story's climax, Daniel's descent from his pillar and subsequent journey to the city are narrated in a manner that allows the stylite to perform the multiple aspects of his holy identity in one continuous event, which concludes with the recognition of the superior nature of Daniel's spiritual and

²⁹³ "Standing twixt earth and heaven a man you see, Who fears no gales that all about him fret; Daniel his name. Great Simeon's rival he, Upon a double column firm his feet are set; Ambrosial hunger, bloodless thirst support his frame, And thus the Virgin Mother's Son he doth proclaim." Idem., Chaps. 31-32, 36.

charismatic authority, depicting Daniel as the one with the unquestioned power and authority.²⁹⁴

The emperor Leo I is the most frequently mentioned emperor in the *Life* with his appearance in twenty-eight chapters out of 102 in total. According to the narrative order in which the development of the relationship between two men was given begins with Daniel's ascend on his pillar in Chapter 27, however, their first personal interaction takes place in Chapter 44.²⁹⁵ Over the course of this seventeen chapters, the hagiographer present the gradual development of the relationship between the emperor and the stylite; first, after a period of hearing the stories hearing the stories about Daniel's saintly powers and miracles, Leo sent a messenger to beseech the holy man for his prayer to God to grant him a son. Following the birth of Leo II, the emperor had given orders for the foundations for the third pillar dedicated to the holy man as an expression of his gratitude. At the same time, this action indicates the recognition of the holy man's role as an intermediary in this miraculous event.²⁹⁶ In Chapter 41, Daniel decided for the first time to contact the Emperor (and also the archbishop Gennadius) about the fact that God allowed Daniel to know that the City would be punished with God's wrath. However, Daniel's warnings were forgotten due to the upcoming feast of Christ's Passion, and ultimately, ignoring the holy man's warning led to disastrous consequences, as depicted with the great fire in the capital which took place in 465.²⁹⁷

What seems to be interesting in the following chapters is the way Leo's first personal visit to Daniel took place. The hagiographer reported that Leo, recognizing the numerous blessings attributed to Daniel's intercession, dispatched a messenger to

²⁹⁴ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 159.

²⁹⁵ *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 27, 44.

²⁹⁶ *Idem.*, Ch. 38.

²⁹⁷ *Idem.*, Ch. 45.

the archbishop Gennadios, instructing him to meet with the revered individual and bestow upon him the honor of priestly ordination.²⁹⁸ Although the archbishop was reluctant to comply and reported this to the emperor, eventually he went to the stylite.²⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the ordination was not an easy task. Daniel, having been informed about the purpose of the archbishop's visit, refused the ordination by refusing the ladder to be placed for the archbishop's ascend. The hagiographer describes the scene as following: "Whilst all those present continued to importune Daniel and the just man still refused to consent, the day was slipping by; and as the crowd was tormented by thirst owing to the heat and the Archbishop saw that he was not achieving anything, he bade the Archdeacon offer a prayer..."³⁰⁰ Pressed between, on one hand, the order of the emperor and the growing impatience and agitation of the crowd, and on the other hand, the stylite who refused to be ordained, the archbishop found the solution in commencing with the ordination from the ground, without actually placing his hands on Daniel but instead declaring him to be ordained by the hand of God.³⁰¹

After the formal inclusion of Daniel's spiritual authority within the Church, the emperor visited the holy man for the first time.³⁰² According to the hagiographer, during this encounter, Leo expressed a desire to touch the stylite's feet. Witnessing the mortified and swollen state of Daniel's feet and marveling at his endurance, Leo issued an order for the construction of a double column.³⁰³ This marked the beginning of the emperor becoming a patron of the stylite, and their relationship rapidly deepened. As their relationship progressed, the emperor appears to become quite attached to the

²⁹⁸ *Idem.*, Ch. 42.

²⁹⁹ Leo's reaction to the archbishop's reluctance was straightforward: if Gennadius had intentions of ascending the hill, he should proceed, as the emperor himself was planning to do the same. *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ *Idem.*, Ch. 43.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.* On this remote priesthood ordination see, Delehay, *Les Saints Stylites*, p. lvi.

³⁰² *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 44.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

stylite. The significance of these interactions for Daniel's identity is in the way the emperor approached and treated the stylite. As pointed out by Rafal Kosinski, it is noteworthy that Leo ascended the column not at the stylite's invitation but in response to his own initiative, and furthermore, the emperor humbly bowed to the holy man's feet and expressed reverence through a gesture.³⁰⁴ The act of kissing the Emperor's feet, as well as his breast or hands, as part of the *proskynesis*, was a component of the Imperial ceremonial protocol.³⁰⁵ These gestures collectively conveyed the reverence shown to the sovereign. Due to this, witnessing the ruler of Christendom engage in these self-humiliating gestures before the stylite is rather remarkable.

Another, and possibly even more significant event that portrays the emperor's immense respect for the stylite and also the demonstration of the emperor's recognition of Daniel's charismatic authority as higher than himself. In Chapter 49, on his way back from Anapulus, Leo had an accident where he fell off his horse and suffered from minor injuries.³⁰⁶ Leo, interpreting the reason behind the incident as his mounting of his horse while he was still in the eyesight of the stylite, stated that he ought to have done so.³⁰⁷ In the following chapter, the hagiographer informs the reader that from that time on, whenever the emperor visited Daniel, as he walking up the hill he would dismount from his horse as soon as he saw the stylite, and he would not mount his horse until he could no longer be seen by Daniel.³⁰⁸ This act and Leo's expression as

³⁰⁴ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 135.

³⁰⁵ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, cf. 81 p. 135. On the *proskynesis* see, "Proskynesis," *ODB*, pp. 1738–1739.

³⁰⁶ The accident was narrated as such; The horse reared up on its hind legs and subsequently toppled backward to the ground, bringing down the mounted Emperor with it. During this fall, the curved edge of the saddle made contact with Leo's face, causing a minor scratch on his skin and moreover, the crown he was wearing slipped off and some of the pearls he had worn were ripped away. *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 49.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Idem.*, Ch. 50.

“your angelic presents”³⁰⁹ in addressing Daniel attests to the emperor’s immense respect for the holy man, and moreover, demonstrates Leo’s recognition of Daniel as the patron of the City and as a representative of an authority superior to the imperial power.³¹⁰ Daniel was also viewed as an advisor and a judge who is capable of providing guidance in political matters. He appears to have been integrated into the court ceremonial as this can be clearly seen in the narratives describing the emperor bringing his visitors to Daniel. Chapter 51 appears as the best example which describes the arrival of the king of Lazi,³¹¹ Gubazius, at Constantinople. According to the hagiographer, Leo brought Gubazius to the stylite, where the rulers engaged in political discussions in Daniel’s presence, meanwhile, the stylite mediated a dispute, ultimately facilitating the negotiation of a mutually agreeable treaty.³¹² In another instance, Daniel was presented as an advisor to Leo when he heard the news that Genseric, the king of Vandals, was planning an attack on Alexandria, and consulted the stylite with his plans.³¹³ When the above-mentioned accounts portraying the interactions and relationship between Leo I and Daniel, it can be seen that the hagiographer was constructing the stylite’s identity for the readers as the holy man who was not only venerated by the emperor or had the emperor as his patron, but also the holy man whose authority was recognized as the superior to all and thus stemming from this, as the ultimate judge and the imperial advisor.

³⁰⁹ Upon hearing the news of the accident, Daniel was concerned with the emperor’s health. Leo sent a messenger to reassure him. Leo’s message was as such; ““Your angelic presence must not have any anxiety about me, for through your holy prayers I was preserved unhurt, and I know now why I had that accident, for when visiting your Holiness I ought not to have mounted my horse so long as you could see me; but, I beg you, pray earnestly to God to forgive me for my ignorance.” Idem., Ch. 49.

³¹⁰ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 138.

³¹¹ Lazica was a kingdom with its capital at Archaiopolis, whose kings had received their insignia from Byzantium. The region was situated along the eastern coast of the Black Sea. Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, cf. 97 p. 140.

³¹² *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 51.

³¹³ Idem., Ch. 56.

On the other hand, the relationship between Daniel and Basiliscus is narrated by the hagiographer to demonstrate the authority and power that Daniel possessed over the politics of the empire. Additionally, Daniel's descent from his pillar as an act of condemnation of Basiliscus' actions after his elevation to the throne to enforce Monophysitism in Constantinople, portrays Daniel as the only one with the unquestioned power and authority and the ultimate leader of the empire. Starting from the first appearance in the *Life*, Basiliscus is depicted in a negative light. In Chapter 68, Basiliscus was mentioned within the context of conspiracy against the emperor Zeno. Initially he was represented as the illegitimate ruler whose characteristics were all negative; "hatred, a predilection for evil, deviousness, as well as ingratitude and perversity."³¹⁴ However, later on he was referred as the "name of ill omen"³¹⁵ by Daniel, because, as the hagiographer reports, the usurper had launched an attack on the churches of God, with the intention of "bring them to deny the incarnate dispensation of God."³¹⁶ Not being able to achieve his desire, the heretic ruler would resort to scheming and deceit. Following his conflict with the archbishop Acacius after his attempt to enforce Monophysitism, Basiliscus sailed to Anaplis and sent a messenger to Daniel in order to win him over; nevertheless, he was unsuccessful in this attempt as well.³¹⁷ In the next chapter, a similar situation was depicted with the messengers sent by the archbishop Acacius, urging Daniel to join the resistance against Basiliscus' actions.³¹⁸ Eventually, deciding to enter an open confrontation with Basiliscus, after many years of living atop, Daniel descended from his pillar and started his journey to Constantinople.³¹⁹

³¹⁴ Kosinski, *Holiness and Power*, p. 138; *Life of Daniel*, Chaps. 68-70.

³¹⁵ *Life of Daniel*, Ch. 70.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ *Idem.*, Ch. 71.

³¹⁸ *Idem.*, Ch. 72.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

It is this account of movement that allowed the stylite to perform his spiritual and charismatic authority. In this context, Daniel's journey through the city was not only narrated to portray the extent to which the stylite had to act in order to demonstrate his position within the upheaval, but also functioned as a way for the hagiographer to perform his authority and power on a larger scale. During the twelve chapters in which Daniel's journey was narrated, the stylite appears in various scenes and situations; following his descent from his pillar, the hagiographer narrates Daniel's entrance and his difficult walk through the City, performing miracles, the shock and amazement of the people who saw the stylite on the ground for the first time, the crowds of people who gathered around Daniel and walked with him, and his interactions with the people around him, more specifically the inhabitants of the City, the archbishop Acacius and Basiliscus.³²⁰ Through the combination of Daniel's interactions with those around him appears to play a fundamental role in the ways in which Daniel's identity was performed and constructed.

The archbishop's plea for Daniel's assistance marked a pivotal moment, positioning the stylite as a central and influential figure within the opposition movement against Basiliscus. This not only underscored Daniel's newfound role as a leader in the defense of the Church but also demonstrated the hagiographer's narrative strategy in constructing Daniel's identity as a key player in the political and religious issues of the time. Furthermore, Daniel's interactions with the people during his journey served to solidify his charismatic and spiritual authority. The performance of healing miracles and the massive crowds that gathered around him emphasized the profound impact of his spiritual presence on the populace. The hagiographer carefully

³²⁰ Idem., Chaps. 72-83.

crafted these scenes to highlight Daniel's ability to inspire respect and devotion, reinforcing his role as a revered spiritual leader. Ultimately, Basiliscus' responses to Daniel's actions underscored his acknowledgment of the stylite's spiritual and charismatic authority. This event essentially depicted the homage paid to the stylite by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, recognizing the superior nature of Daniel's authority and power. Furthermore, it portrayed Daniel as the sole individual capable of restoring peace in the city and serving as an arbitrator in the midst of a dogmatic controversy.

Finally, the *Life* of the Lazaros of Mount Galesion near Ephesos, the eleventh-century ascetic whose renown stemmed primarily from his extraordinary perseverance as a stylite, as he spent the last forty or so years on the barren and inhospitable mountain. Born near Magnesia on the Meander at the end of the ninth century, Lazaros' spiritual journey began at the age of six. Differing from his counterparts in this thesis, mobility and travel were central concepts in his ascetic life which is both applicable to his years before his pillar-dwelling and also in his years as a stylite.³²¹ In fact, as it was discussed by Myrto Veikou, when the narrative of his life was considered as a whole, two phases of travel narrative emerge within the text. The initial phase involves intentional and extensive wandering and traveling, serving as a means of personal and spiritual growth and the establishment of a new ascetic identity. The subsequent phase, occurring on a smaller scale on Mount Galesion, encompasses a negotiation and expression of his holy identity within his social milieu.³²²

³²¹ It should be noted that this comparison is made against the fixedness and lack of movement seen in the other two stylites in this thesis.

³²² Veikou, "Space and Identity," p. 101.

In the early years of his spiritual education and ascetic practices, Lazaros appears as if he is constantly on the move. Until the age of eighteen, he moved four times from one place of education to another and when he was at the age, he set off on a journey to the Holy Land.³²³ This was the beginning of Lazaros' first travel phase which lasted over twenty-five years and encompassed a route through Asia Minor to Jerusalem and his return to his hometown Ephesus. During his first traveling phase, Lazaros visited pilgrimage sites, passed through villages, received monastic habit, and started his solitary ascetic practices.³²⁴ According to Gregory, Lazaros' first act of relocating himself took place when he was residing in a cave near the monastery he was associated with. In a way that foreshadows the future movements of the stylite, his growing popularity due to his solitary life eventually became intolerable to the point where Lazaros departed from Attaleia to continue his journey to the Holy Land.³²⁵ During the time he resided in Jerusalem, Lazaros' movement never completely ceased to end; the stylite was expelled from his first monastery due to the idiorhythmic extremes of his practices as well as his disobedience to the monastic authority, and later on, when he was residing in another monastery, he decided to leave the community due the reason that the standards of the monastic life did not match with his.³²⁶ Although he returned to his initial monastery, his residence in the region eventually came to an end with the growing security concerns. When Lazaros' life is considered up to this point, one cannot escape from the ascetic's constant movement. Whether it was triggered by his personal preferences or enforced onto him from outside, Lazaros appeared regularly to be on the road. However, what seems to be

³²³ *Life of Lazaros*, Ch. 4.

³²⁴ *Idem.*, Chaps. 9-10, 14.

³²⁵ *Idem.*, Chaps. 14-15

³²⁶ *Idem.*, Ch. 17.

interesting in his case is that in all of his movements and relocations were a negotiation and communication of his identity.

After his journey through Asia Minor back to his homeland, the second of his wandering and traveling phase would begin. This time his movements and relocations would take place within a smaller geographical area and because of that, his each mobility would signify a bigger statement. During the time he spent in the region of Ephesus and then on Galesion, Lazaros relocated himself four times in total. On Mount Galesion, Lazaros' movements assumed a distinctive character, intricately woven into the fabric of his negotiation of a holy identity. His first relocation on Mount Galesion marked a strategic positioning, a careful selection of the spot where he would commence his ascetic life on the pillar. His subsequent relocations were not arbitrary but purposeful maneuvers, reflecting shifts in his spiritual journey and the ongoing negotiation of his identity.

The movements also acted as a response to the dynamic social context on the mountain. As word of his ascetic feats spread, Lazaros' interactions with the local community and fellow ascetics shaped his movements. Each relocation could be seen as a nuanced response to the changing dynamics of his social milieu, emphasizing the performative aspect of his ascetic identity. In essence, Lazaros' movements on Mount Galesion were not merely physical relocations but deliberate acts of negotiation and expression, shaping and reshaping his holy identity in response to the challenges of the environment, the dynamics of his community, and the symbolic significance of the ascetic life he embraced.

4.4. Archaeology of the Stylite

As it was examined and discussed in previous chapters, one of the central themes surrounding the stylites is the immense attention that their practice attracts and, as a result of this, the partially failed attempt of the stylites' to withdraw themselves from the world around them. Although the stylite sought out barren and inhospitable spaces to situate himself, the world also pursued his presence and holiness. Furthermore, while a stylite could ostensibly escape the material world by ascending higher or relocating, these actions paradoxically heightened the recognition of the stylite's holy identity, resulting in even greater attention. In such a paradoxical twist, the more the stylite endeavored for isolation and withdrawal, the more the world gravitated towards them. Depending on the extent of attention and veneration bestowed upon the stylite, their enclosure underwent both spiritual and physical transformations. What was once a desolate wilderness spot could be transformed into a sacred place through the stylite's practice of *angelikos bios*.³²⁷ Considering the unusual sight presented by the stylite, the immense amount of attention and veneration that the holy man received from the secular world seems understandable. With time, the growing number of visitors and disciples contributed to increased human interaction with the landscape, essentially reshaping it into a more harmonious environment conducive to spiritual life.

Returning to the archaeological dimension of the stylite phenomenon, the examination of the material remains of Symeon the Elder illuminates the interconnectedness of space, ascetic practice, and sanctity. Symeon, elevated on his pillar at Qal'at Sim'an, left behind not only a physical testament to his ascetic devotion but also a rich array of material artifacts and architectural elements that suggest a

³²⁷ Morris, Monks and Laymen, p. 94.

profound connection between his spatial environment and the sanctified practices that defined his identity as a holy figure. Delving into the souvenir tokens from his cult site, the physical layout of Qal'at Sim'an, and the mysterious funding of this grand complex, this chapter aims to unravel the layers of meaning encapsulated in the material remnants, offering insights into how Symeon's ascension, both physical and spiritual, became intertwined with his revered status as a stylite. Within the souvenir tokens from his cult site, the physical layout of Qal'at Sim'an, and the enigmatic funding of this grand complex, this chapter endeavors to unravel the layers of meaning within the material remnants, shedding light on how Symeon's ascension, both physical and spiritual, became intricately entwined with his esteemed status as a stylite.

Starting with the pilgrimage complex at Symeon the Elder's cult site, Qal'at Sim'an was the largest and most famous complex on the route through Northern Syria to Jerusalem.³²⁸ Located in the limestone massif that stretches between Antioch, Aleppo, and Qal'at al-Madiq, Qal'at Sim'an covers an area of 42,000 square meters.³²⁹ The complex consisted of an octagonal shaped martyrion which was constructed around Symeon's pillar, buildings of the monastery which form a rectangular courtyard, a mortual chapel, a baptisery, hostels for pilgrims, and other buildings of the village of Deir Sim'an, the ancient Telanissos, which was situated at the base of the mountain.³³⁰ The complex was completed in two phases; the first phase of the building process for the Qal'at Sim'an were believed to begin some time after

³²⁸ Heather Hunter-Crawley, "Divinity Refracted: Extended Agency and the Cult of Symeon Stylites the Elder," in *Lived Religion in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Approaching Religious Transformations from Archaeology, History and Classics*, ed. V. Gasparini et al. (de Gruyter, 2020), p. 263.

³²⁹ 342 Georges Tchalenko, "La Chronologie Du Sanctuaire | the Chronology of the Sanctuary," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites at Qal'at Sim'an*, ed. Emma Loosley Leeming and John Tchalenko (Brill, 2019), p. 35.

Tchalenko, "Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, (Brill, 2019).

Symeon's death and began under the reign of the emperor Zeno,³³¹ a cruciform church was completed by 491/492 and a large baptistery was built. The second phase was expanded over the next half century, the site grew to include a monastic facility featuring its own church, a third church, and an additional structure, possibly a hostel or monastery, connected to the baptistery.³³² The site also incorporated courtyards for pilgrims to gather and additional structures to support pilgrims. A procession route lined with shops and marked with a monumental arch directed pilgrims from Deir Sim'an (formerly known as ancient Telanissos) to the complex.³³³

The complex has garnered scholarly attention primarily stemming from the lack of information available regarding the construction project. The size of the complex, the speed and the magnitude of its construction, and the architectural details were argued to suggest imperial patronage, nevertheless, the absence of any corroborating sources leaves this information unverified.³³⁴ Scholars have often proposed that an emperor, either Leo or Zeno, provided for the funding of the complex.³³⁵ One suggestion proposed was that the monumentalization of the site was a form of imperial apologia for the removal of the saint's relics from the cult site.³³⁶ However, the two sources on his life do not provide much information about the physical layout of cult site. It does not come as surprising since both texts were written much before than the completion of the site. Theodoret wrote his account while Symeon was still alive and, during his life, the only structures in Symeon's enclosure

³³¹ Tchalenko, "the Chronology of the Sanctuary," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, p. 48.

³³² Boero, "Who Built Qal'at Sim'an?," pp. 231-33.

³³³ Idem., p. 232. For a comprehensive bibliography on the site see, Tchalenko, "Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, (Brill, 2019).

³³⁴ Boero, "Who Built Qal'at Sim'an?," p. 232.

³³⁵ Lane Fox, "The Life of Daniel," p. 208; Tchalenko, "The Chronology of the Sanctuary," in *Notes on the Sanctuary of St. Symeon Stylites*, p. 47-48.

³³⁶ Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite," p. 358.

were his pillars and an the enclosing doors of the mandra.³³⁷ The *Syriac Life* was argued to be written in 473, right before or following the monumental construction.³³⁸ In her examination on who was responsible for the funding of Qal'at Sim'an, Dina Boero (2022) pointed out to the possibility of a local patronage. Basing her arguments on the lack of written sources to corroborate with the theory of imperial patronage and the silence of the *Syriac Life*, Boero suggested that the constructions could be funded locally.³³⁹

Aside from the *Syriac Life*, the other important account on Symeon's relics and the physical layout of Qal'at Sim'an comes from Evagrius' personal visit to the site. He mentioned that the location was approximately '300 shades' away (60 kilometers), situated at the summit of the mountain, requiring a journey of 'twenty shades' (4 kilometers).³⁴⁰ He detailed the architectural layout, portraying the building in the shape of a cross, surrounded by four sides with aisles. Columns made from polished stone lined the aisles, reaching a considerable height up to the ceiling. e described the building as formed in the shape of a cross, surrounded by four sides with ailes, columns made from the polished stone were placed along the ailes, and raised up to the ceiling to a considerable height.³⁴¹ Symeon's pillar of forty-cubits were placed in the open-air court which was in the centre of the complex. The crowds of visitors could be seen in the opening which is at the left of the pillar when facing the eastern basilica or circling

³³⁷ Theodoret was believed to complete *Historia Religiosa* between 440 and 444. "Theodoret of Cyrrhus," ODB, p. 2049. In 26.22, Theodoret recounted how Symeon ordered for a sizeable part of the enclosing walls to be demolished, leaving him visible to those around. Theodoret, 26.22.

³³⁸ The original date of composition of the *Syriac Life*, written by the authors of the *Syriac Life*, Symeon bar Eupolemus and Bar Hatar, is accepted as 473 based on the text at the end of the manuscript. Lent, "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum. et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV," p. 110; Boero, "Who Built Qal'at Sim'an?," p. 247.

³³⁹ Boero, "Who Built Qal'at Sim'an?," (2022).

³⁴⁰ Scholasticus, Evagrius. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*. Translated by Michael Whitby. Vol. 33. Liverpool University Press, 2000, 1.14

³⁴¹ Ibid.

around the pillar.³⁴² Nevertheless, Evagrius' silence on the benefactors of the complex has been viewed as an indicator for the weakening of the possibility on the imperial support.³⁴³

Despite the lack of historiographical information, the physical layout of the cult site, considered along with the other form of material evidence associated with Symeon's cult, the souvenir tokens, can be useful in unraveling the different parts of the stylite's sainthood and understanding the intricate connection between the materiality and the spatiality of his practice, which create the fundamentals of Symeon's sanctity and identity as a holy man. Starting Qal'at Sim'an, Heather Hunter-Crawley suggested that the architectural arrangement of the complex aimed to prompt a specific mimetic enactment of the saint's embodied practices among the visitors.³⁴⁴ She argued that the monumentalization of the site and the journey from the village of Deir Sim'an to the complex encouraged the pilgrims to rise up and direct their gaze upwards, drawing resemblance to Symeon's actions.³⁴⁵ Describing the ascent on the mountain, Hunter-Crawley asserted that while the complex and pillar were discernible from the approaching roads, as visitors ascended, delaying the complete revelation of the pillar until they were directly in front of it.³⁴⁶ The pathway leading to the complex started with a triumphal arch, supported and decorated with colonnettes that attracted the pilgrims' gaze upwards right before the ascent and the path upwards was lined with buildings, creating an enclosed perspective that directed attention towards the ascent rather than the surrounding countryside.³⁴⁷ The architectural decision to use

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Boero, "Who Built Qal'at Sim'an?," pp. 242-47.

³⁴⁴ Heather Hunter-Crawley, "Movement as Sacred Mimesis at Abu Mena and Qal'at Sem'an," in *Excavating Pilgrimage: Archaeological Approaches to Sacred Travel and Movement in the Ancient World*, ed. Troels M. Kristensen and Wiebke Friese (Routledge, 2017).

³⁴⁵ Hunter-Crawley, "Divinity Refracted," p. 280.

³⁴⁶ Idem., p. 278.

³⁴⁷ Idem., pp. 278-79.

colonnets was argued to function as a preparation for the acts of looking upwards.³⁴⁸ Eventually, when the pilgrims passed through the basilica, they were directly faced with Symeon's pillar, located at the center of the octagonal atrium, and thus, in this way, the pilgrims imitated and reenacted the activity of the stylite within the environment he had once occupied, ascending the mountain toward the heavens.³⁴⁹

Therefore, given that the construction of the site commenced after Symeon's death, a reasonable suggestion can be made that the pillar was assigned primary importance. It was strategically positioned at the center of the complex, prominently revealed, while the miniature columns served a dual purpose as architectural features for both decoration and support for the arches. The significance of the pillar in connection with Symeon's practices seems supported by the fact that, although Symeon's bodily relics were unaccounted for in records by the seventh century, the pilgrimage to the pillar persisted until the eleventh century.³⁵⁰ All these seem to indicate that the pillar was understood as a relic itself. Furthermore, the power of the pillar has been a point of interest for the scholars; as it was mentioned above, Antony Eastmond argued that Symeon's pillar functioned as an imperial column, symbolizing power and authority;³⁵¹ Susan Ashbrook Harvey suggested that Symeon transcended and transfigured on his pillar, attaining the unity of divine and human qualities through his practice;³⁵² David Frankfurter argued that the pillar defined Symeon's both identity and practice.³⁵³ What appears as the common feature of these scholarly arguments is

³⁴⁸ Idem., p. 279-80.

³⁴⁹ Hunter-Crawley, "Movement as Sacred Mimesis," p. 197.

³⁵⁰ Eastmond, "Body vs. Column," pp. 90-93.

³⁵¹ Eastmond, "Body vs. Column."

³⁵² Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite."

³⁵³ David T. M. Frankfurter, "Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44, no. 2 (1990): 168-98.

the pillar's vitality to Symeon's practice and its transformational power that occurred with his ascent.

The interconnected bond between Symeon and his pillar is evident in the iconographic evidence as well. In late antiquity, the understanding of icons was that venerating an image was an expression of honor directed towards the saint depicted. The general interpretation suggests that icons were viewed as sanctified tools, allowing the sacred to interact with the material world.³⁵⁴ According to Hunter-Crawley's argument, depictions of Symeon found on objects originating from the cult site share distinctive features that construct a stylized representation of Symeon.³⁵⁵ These features include a simplified portrayal of his face, characterized by a long beard and a wide-eyed, frontal stare. His head, shaped like an obelisk due to the monastic hood, symbolizes both the monumental form of the pillar and the typical attire of a monk, signifying the crowning of the pillar.³⁵⁶ Notably, the depiction of the column itself often maintains an equal proportion of torso to pillar, creating the illusion of a standing man while simultaneously conveying the fusion of man and pillar, and in a way blurring of the lines between Symeon's body and the pillar.³⁵⁷ In this sense, rather than viewed simply as a tool, Symeon's pillar was perceived and depicted as a part of Symeon, as his limb, holding the saint upright.³⁵⁸ The foundational aspect of Symeon's sanctity is ingrained in his pillar, functioning as the tool that facilitated the ascent; without it, Symeon would not have possessed such formidable power.

³⁵⁴ Marsengill, Katherine. "The Influence of Icons on the Perception of Living Holy Persons." In *Perceptions of the Body and Sacred Space in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, edited by Jelena Bogdanovic. Routledge, 2018, p. 89.

³⁵⁵ Hunter-Crawley, "Divinity Refracted," pp. 270-75.

³⁵⁶ Idem., p. 270.

³⁵⁷ Idem., p. 271.

³⁵⁸ Idem., p. 271.

This interconnected relationship is further illuminated by another form of material evidence associated with Symeon the Elder and his cult: souvenir tokens from the cult site. These tokens, believed to be particularly powerful, acted as proxies for the saint's healing powers.³⁵⁹ Though the production of these tokens were never explicitly mentioned, it was argued that they drew their powers from the fact (or the belief) that, they were made of earth taken from the area of the pillar and the enclosure.³⁶⁰ These objects, despite lacking inherent power, acted as intermediaries for the saint's abilities due to their material being sourced from the cult site. This underscores the significance of the objects' material composition, attributing them agency in facilitating healing and miracles and presenting their function as the healing touch of the saint himself.³⁶¹ Thus, when examined all together, it is evident that the souvenir tokens encapsulated the essential components of Symeon's sanctity; they were crafted from Symeon's sacred dust, blended with oil or water from the mountain and clay, and subsequently marked with Symeon's image as a combined representation of body and pillar before being distributed to the pilgrims.³⁶²

Interestingly, the material from the mountain such as dust, oil, and water were also perceived as sacred substances with a certain ability to function as a conduit for the saint's powers. In the *Syriac Life*, one can find multiple instances where the pilgrims were advised by Symeon to use dust for healing or for protection on land or possessions.³⁶³ It was also recorded that these substances were used to invoke Symeon's protection and power in remote locations.³⁶⁴ In these stories, the reader was reminded that the sacred substances functioned as a means through which Symeon's

³⁵⁹ Gary Vikan, *Sacred Images and Sacred Power in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003).

³⁶⁰ Hunter-Crawley, "*Divinity Refracted*," p. 263.

³⁶¹ Vikan, *Sacred Images*

³⁶² Hunter-Crawley, "*Divinity Refracted*," p. 270.

³⁶³ Lent, pp. 126-29; 172-73.

³⁶⁴ Lent, p. 173.

sanctity materialized.³⁶⁵ The significance of the distribution of the sacred substances was discussed by Dina Boero as she explored the promotion of Symeon's cult site in the absence of his bodily relics. She argued that by focusing on sacred substances and imagined topography, the authors of the *Syriac Life* purposefully emphasized the significance of material elements, such as earth and water from the mountain where Symeon practiced asceticism, in the veneration of the stylite.³⁶⁶ Beyond the reverence accorded to these materials as intermediaries for accessing the saint's protective and healing powers, the materials used in crafting these items were integral to Symeon's surroundings. Simultaneously, comparable to the pillar, the mountain played a crucial role in facilitating Symeon's ascension.³⁶⁷ Therefore, just as the pillar was intertwined with Symeon's sainthood, so was the mountain a constituent part of the extended network of Symeon's agency, in other words, a constituent part of his holy identity.³⁶⁸

In essence, the stylites' agency on space, emerges as a multifaceted influence that transcends mere religious devotion. The examination of Symeon the Elder's cult site, Qal'at Sim'an, and the associated material evidence unveils a profound connection between the stylite's identity and the spatiality of his ascetic practice. The architectural decisions reveal an intentional effort to prompt mimetic enactments of Symeon's practices among pilgrims, the strategic placement of Symeon's pillar at the center of Qal'at Sim'an reflects its crucial role as a relic and an integral part of Symeon's identity as a stylite. The journey from Deir Sim'an, with architectural features directing gazes upward, mirrored Symeon's ascent. This connection between the stylite and his pillar was portrayed in the iconographic representations of him that

³⁶⁵ Hunter-Crawley, "*Divinity Refracted*," p. 276.

³⁶⁶ According to Boero, out of the thirty-two miracle accounts, the authors of the *Life* mentioned these sacred substances in approximately twenty-five accounts. Boero, "*Promoting a Cult Site without Bodily Relics*," p. 236.

³⁶⁷ Hunter-Crawley, "*Divinity Refracted*," p. 277.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

blur the lines between Symeon and his pillar. Material evidence, particularly souvenir tokens crafted from the mountain's elements, illuminated the spatial dimension of Symeon's identity. Crafted from the substances from Symeon's enclosure on the mountain, these tokens encapsulate essential components of Symeon's sanctity, as they were viewed to be conduits for healing and protection, providing a tangible link between materiality and sanctity. In conclusion, Symeon's identity as a holy man was intricately woven into the spatial aspects of his ascetic practices, evident in architectural decisions and material remains. The intentional layout and tangible artifacts linked to the stylite's environment construct a compelling narrative of Symeon's sanctity deeply embedded in the ascetic practices enacted within his sacred space.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exploration of Byzantine stylites and their spatial practices offers a fascinating and multifaceted perspective on the intersection of asceticism, religious symbolism, and spatial dynamics within the Byzantine Empire. The emergence of the 'Spatial Turn' in historical and cultural studies has shed light on the significance of space as a central framework for understanding human experiences and interactions. This theoretical shift, initially championed by scholars like Immanuel Kant, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel Foucault, has highlighted the intricate relationship between space, identity, and societal development. The study of stylites within this spatial context provides valuable insights into how their extreme ascetic practices were not only grounded in physical space but also shaped by it. This thesis employed the spatial triad model proposed by Lefebvre – perceived, conceived, and lived space – to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of stylite practices. Analyzing their physical movements, journeys, and relocations as deliberate strategies for (re)negotiating identities and constructing spiritual narratives, stylitism establishes a unique framework where space becomes a crucial medium for expressing and embodying holiness.

The architectural and archaeological remains of stylite sites further contribute to our understanding of the spatial aspects of these practices. The monumental structure represents enduring impacts on the physical landscape, symbolizing changes,

both spiritual and physical. Furthermore, the intentional layout and tangible artifacts at this site reveal a profound connection between the stylite's identity and the spatiality of his ascetic practice. Symeon's sanctity is intricately woven into the intentional efforts to prompt mimetic enactments among pilgrims, strategically placing his pillar as a relic integral to his identity. Souvenir tokens crafted from the mountain's elements illuminate the spatial dimension of Symeon's identity, encapsulating essential components of his sanctity and providing a tangible link between materiality and sanctity. In conclusion, Symeon's identity as a holy man is deeply embedded in the spatial aspects of his ascetic practices, seen in architectural decisions and material remains, reinforcing the exploration of the complex interplay between asceticism, space, and identity within Byzantine stylitism in the thesis.

In essence, the spatial turn perspective applied to Byzantine stylitism provides a rich tapestry of insights into the complex interplay between asceticism, space, and identity. The study of stylites as embodied spatial practitioners not only enriches our understanding of Byzantine culture but also offers a platform for broader discussions on the role of space in shaping historical developments, human agency, and contemporary social life. As the field of spatial studies continues to evolve, the exploration of stylites' spatialities remains a compelling and promising avenue for interdisciplinary research and scholarly inquiry.

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