

7 A mobile dialogue of an immobile saint

St. Symeon the Younger, Divine Liturgy, and the architectural setting

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The sixth-century site of St. Symeon the Younger at the Wondrous Mountain, located approximately 18 kilometers southwest of Antioch, is founded around the column of the saint that followed the ascetic model of his namesake, the fifth-century “protostylite,” St. Symeon the Elder (Figure 7.1).¹ Scholars have long recognized that St. Symeon the Younger’s cult is founded upon inherent references deriving from the tradition of St. Symeon the Elder, despite the careful silence of the textual sources concerning the apparent link between the two Symeons.² The site of St. Symeon the Younger at the Wondrous Mountain similarly refers to the site of St. Symeon the Elder at Qal’at Sem’an through various elements, among which the most apparent indication emerges as the octagonal space surrounding the columns of both saints. Although this interaction is clearly important, the architectural interpretation of the building site seems to have suffered from the perspective that perceived the site mostly in comparison to Qal’at Sem’an.³ While the recent fieldwork on the Wondrous Mountain revealed that the planning of the building complex remained relatively misunderstood despite two excavations and one major survey previously conducted on the site, the results also call for a new perspective on its architecture.⁴

Subsequently, the present discussion will focus on one essential but rather neglected feature of the site at the Wondrous Mountain that distinguishes it from the majority of the pilgrimage centers: the complex was not a commemorative center built after the death of a saint, but was an elaborate setting constructed around a living ascetic.⁵ In this framework, the active interaction of the immobile stylite with the liturgical celebrations seems to have played a more significant role in the architectural formulation than previously realized. A closer analysis of the site clearly indicates that the stylite was essentially positioned in a setting that offered facilities for pilgrimage, but was meant to be perceived as a church, providing a highly unconventional interpretation of sacred space.

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The seventh-century *Lives* of St. Symeon the Younger and Martha, the saint’s mother, are hagiographic texts that remain as the main sources for establishing a

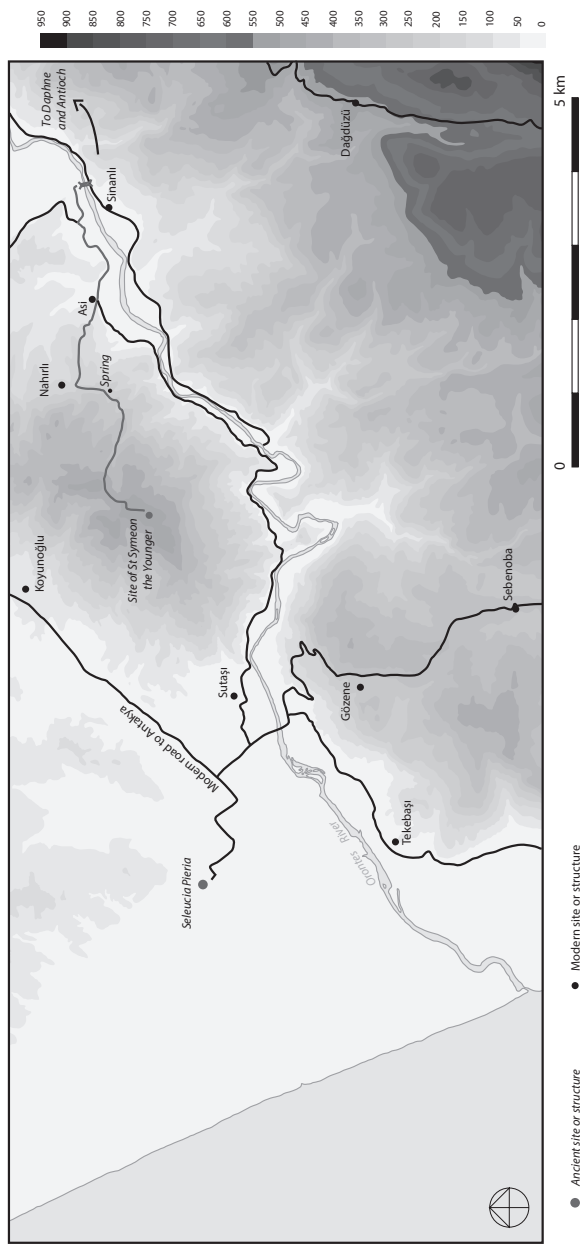


Figure 7.1 Map of the site of St. Symeon the Younger and its vicinity.

Drawing: Olivier Henry.

relative chronology for the saint and his site.⁶ According to these texts, St. Symeon the Younger was possibly born in 521 AD and started his ascetic career as a child – six or seven years old – at the monastery of John the Stylites. The monastery of John was located at the slopes of the Wondrous Mountain crowning the route from Antioch towards Seleucia Pieria. This was the monastery where the child stylite moved to his second column when he was twelve or thirteen (533–534). The change became an incident of celebration, during which he was ordained as a deacon.

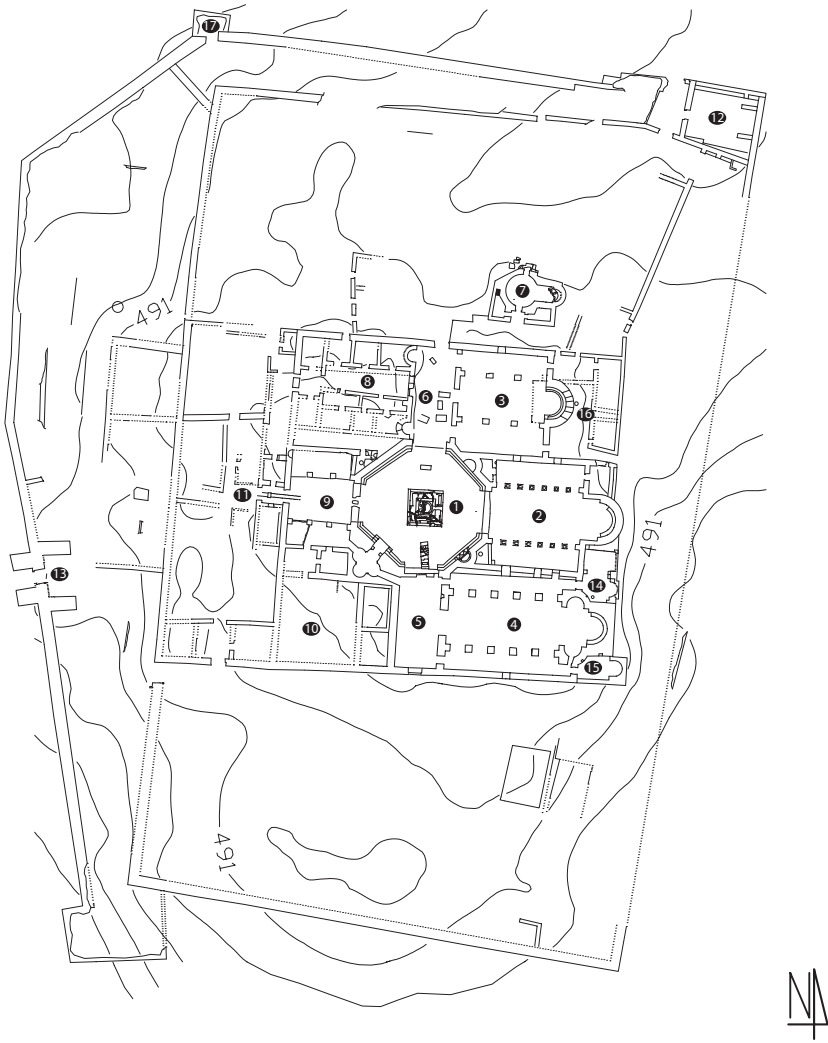
St. Symeon moved to the peak of the hill sometime after the Persian Sack of Antioch at 540 AD. The construction activities started shortly after, and the building program not only included the column for the stylite but also a monumental complex around it. He is considered to have moved to his column approximately ten years after, perhaps in 551 AD. He was ordained as a priest when he was thirty-three years old (ca. 554 AD).

The complex witnessed another major building activity after Martha died. The *Life* of Martha clearly states that a church was built on the site in order to house her remains. Although her death cannot be dated securely, the text suggests that one or two decades passed after the initial consecration of the site. Based on Van den Ven's proposal, 562 AD remains the conventionally accepted date for the death of Martha. Symeon himself died in 592 AD, and this year is the only actual date given in the *Lives*.

The main spaces of the complex are arranged in an overall rectangular planning (i.e., the Rectangular Core) around an octagonal open area, at the center of which the column of St. Symeon the Younger is located (Figure 7.2). Three centrally located entrances lead into the Rectangular Core, from the west, north, and south, conducting the visitors towards the Octagon. The octagonal space opens eastwards into the Church of Holy Trinity, which is flanked by two other churches. The church built after Martha's death is at its south, while to its north is a small church of uncertain designation that possibly had a functional relationship with the baptistery. Despite being a freestanding structure, the baptistery is not located far away from the Rectangular Core. Various traces on both buildings suggest that a covered walkway once connected the baptistery to the North Church, thence to the Rectangular Core, although this walkway no longer exists.

The main entrance to the Rectangular Core was the western one. The atrium that preceded the rectangular center led visitors eastward into the octagon by way of the Entrance Hall, adjacent to a hospice at its north. Several cisterns and unidentified rooms are located to the south of the Entrance Hall. A passage at the southeastern corner of the Entrance Hall leads into the Tetraconch, at the southwest corner of the Octagon. The Tetraconch was linked to the South Passage by another short passage way.

The *Life* of the saint also indicates that the Church of Holy Trinity and the Octagon was consecrated during the ceremony (ca. 551 AD), when the saint ascended his column on the site. Hence, these structures are dated securely to the first construction program of the sixth century. In addition to these two main structures, there is mention of some secondary spaces such as the hospice, a grain



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| 1. The Octagon | 7. The Baptistry | 13. The "West Gate" |
| 2. The Church of Holy Trinity | 8. The Hospice | 14. The South Chapel |
| 3. The North Church | 9. The Entrance Hall | 15. The North Chapel |
| 4. The South Church | 10. The Storage Area | 16. The Eastern Area |
| 5. The South Passage | 11. The Atrium | 17. The North Tower |
| 6. The North Passage | 12. The North Gate | |

Figure 7.2 The Rectangular Core at the site of St. Symeon the Younger.

Drawing: Ayşe Belgin-Henry and Pascal Lebouteiller.

storage room, the kitchen, the bakery, and the smithy in the *Life* of St. Symeon the Younger, which have been accepted by scholars as part of the same construction phase.⁷

On the other hand, the *Lives* do not mention the North Church or the baptistery. This silence in the texts persuaded the scholars to insist on a later date for the small basilica. The architectural details on the structure state otherwise and clarify that the North Church belonged to the same building phase as the Church of Holy Trinity. The clearest evidence is the masonry; the north wall of the Holy Trinity church, which is the south wall of the North Church, is bonded with the east wall of the North Church (Figure 7.3). Despite the lack of secure dating criteria, the close spatial and functional relationship of the baptistery with the North Church might also suggest that they were built together.

The extent and the context of the renovation on the site after Martha's death also seems to be more complicated than was reflected in the *Life* of Martha. There is no doubt that the South Church, the main structure, was added a few decades later and was destined to house the relics of the stylite's mother.⁸ Nonetheless, there is evidence that suggests the Tetraconch and the South Passage might have been finalized alongside the South Church at this period, and the south section of the Rectangular Core was transformed into an alternative route of veneration at this later date.⁹ Overall, the goal of the second sixth-century phase seems to differ from the initial concerns, focusing on the future of the site, foreshadowing the impending death of the stylite through the death of his mother.¹⁰ The later configuration of the building complex would eventually integrate various relics at different locations (the tombs of Martha and Symeon, the fragment of True Cross and the column of the stylite) and a dynamic pilgrimage experience for its visitors.



Figure 7.3 The southeast corner of the North Church.

Photo: Necati Alkan.

The saint and the “ecclesia” at the Wondrous Mountain

At first glance, the planning of the Rectangular Core might suggest that the saint and the liturgical activities did not have a direct interaction, since the saint had a fixed position on his column surrounded by an octagonal open area and the liturgical areas are limited within the adjunctive churches to the east. However, as Ann Marie Yasin convincingly argues, even when the cultic foci and the liturgical areas were physically separate at the early Christian centers, they were correlated through various formulations of visual interaction.¹¹ A careful examination of the complex at the Wondrous Mountain reveals that the interaction of the saint with the liturgy seems to have been similarly established through a series of different planning and decoration strategies. Nonetheless, the interaction of the sty-lite and the liturgical area at the Wondrous Mountain seems to be stronger than other examples and perhaps was one of the major characteristics of the original configuration.

The two churches of the site that were the first to be constructed, the North Church and the Holy Trinity Church, were adjacent occupying the east of the Rectangular Core. The Church of Holy Trinity held the central location and was opened towards the octagonal space with a large arch (Figure 7.4). The choice of an open arch instead of a simple door (or doors) might easily be read as an architectural element that signifies these two structures meant to communicate; but this element on its own does not provide enough evidence for discussion. Djobadze has also suggested that the elaborately sculpted pilaster capitals of this arch, different than the simple capitals of the remaining three entrance arches that open up into the Octagon, further emphasized the connection between the church and the octagonal area.¹²



Figure 7.4 View from the Octagon towards the Church of Holy Trinity.

Photo: Ayşe Belgin-Henry.

The ascetic practice of St. Symeon the Younger was immersed in a liturgical context, as Susan Ashbrook Harvey discusses in several studies.¹³ The passages in the *Lives* reflect the actual routine of Symeon the Younger, who was an established member of the clergy (a deacon since a young age) and was involved continuously in reading the scriptures, delivering sermons, and coordinating communal prayers and troparia.¹⁴ His audience was either monks or laymen, depending on the occasion.¹⁵ The *Life* gives specific emphasis to the resident monks, but this fact might have more to do with the authorship of the text and its focus on their convent and its daily life, rather than the actual realities at the site. Hence, the question arises whether Symeon was actively involved in the regular services. Although a clear answer for this question is not possible, it might be surprising for a saint, who was actively involved in the preaching and scripture reading, not to be involved as a member of clergy during the official liturgy of a church that was built specifically for him. The lack of an ambo (or a Syrian bema in an Antiochene context, although much less likely) within the Church of Holy Trinity seems to support this possibility.¹⁶ Despite the lack of evidence, whether the liturgical activities within the main church, or both churches, were extended into the Octagon remains an open question. Nonetheless, the spatial integration of the saint within the liturgy was definitely fulfilled with the confirmation of the saint as a priest at a later date; his column could have acted as altar from this time onwards, in addition to its proposed role as an ambo. The ordination would have literally turned the octagonal area surrounding him into an open-air church.

One intrinsic element of liturgy – incense – also served to connect the two spaces, with its Antiochene-Syriac emphasis on both liturgical and personal devotion.¹⁷ The extensive significance of incense for the cult of St. Symeon the Younger as an intermediary between the divine and the devotee has received recent scholarly interest in studies concentrating on texts and tokens.¹⁸ The element of interaction between the saint and the different kinds of visitors was certainly not limited to the incense, and the Octagon was certainly a scenic setting where visual, tactile, auditory exchanges were set into motion. On the other hand, the incense seems to have played a particular role in this context, for it both activated the internal sanctity of materials and had an epistemological role in the process; the incense enabled the knowledge and internalization of divine presence for the participants.¹⁹ What needs to be added is its spatial significance as an olfactory bridge between the Holy Trinity Church and the Octagon that marked their unity and contextualized private devotion within the liturgy.

The architectural decoration of the church of Holy Trinity seems to be another element that implemented the transition and connection between the Church of Holy Trinity and the Octagon, while providing a link between the ritual within the church and the cultic activity centered on the stylite saint at the center of the Octagon. The majority of the architectural decoration of the Church of Holy Trinity is a combination of the rural scenes and geometric figures, and both the architectural sculpture and the mosaics seem to convey a taste for themes based on the life in the countryside, combined with an awareness of contemporary Mediterranean themes. The large-scale parallels – with comparisons ranging from Adriatic to

Syria, which Djobadze found related to the style of the geometric decoration of the architrave in particular – usually remained unexplained and undercontextualized.²⁰ In my opinion, although the Mediterranean trade networks did supply Antioch with some of the basic materials needed while it was in the process of rebuilding (specifically at the time the construction of the Wondrous Mountain started), Antioch most likely not only received the materials, but also the latest trends of patterns, accompanied by artisans and masons.²¹

Several examples of architectural sculpture that belonged to the Church of Holy Trinity can be distinguished and seems to have had particular significance. The first of these is the southeastern pilaster capital, which clearly had a complicated composition, but cannot be fully discerned due to its rather badly preserved state (Figure 7.7). The major motif, two birds flanking a cross, is central on all three sides of the basket capital. Two buildings flank the central motif at the western face, but unfortunately, it is not possible to deduce more than this, since the rest of the composition is destroyed. The possibility remains that the scene on the north and the south faces of the capital was repeated here symmetrically.

The cross on the capital was most likely intended to be perceived simultaneously both as a cross and stylite, considering there had already been established according to the saint's hagiography this comparison between the stylite's column and the cross.²² If perceived in this manner, the pilaster capital might reflect a known formula used on some eulogia (although never in the stylite iconography) of two buildings flanking a saint. The nature and significance of these representations are not always clear.²³ Here, if such a composition was intended, the building represented may be the actual church with its three apse windows rather than a generic one, and the same can be suggested for the depictions on all three sides of the pilaster capital. The compositions on the north and south sides of the capital seem to be identical. In this composition, there is again the representation of the eastern exterior facade of a basilica, but the southern one also includes a

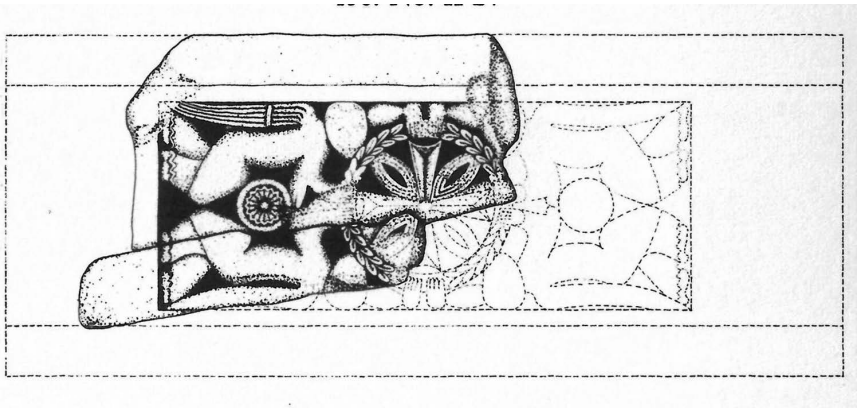


Figure 7.5 The restored drawing of the architrave with angels.

From: Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, Figure.XXIX, 138.

hand pointing downwards towards the church. There is a square structure with an inserted equal armed cross at the westernmost limit of the composition, with an elongated spiral above the square base.

The hand pointing at the church, which represents the Hand of God, parallels the narration in the *Life* of “showing the saint with the finger” (δακτυλοδεικτοῦν), and at least two similar iconographic motifs can be discussed in relation to this detail.²⁴ First, the composition might directly allude to the Transfiguration of Jesus, as the Hand of God holds the same position in some mosaics that depicts this subject.²⁵ The spiral might represent the column itself; yet none of the known stylite images to my knowledge depict a spiral column and the spiral object fluctuates rather than being a rigid and straight row. Hence, because of the reference with the hand, and since the spiral is not under the hand but higher, I suspect that this might be the reference to the tradition told in the *Life* about the origins of the site – that a cloud of light descended upon the mountain, which would again be a parallel reference to Transfiguration.²⁶

Nonetheless, the spiral, however badly depicted, might simply be a stairway superimposed on the column of the stylite. The perspective of the stairs is almost always represented on the *eulogiai* with diagonal steps. It is also important to note that whatever was depicted at the corner, it was separated at the upper sections from the top decorative border of the capital that clearly continued at the back. The possibility that the stylite on his column might have been represented on this section cannot be dismissed easily.

Considering either of these alternatives, the Hand of God indicates the announcement, transformation, and theophany within the context of the actual monastery. In addition, the congregation gathered inside was transformed into an audience that viewed in this imagery the actual building as if from the exterior, as witnesses to the time when the announcement for the site was made. Additionally, since the imagery flanked the bema of the Holy Trinity Church, the liturgical rite was put in relation to both the actual exterior of the church and the traditional narration of its origins. Subsequently, during each and every communion, when the Holy Spirit descended in the sanctuary for the consecration of the bread and wine, the recent past when the Holy Spirit saturated the saint and marked the site was also reenacted.²⁷ The transformation of the saint and his site was given a parallel, Eucharistic context, that in turn ensured the transformation of the visitors. This would have acted as a reminder for the congregation that the site was linked to the divine power they were witnessing during the Eucharistic rite.

There exists another noteworthy detail that seems different from the remaining rural scenes of the architectural sculpture of the capitals. A monk *in orans* found on one of the fallen column capitals of the church quite possibly represented Symeon himself (Figure 7.6).²⁸ Yet, this representation is surprisingly not centrally positioned, but located towards the corner. This choice might not be arbitrary, however, if this figure was meant to interact with one of the architraves of the church.²⁹ This particular architrave was clearly meant to signify something, as it is quite different from the others; it has the only figural composition among the geometrically decorated nave architraves, with four angels carrying a cross, inscribed within a wreath (Figure 7.5).³⁰



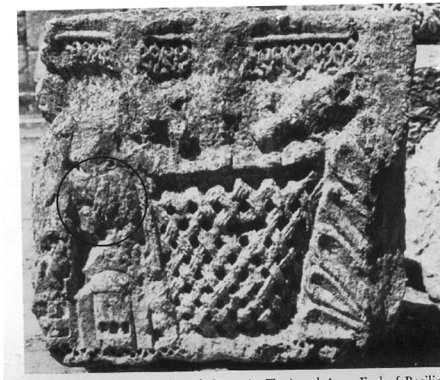
Figure 7.6 The capital with monk in orans, the Church of Holy Trinity.
Photo: Ayşe Belgin-Henry.



a. North face.



b. West face.



c. South face

Figure 7.7 The southeastern pilaster capital with the Hand of God highlighted by the author, the Church of Holy Trinity.
From: Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, Plate 43.

The architrave may be a direct reference to a passage in the *Life* (or to the tradition that later found itself into the pages of the text), in which Symeon is given the gift of “sanctity,” when archangels bore a “diadem that carried a cross, above which a star shined like lightning.”³¹ The iconography of the *eulogiai* that is specifically attributed to St. Symeon the Younger distinguishes itself by the small detail of two angels carrying a “*clipeus* decorated with a cross,” a detail never observed in St. Symeon the Elder tokens, and it is tempting to link this detail to the depiction on the architrave (Figure 7.8).³² If combined with the capital depicting Symeon, this architrave would create a three-dimensional allusion to the *eulogiai* of the saint, in which the stylite was frequently shown under crowning angels.³³

However, the notion that the Rectangular Core was designed as a coherent whole is perhaps best visible from the exterior rather than the interior. The exterior articulation of the core presents indications of how the site was contextually conceived and what the Rectangular Core was meant to signify. The Rectangular Core does not have much of its original exterior walls intact, but the remaining sections, especially the northern façade, hardly reflect the functional separation within the walls. The relatively unarticulated exterior façade of the Rectangular Core might have contributed to the visual impact, as it seems to suggest an ordinary, albeit a huge basilica with a freestanding baptistery to its north.

The western atrium precedes the core much like an atrium of a church. The atrium is opened into the Entrance Hall with a central door and once this door was opened, the view would resemble a three-aisled “church,” extending towards the



Figure 7.8 Eulogia of St. Symeon the Younger.

From: Bobbio, Mennella, *Inscriptiones*, 138, no. 132 A.

east but pierced by the Octagonal space.³⁴ Perhaps most telling is how the protruding apse of the Holy Trinity Church, together with the slightly recessed apse of the North Church, mimics the eastern façade of a basilica. In fact, rather than any basilica, it would have directly resembled in its original state the eastern façade of the East Basilica at Qal'at Sem'an with its three protruding semi-circular apses, which is extremely rare in Northern Syria.³⁵ Although probably the southern section was not completed at this period, enough seems to have been established to give the exterior impression of a "church" for visitors who approached the site from the main entrances, especially from the north.

An intended emphasis on the exterior perception of the Rectangular Core as the "church" would also explain why the North Church was constructed with odd proportions, which resulted in a squarish interior that could have easily been balanced by extending the church towards east.³⁶ The medieval rebuilders who reinterpreted the interior of the North Church by adding four piers were right about understanding these proportions in terms of a cross-domed plan rather than a basilica, although it is unlikely that the original designers ever thought about the church as such.³⁷ These proportions were not corrected, since the overall impact was likely much more important than the interior space³⁸ and the apse of the North Church should have therefore remained recessed.

Therefore, I suggest that the Rectangular Core was perceived as the "ecclesia" of Symeon the Younger with its colorful and busy interior wrapped into the architectural frame. The interior was compartmentalized in order to establish services associated with pilgrimage, such as an interaction with the saint/relic or receiving beneficiary work, but these spaces were reconsidered at the Wondrous Mountain, offering a unique architectural syntax. St. Symeon the Younger stood on his column at the Wondrous Mountain, not surrounded by a commemorative site, but piercing a church, while the builders of the site seem to have successfully underscored the holistic integrity of the saint's practice and the liturgy.

Notes

- 1 The site was excavated in the 1930s under the direction of Mécérian (G. Millet, "Communication: La Mission Archéologique du P. Mécérian dans l'Antiochène." *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1933), 343–348; G. Millet, "Séance du 17 Mai: Un rapport du R.P. Mécérian sur les fouilles au monastère de Saint-Syméon-le Jeune au Mont Admirable (Syrie)." *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1935), 195–197; G. Millet, "Rapport du P. Mécérian sur les fouilles au monastère de Saint-Syméon le Jeune au Mont Admirable." *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1936), 205–206. Jean S. J. Mécérian, "Communications: Une Mission Archéologique dans l'Antiochène." *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1934), 144–149. Jean S. J. Mécérian, "Communications: Monastère de Saint-Syméon-le-Jeune: Exposé des Fouilles." *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1948), 323–328. Jean S. J. Mécérian, "Le Monastère de Saint Syméon le Stylite du Mont Admirable." In *Actes du VIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines*, Vol. II (Paris: École des Hautes Études, 1951), 299–302. Jean S. J. Mécérian, "Les Inscriptions du Mont Admirable." In *Mélanges Offerts au Père René Mouterde*, Vol. II. Maurice Dunand, ed. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1962), 297–330. Jean S. J.

- Mécérian, *Expédition Archéologique dans l'Antiochène Occidentale* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965). Djobadze resumed the excavations in 1960s. The final results were published in Wachtang Z. Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch on-the-Orontes* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986). The survey on this site and its surroundings conducted by Lafontaine-Dosogne was also accompanied by a detailed investigation of the tokens, and the final publication included her work both on the field and the museum (Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires Archéologiques dans la Région d'Antioche* (Brussels: Éditions de Byzantion, 1967). See also the recently published article by Gwiazda based on the photographic archive of Mécérian excavations, Mariusz Gwiazda, "Le Sanctuaire de Saint-Syméon-Stylite-le-Jeune au Mont Admirable à la lumière de la documentation photographique du père Jean Mécérian." *MUSJ* 65 (2013–2014), 317–340. I recently completed my dissertation focusing on the architectural characteristics of the complex that included detailed documentation. Ayşe Henry, "The Pilgrimage Center of St. Symeon the Younger: Designed by Angels, Supervised by a Saint, Constructed by Pilgrims." PhD Diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015.
- 2 See, for example, Sodini, who also rightly notes the silence of the sources; Jean-Pierre Sodini, "Saint-Syméon: l'influence de Saint-Syméon dans le culte et l'économie de l'Antiochène." In *Les sanctuaires et leur rayonnement dans le monde méditerranéen de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne*. Juliette de la Genière et al., eds. (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2010), 319–321.
 - 3 Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires Archéologiques*, 86; Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 226, n: 228/1; Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 82.
 - 4 I had the opportunity to examine and document the building complex on the Wondrous Mountain through three seasons of fieldwork from 2007 to 2009 under the auspices of a research permit held by Hatice Pamir from the Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi (Hatay) and as a part of the regional survey under her direction. The architectural analyses formed the basis of the discussions presented in this chapter. The publication of the documentation and my dissertation is in progress. See note 1 for previous studies on the complex.
 - 5 A comparative example would have been the complex constructed around the column of Daniel the Stylite. The site was founded nearby Anaplous (modern İstinye), Constantinople (Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1923), LVIII and Jules Pargoire, "Anaple et Sosthène." *Izvestiya russkago arkheologicheskago Instituta v Konstantinopolye* 3 (1898), 60–97). However, the remains of the center have never been identified and are likely to remain this way in the near future due to the urban expansion of İstanbul. The *Life* of Daniel Stylites remains as the only source that gives information about the complex (Translation by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes: Elizabeth A. S. Dawes and Norman H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon, and St. John the Almsgiver* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 1–84). See also the chapter by Marsengill in this volume.
 - 6 The *Life* of Symeon is edited and translated by Paul Van den Ven: Paul Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune*, Vol. I (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962) and Vol. II (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1970). The *Life* of Martha is edited by the same author in the second volume of the same publication. For the chronology deduced from the *Lives* and its problems, see Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. I, 108–130.
 - 7 The *Life* of St. Symeon the Younger, especially chapters 100 and 133 (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 97–99 and 114–117). See also Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 58.
 - 8 The *Life* of Martha, chs. 47–51 (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 288–296).
 - 9 A detailed discussion is neither necessary nor possible within the limits of this chapter, but it is quite likely that the Tetraconch was built in order to house the relic of the True

- Cross that was brought from Jerusalem after Martha's death, around the time that the South Church was built. See *Life of Martha* chs. 67–70 (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 308–312). The use of similar architectonic elements and especially the use of conches and their decoration with marble revetments on the walls, which is not used elsewhere on the site, indicate an affiliation of design principles between the South Church and the Tetraconch that parallels the contextual link.
- 10 The remark in the *Life of Martha* (ch. 46, Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 288) that Symeon wanted to be laid to rest with his mother is an indication that the South Church was constructed also for him.
 - 11 Ann Marie Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Church, and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Ann Marie Yasin, "Sight Lines of Sanctity at Late Antique Martyria." In *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*. Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert Ousterhout, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 248–280.
 - 12 Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 75.
 - 13 Especially Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "The Stylite's Liturgy: Ritual and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6, no. 3 (1998), 523–539.
 - 14 Ashbrook Harvey indicates the liturgical context of his prayers (Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 195). See *Life of Saint Symeon*, chapter 32 for a general comment on the constant scripture reading and addresses; Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 40–41. A parallel textual group to the *Life* is the compilation of thirty sermons of Symeon the Younger. Twenty-seven of these sermons were already edited in 1871 (Angelo Mai, "Sanctorum Symeonum: Sermones." *Novae Patrum Bibliothecae* VIII, 3 (1871), 4–156) and the first three sermons have been edited by Van den Ven, who discusses the totality of the compilation in the same study (Paul van den Ven, "Les Ecrits de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune avec trois Sermons Inédits." *Le Muséon* 70 (1957), 1–57). St. Symeon the Younger even composes troparia (The *Life of Symeon*, chs. 105 and 106; Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 106–108).
 - 15 A striking point concerning the subject is the fact that in the *Life* all the sermons and preaching done by Symeon the Younger is addressed to the resident disciples of the saint, while one third of the sermons left from the saint were actually addressed to the laymen (David Hester, "The Eschatology of the Sermons of Symeon the Younger the Stylite." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 34 (1990), 332–333).
 - 16 There is a cruciform inscription that reads "archimandrite" at the center of the nave of the Church of Holy Trinity. The inscription probably belongs to a later restoration (Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 205, No V/15). Djobadze suspects that it might have copied an earlier inscription and fulfilled the function of an ambo (Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 75). In the region, among the known examples, the synthronon is never coupled with a Syrian bema (Jean-Pierre Sodini, "Archéologie des églises et organisation spatiale de la liturgie." In *Les liturgies syriennes*. François Cassingena-Trévedy and Izabela Jurasz, eds. (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 2006), 238–239), hence its existence is not expected in the churches at the Wondrous Mountain, where each church had a synthronon.
 - 17 The role of incense in the Syriac context has been extensively studied by Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*; see especially chapter 4, "Redeeming Scents: Ascetic Models," 156–200, and for the specific mention of the *Life* of St. Symeon the Younger in this context, 194–196.
 - 18 In addition to the already mentioned studies by Ashbrook Harvey, see also Gary Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic in Early Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984), 70–71.
 - 19 Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, esp. 77–90.

- 20 Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, for the architrave capitals, see 99–106. Djobadze presents numerous comparative examples, but not an underlying context explaining the variety.
- 21 After the 526 and 528 earthquakes and the 540 Persian sack, the city had to be reconstructed, which was an imperial project in all cases. Hence the exchange of the models and style should be understood within the historical backdrop of the sixth-century Mediterranean imperial trade networks as they facilitated a wide-range distribution of building materials and concepts, and which would have been active within an important city such as Antioch. See Jean-Pierre Sodini, “Marble and Stoneworking in Byzantium, Seventh–Fifteenth Centuries.” In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh Through the Fifteenth Century*. Angeliki E. Laiou, ed. (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 129–135) for a brief but noteworthy synthesis focusing specifically on the marble and stone production and trade. The main subject of the chapter considers the periods after the sixth century, but the study defines a vivid synthesis of the known evidence for before and during the sixth century as well. The best example from the Wondrous Mountain that indicates the connection with the material arriving for Antioch is the composition of the pilaster capital of the Holy Trinity Church that is a very close parallel to a capital found in Antioch and published by Lassus (Jean Lassus, *Sanctuaires Chrétiens de Syrie* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1947), Plate LII, figs. 3 and 5; the section with the basket capital). Yet, this specific capital at the Wondrous Mountain is a flattened version of the capital from Antioch, which indicates the involvement of local builders and artisans and local interpretation of the models seen elsewhere.
- 22 The stylite is compared to the cross in several passages of the *Lives* (compiled and discussed in Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. I, 147* and Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 258, n. 6.1). The iconography is discussed in Lassus, *Sanctuaires*, 288. A very similar representation that depicts the saint – right under a cross – flanked by two birds on a relief is now in Munich. The sarcophagus is “probably Syrian” and is dated to the seventh century. See Mamoun Fansa and Beate Bollmann, *Die Kunst der frühen Christen in Syrien: Zeichen, Bilder und Symbole vom 4. bis 7. Jahrhundert* (Mainz: Philipp Von Zabern Verlag, 2008), 177 (Catalogue No. 130).
- 23 Among the early examples cited by Pitarakis, the St. Philip *eulogia* – a bronze bread stamp – is a noteworthy parallel, since it is possible that the actual octagonal martyrion of the saint in Hierapolis was depicted to the right of the saint (Brigitte Pitarakis, “New Evidence on Lead Flasks and Devotional Patterns: from Crusader Jerusalem to Byzantium.” In *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*. Denis Sullivan, Elizabeth Fisher, and Stratis Papaioannou, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 248–249). The 2010 discovery of the basilica at Hierapolis, associated with the saint’s tomb clarifies the interpretation as the saint is probably flanked by the two important structures on the site (Francesco D’Andria, “Phrygia Hierapolis’i [Pamukkale] 2011 Yılı Kazı ve Onarım Çalışmaları.” *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 34, no. 3 (2013), 131).
- 24 The *Life* of St. Symeon, chapter 95 (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. I, 74).
- 25 A parallel is the Transfiguration at the apse mosaic in San Apollinare in Classe. This is an adequate example in this context since the iconography is not regular and has already been discussed in terms of its liturgical context, which is similar to my discussion for the pilaster capitals in the following section (Angelika Michael, *Das Apsismosaik von S. Apollinare in Classe: seine Deutung im Kontext der Liturgie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005)). Although Michael’s discussion provides a very strong parallel to mine, I still have to accept that the argument of Mauskopf Deliyannis (Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 269–270 with further bibliography) who thinks that the Michael’s interpretation should be considered as one possible perception among many other possibilities suggested by other scholars, rather than the intended context. The case at

- the Wondrous Mountain, where an intentional link to liturgy can be denoted, is rather different, as discussed herein.
- 26 Although translated as “cloud of fire” by Van den Ven (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 91), which would directly signify the descent of Holy Spirit in Syriac tradition (Sebastian P. Brock, “Fire from Heaven: From Abel’s sacrifice to the Eucharist.” *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 229–243), it actually is “cloud of light/ νεφέλην φωτός” in the Greek text (Van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. I, 74). An alternative reading – albeit less likely because of the different iconographic contexts – is proposed by a detail on a manuscript of Rabbula Gospels from the sixth century. The manuscript is mentioned in Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 130–131, and thoroughly analyzed in discussion in Massimo Bernabò, ed., *Il Tetravangelo di Rabbula: Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, cod. Plut. 1.56. L’illustrazione del Nuovo Testamento nella Siria del VI secolo* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008), and idem., “The Miniatures in the Rabbula Gospels: Postscripta to a Recent Book.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 (2014), 342–358. In the iconography of the Baptism of Christ in this manuscript, the Hand of God above the dove together with the depiction of “fire on water,” a common theme in Syriac textual sources in relation to Christ’s Baptism, rises almost like a column (Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 111–112).
 - 27 The saint was visited/overshadowed (The *Life* of St. Symeon the Younger, chs. 69, 103 and 118) by the Holy Spirit.
 - 28 Djobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 108. The original location of the capital is not known.
 - 29 All the architrave blocks were fallen when the excavations on the site started and their original location remain unknown.
 - 30 Interpreted as the “exaltation of the cross” by Djobadze, who stated that the scene “attain[ed] cosmic significance” without any contextual explanation (Djjobadze, *Archeological Investigations*, 103). The interpretation was initially suggested by Lafontaine-Dosogne (*Itinéraires Archéologiques*, 118, n. 3).
 - 31 Van den Ven (*La Vie Ancienne*, Vol. II, 54 n.4) connects this passage to the iconography of *eulogiai*, but his discussion does not include the architrave.
 - 32 The differences between the iconographies of St. Symeon the Younger and St. Symeon the Elder, including this aspect, are discussed in detail in Jean-Pierre Sodini, “Eulogies de la fouille d’Antioche.” *Antakya 4642 nolu Parsel Kurtarma Kazısı, Vol. I*. Hatice Pamir, ed. (Hatay: Hatay Müzesi Yayınları, in press). The quote is originally in French and translated by the author from the same article.
 - 33 Lafontaine-Dosogne discusses the similarity of the iconography of the architrave to the *eulogiai* but does not refer to the depiction of the monk *in orans* on the capital (Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Itinéraires Archéologiques*, 118–119).
 - 34 Verzone mentions a similar perceptive relation between the Entrance Hall and the Holy Trinity Church (Paolo Verzone, “Il santuario di S. Simeone il Giovane sul Monte delle Meraviglie.” *Corsi di cultura sull’arte ravennate e bizantina* 21 (1974), 279).
 - 35 Qal‘at Sem‘an’s semi-circular apses remained unique in the region until the recent discovery of the East Basilica at Kefert ‘Aqab (Widad Khoury and Bertrand Riba, “Les églises de Syrie (IVe-VIIe siècle): essai de synthèse.” *Les églises en monde syriaque*. Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, ed. (Paris: Geuthner, 2013), 53).
 - 36 In fact, excluding the apse, the east-west axis (ca. 16.5 meters) of the interior is shorter than the north-south axis (ca. 18.5 meters).
 - 37 The North Church was extensively rebuilt probably during the revival of the complex by the tenth to eleventh centuries. The present four piers that are constructed by spolia are probably from the same late construction phase. Although it the Medieval builders might have referred to a planning notion that was quite widespread in their period, i.e., cross-domed, this does not mean that a dome was ever built for this church,

even during later periods. Indeed, the later piers do not look strong enough to carry a dome. See Robert Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2008), 89–91, for a brief discussion of the basilicas that were transformed into cross-domed churches, and also for a condensed comparison of the rebuilt piers that carried a dome and the piers reconstructed at the North Church.

- 38 On size and scale of architectural installations for sacred space within the larger church complex, see also the chapter by Bogdanović in this volume.