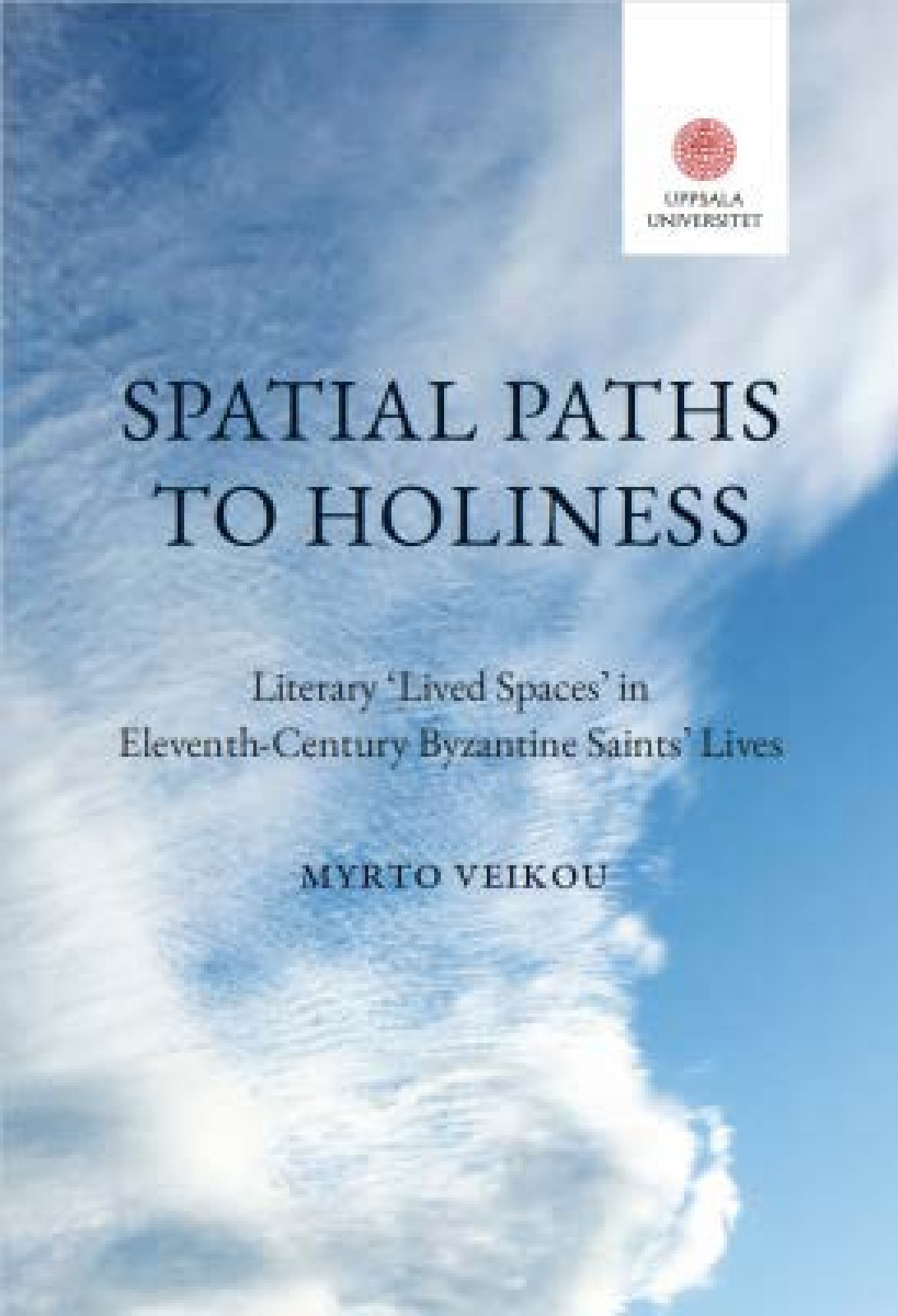

SPATIAL PATHS TO HOLINESS

Literary 'Lived Spaces' in Eleventh-Century Byzantine Saints' Lives

MYRTO VEIKOU

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS

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22

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Literary 'Lived Spaces' in Eleventh-Century Byzantine Saints' *Lives*

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UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

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Cover illustration: A “staircase pattern” by clouds in one of Uppsala’s turbulent skies. © M. Veikou.
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To Thibault and Kymothoi

Preface

In the city of Uppsala, located at some 70km-distance from the Stockholm Archipelago, the average wind-speed throughout the year is 10–15 kilometers per hour. These dynamics generate recurring spectacles of 'turbulent' skies, as clouds are constantly in motion and they rapidly form, reform and transform the image of the sky. These spectacles make this Byzantinist reflect upon ways in which medieval people—who had never flown a plane, bound to the land—would have been receiving them in their everyday life. How 'heavenlily-induced' would they have considered turbulent skies? Would they have understood the image on the cover of this book (a cloud-pattern depicting a long staircase leading from the low parts of the horizon to the celestial hights) as divine invitation? The turbulent skies of Uppsala have nurtured me with ample imagination towards understanding medieval hagiographical texts and writing this book.

This work is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation at Uppsala University (2020), based upon research conducted in the years 2015-2020 under the supervision of Professor Ingela Nilsson and Dr Charis Messis. I express my gratitude to Ingela Nilsson, Charis Messis, Stephanos Efthymiadis, Stratis Papaioannou, Margaret Mullett, Julie Hansen, Helena Bodin and Christian Høgel for their encouragement and support during the process of creation. Special thanks to Ingela for her generous help and advice at every stage of the publication process.

I warmly thank Eric Cullhed for the typesetting and cover design, and Simon Phillips for copyediting this volume. This book has been finalized within the frame of the research programme Retracing Connections, financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (M19-0430:1). The book's production was supported by publication grants from Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala and Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur, for which I would like to express my sincere thanks.

This book belongs to my family, Thibault Brink and Kymothoi Brink Veikou, who gazed at the turbulent skies of Uppsala with me.

Uppsala, 15 June 2023

Contents

Abbreviations

OPBP Bible hub, 2014. Online Parallel Bible Project at https://biblehub.com/psalms/102-7.htm (last accessed on 2019-03-20)

LSJ Henry George Liddell; Robert Scott; Henry Stuart Jones; Roderick McKenzie, 1996. *A Greek-English lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press.

List of Illustrations

1

‘Lived spaces’ in Byzantine literature

> Our mobilities create spaces and stories—spatial stories.[1]

The byzantine world was made up of a set and sequence of spaces formed and transformed by people according to their cultural agenda and the political *aléas*. It is a challenge to reconstruct the experience of these spaces towards a better comprehension of Byzantine society and culture. The main intention of this book is a grasp of literary spaces in such a way as to allow the discerning of how authors’ real-life spatial experiences have determined their use of spaces as part of consistent narrative devices and narrative strategies—whether intentional or reflexive. Eleventh-century hagiographical narratives are analysed and interpreted so as to reconstruct the ways in which the spatial experiences, shared by the authors and their audiences as a result of their cultural experience of Byzantine spaces, are used as a medium for communicating the story. In brief, this study explores how Byzantine authors write about space in order to communicate culture.

towards a reconstruction of byzantine ‘lived spaces’

Henri Lefebvre’s concepts of ‘perceived, conceived and lived social space’ are very useful in this respect. In his well-known work *La production de l’espace* Lefebvre suggested that space should be seen as the site of ongoing interactions of social relations rather than the mere result of such interactions – a process of production, in his own words, rather than a product:

> The space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet as such it escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely. The very agency that has forced spatial reality towards a sort of uncontrollable autonomy now strives to run it into the ground, then shackle and enslave it.[2]

Every society produces a space, its own space. In that sense, Byzantine society of the eleventh century cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space; it had its own spatial practice and forged its own—appropriated—space.

Lefebvre proposed a triadic spatial model—the perceived, conceived and lived space—as an analytical tool for establishing the dynamic process of the ‘production of space’. He considered every such process as a three-part dialectic between

[1] Cresswell & Meriman 2010, 5.
[2] Lefebvre 1974/1991, 26–7.

everyday spatial practices (which can be perceived), representations of space or theories of space (which can be conceived) and spatial representations which are the spatial imaginary of the time (and cannot be anything but lived). The third of these, i.e., lived space, is balanced carefully between the two poles of conceived space (purely notional idealism) and perceived space (pure materialism). It embodies both elements without being reducible to either. Stuart Elden and Zhongyuan Zhang provide helpful elaborations of the triadic model.[3] An example is based upon an office floor layout:

> On the one hand, we have an abstract space of pure mathematical figures and verbal messages—manifested in the design of offices, organizational rules and symbols, and so on; and, on the other, an all-too-material, and therefore indifferent space, consisting of the flows of labor, money, information and every physical movement of employees: their opening doors, sipping coffee etc. In between these two poles, there is the lived space, a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences, of people's sense-making, imagination, and feeling—that is, their local knowledge—of the space as they encounter it. In so far as our experiences always take place in pre-fabricated physical spaces, and what we think may not coincide with what we do, the lived space embodies both conceived and perceived spaces without being reducible to either.[4]

Space, according to Lefebvre, may not change, but our perceptions of it do: they become finer, subtler, more profound, more differentiated. Lefebvre associates the diversity of space—which he develops into his triadic model—with the changing perspectives of onlookers.[5] Zhang has suggested that the current way of understanding Lefebvre's model can be supplemented with the notion of 'shifting perspectives':[6]

> We could portray conceived space, perceived space and lived space as the projected images of three cameras focused concurrently on any given event: through the first camera we read mathematical data (e.g., the height of a man, the length of a building etc.); through the second we see the body movements of the man, his perambulations, his gestures; and through the third, we reach into his inner subjectivity, his feelings about the structures surrounding him. Each camera generates different data yet each, at the same time, refers to the overall organizational space that they come to represent. In other words, conceived, perceived and lived spaces overlap, and are not just juxtaposed.[7]

Different readings and interpretations of literary narratives might help reconstruct Byzantine 'lived spaces' and that is the basic aim of this study. My main research strategy is to approach the Byzantine spatial experiences through the particular ways in which they are reflected in literary writing. All medieval texts which have come down to us can be viewed as (written) speech acts with a purpose of persua-

[3] Elden 2004; Zhang 2006.
[4] Zhang 2006, 221.
[5] Elden 2004, 182; Lefebvre 1974/1991, 295–315; Zhang 2006, 222.
[6] Zhang 2006, 222.
[7] Ibid.

sion, short or long-term.[8] It is very interesting to investigate the role of spatiality in the achievement of their purpose. Through the exploration of the space-relevant vocabulary in primarily two hagiographical narratives I aim to challenge the role of Lefebvre's trialectic in the medieval Eastern Mediterranean cultures (if any). Therefore, I here attempt to identify the narrative (persuasive) function of spatial practices (which can be perceived), theories of space (which can be conceived), and spatial representations (which are the spatial imaginary of the time).

A SPATIAL-NARRATOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON BYZANTINE LITERATURE

Social and culture-specific practices, which are spatially enacted and performed, are reflected in narratives. Therefore, the investigation of narratives potentially leads back to reconstructions of society and culture. A narratological inquiry of Byzantine spatialities in narrative texts focuses on the employment of a 'spatial' language or 'spatial' narrative devices and narrative strategies. Albeit a rather new field of research, this sort of work is very promising. Several notions of space stand out as central features of Byzantine narrative texts.

By definition, space and time form the core of all historiographical texts. This seems reasonable since these texts aim to narrate the trajectory of a located territorial and cultural entity (i.e., the Byzantine Empire). Emmanuel Bourbouhakis and Ingela Nilsson have briefly analysed the narrative structure of chronographic and historiographic works, of which the episodic storytelling remained a persistent feature whether in a 'paratactic' order (in chronography) or with a more integral or causal relation among the parts and the whole.[9] Furthermore, these works contain sporadic accounts of places as intervals of main historical events which are narrated in an ekphrastic manner.[10]

In texts which seem to have had a more obvious and specific function in society, such as the military texts, geographical treatises, itineraria, lists of bishops etc., space stands out as an important parameter for the survival and development of the Byzantine state and society. As such it is extremely carefully dealt with in the texts as evident in precise guidelines for space management both in peace and in battle: the construction of settlements and military infrastructure, the distances in battle, the optimal structure of the hinterland and military outposts in relation to geography and geomorphology etc.[11]

Spatiality is also the main feature of texts whose performative and functional aspects are elusive. These texts are the enigmatic listings of spaces (reminding of modern world-heritage lists by UNESCO) such as the *Patria*, the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and the *Buildings* by Procopius. Even Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus' *De Administrando Imperio* has been traditionally perceived by

[8] Borsa et al. 2015, 9.
[9] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 265–9.
[10] See e.g. Nilsson 2013, 15–7, 27.
[11] Indicatively the *Strategikon* of Syrianus: *Treatises* § 9.28–9, 10.30, 11.32, 12.34–6.

modern scholarship as a geography book of an encyclopaedic utility rather than as a historical narrative whose meanings and significance rest on future investigation. The text of *Geoponika* may be considered in an equal manner through an imaginative close reading.

Ekphrastic texts are, in my opinion, the unlimited field of spatial inquiry because they display a remarkable depth of meanings involved in accounts of spaces. A great variety of approaches have been suggested in the continuous attempts to decipher these meanings in modern scholarship.[12] I have recently proposed a reading which refers to Spatial Studies, very similar to the perspective and methodology of the present work.[13] Novels and romances, in prose or verse, also provide a field of ample inquiry of Byzantine spatial notions, because they confer lived experiences of spaces in everyday life, which are further enhanced by fiction. The analysis of all these literary texts from a spatial perspective opens new ways of comprehension of Byzantine cultures, senses, emotions, and imaginaries.[14]

Byzantine hagiographical texts, in specific, offer a generous colourful palette of spatially and socially defined human agency as well as information on the rhetorical context in which these texts were used. Hagiography was a preponderant narrative genre of Byzantine literature during its floruit and it was addressed to a broad and varied audience. The very fact that sainthood is such an important component of Byzantine culture, and that sanctity is such a diverse and mutable concept, means that a closer look at how writers engaged with sanctity, and how this engagement shaped their writing (and how their writing, in turn, shaped the kind of sanctity they were putting forward) is a question of importance for scholars of literature as well as for Byzantinists.[15]

The Byzantine hagiographical texts contain genuine and dynamic expressions of everyday life, they bring out the individual as well as both the religious and secular culture, and they encounter the sacred in a number of different locations such as the human body, the church, the cell, the pillar, open nature, etc.[16] My preliminary research has shown, for example, that the *Life of St Lazaros from Mt Galesion* contains 189 topographic definitions and the *Life of St Andrew the Fool* 103.[17] Even shorter texts, such the *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*, are staged within an ever-changing locality of action.[18] One cannot help asking what is the need and the significance of relocation—or spatiality in general—of human agency in these texts and what is their role in the narrative. In that respect, one cannot disregard that even the Greek word for the sanctification process through asceticism is relat-

[12] See Veikou 2018, for an account of respective literature.

[13] Veikou 2018.

[14] See e.g. Messis & Nilsson 2015; Nilsson 2013; Veikou & Nilsson 2018.

[15] On relevant issues in medieval literature see von Conzen & Bernau 2015.

[16] See also Mantova 2018.

[17] *L. Andrew*; *L. Laz.*; see the discussion in the next chapters of the present volume on the *Life* of Lazaros.

[18] See e.g. Høgel 2018.

ed to space and relocation in a very interesting way: ἀναχώρησις deriving from the compound verb ἀναχωρέω. The combination of the meanings of the preposition ἀνά[19] and the verb χωρέω[20] provides the compound verb with a variety of meanings: be in motion, depart, go upwards, arise, progress, go against the flow, remake room for oneself. In a way asceticism comes as an experience of social isolation, self-confinement within limited space and ample imagination. St Antony's movements in space and his change of places, in his *Life*, is associated with his spiritual improvement and eventual holiness.[21] But again what comes as extremely surprising is the amount of relocations and mobility in these texts as well as the attention drawn in spatial definitions and representations, which show that the holification experience of a person remains in constant discourse and renegotiation with the social environment from which the saint wished to isolate himself or herself in the first place.

I look into a selection of Byzantine hagiographical texts for several aspects of the spatiality of the social life of their literary worlds. I investigate definitions of—and distinctions between—open versus closed spaces, and domestic versus public spaces. I also explore the social connotations of spatial terms recurrent in the texts, such as town, road, house, church, pillar, mountain etc., as emerging from the narration. When possible, I compare and contrast these reconstructions against modern reconstructions of such Byzantine spaces (deriving from archaeological research) so as to approach issues such as the authors' spatial imaginaries and possible intentions for the particular spatial representations in their texts. Corporeal space is also approached as one person's first and primary space available for use and performance, while visions are viewed as spatial constructions in the same context.

The interdisciplinary approach of this study aspires to outline the field of spatial studies as an area of research where traditional approaches to hagiography (literary, historical, anthropological) can be combined through their common and inherent 'cultural component'.[22] In that sense this consideration of hagiography also exceeds a generic discussion of literature, since the concept of 'spatial storytelling' makes sense when challenged against other kinds of Byzantine narrative.[23] Yet, among the latter, hagiography is exceptional in the sense that it generically lies exactly where modern scholarship, at least, no longer can tell whether it is reflecting a historical reality or not. Had a similar approach been applied to Byzantine novels

[19] *LSJ*, 98: ἀνὰ, up to; upwards; up; arise! ; against the stream; hence flows the sense of increase or strengthening; from the notion throughout, comes that of repetition and improvement, as in ἀναβλαστάνω, -βιόω, -γεννάω.

[20] *LSJ*, 2015: χωρέω, to be in motion or flux; to go forward, advance, make progress; to have/make room for a thing, hold, contain.

[21] *L. Antony*.

[22] See discussions by Efthymiadis 2014, 5–8; Flusin 2018; Høgel 1997.

[23] For example, Veikou 2018 on Byzantine ekphrasis; Nilsson 2013. See also discussions by Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010; Mullett 1992; Nilsson & Scott 2007.

or historiographical works, it would not focus upon the same issues of theoretical discussion.

Therefore, my study aims to respond to questions around the process and the meaning of holification by means of a specifically conceived theoretical framework and methodological toolbox. Such questions, which are central to this study, are the following. What kind of experiences does the process of holification of a human, as conveyed by literature, implicate? What corporeal senses and what corporeal and subsequent mental changes are implied by the texts to have been engaged in this process? Last but not least, how do different notions of space serve as 'vehicles' for the literary expression of these experiences, senses, and changes? Hence, how are literary spatialities used as narrative devices by Byzantine authors in order to persuade their audience about the existence and the meaning of holification?

THE TEXTS AND THEIR AUTHORS

The core material of this study consists of two eleventh-century hagiographical texts that belong to the literary genre of Saints' *Lives*. The first text is the *Life of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion* written by Gregory the Cellarer (Γρηγορίου του κελλαρίτη Βίος Λαζάρου τοῦ ἐν τῷ Γαλησίῳ) edited by Hippolyte Delehaye in 1910 (BHG 979).[24] The second text is the *Life of St Symeon the New Theologian* written by Niketas Stethatos (Νικήτα Στηθάτου Βίος Ἁγίου Συμεὼν τοῦ Νέου Θεολόγου) edited by Symeon Koutsas in 2005.[25] Both texts have been translated into English by Richard Greenfield and these translations are cited in this study.[26]

The authors of the texts share a few common traits: they were roughly contemporary, not widely circulating, they originated from the Byzantine capital, and they were both disciples of the saints whose life story they wrote. Apart from these similarities, there are also many differences between the two. First of all, they lived at different and very distant places. Gregory, on one hand, lived at the monastery of the Resurrection on Mount Galesion near Ephesos, i.e. in a Byzantine Aegean province of Asia Minor. Despite his origin from Constantinople, where he still had his mother and some friends,[27] and his desire to go to Jerusalem (mentioned in passing in the text) his staying at Mount Galesion seems to have been a conscious decision. In fact, he still lived there for at least some years after Lazaros' death, writing the latter's life story. Only towards the very last chapters the reader is a bit uncertain about Gregory's location.[28] Niketas, on the other hand, lived and wrote in the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, probably at the monastery of Stoudios.[29]

[24] *L. Laz.*
[25] *L. Sym. New Theol.*
[26] Greenfield 2000, 2013.
[27] *L. Laz.* §170.
[28] See *L. Laz.* §170, 224.
[29] Greenfield 2013, viii.

Secondly, the two authors seem to have had different social and educational backgrounds. Although we do not know any details about them, apart from what they mention about themselves within their texts, this conclusion is based on their linguistic register and other literary features of the texts. In specific, Niketas presented a conventional, somewhat stylized piece of hagiography.[30] He wrote in good, generally straightforward Byzantine ecclesiastical Greek.[31] He added authority to his writing by drawing on his own knowledge and including biblical quotations and references to patristic scripts.[32] And, while Gregory is not known as the author of any other work, Niketas seems to have been very engaged in scholarly work. He was the editor of all Symeon the New Theologian's surviving scripts (discourses, hymns, and theological and ethical treatises) as well as the author of mystical discourses.[33]

The text of Lazaros' *Life*, on the other hand, suggests that Gregory had received a reasonable yet not outstanding education. He demonstrates his knowledge of biblical scripts by including frequent quotations from the Old and New Testament but most of it seems to be from memory.[34] In contrast to Niketas' conventional and stylized hagiographical work, Greenfield characterizes Gregory's writing style as "straightforward and functional" and the text structure as "rambling and disorganized".[35] I would like to suggest that Gregory's style is more historiographical, the text standing out indeed as "the Christian counterpart of the historiographical genre".[36] In specific, as Greenfield also observes, his narrative has a loose and fluid structure reminding of oral narratives: Gregory develops the structure as he proceeds, leaving the impression that the course of the narrative is being decided as it is written.[37] Furthermore, Gregory displays a great concern for his personal credibility. He constantly includes descriptions of places and landscapes for the reader to be able to identify the locations of narrated events. When narrating Lazaros' interaction with other persons, he cites his sources and ensures they can be verified by his readers. So, he cares to provide ample information about the eye-witnesses' identities: their names and origins, their activity prior to his acquaintance with them, the circumstances in which they met, and their later activity.[38]

The main criterion for the selection of these two texts as research material is the existence of multiple relations between them. As the present study reveals, there is a wide range of literary and narrative relationships between them in regard to

[30] Greenfield 2013, ix.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Alfeyev 2000; Christou 1957; Markopoulos 2008, passim; Paschalidis 2004.
[34] Greenfield 2000, 54–5.
[35] Greenfield 2000, 53.
[36] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 269. For the interjection between historical and literary writing in Byzantium see Nilsson & Scott 2007.
[37] Greenfield 2000, 53–4.
[38] E.g., *L. Laz.* §2, 3, 65, 81, 243.

content, rhetorical aspects, literary motifs, narrative patterns and strategies. However, another set of relations derive from the historical context of the texts. In the following paragraphs I attempt to briefly outline them, while I return to this issue several times in the following chapters.

First of all, the two texts are contemporary. It is estimated that Gregory completed his text around the year 1058, and his narration covers the time span of Lazaros' life dated to the years 966–1053 AD.[39] Niketas' account of the life of Symeon the New Theologian is estimated to have been composed in the years 1054–1090 while his narrative refers to Symeon's lifetime, i.e., to the years 949–1022.[40]

Secondly, the two texts are inscribed within similar social and rhetorical contexts. They were composed and used within two monastic communities in which they were performed in order to commemorate the founder of the community and educate new members.

Thirdly, the two texts are eponymous. Their authors have signed their works by name, a practice which, in the eleventh century, connected them with the particular ancient tradition of prestigious named authorship. In the words of Stratis Papaioannou, already from the patristic literary tradition 'authorship operated, both as a notion and as a practice, within the horizon of authorities, earlier rhetorical models and, especially, writers who drew from divine inspiration'.[41]

Fourthly, the two authors were trusted and respected by their writing subjects (the saints) and had a close relationship with them, as evident from the two texts. Gregory, on one hand, held the office of the cellarer in Lazaros' monastery and he seems to have been very close to Lazaros towards the end of his life.[42] Niketas Stethatos, on the other hand, copied the rough drafts of work that Symeon the New Theologian would send him towards the end of his life.[43] Accordingly, he was not only Symeon's biographer but also the editor of all his theological works and thus very familiar with the saint's philosophy and practice. As Martin Hinterberger suggests, Niketas presents himself as the spiritual successor to Symeon, his student and heir to his writings; he claims the authority to interpret Symeon's works—the distribution of which he controls—and at the same time protect his copyright on these writings against possible competitors.[44]

Last but not least, the authors wrote these works in order to introduce Lazaros and Symeon the New Theologian as new saints, regardless of whether that would actually lead to their 'canonization'.[45] Niketas Stethatos, in another work, even opposes 'the new teachers' (*νέοι διδάσκαλοι*) to the Church Fathers.[46] This emergence

[39] Greenfield 2000, 5–6, 52.
[40] Greenfield 2013, vii, ix.
[41] Papaioannou 2014, 24.
[42] Greenfield 2000, 51.
[43] Greenfield 2013, viii.
[44] Hinterberger 2012, 264.
[45] See Paschalidis 2004, 149–51. Cf. Efthymiadis 1998, 160.
[46] Niketas Stethatos, *Limits* §28.

of new saints was a phenomenon inscribed within the intense religious debates of the eleventh century, involved in the confrontation between the East and the West, and also related to earlier developments inside the Byzantine Church.[47] Therefore, a comparative study of two different emergences of 'brand new' saints, as narrated by their followers, constitutes an excellent opportunity for research on the eleventh-century meanings of the holification process.

The eleventh-century historical background is further relevant to the close relationship between the two *Lives* in a broader sense. The two texts reflect the rise of monasticism during this period. This was often connected to provincial aristocracy and their competition with the aristocratic circles of the capital, and Symeon the New Theologian is a clear example of this process at the upper part of the social scale. As a member of a powerful and wealthy family from Paphlagonia, he used its connections at the imperial court in order to study in the capital and gain a high position in the palace. However, the spiritual life of the capital overwhelmed him, and he ended up rejecting all these advantages. Still, his ideal was to become a monk in Constantinople—not in Paphlagonia—urging to maintain an urban identity, which is a recurrent theme in Middle Byzantine literature.[48] The *Life* of Lazaros depicts the other (lower) end of the Byzantine social scale: he belongs to and deals with the lower social strata of provincial rural and urban communities. The often-harsh behaviour of people in the *Life* depicts the toughness resulting from a daily effort to achieve survival in the countryside. Tricksters and kidnappers pass through the narrative, as well as soldiers, abandoned children, and authoritative monks and bishops. In Gregory's narration, the role of a re-invented monasticism on solid ancient foundations (by imitating the early Christian stylites) appears as the only hope for humanity's salvation. Thus, the holy man, who gave birth to such a movement in a Byzantine province, deserves to be a (new) saint. This is the main reason why Gregory is writing.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research contributes to Spatial Studies within the context of Byzantine Studies. It builds on poststructuralist theoretical conceptualizations of space and narrative. To that end, it aspires to bring together and combine a diversity of methods and academic perspectives in literary, narratological, historical, spatial and cultural studies in an essentially interdisciplinary approach.

Spatial concepts which work well towards this sort of literary criticism are borrowed from Philosophy, Cultural Geography and Social Anthropology. Specifically, apart from Lefebvre's spatial trialectics, discussed above, I use elaborate interpretations of social experiences of spaces, from Philosophy, Geography and Social Anthropology. These are, for example, Edward Soja's 'thirdspace', Lila Le-

[47] Efthymiadis 1998, 159; Magdalino 2001, 61; Rapp 1995, 31.
[48] See examples and discussion by Messis 2017.

ontidou's 'in-between spaces', Michel Foucault's 'other spaces', Homi Bhabha's 'hybrid space', and 'liminal' space as discussed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner.[49] Mobility is a paramount component of one string of Byzantine hagiographical writing. It is here explored with the help of hermeneutic tools from the Walking Studies in Cultural Geography.[50] Place-making and situatedness are also an important feature of Byzantine hagiography. These are approached through conceptualizations in Hermeneutics, Geography and Social Anthropology by David Harvey, Edward Casey, Steven Feld, Keith Basso, Tim Cresswell, Patricia Price, Pauline McKenzie Aucoin, and Jeff Malpas.[51]

Spatial practices stand out as the core of social life; literary expressions of spatial practices determine the narration of social life. For their investigation, I use conceptualizations by the philosophers Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, as well as by the geographer Nigel Thrift.[52] Social practices often involve personal negotiations through space management: I approach them with the help of Doreen Massey's work on spatial politics.[53] The precise ways in which each of these concepts are relevant and helpful for the comprehension of aspects of the Byzantine texts, are further explicated in the respective chapters below.

The spatial lived experience is connected not only to the initial perceptions and conceptions of spaces but also to the dynamic manner in which spaces are socially performed. The performativity of spaces and the emerging subjective knowledge thereof is explored with the help of Gillian Rose and Nicky Gregson.[54] Furthermore, performativity of the corporeal space and its relation to the acquirement of embodied knowledge is approached by means of interpretative devices by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and Shogo Tanaka.[55] The particular articulation of corporeal performativity as a 'holy act' in Byzantine hagiography is based on previous work by Stavroula Constantinou, Derek Krueger, and Julie van Pelt.[56]

The subtle and complex connections between spatial experiences and their written expressions requires a composite investigation which constitutes a fairly new field of research. A number of concepts from narratology constitute a working ground for this sort of scrutiny. They cover a broad range of interrelations be-

[49] Bhabha 1990, 1994; Foucault 1975, 1984; van Gennep 1909/1960; Leontidou 1996; Soja 1989, 1996, 1999; Turner 1969, 1974/2018.

[50] Cresswell & Merriman 2010.

[51] Aucoin McKenzie 2017; Casey 1996, 1997; Cresswell 2013; Feld & Basso 1996; Harvey 1993, 2009; Malpas 2016, 2017, 2018; Price 2013.

[52] De Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1947, 1961; Thrift 1996, 2007.

[53] Massey 1995, 1999, 2004, 2005.

[54] Gregson & Rose 2000; Rose 1999.

[55] Butler 1988, 1993; Haraway 1988; Merleau-Ponty 1945/2012, 1960/1964; Tanaka 2011, 2013, 2015.

[56] Constantinou 2005, 2014; Krueger 2004, 2014; Van Pelt 2018, 2019.

tween (a) narrative and space;[57] (b) narrative and place-making;[58] (c) narrative and spatial mobility;[59] and (d) narrative and performativity.[60] When it comes specifically to the narration by means of 'telling space' (spatial storytelling) Marie-Laure Ryan's 'laminations of space' remains a very helpful methodological device and, therefore, it is explained in detail in Chapter Four and employed throughout this study.[61] This line of research has been growing during the last decade or so, offering a wide range of interpretations which have been here considered, acknowledged, and also used to a larger or smaller degree.[62] Another set of narratological concepts around the author and the reader (such as the implied author/reader, the narratee, the ideal reader) have helped me approach the issue of subjective situated knowledge and its (also situated) reception.[63]

When it comes specifically to the role of space in Byzantine hagiography, I have considered a line of historical and literary research on medieval Saints' *Lives* by Eleanor Ducket, Maribel Dietz, Elisabeth Malamut, Alison Goddard Elliott, Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, Julia Mantova, Christodoulos Papavarnavas, and Veronica della Dora.[64] The issues of authorship and literary 'politics', as well as of Byzantine storytelling (and in particular intertextuality and reception) are central in the discussion of the relation between spatiality and Byzantine and medieval hagiography. On these issues, I have used literary criticism previously employed by Ingela Nilsson, Charis Messis, Christian Høgel, Stephanos Efthymiadis, Margaret Mullett, Stratis Papaionannou, Emmanuel Bourbouhakis and Eva von Contzen.[65]

This hybrid combination of academic methodologies and approaches drawn from Spatial Studies and the humanities allows a comparative investigation of (a) representations of socially-constructed spatial aspects of Byzantine everyday life; (b) literary spaces reflecting social reality; and (c) ways in which these spaces determine the aesthetics of the texts. The main lines of research extend along two main axes. The first of these is the investigation of literary spaces as representations of diverse spatial perceptions, conceptions, uses, functions, and experiences as well as their diachronic transformation, through the study of hagiographical texts (and occasionally their contemporary material and visual culture). The second axis is

[57] Buchholz & Jahn 2005; Correia 2017.
[58] Price 2013; Schlitte 2017.
[59] Turnbull 2002.
[60] Berns 2009.
[61] Ryan 2014.
[62] Azaryahu & Foote 2008; Harris 2015; Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016.
[63] Eco 1979; Iser 1971, 1974, 1978; Prince 1971, 1980, 1985.
[64] Congourdeau 1993; Della Dora 2016; Dietz 2005; Ducket 1959; Malamut 1993; Mantova 2014, 2018; Papavarnavas 2021.
[65] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010; von Contzen 2015, 2016; Efthymiadis 1998, 2014, 2019; Høgel 2018; Messis 2017, 2018; Messis, Mullett & Nilsson 2018; Mullett 1992; Nilsson 2013, 2014; Nilsson & Scott 2007; Papaioannou 2014.

the investigation and reconstruction of diachronic uses of space as a narrative device, its function and effects in these texts.

2

Literary expressions of spatial practices

"Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice," wrote Michel de Certeau in 1980, arguing that spatial practices involving mobility affect our everyday-life experience and our 'knowledge' of power structures.[1] Before him, Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault had already been concerned with purposeful creations and subjective experiences of human spaces through cultural practices, seen within a context of a critique of everyday life.[2] Various later spatial theories including Edward Soja's 'thirdspace', Doreen Massey's elusive 'time-spaces' of power relations and Nigel Thrift's 'non-representational theory', built on these notions of spatial productions and experiences by substantiating them as iterative and discursive processes.[3]

Edward Soja explained how space hides power relations:

> We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology.[4]

Doreen Massey widened this scope:

> Space is the product of intricacies and complexities, of relations from the unimaginably cosmic to the intimately tiny. And, precisely, because it is the product of relations, which are active practices [...], space is always in a process of becoming. It is always being made.[5]

Byzantine texts allow us to believe that iterative makings of culture through spatial practices, as well as practices of 'telling culture' by means of 'spatial talking', both precede the explanation of such experiences by twentieth- and twentyfirst-century thinkers.[6]

In this chapter, I build on spatial theory from cultural geography, as outlined above, to define ways in which human spatial practices, revealing social and cultural content, are reflected in the Byzantine literary texts examined here. A broad use of such spatial practices is evident in both saints' *Lives* explored in this work, yet the two texts present quite different selections of such practices. In what follows, I offer an outline of the practices used in each text, as well as an interpretation of the authors' choices. The first part of the chapter deals with the *Life of Lazaros*

[1] De Certeau 1984, 115. For a clear definition of the term of 'spatial practices' and an explicit analysis of the concept and its history see Thrift 2007.
[2] Foucault 1975, 1984; Lefebvre 1947, 1961, 1974.
[3] Massey 1995, 2005; Soja 1996, 1999; Thrift 2007.
[4] Soja 1989, 6.
[5] Massey 1999, 283.
[6] See Veikou 2018.

from Mount Galesion, while the second deals with the *Life of Symeon the New Theologian*. The uses of these literary spatial practices as narrative devices by the two authors, Gregory the Cellarer and Niketas Stethatos, are further discussed in Chapter Six.

LITERARY EXPRESSIONS OF SPATIAL PRACTICES IN THE *LIFE* OF LAZAROS FROM MOUNT GALESION

Corporeal mobility or 'the wandering body'

Lazaros' life was a constant relocation. Caught in-between his desire for God and asceticism, on one hand, and his flock, the other monks, his disciples, the abbots, the Church officials, on the other, he seems to regularly move or wander, throughout the *Life*, to negotiate his standpoints with all these people.

First, Lazaros acquired both his secular and his religious education by moving from place to place. As a child he was sent by his parents to several monasteries for his primary education. After the age of eighteen, he educated himself through wandering around, changing residence from monastery to monastery, and travelling to visit pilgrimage sites. Here follows the story of his early years in detail.

Born near Magnesia on the Meander River, he was sent to a local priest, called Leontios, to begin his education at the age of six. Three years later, he went to study with a notary called George at the nearby monastery of Oroboi, until, at the age of twelve, he went to another neighbouring monastery, Kalathai, where his uncle Elias was a monk. There, the urge to leave for the Holy Land manifested itself in his attempt to run away from the monastery. On this occasion, however, Lazaros' flight was discovered and he was brought back to Kalathai. He remained there for two years until he was sent to another monastery, Strobelion, where he studied to be a notary under the guidance of a monk called Nicholas. Altogether, Lazaros spent three and a half more years there before he finally succeeded in escaping to the East at the age of eighteen. After a visit to the shrine at Chonai and an adventurous journey across Asia Minor together with a Paphlagonian monk, which must have taken several months, Lazaros reached Attaleia on the south coast. He spent the next seven years there, associated with a monastery where he was formally tonsured as a monk and took the religious name of Lazaros. He showed his ability to pursue the solitary ascetic life and formed his own small monastic community, while he also gained a local reputation as a holy man. Lazaros stayed at Attaleia until his growing popularity became frustrating; then, he left to fulfil his life-long dream of visiting the Holy Land. Aged about twenty-five or twenty-six, he arrived in Jerusalem, where he stayed until the church of the Holy Sepulchre was demolished and increasing pressure on the Christian residents from Islamic authorities became intolerable. Then, for approximately six years, he was a monk at the lavra of St Sabas, a large monastic community near Jerusalem; but after disobeying the superior with his determination to pursue a solitary ascetic

life in the desert during Lent, he was expelled. He then moved to the nearby monastery of St Euthymios and spent some time there until he was disappointed with the standards of monastic life. He returned to the lavra of Sabas, where he became a fully professed monk, and was ordained a priest. He was appointed as *kanonarches* in the monastery. Lazaros left St Sabas and the Holy Land shortly after the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Fatimid caliph, al-Ḥākim, at the age of forty-two or forty-three, setting out for Asia Minor again.[7] He travelled slowly northward, stopping and making detours to various pilgrimage sites. He visited the 'Wondrous Mountain' at Antioch, where St Symeon the Younger had lived as a stylite, and this visit deeply impressed him and influenced the rest of his life. From there, he travelled up through Cilicia into Cappadocia, on foot, and then northward again to visit pilgrimage sites around the Black Sea, before turning west and returning first to Chonai and finally to Ephesos.

Travel, and relocation in general, are social practices which are very common in many hagiographical texts and especially Byzantine saints' Lives.[8] In her work *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Elizabeth Malamut categorized and analysed most of such 'saint movements' in Byzantine hagiographical texts.[9] She defined and discussed some standard categories of movement based on a large number of texts (monastic travelling, pilgrimage travelling, fleeing from danger), all of which apply to different movements of Lazaros in the *Life*. However, a feature which stands out as particular in Lazaros' *Life*, as compared with most texts discussed by Malamut, is precisely the amount of corporeal mobility, wandering and relocation in the text. Mobility is a constant feature of the text and astonishes the reader. Even a brief extract from the beginning of the *Life* is brimming with the number of verbs and phrases designating space and motion (real and symbolic):

> After he had spent three years with ⟨this Nicholas⟩, however, Lazaros gave him the slip one day and *went away.* He *joined up with* some monks and, when he had changed his worldly dress for a monastic habit ⟨that he got⟩ from them, *he travelled with them*, happy and rejoicing because he had now accomplished his desired goal. But not long afterward his joy was *changed* to sorrow, for *they pursued him again and caught him; they returned, taking him unwillingly ⟨with them⟩,* as on the first occasion. When ⟨another⟩ six months had passed after his return, Lazaros could not bear the burning in his heart and his longing for the holy places of Christ's passions and so, *unnoticed, he ran away again*. He *arrived at a place* where there was a monk who had *confined himself on a pillar* and, when *he approached ⟨this man⟩* and told him what he had on his mind, he discovered that he was a good adviser for him. For this ⟨stylite⟩ took off Lazaros' worldly clothes and dressed him in a monastic garment; then, after giving him his blessing, he *sent him off to make the journey* he desired with many exhortations not to turn back. When evening came, Lazaros did not want to *go into a village* and so, *spotting a small chapel in the middle of the fields, he made his way ⟨there⟩ and went into it;* he *closed its rickety door and stood,* offering up his prayers to the Lord. When he had finished, he said a⟨nother⟩ prayer, *sank to the ground and lay down.* After he had slept a little, however, he was *suddenly awakened by cries of some sort ringing in his ears.*

[7] This historical event is dated to 1009 AD. See Greenfield 2000, 101, n. 110.

[8] See Mantova 2018 and Chapter 6 below.

[9] Malamut 1993.

> *Listening carefully, he seemed to hear what sounded like wolves standing somewhere nearby outside and howling.* He *got up, wedged a stone against the door,* said a prayer, and then *lay down on the ground and slept*. In the morning *he left there and took the road leading to Chonai. Going on his way*, Lazaros found some people *originating from Cappadocia who were also heading toward the church of the Archangel. He joined their ranks and went on with them*.[10]

As I argue throughout this book, the substantial number of spatial markers in the text must be understood within Gregory's particular narrative strategy which is well exemplified in the paragraph. It is a narrative technique used by Gregory to communicate some notions to his readers or audience: these notions are the development of and progress in Lazaros' holification sanctification process, which pass through Lazaros' interaction with his secular and divine environment. This is my central argument in this work, and it is defended through narratological analysis in Chapters Four to Ten below.

Performance of personal identities through spatial practices

Wandering and inhabiting

Following Gregory's account on the second wandering phase of Lazaros around Ephesos and Mount Galesion, this pattern gets clearer. Lazaros kept negotiating his identity as a holy man, among himself and with the locals, again by relocating himself on a smaller scale, by selecting his place of residence and by constructing his personal space. The suitable space for the performance of holification in Lazaros' case, though, was a pillar. The exceptional feature of his ascetic practice was his confinement atop an open pillar for forty years, an achievement which placed him in a long tradition of Byzantine stylites. He occupied a total of four pillars during this period, spending seven years on the first (at St Marina) and roughly

[10] Αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ τὸ ποιῆσαι καὶ παρ' αὐτῷ χρόνους τρεῖς, ἐν μιᾷ λαθὼν καὶ αὐτὸν ἀνεχώρησε καὶ μοναχοῖς τισιν ἑαυτὸν ἐγκαταμίξας καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τὸ κοσμικὸν παρ' ἐκείνων εἰς μοναχικὸν μεταμείψας, σὺν αὐτοῖς ἐπορεύετο, χαίρων καὶ ἀγαλλόμενος, ὡς ἤδη τοῦ ποθουμένου σκοποῦ τετυχηκώς. Ἀλλ' οὐ πολὺ τὸ ἐν μέσῳ, καὶ ἡ χαρὰ εἰς λύπην αὐτῷ μετεστράφη. Πάλιν γὰρ αὐτὸν διώξαντες καὶ καταλαβόντες, καὶ μὴ βουλόμενον λαβόντες αὐτὸν ὡς τὸ πρῶτον ὑπέστρεψαν. Παρελθόντος δὲ μετὰ τὴν ὑποστροφὴν ἑξαμηνιαίου χρόνου, μὴ ὑποφέρων τὴν τῆς καρδίας πύρωσιν καὶ τὸν πόθον ὃν εἶχε περὶ τοὺς ἱεροὺς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθῶν τόπους λαθὼν πάλιν ἀπέδρα. Καὶ φθάσας εἴς τινα τόπον, ἔνθα μοναχός τις ἦν ἐν στύλῳ ἐγκεκλεισμένος, προσελθὼν καὶ τὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ γνώμης ὡς εἶχεν ἐξειπὼν εὗρεν αὐτὸν ἀγαθὸν σύμβουλον αὐτῷ γενόμενον. Τὴν γὰρ κοσμικὴν αὐτὸν οὗτος ἀποδύσας ἐσθῆτα, μοναχικὸν ἱμάτιον ἐνδιδύσκει καὶ οὕτως ἐπευξάμενος τὴν αὐτῷ ποθουμένην ὁδὸν ἀφῆκε πορεύεσθαι, πολλὰ αὐτῷ παραγγείλας τοῦ μὴ στραφῆναι εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω. Ὡς δὲ κατέλαβεν αὐτὸν ἡ ἑσπέρα, μὴ βουλόμενος εἰς κώμην εἰσελθεῖν, ἰδὼν μέσον τῶν ἀρουρῶν εὐκτήριον μικρόν, ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπελθὼν εἰσῆλθε καὶ τὴν σεσαθρωμένην αὐτοῦ θύραν κλείσας ἔστη τὰς εὐχὰς αὐτοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἀναπέμπων· καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος εὐχὴν ποιήσας, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους πεσὼν ἀνεκλίθη· καὶ μικρὸν τοῦ ὕπνου μεταλαχὼν ἄφνω ὡς ὑπό τινων φωνῶν βομβηθεὶς ἔξυπνος ἐγεγόνει καὶ προσσχὼν ἐδόκει ἀκούειν ὡσπερεὶ λύκων ἔξω ἐγγύς που ἑστώτων καὶ ὠρυομένων. Ὁ δὲ ἀναστὰς λίθον τε τῇ θύρᾳ προσερείσας καὶ εὐχὴν ποιήσας, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους πεσὼν ὕπνωσε· πρωΐθεν δὲ ἐκεῖθεν ἐξελθὼν τὴν πρὸς Χώνας φέρουσαν ἐπορεύετο. Πορευόμενος δὲ εὑρέ τινας ἐκ τῆς τῶν Καππαδοκῶν χώρας ὁρμωμένους καὶ πρὸς τὸν τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου ναὸν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἀπιόντας· οἷς ἑαυτὸν καταλέξας, σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπορεύετο. *L. Laz.* §6, 7.1–4, translation by Greenfield 2000, 82–3.

twelve years each on the last three on Galesion. Yet finding the right spot for setting his pillar is never illustrated as an easy task for Lazaros, in the *Life*. In Gregory's narration, Lazaros' selection of the place of residence emerges because of divine instruction through signs associated with the attitudes of local people and the availability of life resources (food, drink). Holy people kept relocating themselves until the place felt right for their construction of local identity linked to their sanctity within the context of an immediate or wider community.

After coming back to his homeland, Lazaros paid a short visit to the general vicinity of his home village, and he stayed briefly at a monastery above the village of Kepion outside Ephesos. Then Lazaros finally settled in the area at a small hermitage dedicated to St Marina and occupied by two brothers. These men built a pillar for Lazaros, and it was here, from about the age of forty-five, that he began his career as a stylite. His reputation soon spread, and a monastery was constructed to house the disciples who gathered around him. The metropolitan of Ephesos also granted some land to the community. But the situation of this monastery beside the main road into Ephesos was not well suited to someone who aspired to the ascetic ideals of hesychia. After seven years, Lazaros turned to the neighbouring mountain, Galesion, which was quite barren and uninhabited; he left his pillar at St Marina and settled instead in a cave that had been previously occupied by a holy man called Paphnoutios. His first stay lasted for only six months before he was ordered off the mountain by the metropolitan of Ephesos, but he returned shortly thereafter, this time to remain for good. It is important to note, however, that the authorities in Ephesos openly opposed his settlement on the mountain from the very start, according to the *Life*. Lazaros permanently moved to Galesion at the age of about fifty-two or fifty-three. He stayed in the cave for a few months before moving onto a pillar built by his brothers nearby. At first, he was alone there but, after he nearly died of thirst, a monk went up to live in the cave and look after him. A new community, called 'the Saviour', grew up around Lazaros' pillar and gradually came to have resident monks and a church.

Lazaros spent twelve years at the Saviour before moving higher up the mountain to a new pillar, which he had built for him following a disagreement with some of his monks over the constant visits to the community of a nun from Ephesos. Lazaros moved to his second pillar, that of the Theotokos, when he was about sixty-four. The same pattern repeated itself here, with a small community gradually developing around the pillar at this new site, which then became unsuitable for Lazaros' requirements. It became too confined for his now more ambitious plans, which would lead to the founding of a third community on the mountain. It is unclear exactly how long Lazaros spent at the Theotokos, and when precisely he moved up to his last pillar, that of the Resurrection, around which the largest and most enduring community on Galesion was to be founded. Lazaros, who had been ill for several years, died on his pillar at the monastery of the Resurrection,

which by that time had grown into a community of some forty monks, on the seventh of November 1053, most probably at the age of eighty-six. Gregory the Cellarer writes that he had spent forty-one years in all on Mount Galesion.

Not only Lazaros but most characters are shown as regularly relocating in the *Life*; Gregory the Cellarer loves mobility and change of residence. First, monks appear to have been 'chasing' Lazaros all the way up the mountain, following him and settling around his pillars. Many examples of such episodes in the *Life* are discussed in the following chapters. Furthermore, laymen never left him in peace, constantly seeking his healing, blessing, or advice, throughout his lifetime.

Finally, the officials of the Church of Ephesos appear as considerable opponents to Lazaros' monastic communities on Galesion, regularly demanding their relocation off the mountain, as narrated in paragraph 245. They considered these communities as illegally intruding into their own space of economic interest and authority. Lazaros and his communities should be confined to the neighbouring monastery of Bessai, for the construction of which Lazaros had been offered 720 solidi by the emperor, Constantine IX Monomachos, and his mistress Maria Skleraina. But Lazaros makes clear that it is the divine—not the earthly—orders that he follows:

> Brother Gabriel also sent the father a letter that pointed out the benefactions made by the emperor to the monastery and how God had assisted him in everything through his [Lazaros'] prayers. ⟨This letter⟩ also ⟨added⟩, 'Since the emperor has written ⟨instructing⟩ you to go to Bessai and leave the mountain of Galesion because the place belongs to the metropolitan, you must take all the monastery's possessions and all the brothers and go there ⟨instead⟩.' But when the father heard this, he said, as though he was talking to the man who had written to him, 'I'm not going to go to Bessai because of what you say or because of the emperor's letter, nor ⟨will I take all⟩ the monastery's property ⟨there⟩. ⟨It is⟩ Christ Who has approved the construction of both this ⟨monastery⟩ and that one, and He can again send whatever is necessary to that monastery [Bessai], just as ⟨He has already done⟩ with this one.'[11]

In Gregory's narration, the holy man stands always on one side, while laymen, monks, State and Church authorities stand all together on the other side. Through this contrast the author distinguishes between spirituality and the secular. Gregory uses all these characters' mobility and negotiation of residence as his narrative device. His purpose is to demonstrate how Lazaros, on his way to holiness, has been simply 'running away' from all to avoid the 'mundane fuss', distance himself from it, and set a boundary between himself (a holy man) and the rest of the

[11] Ἀπέστειλε δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς Γαβριὴλ γραφὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, δηλοῦσαν τάς τε τοῦ βασιλέως εὐεργεσίας, ἃς εἰς τὴν μονὴν ἐποίησε, καὶ ὅπως αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ εὐχῶν εἰς πάντα συνήργησε, καὶ ὅτι· Ἐπεὶ ὁ βασιλεύς σοι ἔγραψεν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὰς Βέσσας καὶ καταλιπεῖν τὸ τοῦ Γαλησίου ὄρος διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὸν τόπον τῆς μητροπόλεως, ἆρον καὶ τὰ τῆς μονῆς ἅπαντα μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν πάντων καὶ διάβηθι ἐκεῖ. Ὁ δὲ πατὴρ τοῦτο ἀκούσας, οὕτως ἔφη ὡς πρὸς τὸν γράψαντα αὐτῷ λέγων ὅτι· Οὔτε ἐγὼ ἔχω ἀπελθεῖν εἰς Βέσσας διὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἢ διὰ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως γραφὴν οὔτε τὰ τῆς μονῆς, ἀλλ' ὁ εὐδοκήσας Χριστὸς ταύτην κἀκείνην οἰκοδομηθῆναι, ὥσπερ ἐν ταύτῃ, οὕτω πάλιν καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ πέμψαι ἔχει ὧν χρήζει. *L. Laz.* §245.1–28, translation by Greenfield 2000, 346–8.

humans. Furthermore, power—both the divine of Lazaros and the secular of the emperor—is here demonstrated by means of a claim of space. The gravity of the conflict between secular and divine power is expressed through the particularity of the claimed space. The latter is not a space of common access, but a mountain; it is not even a simple mountain but a sacred one. It is, in fact, the very Holy Mount Galesion that Gregory has been constructing in his storyworld throughout his text.

Living on a pillar as 'living at the threshold'

Lazaros' identity of, and status as, a holy man was based on his extraordinary perseverance as a stylite on the barren mountain. He was a gaunt old man standing on the top of his pillar, poorly dressed, and exposed to the elements, thus making an awe-inspiring impression upon visitors. In this way, he proved that a fragile mortal could imitate on earth the life of angels in heaven, just like the legendary stylites of the earlier Christian tradition.[12] Hence, the exceptional feature of his ascetic practice, his confinement on a pillar, placed him in the long tradition of Byzantine stylites. He occupied a total of four pillars during this period, spending seven years on the first (at St Marina) and roughly twelve years each on the last three on Mount Galesion. These pillars seem to have been completely open to the elements while some sort of a wall enclosed the space on top creating a confined 'cell' in which Lazaros lived.[13] The cell had no door—only a small window that gave access to the platform and a ladder leading to the ground, and provided a limited view of the outside area. His pillars were relatively low, since he addressed the monks assembled around it on the ground, and his cell would not have been much larger than 0.60 quare meters. Thus, there was no more space than Lazaros required for standing up and sitting. Living in this cell upon the pillar involved spatial practices which are narrated by Gregory as follows:

> [Lazaros] persevered there for seven years, standing on his pillar in the open air, burnt by the blazing heat of summer and chilled by the frost of winter. As regards his clothing, he kept his body tightly bound with irons; these stretched from his shoulders to his loins, ⟨which were enclosed⟩ in another circular iron belt fastened to both sides; under his armpits another girdle encircled him, and to this were fastened the middle parts of the irons, which came down from his shoulders. [...] He had a small ⟨specially⟩ constructed seat to rest on, and he would partake of a moment of sleep while sitting on this.[14]

[12] Greenfield 2000, 2.

[13] See a detailed discussion of Lazaros' pillars in Chapter 5 below.

[14] Διετέλεσεν οὖν ἐνταῦθα χρόνους ἑπτά, αἴθριος ἐν τῷ στύλῳ ἱστάμενος, τῷ τοῦ θέρους φλογμῷ καὶ τῷ παγετῷ τοῦ χειμῶνος καταφλεγόμενος καὶ ψυχόμενος. Εἰς δὲ τὴν ἔνδυσιν εἶχε διὰ σιδήρων τὸ σῶμα διεσφιγμένον ἀπό τε τῶν ὤμων ἕως τῆς ὀσφύος ἐν κυκλικῷ ζωστῆρι, ἑτέρῳ σιδήρῳ καθηλωμένῳ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν τῶν μερῶν, καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς μασχάλας ἑτέραν περιζωστρίδα περικυκλοῦσαν ἐν ᾗ τὰ μέσα τῶν ἐκ τῶν ὤμων κατιόντων καθήλωτο σιδήρων. [...] Εἰς δὲ το ἀνακλίνεσθαι μικρὸν καθισμάτιον ἔχων κτιστόν, ἐν αὐτῷ καθεζόμενος βραχύ τι τοῦ ὕπνου μετελάμβανεν. *L. Laz.* §35, translation by Greenfield 2000, 121–2.

Hence, in Gregory's story, the pillar is a residence which, together with its associated everyday ascetic practices, provides Lazaros with great control over his life. Confinement is the key. First, that concerns the vital space of the holy man's body; the latter is physically confined with the help of iron belts tightly binding his entire torso. Secondly, his corporeal space was further confined within one contracted residential space: the top of a pillar. Gregory also uses this pillar as a device that offers Lazaros the possibility of selecting social contacts first: the ladder is his tool. The pillar also gives him a closer connection with pure nature, the elements, and heaven, by means of isolating him at a great height i.e., at a significant distance from the ground and the ordinary, and in the open air. Hence, while the pillar stands on the ground, the reality of living on it is quite different: it feels as living in the sky while still on earth. Through Gregory's narrative the pillar emerges as the space which reifies a human experience of 'living at the threshold between earth and the sky'; for this reason, the space of the pillar can be understood precisely as an in-between space, as argued in Chapter Five.

LITERARY EXPRESSIONS OF SPATIAL PRACTICES IN THE *LIFE* OF SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN

In the *Life of Symeon the New Theologian*, the author, Niketas Stethatos, also uses literary spatial practices to tell his story. In addition to relocation and change of residence, he also uses having a vision in a spatial sense, experiencing the body as the space of the vision, height with the meaning of value, experiencing the spaces of (purifying) labour, community service, and discipline, as the means for practicing spiritual training, and displacement. These are discussed below.

Relocation

Symeon the New Theologian was born in the village of Galati in Paphlagonia. At the age of eleven, he was brought to Constantinople by his parents to study close to his uncle who was working at the imperial court. Symeon eventually joined his uncle at the court, yet at the age of fourteen he met Symeon Eulabes (Stouditis), a monk in the Stoudios monastery, and had his first experience of the ἄκτιστον φῶς at the age of twenty. Then, he returned to Paphlagonia to greet his parents and tell them that he would become a monk; he returned to Constantinople where he joined the monastery of Stoudios as Symeon Eulabes' student. After some problems he had with the other monks, he was transferred to the nearby monastery of St Mammas at the Xerokerkos Gate, where he became a monk. At the age of thirty, he was ordained as priest by the Patriarch Nicholas II Chrysoberges, and he became the abbot at the request of his fellow brethren. He remained abbot for twenty-five years, restoring and renovating the monastic facilities, organizing the spiritual life within the monastery, and even dealing with a revolt of the brethren. Then, he isolated himself and focused on his asceticism and spiritual work for sixteen years, celebrating his spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes. His progress provoked

the envy of some aggressive people in the circles of the Patriarchate, and that of the metropolitan of Nicomedia, Stephanos, who impeached him at the synod for celebrating the memory of Symeon Eulabes although the latter was not officially a saint. Symeon the New Theologian was condemned and displaced to the opposite coast of Bosporus, near a small town called Paloukiton, where he built a chapel dedicated to St Marina. However, he did not feel that well at the new location. He wrote to the Patriarch to inform him about the reasons of his exile and the Court dignitaries quickly succeed in having his case re-examined. Symeon the New Theologian had his reputation restored by the Patriarch and he was offered a metropolitan seat. He declined the offer, returned to the opposite coast, and founded a new monastery dedicated to St Marina despite the locals' resent. He died there at the age of seventy-three.

In this text, the amount of mobility is much less in comparison to the *Life* of Lazaros. Furthermore, mobility is employed only in very specific parts of the text: it is used to mark those critical and decisive turning points in the plot: when Symeon the New Theologian began his education; when he decided to become a monk; when he realized he was gifted and divinely-distinguished among his brothers; when he was exiled; and when his position was restored by the Patriarchate. These are the main turning points in his formation and career as a holy man. This use of mobility is part of Niketas' own narrative strategy, and in this strategy the use of spatiality is entirely different from that of Gregory, as explained in detail in Chapter Four.

Vision with the meaning of 'living at the threshold'

If Lazaros' stay on top of a pillar allowed him to live at the threshold between earth and heaven, the vision of the ἄκτιστον φῶς worked in the same way for Symeon the New Theologian, according to Niketas.[15] The effect of light as mediator between heaven and humans is narrated by Niketas:

> Being like this and *living an apostolic life* in accordance with the Gospel, Christ's blessed disciple *Symeon passed beyond the deceptive perception of this world*. For while in his body he was going about among people on earth, in his soul he was conversing intellectually with God through the divine light and was living with the angels in heaven.[16]

In Niketas' story, this light converts Symeon the New Theologian's cell into a threshold between the earthly/mundane and the heavenly/divine spaces (ἐξέρχεται τῆς ἀπατηλῆς τοῦ κόσμου αἰσθήσεως). The light vision is this liminal space through

[15] These visions are discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 5.

[16] Οὕτως οὖν ἔχων καὶ οὕτω βιοὺς ἀποστολικῶς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὁ μακάριος τοῦ Χριστοῦ μαθητὴς ἐξέρχεται τῆς ἀπατηλῆς τοῦ κόσμου αἰσθήσεως, καὶ τῷ μὲν σώματι συνεπορεύετο τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ Θεῷ νοερῶς συνεγίνετο διὰ τοῦ θείου φωτὸς καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις συνδιητᾶτο ἐν οὐρανοῖς. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §113.11–41, translation by Greenfield 2013, 263, 265.

which Symeon the New Theologian can communicate with God in heaven while still being on earth (τῷ μὲν σώματι συνεπορεύετο τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ Θεῷ νοερῶς συνεγίνετο διὰ τοῦ θείου φωτὸς). Light is Symeon's 'pillar'. It lifts him from the ground and brings him close to his Creator. It also lifts him higher than his disciples and it distinguishes him as a holy man (τοῖς ἀγγέλοις συνδιῃτᾶτο ἐν οὐρανοῖς), as discussed in detail in another part of this work.[17]

Height with the meaning of value

The notion of height is of course recurrent in the *Lives* of Lazaros and Symeon the New Theologian. Lazaros lives on pillars and is climbing mountains all his life, and this is his means of holification.[18] Height is simply correlated with the 'angelic way of life'. Symeon, on the contrary, has a different path to holiness: a direct communication with God through a light which comes from above and lifts him physically upwards. Niketas and Gregory use the action of physical elevation both as a literary topos and as a literary expression of 'holy' spatial practices with symbolic meaning. Physical uplifting is presented in the texts as a spatial practice performed by holy men; its role is to communicate spiritual uplifting to the audience.

The latter is regularly reminded of this principle by the narrator, by means of constant words or phrases throughout the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian. Ascetism is the technique leading to such uplifting: "Since he had already completed the long course of asceticism, however, his spiritual gifts increased as his soul ascended to a higher and more divine state."[19] Prayer is a powerful weapon towards the same goal:

> When the Enemy saw that Symeon had quickly attained this high level of conduct, he ground his teeth against him and tried to throw him down in many ways. But the fiery column of the elder's prayer was a strong protection for Symeon.[20]

This prayer presupposes mental focus:

> he would thus first collect his thoughts completely, ⟨turning them⟩ away from all external distractions, and would stand in prayer at daybreak, as has been said, lifting his intellect heavenward and uniting himself immaterially with the immaterial God.[21]

[17] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of the passage in Chapter 8.

[18] See Chapter 7 below.

[19] Ὡς οὖν αὐτῷ μὲν ὁ μακρὸς τῆς ἀσκήσεως δίαυλος διηνύετο, προέκοπτον δὲ αἱ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπιδόσεις, ἐπὶ τὸ ὑψηλότερον καὶ θεοειδέστερον ἀναγομένης αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §68.6–10, translation by Greenfield 2013, 155.

[20] Ἐν τούτῳ οὖν ὁρῶν ὁ ἐχθρὸς τῷ ὕψει ἀναδεδραμηκότα τὸν Συμεώνην, ἔβρυχε τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτοῦ κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ καθελεῖν αὐτὸν πολυτρόπως ἐπείρα. Ἀλλ' ὁ πύρινος της προσευχῆς στῦλος τοῦ γέροντος σκέπη ἦν τῷ Συμεὼν κραταιά. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §13.1–5, translation by Greenfield 2013, 33.

[21] Διό καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ὅλον ἑαυτὸν συνάγων ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξω εἰς προσευχὴν ἵστατο κατ' ἀρχὰς τῆς ἡμέρας, ὡς εἴρηται, ἄνω τὸν νοῦν ἁρπάζων καὶ ἀΰλως τῷ ἀΰλῳ Θεῷ συγγινόμενος. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §26.14–17, translation by Greenfield 2013, 59.

The grandeur of the final achievement is expressed through a spatial metaphor in which Symeon is a city standing atop the hill of God's wisdom: "Indeed, he was revered by everyone not only as a man who was wise in the Spirit but also as a saint. As a result, this came to Stephen's notice, for such a city standing on the hill of God's wisdom could not be hidden.[22] All these sentences work either as metaphors or as allusions or even as synecdoches of height with divinity. They come in regularly throughout the text because they serve Niketas to 'ring bells' in the audience's ears. They will not allow the audience to forget that height and motion on the vertical axis is what Symeon the New Theologian's theology and holification story are all about.[23]

Weight with the meaning of drawback: Experiencing the body as space, in space

In Niketas' story, the body appears as Symeon the New Theologian's paramount 'field' of holy experience. Holiness takes place therein and the reasons for that are explicitly discussed in another part of this work.[24] Within this experience, weight is a crucial aspect. In specific, it appears in the narrative as a negative quality, while the lack of it is the merit which leads to holification. By means of a 'spatial' narration, again, heaviness pulls Symeon downwards to the sinful earth while lightness lifts him upwards to the Godly heavens. This idea is well articulated, for example, in the following passage:

> To prove that the power of his evil had no strength, however, the Enemy was allowed to attack Symeon's weakness a little. And, so, he first set upon him with sleepiness and induced a feeling of lethargy and dizziness in his head and of *heaviness throughout his body*, so that Symeon *felt as if he were dressed from head to foot in a heavy tunic and was unable to stand or look up or open his mouth or hear the singing in church*. But the noble one realized this was an attack by the Enemy and held his ground through his steadfastness and the weapons of the Spirit, not giving in at all or being shifted from where he stood. Thus, the Enemy could not bear Symeon's steadfastness and his stubborn resistance and he fled the wrestling match after being defeated in the following way: One day, when Symeon was standing at the beginning of the morning hymns, *he felt as though the weight of his tunic were being drawn back from the top of his feet and stripped away upward. The parts of his body from which it was lifted were left free, but it made those where it was gathered together feel as though there were a heavier weight on the*m. *Then, like a thick cloud in a stiff breeze, it lifted into the air, and the noble one felt himself become light and very airy and as though he were wholly spiritual*. Filled with unutterable joy, he cried out like David, 'Thou hast loosed my tunic, Lord, and girded me with gladness.' From then on, *he received strength from above* so that *he never sat down* during any of the services but, imitating his teacher, *remained standing* throughout.[25]

[22] Ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ ὡς ἅγιος παρὰ παντὸς ἐτιμᾶτο ἀνθρώπου, ἦλθε ταῦτα – οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν δυνατὸν πόλιν κρυβῆναι τοιαύτην ἐπ' ὄρους κειμένην σοφίας Θεοῦ... *L. Sym. New Theol.* §74.20–3, translation by Greenfield 2013, 169.

[23] See Chapter 5.

[24] See Chapter 5.

[25] Ἵνα δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἐλεγχθῇ τῆς κακίας αὐτοῦ εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύουσα, συγχωρεῖται μικρὸν προσβαλεῖν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ τῷ Συμεών. Ἔνθεν τοι καὶ πρῶτα διὰ τοῦ ὕπνου τούτῳ προσέρχεται καὶ δὴ ῥαθυμίαν ἐμβάλλει, σκότωσίν τε τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ βάρος ὅλῳ τούτου τῷ σώματι, ὡς δόξαι τὸν Συμεώνην ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς καὶ

The heaviness which Symeon the New Theologian feels in his body is used to signify that he has been attacked by Evil by means of a heavy garment: 'the parts of his body from which it was lifted were left free, but it made those where it was gathered together feel as though there were a heavier weight on them'. On the contrary, the sense of lightness in his body connotes that Symeon has been liberated from the Evil with the help of his Creator: 'Then, like a thick cloud in a stiff breeze, it lifted into the air'. Symeon senses his body as a bodiless: 'the noble one felt himself become light and very airy and as though he were wholly spiritual'.

This 'bodiless body' is used by Niketas as a narrative device throughout the *Life*.[26] The idea behind it has been already mentioned: God is immaterial hence one can only access him in an immaterial way.[27] Another episode, where Niketas narrates what Symeon the New Theologian feels not only during, but also after his vision, also demonstrates the ways in which that works. Not only the corporeal weight but also other senses disappear as a sign of the state of holiness:

> When Symeon, that divinely inspired and most eminent seer of God, had heard these words and seen the ineffable light of God, and had given thanks to God who has glorified our race and enabled it to partake of His own divinity and kingdom, he returned completely to himself once more, and found himself back inside his cell in the same manner and form as before, entirely human. 'Except that,' as he swore to those in whom he confided and to whom he revealed his mystical experiences, 'I retained that same lightness of body for many days and felt no weariness or hunger or thirst at all.'[28]

Symeon passes from a holy state of spirituality in the vision (ἰδὼν τε τὸ ἀνεκλάλητον φῶς τοῦ Θεοῦ) to the state of humanity and materiality (ἐπανῆλθεν ὅλως αὖθις εἰς

μέχρι ποδῶν σάκκον βαρὺν ἐνδεδύσθαι καὶ μήτε ἵστασθαι μήτε ἀνανεῦσαι μήτε μὴν τὸ στόμα δύνασθαι διανοῖξαι αὐτοῦ ἢ ἀκούειν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ τῶν ψαλλομένων. Γνοὺς οὖν ὁ γενναῖος τὴν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ προσβολὴν ἀντιπαρατάσσεται διὰ καρτερίας αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν ὅπλων τοῦ Πνεύματος μὴ ἐνδοὺς ὅλως ἢ τοῦ τόπου οὗ ἵστατο μεταστὰς. Τὴν καρτερίαν τοίνυν καὶ τὴν πολλὴν ἔνστασιν τοῦ Συμεὼν φέρειν μὴ δυνηθεὶς ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἡττηθεὶς φεύγει τὴν πάλην τρόπῳ τοιῷδε· ἱσταμένου τοῦ Συμεὼν ἐν μιᾷ ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ τῶν ἐωθινῶν ὕμνων, ἔδοξεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄκρου τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ οἱονεὶ τοῦ σάκκου τὸ βάρος συστέλλεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄνω προσαποδύεσθαι. Τὰ μὲν οὖν, ὅθεν ἀφίστατο, μέρη τοῦ σώματος ἐλεύθερα κατελίμπανεν, ἐφ' ἃ δὲ συνωθεῖτο μεῖζον τὸ βάρος ἐποίει τοῦτον αἰσθάνεσθαι. Εἶτα ὡσεὶ νέφος παχὺ ἐν πνεύματι βιαίῳ ἀπέστη πρὸς ἀέρα, καὶ τηνικαῦτα ὥσπερ κοῦφον καὶ λεπτότατον γενόμενον ἑαυτὸν ἤσθετο ὁ γενναῖος καὶ ὅλον οἷα πνευματικόν. Χαρᾶς οὖν ἀφάτου πλησθεὶς ἐβόησε καὶ αὐτὸς μετὰ τοῦ Δαυίδ· «διέρρηξας τὸν σάκκον μου, Κύριε, καὶ περιέζωσάς με εὐφροσύνην.» Ἄνωθεν οὖν ἔκτοτε δύναμιν λαβὼν ἐν ταῖς συνάξεσι πάσαις οὐδόλως ἐκάθητο, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ διδάσκαλον ἐκμιμούμενος διήνυε πάσας ἱστάμενος. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §13.5–35, translation by Greenfield 2013, 33, 35.

[26] See detailed discussed in Chapter 10.

[27] ἄνω τὸν νοῦν ἁρπάζων καὶ ἀΰλως τῷ ἀΰλῳ Θεῷ συγγινόμενος. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §26.16–7.

[28] Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἀκηκοὼς ὁ θεοπτικώτατος καὶ θεόληπτος Συμεών, ἰδών τε τὸ ἀνεκλάλητον φῶς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ εὐχαριστήσας τῷ δοξάσαντι Θεῷ τὸ γένος ἡμῶν καὶ κοινωνὸν τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητός τε καὶ βασιλείας ἀπεργασαμένῳ, ἐπανῆλθεν ὅλως αὖθις εἰς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πάλιν ἔνδον τοῦ κελλίου ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ τρόπῳ καὶ σήματι εὑρέθη ἄνθρωπος ὅλος ὤν. Πλὴν ὅρκοις ἐπληροφόρει πρὸς οὕς ἐθάρρει καὶ ἀπεκάλυπτεν αὐτοῦ τὰ μυστήρια, ὅτι «ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας τὴν κουφότητα ταύτην εἶχον τοῦ σώματος μήτε κόπου μήτε πείνης μήτε δίψης τὸ σύνολον αἰσθανόμενος.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §71.1–12, translation by Greenfield 2013, 161.

ἑαυτὸν, καὶ πάλιν ἔνδον τοῦ κελλίου ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ τρόπῳ καὶ σήματι εὑρέθη ἄνθρωπος ὅλος ὤν). And yet holiness remains even after the vision; its literary signification is made through the absence of corporeal needs (for rest, food, and drink) and sensations (tiredness, hunger, and thirst).

Displacement: the exile as spiritual triumph

The sent-to-exile body

In paragraph 95, Niketas narrates how Symeon the New Theologian was forced out of Constantinople, away from his personal space and belongings, due to Stephanos' slander and false accusations, and the Patriarch's unjust decision.[29] He was transported by some men across the Bosphorus between Constantinople and Chrysopolis. The cruel men beached the boat at a small settlement called Paloukiton, where there were no amenities in the winter, and left the saint in a deserted spot, completely alone, without even giving him food for the day. Symeon started to wander about, abandoned and all alone, on that rugged mountain, he chanted with a cheerful soul the words of the psalm. By the following passage, Niketas demonstrates that Symeon could never really be either alone or in danger anywhere in the world, because he had an ever-present close companion, i.e., God himself:

> 'I cried with my voice to the Lord, with my voice I made supplication to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before Him. I tell my trouble before Him. In the path, where I was walking, they hid a trap for me. I looked to my right hand and I saw no one who recognized me. And again, Behold, God is my Saviour and my Lord. I will be confident in Him and I will be saved by Him and I will not be afraid, for the Lord is my glory and my praise, and He has become my Saviour'.[30]

The violence that Symeon the New Theologian experiences is narrated by Niketas with a touch of sarcasm: 'This was what that wise synkellos, that monk and priest, accomplished in his wisdom, this the most glorious height to which his acclaimed knowledge ascended, along with his love for his neighbour'.[31] He explains the inhuman conditions that Symeon's body is facing: no local amenities, no food for the day, a deserted spot, a rugged mountain, while the cruel men left him completely alone. A blessed monk is just left at a barren place with no shelter and food, like a criminal. The description of the place itself directly conveys the message of the injustice through the contrast of the new space to the Byzantine capital where the holy man's previous life was unfolding.

[29] See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 8.

[30] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95.21–31, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219, 221. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 8.

[31] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95.1–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 8.

The exiled body

Following Symeon the New Theologian's adventure, after his first shock he enters a chapel and prays. Then, he sits down and writes a first letter to his prosecutor, synkellos Stephanos, the cause of his suffering:

> Symeon went down to the foot of the mountain and there found a ruined chapel dedicated to Saint Marina. Going inside, he offered to God the prayers of the ninth hour. Then, when he had taken a little rest, like a true disciple of Christ, he greeted his friend the synkellos with this letter.[32]

His letter is very ironic:

> To my holy master, the most reverend and illustrious synkellos, from your Symeon who is in exile and being persecuted because of you. Behold, most reverend master, what grain the fields of your efforts and your words on God's behalf have yielded! See what glory and joy they have granted me, what crowns they have caused me to win, with what happiness they have filled me! For they have led me up to the summit of spiritual knowledge and have planted the feet of my intellect firmly on the rock, and have even caused me to be clothed in this rock [Christ] itself, from which I have the living water actually gushing forth in me, moving and speaking and encouraging me to write to you. This fills me with every delight and renders me completely unaware of the deadly trials ⟨around me⟩. Like the three boys whom it kept from being burned in the furnace, it has thus also hidden me in its shelter and preserves me free from grief and misery.[33]

Niketas, on one hand, produces a 'reverse' way of communicating Symeon the New Theologian's state of body and mind. First of all, he is ironic: he writes that Symeon 'greeted his friend' the synkellos with this letter. Secondly, he presents Symeon, who has been defeated, trying to be brave while feeling the injustice and physically sensing its consequences. He fights back with pride. On the other hand, Niketas decides that this late in his story (ninety-sixth paragraph out of 152) the time has finally come for this holy man's phase of experiencing wilderness. After a lifetime in the comforts of urban monasteries in the Byzantine capital, Symeon the New Theologian is suddenly left alone on a barren mountain, full of lethal dangers (θανατηφόρων πειρασμῶν) of which Symeon is aware and scared. He can do nothing but trust his Creator for giving him shelter and rescuing him from the

[32] Κατελθὼν τοίνυν εἰς τὴν τοῦ βουνοῦ ὑπώρειαν καὶ εὐκτήριον ἐκεῖσε τῆς ἁγίας ἐπονομαζόμενον Μαρίνης ἐρείπιον εὑρών, εἰσῆλθεν ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὰς τῆς ἐνάτης ὥρας εὐχὰς ἀπέδωκε τῷ Θεῷ. Εἶτα μικρᾶς μετασχὼν ἀναπαύσεως δεξιοῦται τὸν φίλον σύγκελλον οἷα δὴ Χριστοῦ μαθητὴς τοῖσδε τοῖς γράμμασι. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §96.1–23, translation by Greenfield 2013, 221.

[33] «Τῷ πανιέρῳ καὶ ἁγίῳ δεσπότῃ μου τῷ ἐνδοξοτάτῳ συγκέλλῳ, ὁ διὰ σοῦ ἐξόριστος καὶ δεδιωγμένος Συμεὼν ὁ σός. Ἰδού, πανίερε δέσποτα, τῶν κατὰ Θεὸν σου ἀγώνων καὶ λόγων τὰ σπέρματα οἷα πεποιήκασι τὰ γεώργια, οἵαν μοι δόξαν καὶ χαρὰν προεξένησαν, ὅσων μοι στεφάνων γεγόνασιν αἴτια, ὅσης με τῆς εὐφροσύνης ἐνέπλησαν, εἰς ὕψος τε πνευματικῆς ἀνήγαγον γνώσεως καὶ ἐπὶ πέτραν τοὺς πόδας μου τοῦ νοὸς καλῶς προσερείσαντο καὶ αὐτήν με τὴν πέτραν ἐνδύσασθαι παρεσκεύασαν, ἐξ ἧς ἔχω τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν ἐννοποστάτως βλύζον ἐν ἐμοὶ, κινούμενον καὶ λαλοῦν καὶ γράφειν μὲν πρὸς σὲ προτρεπόμενον, πάσης δὲ θυμηδίας ἐμπιπλῶν καὶ μὴ ἐῶν ὅλως με τῶν θανατηφόρων πειρασμῶν ἐπαισθάνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς τοὺς τρεῖς παῖδας ἀφλέκτους ἐν τῇ καμίνῳ ἐφύλαξεν, οὕτω κἀμὲ, ὡς ἐν σκηνῇ αὐτοῦ κρύπτον, ἄλυπον διατηρεῖ καὶ ἀπήμαντον.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §96.1–23, translation by Greenfield 2013, 221, 223.

storm of negative feelings. But in Symeon's words, Niketas conceals the message that the wilderness, due to the exile, will only work spiritually to bring the holy man closer to God. He confirms this in Symeon's second letter to Stephanos:

> 'But I beg you, do not halt your plans, do not give up your work! Add to them, if you will, things that, by their intensity, will make my sufferings even sweeter. For you have increased for me the light, the joy, the sweetness, everything that gushes forth in me in such a marvellous was in the peace of my thoughts through the ineffable gladness of the Spirit. Please go on increasing these by all means, and, continuing to do what you do, unite me more swiftly with my beloved God, on whose behalf I willingly bear everything and because of whom, as you see, I am enveloped by you in the chains of exile. Farewell. To my most reverend and holy master, your Symeon, who, because of you, is an exile, stripped of all his possessions.'[34]

Symeon the New Theologian finds himself in wilderness, with no belongings and unable to return to his hometown. And yet, this only gives him peace of mind and sweetness of spirit because of the divine marvel this experience beholds. But it is actually a layman, named Christopher Phagouras (the owner of the chapel), who saves Symeon's body. He comes around and offers Symeon money, but the latter asks Phagouras to offer him a place of his own, instead. Christopher donates the chapel and its land to him so that Symeon has a place to stay and establish a new monastery.[35]

The returning body

From his new place Symeon the New Theologian now writes to the Patriarch to complain. The latter eventually admits and reconciliates the injustice by restoring Symeon's status and he decides to bring Symeon back to Constantinople:

> 'Whatever he has suffered on my orders he has not suffered because he erred in the dogmas of the church, by which the correct and spotless faith is made strong. Rather, I removed him from his monastery and from the city because he held unwaveringly to his own personal objective [...]. But now, if he is willing to heed my words, he may become master of his own monastery again and I will consecrate him bishop in one of the great metropolitan cities, if the entire holy synod agrees. That way, proper amends will be made for what has turned out so badly and your unshakeable faith in him will be preserved intact.'[36]

[34] «Ἀλλὰ δεόμεθά σου μὴ στῇς τῆς προθέσεως, μὴ καταπαύσῃς ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων σου, πρόσθες εἰ δοκεῖ τούτοις τὰ ἔτι γλυκυτέρους τῇ ἐπιτάσσει ποιοῦντα τοὺς πόνους μοι. Ηὔξησάς μοι τὸ φῶς, τὴν χαράν, τὴν ἡδύτητα, ἅ καὶ βλύζει παραδόξως ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς εἰρήνης τῶν λογισμῶν τὴν ἄρρητον εὐφροσύνην τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἅ καὶ αὐξήσαις ἔτι πάντως καὶ ἔτι ποιῶν τὰ οἰκεῖα καὶ τῷ φιλουμένῳ τάχιον ἑνώσαις ἡμᾶς Θεῷ ὑπὲρ οὗ φέρω πάντα προθύμως καὶ δι' ὃν ὡς ὁρᾷς τὴν ἄλυσιν ταύτην παρὰ σοῦ τῆς ἐξορίας περίκειμαι. Ἔρρωσο. Τῷ πανιέρῳ καὶ ἁγίῳ δεσπότῃ μου ὁ διὰ σοῦ ἐξόριστος καὶ τῶν προσόντων γυμνὸς γεγονὼς Συμεὼν ὁ σός.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §99.13–26, translation by Greenfield 2013, 229.

[35] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §100–1.

[36] «Ἃ δὲ πέπονθε παρ' ἡμῶν, οὐχ ὡς παρασφαλεὶς ἐν τοῖς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δόγμασι, δι' ὧν ἡ ὀρθὴ καὶ ἀμώμητος πίστις ὠχύρωται, πέπονθεν, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἐκεῖνος μὲν τοῦ ἰδίου ἀμεταθέτως εἶχε σκοποῦ [...]. Νῦν δέ, εἰ βούλεται καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς εἴξει λόγοις, κύριος αὖθις καὶ τῆς ἰδίας μονῆς γενήσεται, καὶ ἀρχιερέα τοῦτον ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ὑψηλῶν μητροπόλεων συνευδοκούσης πάσης τῆς ἱερᾶς συνόδου χειροτονήσω, καὶ τὰ κακῶς ἐκβεβηκότα διορθώσεως τεύξονται τῆς προσηκούσης, καὶ ὑμῶν ἡ εἰς αὐτὸν πίστις ἄσβεστος

The patriarch brings Symeon back to the capital by means of a triumphal ceremony attended by prominent citizens and clergy. Niketas tells this process by demonstrating the relationships among characters; he does so through a detailed narration of characters' movement in space:

> When he had said this the patriarch *sent out for the saint and brought him back from his exile*. The *saint's return* had been discussed everywhere, and so everyone, monks and laymen, priests and deacons, and all those eminent senators who knew that blessed man's virtue and whose teacher and spiritual father he was, *gathered as though for a great feast, and accompanied him to the patriarch*. When *the father's arrival was announced, the patriarch came out into the small council chamber and the saint met with him there, along with his dignitaries*.[37]

Through this spatial performance, Symeon the New Theologian's personality is publicly restored in society. The holy man leaves the Patriarchate in triumph in paragraph 109 of Niketas story.[38] In Niketas' words 'the blessed Symeon had thus shown himself to be a willing martyr, even without persecution, both in the martyrdom of his conscience and in his endurance of the trials which befell him on account of God's commandment'.[39] He left the patriarchate rejoicing, along with his flock consisting of members of the ruling elite, and they were all entertained in the house of his benefactor, Christopher Phagouras. He spent several days there, teaching Christopher, his brothers, and many others such as priests, deacons, members of the ruling elite, ordinary people, men, and women of all ages. Then, 'he crossed over to the solitude that was so dear to him as he wanted to build a cell there [in which to practice] spiritual tranquillity. And God, who gives a nest to the nestlings of eagles and bread to people for food, rained down a shower of resources upon the blessed one and opened the treasuries of the ruling elites to him, for everyone together, relatives, friends, and children, provided a great quantity of gold.'[40] Symeon received this offer and set to work on the construction of the monastery.

Niketas narrates Symeon the New Theologian's exile as equal to martyrdom, and his return from it as the moment of redemption. Upon his return to Constantinople, everything takes care of itself: a crowd awaits to applaud Symeon, his supporter Christopher is there to entertain all of them, his career as holy man takes off. A break in the narrative is implied by Symeon's movement: his 'crossing over

διαφυλαχθήσεται.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §103.12–26, 104.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2013, 237, 239.

[37] Εἶπε, καὶ ἀποστείλας εἰσάγει τὸν ἅγιον ἀπὸ τῆς ἐξορίας. Λαληθείσης τοίνυν τῆς εἰσόδου πανταχοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου, ἐπισυνάγονται πάντες ὡς εἰς μεγάλην ἑορτὴν λαϊκοί τε καὶ μοναχοί, ἱερεῖς καὶ λευῖται, καὶ ὅσοι περὶ τὴν σύγκλητον ἄνδρες περιφανεῖς, οἷς ἦν γνωστὸς ὁ μακάριος ἐκ τῆς ἀρετῆς, καὶ ὧν διδάσκαλος καὶ πατὴρ ἐχρημάτιζε, καὶ συνανέρχονται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν πατριάρχην. Ὡς δὲ δήλη γέγονεν ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς ἄνοδος, ἐξέρχεται ὁ πατριάρχης ἐν τῷ μικρῷ σεκρέτῳ καὶ ὑπαντᾶται μετὰ τῶν ἐν τέλει τούτῳ ὁ ἅγιος. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §103.12–26, 104.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2013, 237, 239.

[38] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109, translation by Greenfield 2013, 251–3. See the Greek text and translation as well as further discussion of this paragraph see Chapter 8.

[39] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109.1–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 251.

[40] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109.17–25, translation by Greenfield 2013, 253.

to solitude'. After this, not only has he become popular again in the capital, but God, through the hands of people, provides him with ample means ('treasures') to restore and expand his monastery at his new homeland.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have indicated ways in which the spatial practices are used in Byzantine hagiography to communicate social meaning. The spatial social practices used in the two hagiographical texts here discussed are different albeit displaying similarities.

Practices which involve height with the meaning of merit and weight with the meaning of drawback appear only in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian. Height is always present in Lazaros' *Life* (in the form of living on a pillar and 'climbing' Mount Galesion) as a setting and a means of holification. The notion of height is constantly implied by Gregory, by means of the pillar and the mountain, as quintessence and theory of divinity and holiness. Yet, height is not found in the *Life* as an expression of Lazaros' theological approach to holiness. Instead, movement (and especially 'going') is Lazaros' core of monastic practice.

Liminality and mobility are two literary practices which are common in both works; however, they are used on a different scale and in diverse ways by the two authors. A feature that the two *Lives* have in common is the saints' relocation back and forth within the story space; this is a central feature in their authors' narrative strategies as discussed in Chapter Six.

The same stands regarding the existence in wilderness, which occurs in both works in the form of living on a barren mountain. Lazaros, on one hand, lives in the wilderness by choice, because that is his method of spiritual training. Nevertheless, small, or larger communities, with which he is in dialogue, are always near him somehow. These communities either discretely support him or simply chase him for blessing and advice or follow him upon the mountain to share—or 'profit from'—his holy experience. Symeon the New Theologian, on the other hand, does not embrace wilderness until he is forced to do so by external factors. He eventually develops the rural hermitage into a large and rich monastic community in an 'urban' sense: through funding and resources coming from the capital. Out of Gregory's and Niketas' characterizations and consecutive narrations through spatial practices, Lazaros is presented to the audience as a 'rural holy man' while Symeon as an 'urban' one.

3

‘Lived space’ as text
Commonplace-Places or (yet another) conception of topoi

Rhetorical traditions consist of ‘common patterns of language use, manifest in performance, and organized social knowledge of communities’ which generate ‘a shared means of making sense of the world’.[1] These traditions provide actors with resources available for the invention of effective arguments; it is invention that allows these rhetorical traditions to be adapted across cultural differences or situations.[2] Common patterns of language use must be understood as an ‘intelligible cultural grammar’ of specific idioms, enacted by particular speakers/writers, and marked by characteristic figurative and argumentative devices.[3] These ‘common patterns of language use’ used to build arguments, well known since ancient Greek rhetorics, are commonly referred to by Aristotle’s term which focalizes spatial aspects of texts: topos/topoi meaning ‘place/places’ in Greek.[4] A geographical reading of Aristotle’s verbal representation of an argumentative scheme within the process of argumentation distinguishes between space (as a general objective concept) and place (as a precise subjective one): topos thus recurs as a referential ‘place with a particular meaning’ within a broader and abstract textual space.

Thomas Pratsch proposed the term ‘hagiographical topos’ in Byzantine literature meaning a literary commonplace widely used to build hagiographers’ arguments in favour of the holiness of their subjects.[5] Depending on which particular events or qualities of their subject’s life they wished to emphasize (for example, the subject’s spiritual ascesis, life accomplishments, or martyrdom), hagiographers could choose to present their material more or less through the conventions of rhetoric. These conventions might determine, for example, how certain episode types were presented and what episodes were appropriate for the life story of the saint.[6] The use of these commonplaces as stylistic and structural devices, further helped hagiographers to form the distinctive basis of a saint’s *Life*.[7] The rhetorical conventions which shaped the structural and stylistic patterns of upper-register Byzantine hagiography, already in place by the ninth century,[8] had sprung from a

[1] Murphy 1997, 72.
[2] Murphy 1997, 71.
[3] Murphy 1997, 72.
[4] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.2.1358a2–35; Rapp 2010.
[5] Pratsch 2003, 62. On the definition of hagiographical topos see Pratsch 2005, 1–15.
[6] McKenzie 1998, 12.
[7] McKenzie 1998, 13.
[8] Kustas 1970.

mixture of post-classical Greek rhetoric and the Bible, and provided a highly useful manner of abstracting and idealizing the subject of veneration.[9] Saints' *Lives* do not follow a uniform pattern of compositional rhetoric, some authors lacking either the skill or inclination to adhere to rhetorical patterns; yet, all hagiographers were affected to some degree by these conventions.[10] Paul Hollingsworth highlights the importance of this selection in Russian hagiographical writing with the phrase "in few other literary categories was the gravitational pull of tradition so strong".[11] Yet Charis Messis and Stratis Papaioannou reject the frequent use of the term topos to discuss Byzantine texts as a misapplication, especially if we transfer with the ancient term connotations that it never had in Byzantium.[12]

By contrast, hagiography was a heterogeneous form of literature with no prescribed compositional norm.[13] On the one hand, medieval hagiographers certainly drew upon a considerable pool of topoi, yet there was no obligation to include every topos or group of topoi, nor to use them in the same manner as previous hagiographers.[14] This relative freedom of choice allowed Byzantine authors to apply as many rhetorical elements as they wished according to their narrative strategies.[15] The topoi also presented the occasion for hagiographers to display personal mastery of rhetoric.[16] On the other, there is the question of reception. Stephanos Efthymiadis notes that the use and function of a topos was contingent upon specific socio-historical and geographical considerations.[17] It cannot be perceived as monosemantic in any context and encompassing all audiences. Stavroula Constantinou criticizes Pratsch's broad definition of topos as too risky. She observes that Pratsch had chosen to see a large number of rhetorical and thematic commonplaces as belonging to the topos category, following Ernst Robert Curtius' earlier understanding of the term; yet these commonplaces are identified with a number of quite different literary devices, such as clichés, established schemes of thought, standardized passages of description, formulas, examples, motifs, symbols or allegories.[18]

In what follows I do not engage in the general discussion of hagiographical topoi. Instead, I invite the main interest of the present study, i.e., the 'spatial' narrative techniques in Byzantine storytelling, to add to our traditional ways of looking at topos. I focus upon Gregory the Cellarer's and Niketas Stethatos' choices in employing particular hagiographical commonplaces of spatial content or references.

[9] McKenzie 1998, 13; Pratsch 2003, 2005.
[10] McKenzie 1998, 13. See also Pratsch 2003, 2005.
[11] Hollingsworth 1992, xix.
[12] Messis & Papaioannou 2021, 151.
[13] McKenzie 1998, 17.
[14] McKenzie 1998, 17.
[15] See an example by Charis Messis in his analysis of *Vita Basilii* (Messis 2018).
[16] Papaioannou 2014, 27.
[17] Efthymiadis 2007, 252.
[18] Constantinou 2006, 476.

By the latter I mean literary spaces—both geographic and social—which are mentally constructed into places with either real or metaphorical sense (e.g., the mountain, Heaven, the school, the road, the ladder, the pillar etc) within the particular stories.[19] I discuss ways in which these places are employed within Niketas' and Gregory's narrative techniques in order to serve the plot by means of their particular social connotations. I characterize them as topoi because they occur commonly in both texts—and in other Byzantine hagiographical texts—most often with similar meanings, and they are recurrent therein whenever their social connotations are called in to explain the characters' agency or background, thus informing the story and moving it along. Furthermore, these commonplaces function in these texts precisely as places (τόποι, in Greek) i.e., spaces invested with specific meaning and social connotations all conveyed to the reader/audience through spatial descriptions. Therefore, what is discussed in this chapter is literary spaces, constructed into places within the stories, which also work as recurrent commonplaces in Byzantine hagiography. I explain the relation between the respective literary spaces/places and their meaning as topos by means of 'double' subtitles, as follows. The human body is narrated as a place of transformation and utter subjectivity; the school as a place of selection and distinction; the road, the path, and the route mean places of development; the chapel and church appear as places of refuge, interaction, politics; the mountain is a dense place; the desert, a place of *anachoresis*; the cave, a place of seclusion; the monastery, a place of collective sustainability; the cell, a place of one's own; the pillar, a 'high-up' place; the κλῖμαξ/βαθμίς (ladder/staircase), a bilateral place; the divine light, a mystical place; and, finally, Heaven is an 'other' place. To support my argument, I often make secondary references to the function of these hagiographical 'spatial topoi' in other texts.

From a theoretical point of view, I consider these 'spatial' topoi in order to investigate the 'organized social knowledge of communities' hidden behind them—deriving from Byzantine 'topologies of being', where places are an important part of the spatiality—as well as the ways in which this knowledge is invoked by Gregory and Niketas.[20] I associate this 'organized social knowledge of communities' with the literary commonplace (topos) through the notion of collective memory. As Messis and Papaioannou argue, "the perception of time and space (in Byzantium) was equally punctuated by the fissures and prerogatives of memory, just as memory served as a primary means for the preservation, diffusion, and making of culture".[21] Through that function, memory inevitably was an intrinsic, constitutive element in the very process of literary creation and consumption.[22]

[19] The definition of place—as space embedded with specific subjective meaning—is explained in detail below: see Chapter 9.

[20] Malpas 2016, 2018.

[21] Messis & Papaioannou 2021, 131.

[22] Messis & Papaioannou 2021, 132.

Therefore, my main aim here is to bring together the elements of rhetorical tradition as 'organized social knowledge' of communities, on the one hand, and performativity and the 'shared means of making sense of the world', on the other, in the spatial conception of 'common patterns of language use' as topos. In that sense, my discussion is theoretically oriented towards investigating the potential of these 'spatial' topoi towards an establishment of interaction with the audience or readers. Françoise Létoublon interprets the repetitive use of commonplaces in ancient novels as a technique that allows an interplay with the reader.[23] Claudia Rapp argues that the main concern of hagiographical texts is not the accurate representation of historical events, but the direct involvement of the audience in the narrative.[24] Christodoulos Papavarnavas further argues in his discussion of hagiographical texts as spectacles, that several elements in the texts functioned as messages to the Byzantine extra-textual audience so as to establish an 'interactive performance'.[25] Along these lines of thought, I here propose that these literary spaces—which recur with a hagiographical objective—work so as to establish an interaction between the story and the reader/audience by means of reflecting real life's social-spatial experiences shared by the reader/audience and the author.[26]

THE HUMAN BODY: THE PLACE OF TRANSFORMATION

In Byzantine hagiography, the holy person's body is certainly a recurrent dimension. It recurs not only as the actual physical space, in which holiness 'happens', but also as the place in which holiness is subjectively conceived, enacted and performed.[27] Derek Krueger analyses this process, which he names 'the Formation of the Ritual Body', based on Symeon the New Theologian's *Discourses* and on Niketas Stethatos' biography of Symeon.[28] He describes how Symeon's scripts introduce a ritual process composed of set prayers, mental exercises, and bodily postures and understands prayer as a private ritual practice in which 'habits of mind reinforce themselves in the body'.[29] The perception and the movement of particular body parts (eyes and tears, hands, back etc) is thus specifically engaged in the transformation of the mind.[30] In Krueger's words 'scripted and choreographed, this performance employs the body to reform the self. Interior self-regard and reflection are somatised, embodied, inaugurating a new subjectivity, an expressly penitent self.'[31] The divine light is an agent which helps this process: the light [...]

[23] Létoublon 1993.
[24] Rapp 1988, 444.
[25] Papavarnavas 2016.
[26] See more on this theoretical perspective on the interpretation of Byzantine literary texts in Veikou 2018.
[27] See Constantinou 2005.
[28] Krueger 2014, 205–8.
[29] Krueger 2014, 205–6.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Krueger 2014, 208.

made the air seem brighter, and he felt himself and his whole body transcending this earthly existence.[32] The outcome of this physical experience is a 'non-physical', immaterial corporeal perception, defined by Niketas Stethatos with the words 'bodiless body', 'lightweight body', 'spiritual body'.[33] This idea occupies a significant narrative space in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian.[34]

The same idea is implied, in a more direct and practical manner in Gregory's life story of Lazaros. Philosophical inquiries are here absent; hence the subjective 'immaterial' corporeal perception of holiness, by means of bodily ritual performance, is instead communicated by means of narrative details around Lazaros' way of life. The reader gets descriptions of his minimal food, water intake, and clothing, his modest accommodation on top of the pillar, and his ample exposure to natural elements and dangers. Several episodes in the *Life* reflect events of starvation, near-death from thirst or from a scorpion sting, as discussed in other parts of this study.[35] The way in which corporeal needs are intentionally suppressed and ignored is skilfully narrated by Gregory in one of these episodes. Here, Lazaros hears from visitors that there was a woman enclosed on a pillar, who had her feet hanging outside through a hole:

> When he heard this, he said to himself, '*If a woman, ⟨of⟩ the weak⟨er⟩ sex has done this for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, then I ⟨too⟩ really ought to do not only this but other, even harder things*.' So, he did this too, and *hung his feet out through the wall*. The brothers, who were there with his mother, the blessed Eupraxia [...], saw this and went and stood in a circle around the pillar; they tearfully begged him to desist from such an undertaking. 'Why are you trying to make us into orphans so quickly?' they said, '*Is it not sufficient to stand almost naked on your pillar in the open air as you do, distressed by the cold and the heat, worn out by fasts and vigils, and, in addition, exhausted by the weight of your irons and the biting of your lice, without imposing yet another torment on yourself*?' [...] Lazaros persuaded them by his counter arguments to stop bothering him about this. For he repeated the ⟨sayings⟩ of the apostle, '[...] *In as much as our outer man perishes, so is the inner ⟨man⟩ renewed day by day*.'[36]

[32] τὸ δεικνύμενον φῶς ... τὸν ἀέρα ἐποίει λαμπρότερον φαίνεσθαι καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἔξω τῶν γηΐνων σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι κατενόει γινόμενον: *L. Sym. New Theol*. §69.9–12, translation by Greenfield 2013, 157.

[33] σῶμα ἀσώματον, σῶμα κοῦφον, σῶμα πνευματικόν: *L. Sym. New Theol.* §70.13–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 159.

[34] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §4, 5, 69, 70, 72, 129, 133.

[35] See Chapters 3, 8, 10.

[36] Τοῦτο οὖν ἀκούσας λέγει ἐν ἑαυτῷ· Εἰ γυνή, τὸ ἀσθενὲς μέρος, διὰ τὴν τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείαν τοῦτο πεποίηκε, πόσῳ γε μᾶλλον ἐγὼ οὐ μόνον τοῦτο ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕτερα τούτου μείζονα ὀφείλω ποιεῖν. Καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ποιήσαντος καὶ τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ πόδας διὰ τοῦ τοίχου ἔξω ἀποκρεμάσαντος, οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦτο ἰδόντες ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ γενόμενοι μετὰ καὶ τῆς μακαρίας Εὐπραξίας τῆς αὐτοῦ μητρὸς [...] προσελθόντες καὶ κύκλῳ τοῦ στύλου στάντες μετὰ δακρύων παρεκάλουν ἀποστῆναι τοῦ τοιούτου ἐγχειρήματος, λέγοντες· Τί ἡμῖν τὴν ὀρφανίαν ταχὺ πραγματεύῃ γενέσθαι; ἢ οὐκ ἀρκεῖ τὸ αἴθριον οὕτως γυμνὸν σχεδὸν ἵστασθαι ἐπὶ τοῦ στύλου, ψύχει τε καὶ καύσωνι πιεζόμενον, νηστείαις τε καὶ ἀγρυπνίαις καταπονούμενον, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ τῶν σιδήρων τῷ βάρει καὶ τῷ τῶν φθειρῶν δαγμῷ δαπανώμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑτέραν βάσανον αὖθις σεαυτῷ προστέθεικας; [...] αὐτὸς μᾶλλον τοῖς ἀντιρρητικοῖς αὐτοῦ λόγοις ἔπεισε παύσασθαι αὐτοὺς τοῦ ἐνοχλεῖν αὐτῷ περὶ τούτου, ἐπιλέγων αὐτοῖς τὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλου ὅτι· [...] ὅσον ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος φθείρεται, τοσοῦτον ὁ ἔσω ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ. *L. Laz.* §59.4–32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146–7.

With a rather misogynist example, Gregory presents Lazaros to be impelled to ascetic practice by the achievement of another person. If the weak woman (γυνή, τὸ ἀσθενὲς μέρος) can do it, Lazaros *must* do not only the same, but even greater things (πόσῳ γε μᾶλλον ἐγὼ οὐ μόνον τοῦτο ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕτερα τούτου μείζονα ὀφείλω ποιεῖν). This kind of potentially life-threatening, intentional suffering is a hagiographical topos: the *ascesis*.[37] The suppression of corporeal needs is here used as a device for the acquisition of strength and progress within the process of holification. The meaning of painful corporeal and spiritual *ascesis* as an agent of transformation (οὐκ ἀρκεῖ ... προστέθεικας) is here well clarified by Gregory not only by means of the episode itself but also through his literal explanation of the process. According to this explanation, the *ascesis* serves to transform the man day by day, after dismantling, first of all, his outer surface (ὅσον ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος φθείρεται, τοσοῦτον ὁ ἔσω ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ). Hence, in the process of holification, the human body is a physical space with two layers: a shell, which is somehow an obstacle to the liberation of the spirit and needs to be removed, and an inner matter which is flexible and open to change.

THE SCHOOL: A PLACE OF SELECTION AND DISTINCTION

A well-known hagiographical topos is that of education, which is used in many saints' *Lives*; it is found after the beginning of the narration of a saint's life story, when the young child starts his education.[38] Around the age of 6–8 years, the boy is led by his parents to a teacher (γραμματιστής) and receives a comprehensive education. This topos is used in the *Lives* of both Symeon the New Theologian and Lazaros: both boys are sent to teachers in monastic foundations for their basic education. Symeon's education was carefully planned. As Niketas narrates in his first paragraph, after the introduction, Symeon as a boy was sent to his grandparents in the Byzantine capital and was entrusted to a professional teacher:

> While still at a tender age, he was taken to Constantinople by his parents, like some precious object, and entrusted to his grandparents who were at that time well known at the imperial court. *He was also handed over to a schoolteacher and taught the elementary curriculum. Because he was intelligent and full of good sense from his youth, he was eager for his lessons and, with his natural quickness, cleverly and logically derived benefit from them. But if he saw the other children doing something childish and inappropriate, he would draw back, as though he were already an old man in terms of good sense, and turn his mind wholly to his lessons, distancing himself from those who were acting foolishly*. When he had reached a more advanced age, he reached more ardently for more advanced lessons, and so, after he had successfully mastered shorthand in a very short time, he learned calligraphy, as the books copied by him clearly prove. *He never hellenized his speech by assimilating secular learning, however, nor mastered rhetoric*. Rather, since Symeon was very intelligent from his boyhood, *he fled this ⟨learning⟩ and its defilement and, even if he did not totally avoid it, only brushed with his fingertips what was beneficial in it*. Thus, when he had completed

[37] Pratsch 2005, 306–8.

[38] For its use in other saints' *Lives* see Pratsch 2003, 63–4.

> what is known as primary education, *he avoided what remained, or rather the entirety of secular education, and fled the harmful influence of his schoolfellows*.[39]

Such a use of the 'educational topos' offers Niketas the opportunity to clarify a couple of things right from the beginning. First of all, through the education process Symeon the New Theologian proved to be a very special child: not only was he very gifted at learning but he also showed his excellent character. Despite meeting many children at school, he was very serious and focused, and he kept distance from childish behaviour. Secondly, Niketas establishes the fact that Symeon already as a young boy acquired sufficient writing skills; this will be recalled later in the story, when the 'quality of his written works' is used to justify Stephanos' envy and aggression but it also establishes Symeon the New Theologian as a holy man.[40] Thirdly, Niketas clarifies that the knowledge of reading and writing was one thing but the influence by secular Greek literature was another. A holy person was supposed to keep appropriate distance from secular writings and s/he must select what is useful and what is not. By this spatial practice, of distancing from peers acting foolishly, Symeon is demonstrated by Niketas as a 'holy' person already since childhood.

In the story of Lazaros, the reader finds the educational topos again at the beginning of the text, with a similar use: his parents, too, pursue the young boy's education by sending him to teachers. Gregory stresses the boy's development as well as his strong character through a rather frequent change of monastic environment for the boy during the various stages of primary and secondary education. He begins his studies at the monastery of Kalathai near his uncle; from there he is moved to the monastery of Oroboi. Then, he returns back to Kalathai, from where Lazaros tries to escape, obviously in order to avoid his uncle, yet he is forced back:

[39] Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀπαλὸς ὢν ἔτι τὴν ἡλικίαν τῇ Κωνσταντίνου παρὰ τῶν γεννητόρων ὡς χρῆμά τι διακομίζεται πολλοῦ ἄξιον καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀνασώζεται τοῖς προγόνοις, ἐνδόξοις οὖσι τηνικαῦτα ἐν βασιλείοις, γραμματιστῇ παραδίδοται καὶ τὴν προπαιδείαν ἐκδιδάσκεται. Συνετὸς δὲ ὢν καὶ γέμων φρονήσεως ἐκ νεότητος, εἶχε μὲν σπουδαίως πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα, τάχει δὲ φύσεως τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ὠφέλειαν εὐφυῶς τε καὶ λογικῶς ἀνελέγετο· εἰ δέ τι παιδαριῶδες καὶ ἄσεμνον ἐν τοῖς παισὶν ἑώρα πραττόμενον, συστέλλων ἑαυτὸν ἅτε δὴ τὴν φρόνησιν πολιός, καὶ τὸν νοῦν ὅλον ἐπιστρέφων πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα μακρὰν τῶν ἀφρονοῦντων ἐγίνετο. Ἤδη δὲ τῆς τελεωτέρας ἁπτόμενος ἡλικίας καὶ τῶν τελεωτέρων ἥπτετο θερμότερον μαθημάτων. Ὅθεν καὶ κάλλιστα τὰ τῶν ταχυγράφων ἐν βραχεῖ τῷ χρόνῳ κατορθωκώς ὡραῖα γράφειν λίαν μεμάθηκεν, ὡς τὰ ὑπ' ἐκείνου γραφέντα βιβλία πιστοῦται σαφῶς τὸ λεγόμενον. Ἐλείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ ἐξελληνισθῆναι τὴν γλῶτταν τῇ ἀναλήψει παιδείας τῆς θύραθεν καὶ λόγου εὐμοιρῆσαι ῥητορικοῦ. Ἀλλά τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ παιδὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ πολὺς τὴν σύνεσιν ὢν καὶ τὸν μῶμον ἐκφεύγων, εἰ καὶ μὴ καθόλου ὅμως οὐχ εἵλετο, ἄκροις δὲψαύσας δακτύλοις τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ὠφελείας καὶ μόνην μεμαθηκὼς τὴν οὕτω λεγομένην γραμματικὴν, τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ὡς εἰπεῖν τῆς ἔξωθεν ἀπεσείσατο παιδείας καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν συμφοιτητῶν βλάβην ἐξέφυγεν. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §2.8–34, translation by Greenfield 2013, 5, 7.

[40] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §74, translation by Greenfield 2013, 167–71.

> After he had spent another three years there, his uncle took him to the monastery with him to teach him about church matters and to have him as his attendant. However, *when the boy saw that his uncle was well endowed with material necessities but gave away nothing at all from his possessions to the poor, he secretly took whatever he found and gave it to the needy*. In the end, because Lazaros continued to do this, there was no way for him to escape detection, for when ⟨Elias⟩ looked for these things and could not find them *he began to assail ⟨the boy⟩ with interrogations, blows, and insults*; but he bore everything nobly and did not stop his good work. He would also take books from the church and, *reading them by himself in solitude*, would reap much profit from them.[41]

As regards the saint's own plans regarding the ways in which he can use all this education that he received at the monasteries, Lazaros' urge seems, in fact, to be the escape from authority. He sets his own rules by disobeying the instructions about the management of monastic possessions. This deviation from normative education is used by Gregory as proof of Lazaros' knowledge of God's will.

Another way to demonstrate this separation from normative education is Lazaros' repeated attempts to run away. First, he secretly escapes from his authoritative uncle at Kalathai in order to discover the world on his own. The uncle does not forgive this act. The respective negotiations between Lazaros and his monastic environment are narrated through recurrent movement in space—voluntary or enforced (λαθὼν πάντας ... ἀποστέλλεται).

> Then *divine love entered into Lazaros' soul* and he, like the great Abraham, began seeking to become *a wanderer from his own homeland* and to *go to the holy places of Christ's passions*. So, one night, he *slipped out of the monastery in secret without being observed by anyone* and *set off on the journey for which he was longing*. When his *flight* became known, however, his uncle *sent some people out to search for him without delay*. *They caught up with him* by making inquiries and then *returned to the monastery again and took him back to his uncle against his will*. When ⟨Elias⟩ had sufficiently chastised him with insults and blows, he ordered those in the monastery to *watch him carefully so that he might not leave it at all*. After *spending two years in the monastery* with his uncle, Lazaros was *sent by him to the monastery of Strobelion*, to a notary called Nicholas, for further education in the professional skill⟨s⟩ of notaries.[42]

[41] Ἐκεῖθεν δὲ μετὰ ἑτέρας τριετίας ἐκπλήρωσιν λαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ αὐτοῦ θεῖος μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ εἰς τὴν μονὴν πρὸς τὸ ἐκπαιδεῦσαι αὐτὸν τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἅμα δὲ καὶ ὑπουργοῦντα ἔχειν αὐτῷ. Βλέπων δὲ ὁ παῖς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεῖον ταῖς σωματικαῖς ἐνευθηνούμενον χρείαις καὶ μηδ' ὅλως ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ τι τοῖς πένησι παρεχόμενον, αὐτὸς λάθρᾳ, εἴ τι ἀνεῦρεν, ἀναλαμβάνων παρεῖχε τοῖς χρῄζουσι. Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ πράττοντος, οὐκ ἦν εἰς τέλος πάντως λαθεῖν. Ἐπιζητῶν γὰρ ἐκεῖνος καὶ μὴ εὑρίσκων αὐτά, ἐτασμοῖς τε καὶ πληγαῖς καὶ ὕβρεσιν αὐτὸν ἔβαλλεν. Ὁ δὲ φέρων πάντα γενναίως οὐκ ἐπαύετο τῆς ἀγαθῆς ἐργασίας· λαμβάνων δὲ βίβλους ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ ἀναγινώσκων πολλὴν ἐξ αὐτῶν τὴν ὠφέλειαν ἐκαρποῦτο. *L. Laz.* §3.18–33, translation by Greenfield 2000, 80.

[42] Ἔρως οὖν θεῖος εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ εἰσέδυ ψυχὴν καὶ ἐζήτει καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ τὸν μέγαν Ἀβραὰμ μετανάστης τῆς ἰδίας πατρίδος γενέσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἱεροὺς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων τόπους καταλαβεῖν. Καὶ δὴ μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν λαθὼν πάντας λάθρᾳ τῆς μονῆς ἐξελθὼν πρὸς τὴν αὐτῷ ποθουμένην ὁδὸν ἀπῄει. Ὡς δὲ ἐγνώσθη ἡ αὐτοῦ φυγή, μὴ μελλήσας ὁ αὐτοῦ θεῖος ἀποστέλλει τινὰς εἰς ἀναζήτησιν αὐτοῦ· οἳ καὶ δι' ἐρωτήσεως καταλαβόντες αὐτόν, καὶ μὴ βουλόμενον πάλιν πρὸς τὴν μονὴν εἰς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεῖον λαβόντες ὑπέστρεψαν. Ὁ δὲ ὕβρεσι καὶ πληγαῖς αὐτὸν ἱκανῶς μαστίξας παρήγγειλε τοῖς ἐν τῇ μονῇ ἀσφαλῶς αὐτὸν βλέπειν, ἵνα μὴ τῆς μονῆς ἐξέλθῃ τὸ σύνολον. Μετὰ δὲ τὸ ποιῆσαι ἐν τῇ μονῇ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεῖον χρόνους δύο, ἀποστέλλεται παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν τοῦ Στροβηλίου μονὴν πρὸς νοτάριόν τινα, Νικόλαον τοὔνομα, πρὸς

In the rest of the same paragraph, the negotiation between Lazaros and his new teacher is narrated as a process of justified disobedience to the teacher from which Lazaros comes out a winner. He manages to persuade Nicholas that it is *him* that must change:

> This notary was just as heartless as the monk [Elias], for he would give nothing away at all and was ⟨quite⟩ without pity. Therefore, when the pupil saw that his teacher was so untutored in regard to the good, *he began without hesitation to teach and admonish him not to be so unsympathetic and miserly toward the poor*. However, as Lazaros *saw that the man was scarcely swayed at all by his words, he left off speaking and took to action, and whenever he found anything, he did the same with it as he had done with the monk's possessions*. When this came to the notary's knowledge, however, *he was not angry or annoyed with the boy*, as the monk [Elias] ⟨had been⟩, but *instead he was amazed and astonished at the youth's good moral judgment and disposition*.[43]

Symeon the New Theologian's uncle, on the other hand, uses the education that the boy has acquired at the monastery as a qualification which would allow appointing him in the imperial court. Contrary to Lazaros, Symeon appears compliant. He feels free to follow his own will only after his uncle passes away. He eventually abandons the appointment to return to the monastery and do more spiritual training. This entire, years-long, trajectory of Symeon's is briefly summarized within the following single paragraph, at the beginning of the story:

> When his uncle saw that Symeon stood out from others in his physical beauty and handsomeness, he planned to present him to the emperor and introduce him to his circle. But *after Symeon had sorrowfully rejected his uncle's plan (not wanting to become an intimate of the current rulers, so that he might not lose God in gaining things of no value),* he was *reluctantly persuaded by him to accept* the distinguished rank of spatharokoubikoularios and become a member of the senate. But let me demonstrate for you how *true nobility is not bound by the chains and servitude of worldly affairs, nor is it overcome by the splendours and ambitions of this life*! His uncle thus strove to make Symeon a man resplendent through transitory glory, while *Symeon on the one hand wisely rejected this but on the other conditionally accepted it for the time being as he waited for what was to come*. But when that illustrious man was suddenly cast from the present life by a violent death, *Symeon seized this opportunity and thus, leaving everything behind, immediately fled the world and worldly things and hastened toward God*. In this way, every soul that is smitten by the beauties of heaven and comes to desire its glory also readily despises the splendid delusion of visible things.[44]

περισσοτέραν παιδείαν τῆς τῶν νοταρίων ἐπιστήμης. *L. Laz.* §4.1–32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 81.

[43] Ὅστις νοτάριος ἐν ἴσῃ τοῦ μοναχοῦ ἀσπλαγχνίᾳ διακείμενος, ἀμετάδοτος πάντῃ καὶ ἀνηλεὴς ἦν. Ὅθεν ὁρῶν ὁ μαθητὴς τὸν διδάσκαλον οὕτως ἀμαθῶς πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ἔχοντα, μηδὲν ὑποστειλάμενος ἐδίδασκεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐνουθέτει μὴ οὕτως ἀσυμπαθῶς καὶ ἀμεταδότως πρὸς τοὺς πένητας ἔχειν. Ὡς δὲ ἐκεῖνον ἑώρα ἥκιστα τοῖς αὐτοῦ λόγοις πειθόμενον, αὐτὸς ἀφεὶς τὸ λέγειν ἔργου εἶχετο καὶ λαμβάνων κρυφῇ, εἴ τι καὶ εὕρισκεν, ἐποίει ταῦτα, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ τοῦ μοναχοῦ. Ὡς δὲ εἰς γνῶσιν ἦλθε ταῦτα τῷ νοταρίῳ, οὐκ ἐπικράνθη ἢ ἐδυσχέρανε κατὰ τοῦ παιδός, ὥσπερ ὁ μοναχός, ἀλλ' ἐθαύμαζε μᾶλλον καὶ ἐξεπλήττετο ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγαθῇ γνώμῃ τε καὶ προαιρέσει τοῦ νέου. *L. Laz.* §4.1–32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 81.

[44] Ὁ τοίνυν πρὸς πατρὸς αὐτοῦ θεῖος ὡς ἑώρα κάλλει σώματος καὶ ὡραιότητι τῶν πολλῶν αὐτὸν διαφέροντα, [...] σκέπτεται τῷ αὐτοκράτορι αὐτὸν δοῦναι καὶ οἰκειώσασθαι. Ἀλλ'ἐπεὶ θρήνοις ἐκεῖνος τὸ τοῦ θείου ἀπεκρούσατο βούλημα, τοῖς κρατοῦσι τότε μὴ βουληθεὶς γνώριμος καταστῆναι, ἵνα μὴ ζημιωθῇ

Hence, in this case, the educational topos, in the first two paragraphs of his story, is the device that allows Niketas to set the boundaries between Symeon the New Theologian and the secular world. God is Symeon's true destination, and this divine life is incompatible with mundane honours (Οὕτω πᾶσα ψυχὴ ... εὐκόλως καταφρονεῖ). The uncontested proof of this is Symeon's giving up a promising and enviable position within the imperial court—which might have been a dream of any member of a Byzantine audience—because of his true virtue (ὅρα μοι ... βιοτικῶν).

Contrary to Gregory, Niketas pays justice to obedience towards the teacher against obedience to God. Despite his predestination as a holy man, Symeon does not quit the court office until his uncle passes away. The reader is perhaps left with the question of why he did not flee to his real personal truth (divinity) earlier in life but, instead, he stayed within the trap of mundane splendours (κρατεῖται ... ἐπιζήλοις). Niketas does not answer this question anywhere in the *Life*.

In the end, Symeon escapes authority in order to follow his God, exactly like Lazaros did (Ἁρπάζει ... καὶ προστρέχει Θεῷ). However, in his case, it is a supreme secular authority that he faces with contempt—not a provincial religious one: Niketas sketches his storyworld within the capital and its citizens, while Gregory constructs his within the local societies of the provinces.[45]

THE ROAD, THE PATH, THE ITINERARY: LIMINAL SPACES AND PLACES OF DEVELOPMENT

Pratsch discusses wandering as a hagiographical topos; he named it *apodemia* or *peregrinatio*.[46] Maribel Dietz termed it 'itinerant spirituality'.[47] Malamut's close reading demonstrates Byzantine hagiographers' frequent narration of their characters' being 'on the road'.[48] She discusses the roads themselves as narrative places which reflect a lively picture of Byzantine society.[49] This topos involved traveling as a way of achieving separation from society and family. However, the road and the itinerary had its own life—natural, social, and sacred.

Θεὸν ἐν τῷ κερδαίνειν τὰ μηδενὸς ἄξια, μόλις πείθεται παρ' αὐτοῦ τῇ τοῦ σπαθαροκουβικουλαρίου τιμῇ διαπρέψαι καὶ εἷς τῆς συγκλήτου γενέσθαι βουλῆς. Ἀλλ' ὅρα μοι τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐγένειαν, πῶς οὐ κρατεῖται δεσμοῖς καὶ δουλείᾳ πραγμάτων βιοτικῶν ἢ τοῖς λαμπροῖς ἥττηται τοῦ βίου τούτου καὶ ἐπιζήλοις· ὡς γὰρ ὁ μὲν ἔσπευδε λαμπρὸν ἀποδεῖξαι τὸν ἄνδρα διὰ τῆς ῥεούσης δόξης, ὁ δὲ τὸ μὲν σοφῶς ἀπεκρούσατο τὸ δὲ πρὸς καιρὸν οἰκονομικῶς κατεδέξατο καὶ τὸ μέλλον ἐκαραδόκει, αἴφνης ὁ περιφανὴς ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ ἐξαισίῳ θανάτῳ τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς ἐκβάλλεται. Ἁρπάζει οὖν ὁ Συμεὼν τὸν καιρὸν καὶ πάντα καταλιπὼν φεύγει κόσμον καὶ τὰ ἐν κόσμῳ εὐθὺς καὶ προστρέχει Θεῷ. Οὕτω πᾶσα ψυχὴ τρωθεῖσα τῶν οὐρανίων τοῖς κάλλεσι καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν δόξης ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ γενομένη καὶ τῆς λαμπρότητος, τῆς τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀπάτης εὐκόλως καταφρονεῖ. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §3.1–28, translation by Greenfield 2013, 7, 9.

[45] For the concept of storyworld applied to the two *Lives* see Chapter 4.

[46] Pratsch 2005, 147–59.

[47] Dietz 2005, 220.

[48] Malamut 1993.

[49] Malamut 1993, 265–94.

Symeon the New Theologian's experience of the road is narrated by Niketas at only one instance. His *apodemia* is marked by his travel back to his homeland, Paphlagonia. He visits his parents during a professional trip and takes the opportunity to announce to them his withdrawal from his parental property, his career at the imperial court, and the secular world altogether, so as to devote himself to God. This particular journey is narrated by Niketas in somewhat greater detail than Symeon the New Theologian's other relocations (which are usually mentioned in passing), in four paragraphs.[50] First of all, he sets off to Paphlagonia:

> *I'll renounce the world and everything in it right now. But look, since I'm already in a hurry to leave for my homeland on this imperial mission that I've been assigned, when I've retrieved all my possessions there, I'll come back and place everything, including myself, into the hands of your holiness.'* With these words Symeon set off on his journey and swiftly reached his home. Since it was Lent at that time, he gave himself over entirely to his struggles for virtue. While he was there, he searched through his family library and took out the Ladder of the divine John. [...] And since *there was a tiny room by the entrance to the chapel there, he used to go into it and remain in complete solitude*.[51]

Symeon the New Theologian goes home after years in the capital, only to meet God. Niketas does not narrate his meeting with his parents and family after all these years, nor does he mention anything about his homeland and social environment. Symeon spends his time only in the church, in a special room that offers him the possibility of isolation, study, contemplation, contact with God by means of vision, and personal transformation.[52] Then the time comes to return to Constantinople, and that is when we hear about Symeon's father for the first time. His father begs him in tears to stay with him until he dies, because he is very old—after his death Symeon will have all the time to travel. But Symeon "had already transcended the bonds of nature and preferred the heavenly Father to his earthly one".[53] In this way, he leaves. The transcendence is narrated by Niketas by means of a detailed description of Symeon's *rites of passage* consisting according to van Gennep) of three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation.[54] The liminal space in and by which this process is reified consists of Paphlagonia (separation),

[50] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6–9.

[51] «Ἀλλὰ γε καὶ νῦν ἤδη κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ πᾶσιν ἀποτάσσομαι καὶ, ἐπεὶ τῇ προφάσει τῆς ἐγχειρισθείσης μοι βασιλικῆς δουλείας ἀπαίρειν ἤδη πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα ἐπείγομαι, ἰδοὺ πάντα τὰ ἐκεῖσε προσόντα μοι ἀναλαβόμενος ὑποστρέφω καὶ εἰς χεῖρας πάντα καὶ ὅλον ἐμαυτόν παραθήσομαι τῆς σῆς ἁγιότητος.» Εἶπε καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖσε φερούσης ἁψάμενος πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα διὰ τάχους ἐγίνετο. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ τηνικαῦτα ὁ καιρὸς ἐπέστη τῶν νηστειῶν, ὅλον ἐξέδοτο ἑαυτὸν πρὸς τοὺς ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀγῶνας. Ἔνθεν τοι καὶ τὴν ἐκ προγόνων ἐρευνήσας βιβλιοθήκην λαμβάνει τὴν κλίμακα τοῦ θεσπεσίου Ἰωάννου ἐκεῖθεν [...]. Τοίνυν καὶ ἐπεὶ σμικρότατον ἦν κελλίον πρὸς τῇ εἰσόδῳ τοῦ ἐκεῖσε εὐκτηρίου, μονώτατος εἰσελθών ἔμενεν ἐν αὐτῷ. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6.17–30, 6.33–5, translation by Greenfield 2013, 17–8.

[52] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6–7.

[53] Ὁ δέ γε υἱὸς ὡς ὑπερβὰς ἤδη τῆς φύσεως τοὺς θεσμοὺς καὶ τὸν οὐράνιον Πατέρα ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπιγείου προτιμησάμενος. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §8.18–20, translation by Greenfield 2013, 23.

[54] Van Gennep 1909/1960.

the mountains (transition), and the Monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople (incorporation).[55] His separation rituals involve a rejection of family property and galloping away without looking back:

> Symeon *said this and at the same time renounced in writing with immediate effect all the property* that would come to him from his parents. Then, *taking with him only his own possessions, his personal servants, and whatever he had acquired from other income, he mounted his horse and galloped wildly away*. Like Lot, *he never looked back toward the laments of his family, nor gave any thought to the public service* that had been entrusted to him.[56]

The transition ritual involves constant lamenting within a process of crossing of the mountains alone, i.e. keeping distance from his men, which results in an apocalyptic vision:

> Because he was in this state then, the wondrous Symeon *ordered his men to go on ahead. Sometimes he himself would hang back and follow behind them while he grieved, but sometimes he would go so far ahead of them that they could not hear his laments. And in this way, filling the mountains with his mournful lamentations and the valleys with his cries, he found some fulfilment for his intense desire for God*. One day, however, when he had gone on ahead and was somewhere in the mountains, *the grace of the Spirit suddenly flashed about him like fire from above*, just as it once did with Paul, and *it filled him with indescribable joy and sweetness, increasing his love for God and his faith in his spiritual father*.[57]

Symeon the New Theologian's particular way of being 'on the road' reveals several stages of his internal transformation. His emotional distress is narrated through his irregular pace of travel in relation to his travel partners. The natural landscape serves as witness of his mourning for his lost family. Last but not least, the journey brings Symeon to the mountains: according to the biblical traditions, these are

[55] *L. Sym. New Theol*. §9.1–9, 9.15–28, translation by Greenfield 2013, 25, 27.

[56] Ταῦτα ἔφη καὶ ἅμα πάσῃ τῇ ἐπιβαλλούσῃ αὐτῷ ἐκ γονέων περιουσίᾳ ἐγγράφως εὐθὺς ἀπετάξατο. Τοίνυν καὶ μόνα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράγματα, οἰκογενεῖς καὶ ὅσα ἐξ ἑτέρων πόρων αὐτῷ προσεγένοντο ἀναλαβόμενος καὶ ἐπιβὰς τοῦ ἵππου ἔφευγεν ἀκρατῶς ἐλαύνων ὥσπερ ὁ Λώτ, μὴ ἐπιστραφεὶς ὅλως εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω πρὸς τοὺς θρήνους τῶν συγγενῶν ἢ τῆς καταπιστευθείσης αὐτῷ φροντίσας τοῦ δημοσίου δουλείας. *L. Sym. New Theol*. §9.1–9, translation by Greenfield 2013, 25.

[57] Ταῦτα ἔφη καὶ ἅμα πάσῃ τῇ ἐπιβαλλούσῃ αὐτῷ ἐκ γονέων περιουσίᾳ ἐγγράφως εὐθὺς ἀπετάξατο. Τοίνυν καὶ μόνα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράγματα, οἰκογενεῖς καὶ ὅσα ἐξ ἑτέρων πόρων αὐτῷ προσεγένοντο ἀναλαβόμενος καὶ ἐπιβὰς τοῦ ἵππου ἔφευγεν ἀκρατῶς ἐλαύνων ὥσπερ ὁ Λώτ, μὴ ἐπιστραφεὶς ὅλως εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω πρὸς τοὺς θρήνους τῶν συγγενῶν ἢ τῆς καταπιστευθείσης αὐτῷ φροντίσας τοῦ δημοσίου δουλείας. […] Ἔνθεν τοι καὶ οὕτως ἔχων ὁ θαυμαστὸς Συμεὼν τοὺς μὲν παῖδας προάγειν ἐκέλευσεν, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ποτὲ μὲν ὑπομένων ὄπισθεν εἵπετο πενθῶν, ποτὲ δὲ τοσοῦτον προῆγεν αὐτοὺς ὅσον μὴ ἐξακούεσθαι τοὺς θρήνους αὐτοῦ. Διὸ καὶ ὀδυρμῶν μὲν τὰ ὄρη γοερῶν δὲ φωνῶν τὰς νάπας πληρῶν, τὸν εἰς Θεὸν ἔρωτα παρεμυθεῖτο ποσῶς. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὕτως ἐν μιᾷ προάγοντα καὶ κατὰ μέσον ὄρους γενόμενον περιαστράπτει αὐτὸν δίκην πυρὸς αἴφνης ἡ χάρις τοῦ Πνεύματος ἄνωθεν, καθὰ δὴ καὶ Παῦλόν ποτε, καὶ ὅλον ἀρρήτου χαρᾶς καὶ γλυκύτητος ἔπλησεν, ἐπαυξήσασα τὴν ἀγάπην αὐτῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν εἰς τὸν πνευματικὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ. *L. Sym. New Theol*. §9.1–9, 9.15–28, translation by Greenfield 2013, 25, 27.

the sacred places in which the grace of God is manifested, and that is what also happens to him.[58]

When it comes to the way in which the wandering topos is used by Gregory in Lazaros' *Life*, it is completely different. Lazaros is basically doing little else than relocating during his entire life. He is constantly on a road or a path, until his age does not permit. Many scenes from his itinerary are discussed in other parts of this study: relocation serves as a pattern that allows Gregory to demonstrate Lazaros' personal transformation and development as well as the negotiations of his holy status, territory and social relations.[59] During his relocations Lazaros encounters many spaces of travel: roads in cities and the countryside, mountain paths, and desert passages.[60] The main feature of these places is that they are public spaces.

Roads in cities are socially dense and unpredictable, such as in the following scene in Antioch.[61] Lazaros finds people gathered in the middle of the street, lamenting over a girl's abduction by the Armenian army. He decides to pursue these soldiers, he finds them, and he bravely and boldly negotiates with them the girl's homecoming. He succeeds to impose his will on the soldiers who return the girl to him and Lazaros takes her home. Roads in the countryside are also full of encounters with all kinds of people and their personal stories:

> *Going on his way, Lazaros found some people* originating from Cappadocia who were also heading toward the church of the Archangel. *He joined their ranks and went on with them*. Now there was *a girl with them who was crying and wailing bitterly*; when Lazaros saw her, he asked about her and discovered the reason for her sorrowful complaint. According to her she had been tricked by some people and had estranged herself from her family, for, on the advice of these deceitful people, she had taken quite a lot of money from her family home; when they had ⟨thus⟩ led her astray, however, they had taken the money and, abandoning her, had disappeared from sight. Her lament was not, however, so much about these events as because *she was terrified and shaking with fear, in case she should be disgraced by someone, for she was a virgin*. When Lazaros discovered this, *he went over and spoke with her; he persuaded her and, through her, those traveling with her to let him take her into his safekeeping until they should reach Chonai*. Which indeed he did. *Upon their arrival there they found some of her relatives and gave her into their charge so that they might take her back to her homeland and to her parents*.[62]

[58] See Chapter 7.

[59] These matters are extensively discussed in Chapters 3, 4, 6, 8, 9.

[60] See the discussion on the desert in this chapter, and Chapters 3, 7, 9.

[61] *L. Laz*. §14, translation by Greenfield 2000, 92–3. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 4.

[62] Πορευόμενος δὲ εὗρέ τινας ἐκ τῆς τῶν Καππαδοκῶν χώρας ὁρμωμένους καὶ πρὸς τὸν τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου ναὸν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἀπιόντας· οἷς ἑαυτὸν καταλέξας, σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπορεύετο. Ἦν δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς κόρη τις κλαίουσα καὶ ὀδυρομένη σφοδρῶς· ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἰδὼν ἠρώτησεν καὶ μαθὼν τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ὀδυρμοῦ, ἦν γὰρ ὡς ἔλεγε παρά τινων ἀπατηθεῖσα καὶ τῆς πατρῴας ἀποξενωθεῖσα, οὐκ ὀλίγον δὲ ὄγκον χρημάτων ταῖς τῶν ἀπατησάντων συμβουλαῖς ἐκ τῆς πατρῴας οἰκίας λαβοῦσα· ἃ καὶ λαβόντες οἱ αὐτὴν ἀπατήσαντες, καταλιπόντες αὐτὴν ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῆς ἄφαντοι γεγόνασι. Καὶ οὐ τοσοῦτον ἦν αὐτῇ περὶ τούτων ὁ θρῆνος, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐδεδίει καὶ ἔτρεμεν, ἵνα μὴ καὶ μῶμόν τινα παρά τινων ὑποστῇ· ἦν γαρ παρθένος. Ταῦτα μαθὼν ἐκεῖνος προσελθὼν καὶ συλλαλήσας αὐτῇ πείθει ταύτην καὶ δι' ἐκείνης τοὺς σὺν αὐτῇ ὁδεύοντας, ἵνα αὐτὸς αὐτὴν εἰς παραφυλακὴν λάβῃ, ἕως οὗ φθάσωσιν εἰς Χώνας· ὅπερ καὶ γέγονε. Φθάσαντες δὲ ἐκεῖσε εὗρόν τινας ἐκ τῶν αὐτῆς συγγενῶν καὶ παρέθεντο αὐτοῖς ταύτην, ὅπως ἀπαγάγωσιν εἰς τὴν πατρίδα

The urban and rural roads, on which Lazaros wanders, are the places that allow him to begin his transformation into a holy person, even before he becomes a monk. Amidst his wandering, roads offer Lazaros a little security: the security of collectivity. He encounters people and joins them on the road.

This 'collective' setting offers him the opportunity not only to demonstrate his love and pious attitude towards people, but also to undertake a role of protector of the weak and the suffering, within Gregory's story. This is exemplified by the safekeeping of the virgin, narrated in this episode. The scene also fully illustrates Lazaros' virtue and integrity, since the virgin is, according to the context, at the age of marriage and Lazaros is a young man.

THE CHAPEL AND THE CHURCH: PLACES OF REFUGE, INTERACTION, POLITICS

The church is a topos with a range of different meanings in the saints' *Lives* under discussion. From the small chapel to the urban and monastic church, churches hold a significant role in the hagiographical landscape by signifying the presence of God. They are ever present, one way or another, throughout the stories. Churches and chapels occupy a narrative space of sixty-four out of 255 paragraphs in Lazaros' *Life*, and of twenty-four out of 152 paragraphs in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*.[63]

In both *Lives*, due to God's presence, small chapels in the countryside appear with the meaning of refuge, either in the present life or after death.[64] A good example is Lazaros' visit to the chapel at the top of Mount Argeas in Cappadocia.[65] Another is Lazaros' very first stop on his journey to the Holy Land. As he was walking evening came, and Lazaros did not want to go into a village.[66] So, spotting a small chapel in the middle of the fields, he made his way over there, went into it, closed its rickety door, and prayed.[67] Then he sank to the ground, lay down, and slept for a while.[68] But he was suddenly awakened by cries; listening carefully, he heard

αὐτῆς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ταύτης γονεῖς. *L. Laz.* §7.1–23, translation by Greenfield 2000, 83.

[63] See *L. Laz.* §6, 7, 8, 10–12, 16, 17, 19, 25, 27–31, 33, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49, 53, 57, 62, 64, 66, 71–3, 82, 84–6, 94, 118, 133, 138, 139, 152, 156, 157, 165, 171, 172, 174, 175, 177–80, 182, 185, 191, 198, 200, 204, 206–7, 209, 219, 224, 234, 244, 249, 252; *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6, 7, 13, 16, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 38, 54, 93, 96, 100, 104, 110, 116, 118, 134, 141–3, 147, 152.

[64] *L. Laz.* §6, 12, 25, 28, 73, 94, 156, 174, 175, 206; *L. Sym. New Theol*. §7, 99–100.

[65] *L. Laz.* §25, translation by Greenfield 2000, 109–10. For the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this passage see Chapter 7.

[66] *L. Laz.* §6, translation by Greenfield 2000, 82–3. See the Greek text and translation of the passage on pp. 17–18.

[67] Ἰδὼν μέσον τῶν ἀρουρῶν εὐκτήριον μικρόν, ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπελθὼν εἰσῆλθε καὶ τὴν σεσαθρωμένην αὐτοῦ θύραν κλείσας ἔστη τὰς εὐχὰς αὐτοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἀναπέμπων. *L. Laz.* §6.14–7. See the English translation (by Greenfield 2000, 83) on p. 17.

[68] Μικρὸν τοῦ ὕπνου μεταλαχὼν ἄφνω ὡς ὑπό τινων φωνῶν βομβηθεὶς ἔξυπνος ἐγεγόνει καὶ προσσχὼν ἐδόκει ἀκούειν ὡσπερεὶ λύκων ἔξω ἐγγύς που ἑστώτων καὶ ὠρυομένων. *L. Laz.* §6.18–9. See the English translation (by Greenfield 2000, 83) on p. 18.

what sounded like wolves standing somewhere nearby outside and howling.[69] He got up, wedged a stone against the door, said a prayer, and then lay down on the ground and slept.[70]

Symeon the New Theologian does the same when he finds himself on a deserted and rugged mountain, after being sent into exile.[71] He finds refuge in a small chapel in the countryside and he decides to settle in it. This chapel becomes the location of his own monastery, since the field is donated to him by the owner, a wealthy citizen called Christophoros Phagouras. In both *Lives*, then, the chapel is a refuge for the saint, because it is a place of God and of prayer. By so being, it is a peaceful, safe, spiritual place, a place of love and compassion. The dome of a church appearing suddenly in the sky is used by Gregory as a symbolic representation of divinity. This happens in two different miraculous visions, and it is narrated through visualizations of space in which light—and the lack of it—play a central role:

> Suddenly, *although it was clear weather and broad daylight, it seemed to get dark around him*; *indeed* ⟨*it was*⟩ *so* ⟨*dark*⟩ *that he could not even see himself*. He gazed up at the sky and thought that he could see the stars; so, looking carefully at these, he worked out the way to the ⟨monastery of the⟩ Saviour from their positions and went on. When he got near the monastery, *he turned his eyes to the ground but saw nothing in front of him, for everything was completely dark; the only thing that he* ⟨*could*⟩ *see, so he said, was the dome of the church*. [...] *The darkness left him at once and the stars were no longer shining in the sky, but it was light and day again*. So, he glorified God Who, through the appearance of the stars, had miraculously rescued him from the illusion of darkness ⟨caused⟩ by the wicked demons, and went into the monastery.[72]

> Another brother from our monastery [...] told me something similar. He said that one evening he was going from the church to his cell and was near the kitchen [...], *when there seemed to be a bolt of lightning from heaven. He turned toward the east and saw the dome of a church apparently swathed in fire; the fire then ran down from there like water and went into the father's pillar*.[73]

[69] *L. Laz*. §6.19–22, translation by Greenfield 2000, 83. See the English translation on p. 18.

[70] Ὁ δὲ ἀναστὰς λίθον τε τῇ θύρᾳ προσερείσας καὶ εὐχὴν ποιήσας, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους πεσὼν ὕπνωσε. *L. Laz*. §6.23–4. See the English translation (by Greenfield 2000, 83) on p. 18.

[71] *L. Sym. New Theol*. §100. See the Greek text and translation of this passage on p. 56.

[72] Ἄφνω αἰθρίας οὔσης καὶ καθαρὸν τοῦ τῆς ἡμέρας φωτὸς αὐγάζοντος, δοκεῖ περὶ αὐτὸν σκότος γίνεσθαι καὶ τοσοῦτον ὥστε μηδὲ ἑαυτὸν ὁρᾶν δύνασθαι. Ἀτενίσας δὲ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀστέρας ὁρᾶν ἐνόμιζεν· οἷς καὶ προσέχων ἐκ τῆς αὐτῶν θέσεως τὴν πρὸς τὸν Σωτῆρα φέρουσαν ὁδὸν εἰκάζων ἐπορεύετο. Ὡς δὲ πλησίον τῆς μονῆς ἐγένετο κλίνας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν γῆν, εἰς μὲν τὰ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἑώρα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἦν σκοτίας μεστά, τὴν δὲ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τροῦλαν, ὡς ἔλεγε, μόνην ἐθεάσατο· [...] εὐθέως τὸ σκότος ἀπῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν οὐκέτι ἐφαίνοντο, ἀλλὰ πάλιν φῶς ἦν καὶ ἡμέρα. Καὶ οὕτως τὸν Θεὸν δοξάζων, τὸν διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων ἐμφανείας παραδόξως αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων σκοτεινομόρφου φαντασίας ῥυσάμενον, εἰς τὴν μονὴν εἰσῆλθε. *L. Laz*. §46.6–17, 46.21–7, translation by Greenfield 2000, 132–3.

[73] Ἕτερος δέ μοι ἀδελφὸς τῆς ἡμετέρας μονῆς, [...] τοιοῦτόν τι διηγήσατο. Ἔλεγε γάρ, ὡς ἐν μιᾷ ἑσπέρας βαθείας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὸ κελλίον ἑαυτοῦ ἀπιών, ὡς ἐγγὺς γεγόνει τοῦ μαγειρείου [...] ἐδόκει ἀστραπὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γεγενῆσθαι. Καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς ἀνατολάς, τὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας τροῦλαν ὡς πυρὶ ἑώρα σπαργανουμένην, εἶτα τὸ πῦρ ἐκεῖθεν ὥσπερ ὕδωρ ἐκδραμὸν καὶ εἰς τὸν στύλον εἰσελθὸν τοῦ πατρός. *L. Laz*. §86.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2000, 177.

In both scenes, the parameters of light and darkness imply the presence of God and demons, respectively, to the reader/audience. The dome of a church manifests divinity in both scenes. In the first passage, the dome confirms that the monk is at the monastery and at the place of God. Its appearance miraculously makes the darkness disappear and restores natural order. In the second vision, divinity springing from a dome in the eastern part of the sky flows like liquid fire into Lazaros' pillar. This is Gregory's method of demonstrating mystically and in a visual manner Lazaros' holiness to a spectator; the latter is employed as the original narrator of the story.

On the other hand, monastic and urban churches are meeting places of Christians and, as such, they host social interaction, both positive and negative, and they can become the setting of political debate.[74] The story of Symeon the New Theologian's brothers' revolt involves two Constantinopolitan churches—the ones of the Stoudios Monastery and the Great Church (seat of the Patriarchate)—which are presented as not so peaceful places:

> It was the blessed one's custom to instruct his disciples after the doxology of the early morning service was finished. But on this one day, when he began his instruction, admonishing, persuading, and exhorting according to the apostle's advice, all of a sudden around thirty of the monks tore their cloaks, just as the followers of Annas and Caiaphas once did. *Then with incoherent shouts, moved by a murderous impulse, they threw the whole church into confusion and boldly raised impious hands against their father as they tried to grab him and, like wild animals, tear him to pieces*. [...] As they rushed at him with their incoherent cries and blasphemies, *they displayed the same frenzy and recklessness as barking dogs*, yet they were stopped from on high from laying impious hands on him. [...] Not knowing what to do next, *they went racing out of the church*. [...] They smashed the bolts of the monastery gate and ran off along the road that led to the patriarchate as though they had lost their minds and gone mad. *After they had entered unarmed through the first gateway of the great church of God and disturbed the high priest—this was Sisinnios—with their cries from below, the patriarch summoned them*.[75]

In these scenes, two divine and sacred places, where love is supposed to prevail, are transformed into their opposites: places of conflict and revolt, violence and hostility. This is a sign of the impiousness which prevails in the secular world.

[74] See e.g., *L. Laz*. §57, 84, 139, 178, 207; *L. Sym. New Theol*. §38, 39.

[75] Τῆς ἑωθινῆς ἐν μιᾷ τελεσθεῖσης δοξολογίας καθὼς ἔθος ἦν τῷ μακαρίῳ τοὺς μαθητὰς κατηχεῖν, ὡς τῆς κατηχήσεως ἤρξατο νουθετῶν, ἐλέγχων, παρακαλῶν, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου παραίνεσιν, αἴφνης ὡσεὶ τριάκοντα ἄνδρες τῶν μοναχῶν τὰ ἑαυτῶν διαρρήξαντες παλλία, ὡς οἱ περὶ Ἄνναν ποτὲ καὶ Καϊάφαν, κραυγαῖς ἀσήμοις καὶ ὁρμήματι φονικῷ κινηθέντες καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν πᾶσαν διαταράξαντες χεῖρας ἀνόμους τολμηρῶς ἦραν κατὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν, ὥστε συλλαβεῖν καὶ ὡσεὶ θῆρες διασπαράξαι αὐτόν. [...] Ὡς δ' ὥρμησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἀσήμοις κραυγαῖς τε καὶ βλασφημίαις κυνῶν ὑλακτούντων μανίαν καὶ ἀναίδειαν ἐπεδείξαντο, ἐκωλύοντο μὲν ἄνωθεν τὰς ἀνόμους χεῖρας ἐπιβαλεῖν αὐτῷ [...]. Ἀποροῦντες δὲ τί διαπράξονται, τῆς ἐκκλησίας δρομαίως ἐξέρχονται, καὶ τὰ κλεῖθρα τῆς πύλης τοῦ μοναστηρίου συντρίψαντες τὴν φέρουσαν εἰς τὸ πατριαρχεῖον ὥσπερ ἐξεστηκότες καὶ μαινόμενοι ἔθεον, μόνον τὸν μακάριον μετὰ τῶν ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ ζώντων ἐγκαταλείψαντες. Ὡς δὲ τὴν πρώτην πύλην εἰσῆλθον τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίας ἄοπλοι καὶ ταῖς κραυγαῖς τὸν ἀρχιερέα – Σισίννιος δὲ ἦν – κάτωθεν ὤχλουν. *L. Sym. New Theol*. §38.9–19, 39.1–4, 39.7–14, translation by Greenfield 2013, 83, 85.

The normal practice (prayer to God) is replaced by mundane politics, that is by negotiations of the rules of monastic practice between the authorities (abbot and patriarch) and the monks. The scene of political conflict is inscribed within the urban space of the capital, ringing bells of secular conflicts in the capital. This urban space is conferred by a sequence of places which constitute the revolting monks' itinerary: from the monastic church, to the gates of the monastery which are violated to give access to the street, then to the Gates of the Patriarchate, and finally to the incontestable House of God for the Byzantines, the church of Hagia Sophia. At this destination, the supreme religious authority, the Patriarch, is asked by the monks to judge the legitimacy of the abbot's (i.e., Symeon's) perception of monastic practice.

THE MOUNTAIN: A DENSE PLACE

The mountain is another common hagiographical topos. Mountains were places isolated from the mundane world; they had been specifically selected for the performance of monastic ascetism since the earliest periods of Christianity.[76] Veronica Della Dora shows that, by their geographical features and cultural symbolism, mountains accumulate a heavy Christian narrative 'luggage': as biblical and scriptural landmarks, *loci memoriae*, gardens of Eden, and ladders to heaven.[77] Svetlana Smolčić-Makuljević interprets them as utopic non-places and *other* places or heterotopias, and simultaneously as *Gedächtnisorte*, places of memory.[78]

In Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, the topos appears twice. In the first case, it emerges early in his life as the place which offers him holy grace.[79] In the second, more extensive, emergence, the mountain marks a place of social isolation and suffering, to which the holy man has been exiled after having spent most of his life in the Byzantine capital. Niketas' notion of the 'rugged mountain' (ἐπὶ τοῦ τραχυτάτου βουνοῦ)[80] is not far from the notion of desert discussed below.

In Gregory's narration, the mountain occupies an extensive narrative space. It appears regularly in the text, already from the title: Life of Lazaros of Mount Galesion (Βίος [...] Λαζάρου τοῦ ἐν τῷ Γαλησίῳ).[81] By its spatial qualities (dominating height and depth, thickness of vegetation, harshness of ground, difficulty of access, latent natural dangers) and its symbolic connotations, mentioned above,

[76] Talbot 2001.

[77] Della Dora 2018, 147–75.

[78] Smolčić-Makuljević 2014, 244.

[79] οὕτως ἐν μιᾷ προάγοντα καὶ κατὰ μέσον ὄρους γενόμενον περιαστράπτει αὐτὸν δίκην πυρὸς αἴφνης ἡ χάρις τοῦ Πνεύματος ἄνωθεν, καθὰ δὴ καὶ Παῦλόν ποτε, καὶ ὅλον ἀρρήτου χαρᾶς καὶ γλυκύτητος ἔπλησεν. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §9.15–28. See the English translation of this passage (by Greenfield 2013, 27) on p. 44.

[80] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95.20.

[81] *L. Laz.,* title (p. 508).

this topos is of imperative use within Gregory's narrative strategy. Therefore, one chapter of this study deals exclusively with this subject.[82]

In what follows, I investigate an additional meaning of the mountain (a spatial topos) in Lazaros' *Life* by associating it with two other, non-spatial, hagiographical topoi defined by Pratsch: a) σημεῖα (*signa*); b) ἐχθρός (*adversarius*).[83] In Lazaros' *Life*, the mountains are natural spaces with a paramount social content. They are places which are named (Mount Tabor, Mount Galesion etc.) and very rich in accumulated meanings. These accumulated meanings derive from their hosting a great number of distinct places; these places owe their 'identity' to particular signs that the reader must recognize and interpret. Such signs are, for example, rocks with carved crosses, creeks with running water, and caves of ascetic monks. In paragraph forty-one, Gregory describes this landscape: Lazaros is climbing a mountain while singing.[84] When he reaches the rock where there is an extremely narrow passage, he stretches out his right hand and makes the sign of the cross on the rock; then he kissed it, says a prayer, and then he passes the place.[85] Gregory even notes that the cross was still visible now carved in the rock, for it was engraved afterwards on the father's order as a phylactery for those passing by.[86]

Other signs demarcate the territory of enemies: wild animals appear to demonstrate the boundaries between the holy man's space and that of the wilderness, while the emergence of demons signifies the vulnerability of a human being. The episode where Lazaros comes face-to-face with a bear in the fog while climbing a mountain, is a good reminder to the reader of the association between mountain and natural threat.[87] Even if monastic activity has civilized the mountain—turning it into a 'city' or a second heaven (πολισθῆναι τὸ ὄρος καὶ ἄλλον οὐρανὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν γενέσθαι)—its wilderness transforms it into the demons' favourite field of action against solitary humans (οἵους πειρασμοὺς ὑπέστη ὁ ἅγιος, ὅτε μόνος ἦν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ὄρει):

> But who could describe the *temptations from the demons which Lazaros experienced while he was living there alone*? For, *even after the mountain was made into a city and became another heaven, as one might say, with the ceaseless hymn singing and divine liturgies of the monks, some of our brothers experienced these ⟨temptations⟩, and especially in the cave itself and in the gorge*. So, I am going to describe a few of the many such ⟨incidents⟩ as evidence for you, so that you may know from these ⟨stories⟩ *what sort of temptations the holy Lazaros experienced, when he was alone on this mountain*.[88]

[82] Chapter 7.

[83] Pratsch 2005, 170–83, 213–24.

[84] *L. Laz.* §41.35, translation by Greenfield 2000, 128. See the Greek text and translation of this passage on pp. 106–7.

[85] *L. Laz.* §41.36–41, translation by Greenfield 2000, 128. See the Greek text on pp. 107.

[86] *L. Laz.* §41.41–44, translation by Greenfield 2000, 128. See the Greek text on pp. 107.

[87] *L. Laz.* §25, translation by Greenfield 2000, 109–10. See the Greek text and translation as well as discussion of this passage on pp. 125–6.

[88] Τοὺς δὲ πειρασμούς, οὓς παρὰ τῶν δαιμόνων μόνος ὢν ἐκεῖσε ὑπέστη, τίς ἂν δύναιτο διηγήσασθαι; ὅπου

The distinction between wilderness and civilization is clear at this point. The human presence, the prayers, and the sacred sounds are investing the natural space with culture. Religion turns wilderness into a 'city' and into 'another heaven' but this 'urbanization effect' is subjected to a dynamic power balance. The landscape changes at night, when the 'enemy' forces prevail. Demons like to attack people alone, on the mountain and in designated parts of it, in specific, such as the cave and the gorge. For the sake of truth, Gregory narrates ten different stories of demonic attacks in these places in the paragraphs that follow.[89] On another occasion, Evil takes human form and murders a monk by pushing him over a cliff.[90]

THE CAVE: A PLACE OF SECLUSION

The hagiographical topos of holy men's and women's seclusion from their social surroundings (secular or monastic) has been outlined and discussed by Pratsch (*anachoresis-reclusio*).[91] Papavarnavas traces down the origin of this topos to the concept of imprisonment of the first martyrs in the form of being ascetic or being voluntarily withdrawn (ἐγκλεισμός).[92] The concept of the enclosed space with identity-creating characteristics is handed down in the ascetic and monastic descriptions of life, and the cave is one example of such a space. Della Dora discusses the practice of seclusion in the darkness of a cave as a common topos in the *Lives* of medieval saints.[93] Indeed, caves are places occurring often in Gregory's narration of Lazaros' *Life*.[94] On the contrary, a cave occurs only once in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, probably because the cell can be understood as a substitute for it.[95] And yet, the 'place under the staircase' is strongly reminiscent of a cave.[96]

Alice-Mary Talbot combines hagiographical descriptions with archaeological evidence in order to investigate the meaning of the experiences of 'cave-men' as she calls these 'anachoretic monks'.[97] As she observes, caves were the logical option of residence for an ascetic monk who chose to follow the anachoretic life, since they were natural shelters provided by God and offered favourable living conditions (protection from the elements and from other people) although the

γε μετὰ τὸ πολισθῆναι τὸ ὄρος καὶ ἄλλον οὐρανὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν γενέσθαι ταῖς τῶν μοναχῶν ἀκαταπαύστοις ὑμνῳδίαις καὶ θείαις ἱερουργίαις τινὲς τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν τούτους ὑπέστησαν, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σπηλαίῳ καὶ τῇ φάραγγι· ἐξ ὧν ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν ὀλίγους εἰς μαρτυρίαν ὑμῖν τῷ λόγῳ διαγράψομαι, ἵν' ὅπως ἐκ τούτων ἐπιγνῶτε, οἵους πειρασμοὺς ὑπέστη ὁ ἅγιος, ὅτε μόνος ἦν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ὄρει. *L. Laz.* §42.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2000, 128.

[89] See *L. Laz.* §42–52.

[90] *L. Laz.* §132.

[91] Pratsch 2005, 136–47.

[92] Papavarnavas 2021.

[93] Della Dora 2016, 198–202.

[94] *L. Laz.* §10, 11, 18, 27, 39–41, 43, 49, 53, 55.

[95] See the section on the cell in this chapter.

[96] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §149. For the 'place under the staircase' see the section on ladder/staircase in this chapter.

[97] Della Dora 2016, 198–202; Talbot 2016.

provision of food and water was not always easy.[98] The symbolic dimensions of this practice were the link between caves and the meditation on death, the increase of knowledge of the divine, the spiritual enlightenment, and the encounters with wild animals.[99] In a posthumous miracle, Symeon the New Theologian appears to help out a monk who resides in a subterranean cave and is engaged in spiritual combat through fasting and every kind of mortification: "His body was wasted away through the contests of fasting and practically deadened, so to speak, due to his extreme abstinence from food and keeping vigil."[100]

Due to their religious and spiritual connotations, caves could act as *loci memoriae* and sites for mimesis in the saints' *Lives*.[101] Such is the case in one episode from the *Life* of Lazaros.[102] The latter occupies a cave, in which an earlier monk, Paphnoutios, had lived. The process of occupation involves a long and rich ritual on the mountain described by Gregory in great detail.[103] This story also has it that, after Paphnoutios and before Lazaros, there was yet another resident in the cave, as narrated earlier in the *Life*: it was a shepherd, who had killed Paphnoutios by mistake and then decided to settle in the cave for the rest of his life in order to repent.[104]

Another story in Lazaros' *Life*, though, demonstrates caves as demonic fields. A disciple, called Symeon, wants to live in a cave but Lazaros hesitates to let him due to the presence of demons:

> A monk called Symeon began begging the father that he might go and live in the cave. The father would not allow him to do this because, as he said to him, he would be incapable of enduring the temptations of the demons. However, when the monk began to pressure the father, arguing forcibly to this end, Lazaros was won over and urged him to go off and live there. So ⟨Symeon⟩ went off and stayed there for some time without being tempted by the demons. But one night, as he stood praying, he saw, so he said, the whole cave filled with sparkling coals. Straightaway then it seemed to him that some ⟨demons⟩ fell on him with a shout and, having laid hold of him, one of his head and the other of his feet, they suddenly hurled him to the ground; and they hit him so ⟨hard⟩ that he became unconscious from such a beating. After they had beaten him a great deal they lifted him up in the air and, taking him to the mouth of the cave, suspended him there until the semantron of the church struck; then, when the semantron was struck, they threw him to the ground there and went away.[105]

[98] Talbot 2016, 709–12.

[99] Talbot 2016, 713–7.

[100] Ἐν ᾧ τεταριχευμένον τὸ σῶμα ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἔφερε τῆς νηστείας καὶ σχεδὸν ἀπονενεκρωμένον εἰπεῖν ἄγαν ἐξ ἄκρας ἀσιτίας καὶ ἀγρυπνίας, μὴ εὑρίσκων, σφόδρα τῇ λύπῃ καὶ τῇ ἀθυμίᾳ ἐβάλλετο, μὴ ἔχων ὅ,τι καὶ δράσει εἰς θεραπείαν τοῦ πάθους. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §149.13–7, translation by Greenfield 2013, 371, 373.

[101] Della Dora 2016, 199.

[102] *L. Laz.* §62. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this episode in Chapter 7.

[103] *L. Laz.* §62. See Chapter 7, pp. 132–3.

[104] *L. Laz.* §39. See also Della Dora 2016, 199.

[105] Μοναχὸς δέ τις ὀνόματι Συμεὼν ἠτεῖτο τὸν πατέρα, ἵνα ἀπελθὼν οἰκήσῃ ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ. Ὁ δὲ πατὴρ οὐ συνεχώρει αὐτῷ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι, ὡς αὐτῷ ἔλεγε, τοὺς ἐκ τῶν δαιμόνων πειρασμοὺς ὑποφέρειν. Ὡς δὲ ὁ μοναχὸς ἐπέκειτο τὸν πατέρα βιάζων πρὸς τοῦτο, πεισθεὶς ὁ πατὴρ προέτρεψεν αὐτῷ

The caves are clearly signified as places of demons in the first lines of the passage. First of all, Lazaros will not let Symeon go because he is not strong enough to resist them. Secondly, when Symeon does go, he remains unbothered by them; Gregory finds the fact exceptional enough to mention it. The following descriptions of demonic attacks are spectacular in visual and sonoric terms, which illustrate the degree of violence and aggression involved in the battle.

The demonic presence and attack make the hermit's stay in the cave even more meaningful, since it transforms his stay in the cave into a period of hard exercise and struggle. The cave's darkness (probably also its heavy smell and humidity or the presence of animals) would have made an excellent backdrop for shining demonic eyes looking just like sparkling coals. Within the cave's limited space it would have been impossible to run away from the attacker's blows.

THE DESERT: THE PLACE OF ANACHORESIS

The desert is a common hagiographical topos, discussed by Pratsch in respect to *apodemia-peregrinatio*.[106] In Lazaros' story, his *anachoresis* comes at an early stage of the story.[107] His desert-phase follows his wandering among the monasteries in the Holy Land, and it is narrated in six paragraphs.[108] It is in the desert that Lazaros hears a voice from above, instructing him to return to Ephesos. On his way there, he is together with a monk named Paul and another man. They are crossing the desert which appears as a really dangerous place. First of all, the third man robs Lazaros and Paul, and vanishes while they are sleeping:

> After they had got far enough away from the place they had left, they wanted to have a short rest, and lay down on the ground and went to sleep. But that miserable and misguided ⟨former monk⟩ got up ⟨again⟩, when he saw that they were asleep, and went back, just like a dog to its own vomit. When ⟨Lazaros and Paul⟩ woke up and could not find him, they realized what he had done. They understood then that his mind was twisted and that his repentance was not on account of God, just as Judas' was not. [...] So, the fathers got up and continued their journey through the desert, despairing of the salvation of that miserable man.[109]

ἐκεῖ ἀπελθεῖν καὶ τὴν κατοίκησιν ποιῆσαι. Καὶ δὴ ἀπελθὼν ἔμεινε χρόνον τινὰ ἐκ δαιμόνων ἀπείραστος. Μιᾷ δὲ τῶν νυκτῶν ὡς ἵστατο προσευχόμενος, ὁρᾷ ὡς ἔλεγε τὸ σπήλαιον ἅπαν πληρωθὲν σπινθηρακοειδῶν ἀνθράκων· εἶθ' οὕτως ἐδόκει τινὰς αὐτῷ μετὰ βοῆς εἰσπεσεῖν· οἳ καὶ δραξάμενοι, ὁ μὲν τῆς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς, ὁ δὲ τῶν ποδῶν, ἄφνω εἰς γῆν αὐτὸν καταράττουσι. Καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἔρυψαν, ὡς ἄφωνον αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου δαρμοῦ γενέσθαι. Μετὰ δὲ τὸ τύψαι αὐτὸν ἱκανῶς, βαστάσαντες αὐτὸν αἰθέριον μέχρι τῆς ὀπῆς τοῦ σπηλαίου ἀναγαγόντες ἐκεῖσε αὐτὸν κρέμασθαι ἐποίησαν, ἕως οὗ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἔκρουσε. Κρουσθέντος δὲ τοῦ ξύλου, ἐκεῖθεν πρὸς τὴν γῆν αὐτὸν ῥίψαντες αὐτοὶ ᾤχοντο. *L. Laz.* §43.1–22, translation by Greenfield 2000, 129.

[106] Pratsch 2005, 136, 139, 146.

[107] Pratsch 2005, 137–8.

[108] *L. Laz.* §18–23.

[109] Ὡς δὲ τόπου ἱκανοῦ ἐξ οὗπερ ἐξῆλθον διέστησαν, μικρὰν ἀνάπαυσιν ἑαυτοῖς δοῦναι θελήσαντες, ἐν τῇ γῇ κατακλιθέντες ὕπνωσαν. Ὁ δὲ ταλαίπωρος καὶ πεπλανημένος ἐκεῖνος, ὡς εἶδεν αὐτοὺς ὑπνώσαντας, ἀναστὰς ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ τὸν ἴδιον ἔμετον πάλιν ὑπέστρεψεν. Διυπνισθέντες οὖν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ μὴ εὑρόντες αὐτὸν ἔγνωσαν, ὃ δέδρακεν· καὶ γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν αὐτοῦ διάστροφον γνώμην καὶ ὅτι ἡ μετάνοια αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἦν διὰ Θεόν, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τοῦ Ἰούδα. [...] Ἀπογνόντες οὖν οἱ πατέρες τῆς τοῦ ταπεινοῦ ἐκείνου σωτηρίας,

Gregory narrates how Lazaros and Paul have lost their co-traveller. The loss, moreover, is not very significant. Gregory uses the walking-in-the-desert example in order to demonstrate that not everybody can be a monk. Lazaros' and Paul's co-traveller does not have the appropriate spiritual strength to become one and the confrontation with a landscape as harsh and difficult as the desert is enough to accelerate his decision. Yet Lazaros and Paul do have the necessary strength and spirit. Their focus upon their target is demonstrated by Gregory through their departure: they have to let go of their co-traveller, who was eventually lost to a sinful life, and walk towards fulfilling their dream.

After this first loss, the extreme sense of thirst is the second challenge that Lazaros and Paul face in the desert. This is an obstacle in the monks' advance in the desert and travel back home. However, Lazaros' travel was prescribed by God's will: the obstacle is, therefore, withdrawn with the help of God. The latter leads them miraculously to a water spring which they would have never been able to find on their own because it was hidden under a bush. In this way God saves their lives. It is reasonable to think that a water spring in the desert attracts all thirsty creatures—animals and humans alike. The water spring is used by Gregory as a chance to illustrate an amazing experience that Lazaros and Paul have in the desert. The third challenge appears before the men's eyes in the form of life-threatening wild beasts. Gregory's narration is breath-taking:

> As it was terribly hot in the middle of the day ⟨Lazaros and Paul⟩ grew extremely thirsty, but He, Who long ago made water gush forth from the barren ⟨hill of the⟩ jawbone for Samson when he was fighting and thirsty, *now also miraculously led these men to go to a place where there was water*. The water was hidden from the outside by a bramble bush but, when they went inside the bush, they found the water and drank; they then came out ⟨again⟩ and lay down in the shade of the bush. While they were lying on the ground like this *they looked up and saw (just saying and hearing ⟨this⟩ is enough to fill one with horror, let alone seeing it) four lions apparently coming toward them*. When they suddenly saw these ⟨lions⟩, they ⟨stayed⟩ lying ⟨there but⟩ raised the hands and eyes of their souls ⟨in supplication⟩ to God, Who ⟨alone⟩ could save them, and called on Him for help. And, indeed, they did not fail in their request for, just as He miraculously tamed the wild beasts for Daniel, so also did He for them. *⟨The lions⟩ thus came up one by one, smelt them from head to foot, licked them with their tongues and then went by, wagging their tails just like pet dogs do when they see their masters; after ⟨the lions⟩ had drunk and come out of the bush, they did the same thing ⟨again⟩ and then left ⟨the men⟩ and went away*. After they had thus been miraculously saved from the beasts, they got up and gave glory to God Who had saved them from the mouths of lions; then they drank some more water and went on their way.[110]

ἀναστάντες διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου ἐπορεύοντο. *L. Laz.* §21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 105.

[110] Καὶ δὲ τῆς μεσημβρινῆς ὥρας οὔσης, σφοδροτάτου καύματος ὄντος, δεινῶς τῇ δίψῃ κατεπιέζοντο. Ἀλλ' ὁ τῷ Σαμψὼν πάλαι πολεμοῦντι διψήσαντι διὰ τῆς ἀψύχου σιαγόνος ὕδωρ ἀποπηγάσας, αὐτὸς καὶ τούτους παραδόξως ὡδήγησεν εἴς τινα τόπον ἀπελθεῖν, ἐν ᾧ ὕδωρ ἦν· τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ἔξωθεν ὑπὸ βάτου ἐκαλύπτετο. Εἰσελθόντες οὖν ἔνδον τῆς βάτου, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ εὑρόντες ἔπιον· καὶ οὕτως ἐξελθόντες ἀνέκλιναν ἑαυτοὺς ὑπὸ τὴν σκιὰν τῆς βάτου. Κείμενοι δὲ οὕτως ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἀτενίσαντες τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῶν ὁρῶσιν, ὅπερ καὶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι μόνον, μήτοιγε ἰδεῖν, φόβου ἔμπλεων καθιστᾷ, λέοντας τὸν ἀριθμὸν τέσσαρας ὡς πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐρχομένους· τούτους ἄφνω ὡς εἶδον κείμενοι, τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ὁμοῦ χεῖράς τε καὶ ὄμματα πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον αὐτοὺς Θεὸν σῴζειν ὑψώσαντες εἰς βοήθειαν αὐτὸν ἐπεκαλοῦντο· καὶ μέντοι καὶ οὐ διήμαρτον

All characters', including the animals', urgency to drink water is illustrated through the repetition of the word water (ὕδωρ)—which appears four times within three sentences and once again at the end—and thirst (δίψῃ, διψήσαντι) at the beginning of the paragraph. God's voice leads Lazaros to the solution of the problem: it guides them towards the water hidden under a bush. God returns (through Lazaros prayer) later in the same scene to save him from the terrible beasts: the four lions smell and lick the two monks like puppies—not just once but twice, to confirm the fact— and then walk away.

The meeting with the lions reminds the reader what a desert really means as a natural landscape. It is part of wilderness and full of fatal dangers; one needs to be prepared for that. However, it also confirms the traditional view of the desert as a 'counterworld' and a site of paradox.[111] After this episode, Lazaros and Paul find the power to travel in the desert for three full days without any food, as they have been traveling empty-handed, another sign that God is not giving up on them. The desert is a metaphor for Christianity and for spirituality in the broader sense.[112]

The desert does not literally exist in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, but the description of his place of exile strongly recalls it.[113] This is the place of his *anachoresis*, at a later stage of the story.[114] Symeon deliberately crosses over to the opposite coast of the Bosphorus, his place of exile, after his reputation has been restored: "he crossed over to the solitude that was so dear to him as he wanted to build a cell there ⟨in which to practice⟩ spiritual tranquillity (διαπερᾷ πρὸς τὴν φίλην αὐτοῦ ἐρημίαν ἡσυχίας ἐκεῖσε ποθῶν κατασκευάσαι κελλίον)."[115] The word ἐρημία has been translated as 'solitude' by Greenfield but it obviously means much more than that: Koutsas translates it as desert and wilderness (ἐρημιά). So in this case, the desert is imbued with its Late Antique meaning, as explained by the Holy Fathers, as a place for solitary life and a 'mother of quietness'.[116]

τῆς αἰτήσεως. Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸν Δανιὴλ τοὺς ἀγρίους θῆρας παραδόξως ἡμέρωσεν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις πεποίηκε. Διερχόμενοι οὖν καθ' ἕνα καὶ ὀσφραινόμενοι αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ἕως ποδῶν, εἶτα καὶ ταῖς αὐτῶν γλώσσαις αὐτοὺς ἀπολείχοντες καὶ ὥσπερ κύνες ἥμεροι, ὅταν τοὺς ἰδίους δεσπότας ἴδωσιν, οὕτως καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰς κέρκους αὐτῶν κινοῦντες διήρχοντο. Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ μετὰ τὸ πιεῖν καὶ ἐξελθεῖν τῆς βάτου οὕτως ποιήσαντες, ἀφέντες αὐτοὺς ἀπῆλθον. Ὡς οὖν οὕτως παραδόξως ἐκ τῶν θηρῶν ἐρρύσθησαν, ἀναστάντες καὶ τῷ Θεῷ δόξαν ἀναπέμψαντες τῷ ῥυσαμένῳ αὐτοὺς ἐκ στόματος λεόντων, ὕδωρ πάλλιν πιόντες ἐπορεύοντο. *L. Laz.* §22, translation by Greenfield 2000, 105–6.

111 Brown 1988, 216–7; Dela Dora 2018, 125–6, 143.

112 Dela Dora 2018, 142.

113 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95. See the Greek text and its discussion on pp. 137–8.

114 Pratsch 2005, 138–40.

115 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109.16–7, translation by Greenfield 2013, 253.

116 *Greg. Naz. Poem. Mor.* 17.1–2; Della Dora 2018, 128.

THE MONASTERY: A PLACE OF COLLECTIVE SUSTAINABILITY

Monasteries are holy persons' natural spaces of appearance and agency; hence they are omnipresent in the two *Lives*. The struggle for the creation of a 'monastery of one's own' comes intentionally in Symeon the New Theologian's case and unintentionally in that of Lazaros. Symeon decides to establish a new foundation, as he wants it, after having been forced out of St Mamas.[117] Lazaros is shown to seek peace and isolation, while flocks just keep chasing him up on the mountain, forming monastic settlements around his pillar.[118] And, while Gregory only implies the value of all those monastic settlements on Mount Galesion—until he finally spells out that this was Lazaros' "greatest miracle"—,[119] Niketas literally designates the value of individual property for a holy man. Symeon the New Theologian finds himself all alone, exiled on a rugged mountain, where he finds refuge in a chapel, which belonged to a wealthy citizen from the capital:

> The aforementioned chapel and the land on which it stood belonged to a highly placed man called Christopher, who had the surname Phagouras. [...] He immediately sailed across the Bosporus, and when he reached the place and saw the blessed one sitting there with a single disciple and with no physical comforts at all, his eyes filled with tears. [...] *He begged the saint to let him provide for his physical needs so that he would not lack the necessities.* But the saint replied, 'What more do I need, my child, than enough food for the day with which bread and salt and water supply me more abundantly than luxurious foods? *But if you are concerned and want to look after me, [...] you may instead grant this chapel to me as a gift because I am homeless. [...] I will restore it as a monastery for monks and a home for those seeking salvation*.'[120]

When Christopher Phagouras proposes to Symeon the New Theologian to support him financially, the latter asks him for land instead. The guarantee of his survival is the establishment of a new monastery which will be a sustainable economic unit in the long-term. Symeon is proved to be right later in the story: the monastery is established and renovated, raising envious fury among the local secular communities. These communities attempt to damage the building and scare the monks out of the neighbourhood: "His neighbours, motivated by envy, hindered him openly with threats and tried to chase him away by throwing stones."[121]

[117] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §12–3.

[118] This issue is extensively discussed in Chapters 3 and 8.

[119] *L. Laz.* §79; see the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this passage in Chapter 7.

[120] Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ εἰρημένον εὐκτήριον καὶ ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἵστατο ἑνὸς ἦν τῶν ἐν τέλει ἀνδρῶν Χριστοφόρου ἐκείνου, ᾧ Φαγούρα ἦν τὸ ἐπώνυμον [...]. Ἐξαυτῆς οὖν τὴν Προποντίδα ὁ ἀνὴρ διαπλεύσας καὶ ἕως τοῦ τόπου γενόμενος, ὡς εἶδε τὸν μακάριον μεθ' ἑνὸς μαθητοῦ ἐκεῖσε καθήμενον, μηδὲν τῶν εἰς παραμυθίαν τοῦ σώματος ἔχοντα, δακρύων πληρωθεὶς [...]. Ἐδυσώπησε δὲ λόγοις τὸν ἅγιον τὰ κατὰ χρείαν τοῦ σώματος κομίζεσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐνδεῶς ἔχειν τῶν ἀναγκαίων. Ὁ δὲ ἅγιος· 'τί δὲ δεῖ', φησί, 'καὶ πλέον ἡμῖν, ὦ τέκνον, τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς, ἣν ἄρτος καὶ ἅλας μετὰ ὕδατος ἀφθονωτέραν ἡμῖν ἀπεργάζονται τῶν πολυτελῶν τοῖς ἐδέσμασιν; Ἀλλ' εἴ τί σοι μᾶλλον διὰ φροντίδος ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς τοὺς γεγεννηκότας σε διὰ Πνεύματος θεραπεῦσαι, ἐπιδώσεις μᾶλλον ἡμῖν τοῖς ἀστέγοις τοῦτο δὴ τὸ εὐκτήριον κατὰ δωρεὰν καί [...] μονὴν μοναστῶν καὶ οἶκον σωζομένων αὐτὸ ἀποκαταστήσομεν.' *L. Sym. New Theol*. §100.1–3, 100.6–9, 100.16–25, 100.28–9, translation by Greenfield 2013, 231, 233.

[121] Οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρόσοικοι φθόνῳ βαλλόμενοι ταῖς ἀπειλαῖς φανερῶς διεκώλυον καὶ ταῖς βολαῖς τῶν λίθων

As to the function of holy men within this community, despite their need for isolation as a prerequisite for ascetic activity, holiness emerges as a personal identity negotiated and performed collectively.[122] As Krueger observes, the history of monasticism is written as a productive enterprise, effecting the self through regimen, discipline, liturgy, public and private prayer, and particularly through an abbot's exhortations.[123] He gives the example of Symeon the New Theologian's Catecheses[124] as the most complete and reasoned program for the formation of monks to survive from the middle Byzantine centuries:

> In prescribing interior speech as a tool in the formation of a monk, Symeon encodes a Byzantine theory of subjectivity. He places confidence in the efficacy of repetition and ritualization as a technology for the formation of the monastic self, and thus reveals his sense of monasticism as a performed identity.[125]

Symeon the New Theologian's scripts are well reflected within the story of his life, whenever Niketas takes the opportunity to do that. This happens, for instance, in the scene where Symeon instructs his disciples just before handing the reins of the monastery over to another abbot so as to concentrate on his ascetic life. Out of a long list of guidelines, only a few can be cited here:

- Strive to increase your Lord's flock by your care for its spiritual sheep.[126]
- Do not turn to bodily indulgence or luxuries by saving up the resources of the monastery for your own pleasure rather than for your brethren.[127]
- Do not prepare extravagant meals for yourself while providing wretched and miserable ones for the brethren under you.[128]
- You should not give yourself the duties of your monastery to do all by yourself, [...] rather you should delegate the duties of your community to each of those who live in piety and the fear of God, that is to say, yourself evaluating the rationale of all of them.[129]
- You should not get carried away with anger or rage against your children and brothers, unless it is a matter endangering their souls, but rather should instruct them with kind words and speech as to how each should live and comport himself in the midst of the brotherhood.[130]
- Along with all these things you must be exacting in the scrutiny of each person's thoughts, so that you may know which monks should be in the congregation of those who pray and take

αὐτὸν ἐξεδίωκον. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §110.11–14, translation by Greenfield 2013, 255.

122 See Chapter 8.

123 Krueger 2014, 197–9.

124 Symeon, *Discourses*.

125 Krueger 2014, 199.

126 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §61.1–3, translation by Greenfield 2013, 137.

127 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §61.3–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 137.

128 *L. Sym. New Theol*. §61.12–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 137.

129 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §61.21–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 139.

130 *L. Sym. New Theol.* §62.1–5, translation by Greenfield 2013, 139.

> communion together. [...] You should not permit access to the divine sanctuary to all who want it, but only to the ordained and consecrated brothers."[131]

Thus, the abbot has to behave like a real leader and leave nothing to chance. His role means that he has to individually develop himself and each of the brothers but this has to be accomplished through a collective way of life. Hence the abbot must maintain justice and equality within the community; have constant knowledge of each monk's intentions, determination, and commitment; watch his manners and not exaggerate his exercise of power; be especially careful when it comes to finances and expenditure; and protect the sacred space of the monastery from intruders. Symeon the New Theologian is presented as a priest with strict and absolute stances on abbotship, who takes these responsibilities very seriously up to the point of becoming unpleasant to his disciples (such an instance is in fact narrated in detail).[132]

Lazaros is presented by Gregory as someone who is conscious of all these duties and responsibilities yet does not have much patience with people: as a protest he usually just walks away. A much less serious complaint by his disciples, for example, lead to his relocation to the second pillar.[133] The brethren complain about the frequent presence in the monastery of a widow who, due to Lazaros' influence, eventually gets tonsured.[134] A violent scene takes place within the church, with a disciple: "Dashing off brazenly from the place, where he had been standing, and running into the church; there he seized the nun by her scapular and led her out of the church. He brought her before the father and said 'It is this woman who is hurting me and these ⟨others⟩".[135] Here the politics take place in the courtyard of the monastery, around Lazaros' pillar, where the brethren have been assembled to receive the father's teachings. The courtyard, with Lazaros' pillar in the middle, is the heart of the monastic everyday life and the regular setting of stories narrated in the *Life*:

> A certain brother went into someone's cell while the other brothers were in the church, took ⟨some⟩ cash ⟨worth⟩ about four milia, and went off to his cell. While he was still on the way, the father called out to him by name from up on his pillar and summoned him. When ⟨the monk⟩ got there, Lazaros said, 'Give me the cash which you just took after going into brother Merkourios' cell.' As he had no excuse at all, ⟨the brother⟩ immediately took out the cash and gave it to the father; then he prostrated himself and begged for forgiveness, and

[131] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §63.1–8, 63.15–8, translation by Greenfield 2013, 143.

[132] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §100 (see the section on chapel/church above).

[133] *L. Laz.* §57–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145–6. For the Greek text and translation as well as for a detailed discussion of these passages see Chapter 8, pp. 133–5.

[134] The theme is not unusual for the middle Byzantine period; see Efthymiadis 2019, 41.

[135] Ἰταμῶς ἐξ οὗ τόπου ἵστατο ἐκπηδήσας δρομαίως εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν εἰσῆλθε καὶ τὴν μονάζουσαν ἐκ τῆς ἐπωμίδος δραξάμενος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐξάγει. Καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν ταύτην ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρός· Αὕτη, φησίν, ἡ κἀμὲ καὶ τούτους βλάπτουσα. *L. Laz.* §57.17–22, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145.

⟨asked⟩ that this should not become known to the brothers. The father demanded his word that he would not dare do such a thing again.[136]

Lazaros' pillar serves as watchtower in this scene. From his high-up position amid the courtyard, the father oversees the monks' movement and behaviour. In other scenes he also watches the movement of visitors. Lazaros intervenes, whenever he finds it necessary, to impose good order and peace in the community, as in this case of money theft.

THE CELL: A PLACE OF ONE'S OWN

A place can be not only an indispensable part of a process but it may in the end predominate over the agents and outcomes of this process. As Virginia Woolf wrote:

> But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction – what, has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain. [...] The title women and fiction might mean women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point—a woman must have money and a room of her own, if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved.[137]

In the process of holification, the cell is a place such as the room imagined by Woolf. It is the monk's absolutely-own, personal, private space. Here, he can pray and communicate with God which is his prime concern and destination. The form, size and shape of the place is not important. It can be a place under the staircase or a room in a monastic foundation, in the case of Symeon the New Theologian; or it can be a miniature of a room on top of a pillar, in the case of Lazaros. In all cases, these places host the processes of holification in the *Lives*. A variety of spatial aspects of these processes and, in particular, the ways in which these places (cells) work to reify the characters' aspirations, are discussed in great detail in other parts of this work.[138]

Yet, the cell is not only architecture—it is an entire material and spiritual world. In his cell, a monk can also secure his personal belongings: any sort of goods such

[136] Ἀδελφός τις, τῶν λοιπῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὄντων, εἰς ἑνός τινος εἰσελθὼν κελλίον καὶ κέρμα ἄρας ἐκεῖθεν ὡσεὶ μίλια τέσσαρα, ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ κέλλαν ἀπῄει. Ἔτι δὲ αὐτὸν πορευόμενον ὁ πατὴρ ἄνωθεν ἐκ τοῦ στύλου φωνήσας ὀνομαστὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν κέκληκεν. Ὡς δὲ ἦκε· Δός μοι, ἔφη, τὸ κέρμα, ὃ ἄρτι ἐκ τοῦ κελλίου τοῦ μοναχοῦ Μερκουρίου εἰσελθὼν εἴληφας. Ὁ δὲ μὴ ἔχων ἀπολογήσασθαί τι, ἐκβαλὼν αὐτίκα τὸ κέρμα τῷ πατρὶ δίδωσι. Καὶ μετάνοιαν βαλὼν ἠτεῖτο συγχώρησιν καὶ τὸ μὴ φανερὸν τοῦτο γενέσθαι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. Ὁ δὲ πατὴρ λόγον παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀπαιτήσας, ὥστε μηκέτι τι τοιοῦτον τολμῆσαι. *L. Laz.* §108.1–13, translation by Greenfield 2000, 200–1.

[137] Woolf 1929, 4.

[138] See Chapters 5, 6, 10.

as clothes, books, money and valuables.[139] Violation of this space occurs in both texts and, thus, was not uncommon. However, it obviously was a serious offense, as shown by the intervention of Lazaros in the episode discussed earlier.[140] The undertaking of such offensive action by the supreme religious authorities—the Patriarch himself—is very striking in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*.[141] According to one of his letters to Stephanos, the latter is infuriated and decides to ask the Patriarch to invade the monastery of St Mamas and look for stacks of gold buried under Symeon's cell.[142] The patriarch sends out his men to search for the saint's treasure, and to seize as well, along with the gold, all of Symeon's possessions (books and other necessities and even his clothing).[143]

What is remarkable is that, after having read several narrations of Symeon the New Theologian's in-cell visions, it is only now—this late in the story, in paragraph ninety-eight out of 152—that the reader actually gets some physical description of the place that hosted the visions. The blessed Symeon's cell, "which once had the treasure of the graces of the Spirit dwelling in it", was searched for the buried stacks of gold.[144] It was searched with shovels and various implements. The floor was excavated, holes were dug in the walls, the roof was opened up, and even the soil itself was winnowed in the open air. The inanimate cell was thoroughly examined all day long and "underwent a punishment equal to that of its owner".[145] But despite being badly scarred, it yielded none of those things for which it had been examined; instead, Symeon's books were seized, along with Symeon's clothing.

Certainly, Symeon the New Theologian's personal space was literally torn to pieces by the authorities, subjected to a punishment equal to that of its owner' and 'scarred' like Symeon himself. This violation comes as an additional exile to Symeon. In Woolf's words: "I pondered [...] what effect poverty has on the mind; and what effect wealth has on the mind; [...] and I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse perhaps to be locked in."[146] She describes a private space (one's own room) as invested with both positive and negative meaning, and also as containing one's belongings. In both ways it becomes a central symbolic space that determines one's state of mind. In the *Lives*, the cell manifests itself as an integral part of the monk's personality both through the vision and through everyday petty occupations and engagements.

[139] E.g., *L. Laz.* §108; *L. Sym. New Theol.* §87, 97.
[140] See the section on the monastery above.
[141] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §98. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this paragraph in Chapter 9.
[142] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §98.5–12.
[143] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §98.12–30.
[144] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §98.5–7.
[145] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §98.17–8.
[146] Woolf 1929, 21.

THE PILLAR: A HIGH-UP PLACE

Gregory the cellarer inscribes Lazaros in the long Christian tradition of Byzantine stylites, hence the pillar is a central topos in his life story. Whether narrated in detail or mentioned in passing or even simply implied, it occupies a very significant narrative space. In at least thirty paragraphs, it appears as part of the saint's life in explicit narratives and it is commented upon in terms of construction, design, location and function.[147] The window of the cell upon Lazaros' pillar is also often mentioned—usually as 'his little window'—as reference to the pillar in various stories of the saint's interaction with other people, whether monks or visitors.[148] Furthermore, the audience is occasionally reminded of the meaning of the pillar as a hagiographical topos by means of references to biblical and historical pillars (such as Symeon the Elder), but also to pillars of Lazaros' contemporary stylites in the *Life* (such as two anonymous stylites—two men and a woman—, Paul, Paphnoutios, Laurentios, Kerykos, John, and Nikon).[149]

In Gregory's story, the pillar's main feature is its height which increases with the holy man's age, accumulated wisdom and holiness. Practically, virtually, and symbolically, the pillar simply raises Lazaros to another level, lying over that of ordinary people. This is clearly depicted in the narration of Photios' vision discussed below.[150] From that height (atop the pillar) Lazaros conducts his dialogue with both the people and his God. Several aspects of this dialogue comprise Gregory's narrative strategy for telling Lazaros' life story; this strategy firmly involves the use of the pillar topos. These aspects are extensively discussed in other parts of this work.[151]

In Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, the holy man does not use any material media for communicating with God. In Symeon's ascetic practice, his contact with heaven is direct and it is symbolically represented by the presence of the divine light.[152] In another part of this study, I argue that, metaphorically, 'light is Symeon's pillar' in the sense that it does for Symeon what the pillar does for Lazaros.[153] Nevertheless, a single, metaphorical use of the word 'pillar' does in fact appear in Niketas' narration: "the fiery column of the elder's prayer was a strong protection for Symeon".[154] The use of this metaphor for Symeon Eulabes' ascetic practice, as a 'pillar of fire' is based on the notion of the pillar as a hagiographical topos. By means of recalling the stylite practice, Niketas aims to link Symeon

[147] *L. Laz.* §31, 40, 53, 57, 81, 86, 87, 88, 96, 107, 114, 118, 120, 152, 157, 159, 160, 179, 207, 208, 219, 222, 224, 225, 226, 236, 237, 238, 246, 249.
[148] *L. Laz.* §81, 87, 88, 96, 114, 120, 152, 179, 208, 219, 226, 246, 249.
[149] *L. Laz.* §6, 24, 31, 41, 53, 59, 138, 159, 160, 164, 175, 201.
[150] See the section on *Heaven*, in this chapter.
[151] See Chapters 2, 4-10.
[152] See the section on *Divine Light*, in this chapter.
[153] See Chapter 5.
[154] ὁ πύρινος τῆς προσευχῆς στῦλος τοῦ γέροντος σκέπη ἦν τῷ Συμεὼν κραταιά. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §13.3–5.

the New Theologian's spiritual father with the power of an old, respectful, and long-living Christian tradition.

THE ΚΛΙΜΑΞ/ΒΑΘΜΙΣ (LADDER/STAIRCASE): A BILATERAL PLACE

The ladder is a hagiographical topos going back to the Ladder of St John Climacus and the archetype of Jacob's ladder in *Genesis*.[155] In the two *Lives*, this topos is used in very different ways, yet in both cases its main feature is its bilaterality. The κλῖμαξ has two ends (one upwards and one downwards) as well as two sides (the upside and the down-side).

In Lazaros' *Life*, the ladder has the meaning of a bridge. It is mentioned several times as a space on (and of) the pillar which lies in-between the holy man and his disciples and visitors: it both emphasizes and technically bridges the distance between them. A good example of 'spatial telling of a holy story' through an employment of this topos is the scene where a high official, the *strategos* of the region and member of the Byzantine emperor's close circle, Romanos Skleros,[156] visits Lazaros:

> Romanos, called Skleros, who was the strategos of the region, *came up to the monastery* to see the father. When he was about *to go up to Lazaros*, but had only *mounted the first rung of the ladder*, the father put his head out of his little window. ⟨Skleros⟩ *turned back as though he had been pushed by someone* and *stood holding his head with his hand and bending down toward the ground*. Then, *after shaking off the faintness that had come over him*, he *went up to the father*.[157]

In this scene, the ladder serves as the device by means of which Gregory illustrates the preponderance of divine power over mundane authority. Gregory uses a narrative technique which consists of involving space and mobility (ἀνελθὼν πρὸς, πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνελθεῖν, τοῦ πρώτου τῆς κλίμακος ἐπέβη βαθμοῦ, προκύψαντος, ὑπό τινος ὠθισθεὶς εἰς τοὐπίσω τε ἀνεστράφη, πρὸς τὴν γῆν κάτω νεύων σταθεὶς, ἄνεισι πρὸς). After coming down from Lazaros, the monks ask him what it was that had suddenly made him lurch backward. He replies: "I saw the father appear like fire as soon as he put his head out of the window, and I could not bear the sight; I felt faint and turned back involuntarily".[158] He concludes that he thinks that "the holy

[155] For examples see Della Dora 2018, 167–70.

[156] Romanos Skleros was the brother of Maria Skleraina, the mistress of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055). For this person see Greenfield 2000, 177: notes 393, 394.

[157] Ῥωμανός, ὁ Σκληρὸς λεγόμενος στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας ὑπάρχων, ἀνελθὼν πρὸς τὴν μονὴν ἐπὶ τῷ τὸν πατέρα θεάσασθαι, ὡς ἔμελλε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνελθεῖν καὶ μόνον τοῦ πρώτου τῆς κλίμακος ἐπέβη βαθμοῦ, τοῦ πατρὸς τῆς θυρίδος προκύψαντος, ἐκεῖνος ὡς ὑπό τινος ὠθισθεὶς εἰς τοὐπίσω τε ἀνεστράφη καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ κεφαλὴν ὑποστηρίξας τῇ ἰδίᾳ χειρί, πρὸς τὴν γῆν κάτω νεύων σταθεὶς καὶ τὸν αὐτῷ προσγινόμενον σκοτασμὸν ἀποτρίψας, ἄνεισι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα λοιπόν. *L. Laz.* §87.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2000, 178.

[158] ὡς μόνον ὁ ἅγιος πατὴρ τῆς θυρίδος προέκυψεν, ὡς πῦρ ἐθεασάμην αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ ὑποφέρων τὴν θέαν σκοτωθεὶς ὡς εἶδετε καὶ μὴ βουλόμενος εἰς τοὔπισθεν ἀνεστράφην. *L. Laz.* §87.15–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 178.

father has as much (and perhaps more) familiarity with the heavenly emperor, as Romanos himself currently has with the earthly one".[159]

This meaning of the staircase as bridge between the divine and the mundane is included in an extraordinary vision of heaven.[160] He said he saw a building complex between heaven and earth (ἰδεῖν γὰρ ἔλεγεν ἀνὰ μέσον οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς κτίσιν τινά).[161] Up above this complex, near heaven, he saw another complex more glorious and splendid (κτίσιν ἑτέραν ὁρᾶν ἐδόκει, πολύ γε τῆς προτέρας περιφανεστέραν καὶ λαμπροτέραν).[162] And between the two complexes there was a staircase that flashed more brightly than the sun's rays (μέσον δὲ τῶν κτίσεων ἀμφοτέρων βαθμὶς ἐπηρείδετο, ὑπὲρ ἡλίου αὐγὰς ἐξαστράπτουσα).[163] By its 'shining more brightly than the sun itself' the staircase appears as an elaborate element of this scene; thus, it claims a share of the reader's attention overwhelmed by the splendour of the two building complexes. Furthermore, the staircase is literally described as lying in-between the secular and the divine world and to provide access to the holy man from one world to the other, as it was symbolically implied to do in the story of Romanos Skleros' experience.

In Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, there is no ladder (since there is no actual pillar), yet the word κλῖμαξ is mentioned, on a single occasion, with the meaning of an indoor staircase. The episode follows Symeon's return to the Stoudios monastery after saying goodbye to his parents and walking out of his secular life. Symeon Eulabes takes him in and, since there is no vacant cell to accommodate the young man, the abbot entrusts him to the father:

> There was no vacant cell to accommodate the young man at that time, and so the superior entrusted him to that great father, since both of them judged this necessary because of Symeon's youth. The father took Symeon, whom he had reared from infancy in the teaching of the word, and *told him to stay under the stairs of his cell and reflect there upon the meaning of the most narrow way. For there was a sort of cell in it, like a tomb, and Symeon would squeeze into this with much difficulty and sleep there*. And so, while he tackled the more advanced exercises in the pursuit of virtue, *his spiritual father coached him in the necessary technique*.[164]

[159] Δοκῶ δέ, φησίν, ὅσην ἔγωγε παρρησίαν νῦν ἔχω πρὸς τὸν ἐπίγειον βασιλέα, τοσαύτην ἢ καὶ πλείονα πολλῷ τὸν ἅγιον πατέρα πρὸς τὸν ἐπουράνιον ἔχειν. *L. Laz.* §87.18–21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 178.

[160] *L. Laz.* §85, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6. See the Greek text and English translation on pp. 66–7.

[161] *L. Laz.* §85.3–4, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6.

[162] *L. Laz.* §85.8–9, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6.

[163] *L. Laz.* §85.11–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6.

[164] Ἐπεὶ δὲ κελλίον οὐκ ἦν σχολάζον εἰς ξενίαν τότε τοῦ νέου, παρατίθεται αὐτὸν ὁ καθηγούμενος τῷ μεγάλῳ τούτῳ πατρί, οὕτω δεῖν κεκρικότων ἀμφοτέρων διὰ τὸ νέον τῆς ἡλικίας τοῦ Συμεών. Ὁ δὲ λαβὼν ὃν ἐξ ἁπαλῶν ὀνύχων τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τοῦ λόγου ἐξέθρεψεν, ὑπὸ τὴν κλίμακα τῆς κέλλης αὐτοῦ δέδωκε καταμένειν αὐτὸν καὶ φιλοσοφεῖν ἐκεῖσε τὰ τῆς στενοτάτης ὁδοῦ· ὑπῆρχε γὰρ ταφοειδές τι κελλίον ἐν αὐτῇ, εἰς ὃ μετὰ στενοχωρίας πολλῆς εἰσδύνων ἐκάθευδεν. Ἅπτεται τοιγαροῦν ὁ μὲν τῶν ὑπέρ ἀρετῆς τελεοτέρων πόνων, ὁ δὲ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐντέχνου διδασκαλίας. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §11.5–16, translation by Greenfield 2013, 29.

The κλῖμαξ is here mentioned in an entirely different way than in Lazaros' *Life*. The emphasis is not on its upper side, which leads upwards (to the holy father and the divine); instead, the interest is in the space underneath it, which has a negative nuance. It is narrow (στενοχωρία) and looks like a grave (ταφοειδές τι κελλίον ἐν αὐτῇ). One thinks that not only is this space completely unpleasant and uncomfortable, but it may also be dangerous for someone's health. These particular qualities make the underneath side of a staircase the appropriate space for ascesis (φιλοσοφεῖν ἐκεῖσε τὰ τῆς στενοτάτης ὁδοῦ).

THE DIVINE LIGHT: A MYSTICAL PLACE

Starting from the scriptural episode of the Transfiguration of Christ, the inexplicable shed of light as a sign of divinity – the divine 'uncreated light' (ἄκτιστον φῶς)—is a central feature of Byzantine theology and a common hagiographical topos.[165] The vision of God as light is definitely the most characteristic component of the mysticism of Symeon the New Theologian. As discussed in detail by Hilarion Alfeyev, this theme is touched upon in almost all of his poetic and prose works.[166] The terminology related to it is much more developed in Symeon's theological scripts than in those of any other Byzantine writer of the preceding period.[167] Alfeyev observes that this theme is also one of the most personal in his text: it is

> thoroughly indebted to his extraordinarily intense mystical life, and he speaks of the vision of light primarily as a matter of his own experience. Dozens of pages in his writings are devoted to the descriptions of his visions of the divine light and all descriptions are fully original and independent of any other literary source.[168]

That is probably the reason why Niketas includes many such episodes in Symeon's *Life*, in which a warm and bright light is the agent that converts the space of his cell into a space of vision and connects Symeon the New Theologian with Symeon Eulabes and God.[169] Throughout the text, occasionally more words are used in a synecdoche for a joined notion of heat and light, such as fire and flame (πῦρ, φλόξ),[170] bright, brightness, to shine, torch (λαμπρός, λαμπρότης, λάμπεσθαι, λαμπάδας),[171] and sun (ἥλιος).[172] These episodes occupy approximately one third of the story's narrative space (25 out of 120 paragraphs) and many of them are discussed in other parts of this study.

[165] Pratsch 2005, 213–5.
[166] Alfeyev 2000, 226–41.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Alfeyev 2000, 226.
[169] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5, 19, 23, 24, 26, 29, 36, 69, 70, 71, 87, 106, 111, 113, 117, 126, 129, 133, 134.
[170] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6, 13, 26, 27, 69, 77, 111, 135.
[171] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §24, 33, 69, 129.
[172] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §134.

Gregory the Cellarer, on the other hand, seems to suggest that Lazaros had a theological perspective very different from Symeon the New Theologian's, involving mobility and asceticism on top of a pillar as the means of contact with God; these issues are discussed in detail in Chapters Five to Ten below. However, the topos of 'divine light' is also used in Lazaros' *Life* to mark his birth as an event of divine significance:

> When Lazaros emerged from his mother's womb, *a light at once shone forth miraculously from heaven and filled the whole interior of the house with an indescribable flash of lightning. Indeed, the people who were there could not stand the brilliance of this light and, leaving the mother with the baby, rushed out of the house and stood somewhere nearby in great fear and trembling. They waited for a little while and then, after that terrible light had gone away, went back into the house again*. When the midwife approached the woman, who had just given birth, *she found the baby standing upright; he was facing east and had his hands pressed tightly to his chest in the form of the cross*. [...] So, when *his parents and those who were there saw these things* (as well as what they learned from hearsay), they were filled with wonder and amazement, and from then on began to guess the future well enough and to say that they expected to see something great and auspicious in connection with the child.[173]

Here, again, a narrative technique that makes ample use of spatiality and mobility is engaged so as to demonstrate the significance of light as 'Godly visit' and its impact upon the characters' emotions. There are several motifs. One of them is the sudden emergence of light that transforms the room (εὐθὺς φῶς ... ἀρρήτου ἀστραπῆς). Another is the rapid evacuation of the house (καταλιπόντες ... ἐξῆλθον). A third motif is waiting outside, but near the house (ἐγγύς ... ἑστῶτες). A fourth is the disappearance of the divine light house (μετὰ τὴν ... παρέλευσιν). A fifth motif is people's immediate re-entering the house (ἔνδον ... εἰσέρχονται) at the right moment to witness the amazing miracle of a standing new-born looking East with crossed arms (προσελθοῦσα ἡ μαῖα ... ἔχον σταυροειδῶς); only those who happened to be there at those moments could have seen all this (οἱ ἐκεῖσε ... ἰδόντες).

The reference to the topos of 'divine light', in this case, presents several similarities with that in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*. First of all, it is described as an all-penetrating flash; secondly, it has direct provenance from heaven; thirdly, it manifests itself within an indoor space (in the room of birth inside a house, just

[173] Τούτου τῆς μητρικῆς προελθόντος νηδύος, εὐθὺς φῶς οὐρανόθεν παραδόξως ἐκλάμψαν τὸ δωμάτιον ὅλον τῆς οἰκίας πεπλήρωκεν ἀρρήτου ἀστραπῆς· οὗ δὴ φωτὸς τὴν λαμπηδόνα οἱ ἐκεῖσε εὑρεθέντες μὴ δυνάμενοι στέρξαι, τὴν μητέρα μετὰ τοῦ βρέφους καταλιπόντες σπουδῇ τῆς οἰκίας ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἐγγύς που περιδεεῖς καὶ ὑπότρομοι ἑστῶτες, ὀλίγον προσκαρτερήσαντες μετὰ τὴν τοῦ φοβεροῦ ἐκείνου φωτὸς παρέλευσιν ἔνδον τῆς οἰκίας αὖθις εἰσέρχονται· καὶ προσελθοῦσα ἡ μαῖα πρὸς τὴν λεχὼ εὗρε τὸ βρέφος ὄρθιον ἑστὼς. Ἅμα γὰρ κυηθῆναι αὐτόν, ὄντα ἐν τῇ σκάφῃ, τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ δυνάμει ἕστη ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὀρθῶς ὡς ὥρας δύο καὶ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς βλέπον καὶ τὰς αὐτοῦ χεῖρας τῷ ἑαυτοῦ στήθει ἐρηρεισμένας ἔχον σταυροειδῶς [...] Ταῦτα οὖν οἵ τε αὐτοῦ γονεῖς καὶ οἱ ἐκεῖσε τότε εὑρεθέντες ἰδόντες, ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὅσα ἐξ ἀκοῆς μεμαθήκεσαν, θάμβους καὶ ἐκπλήξεως ἐπληροῦντο καὶ τὸ μέλλον ἐντεῦθεν λοιπὸν ἱκανῶς ἐτεκμαίροντο καὶ μέγα τι καὶ χρηστὸν εἰς τὸν παῖδα ἰδεῖν καραδοκοῦντες ἔφασκον. *L. Laz.* §2.17–30, 2.36–41, translation by Greenfield 2000, 78–9.

like in Symeon's cell at a monastery). A remarkable difference between the two texts is the light's perception by the witnesses. In Gregory's narration, the light is startling and too scary for the witnesses: it is 'terrible' (φοβερὸν). It makes the viewers run out of the room and never return before the light disappears. In that sense, Gregory's use of this topos recalls more closely the scriptural episode of the Transfiguration. On the contrary, Niketas narrates light in Symeon's visions as something startling and impressive, yet in a somewhat softer and magical manner. The light is described as 'a wonder occur that was awesome to see' (φρικτὸν καὶ ἐξαίσιον θαῦμα), which scares and shocks its witness, yet not enough to send him out of the room.[174] The witness apologizes for his fear with the excuse that he was young and had no experience of miracles: 'As I was a child and without any experience of such things, I was frightened when I saw this awesome and extraordinary miracle, and so I put my head under the mattress and hid my face' (παιδίον ὢν ... καλύψας).[175] The experience deeply impresses him.[176]

THE HEAVEN: AN 'OTHER' PLACE

Heaven or heavenly home (πατρὶς οὐράνιος) has been discussed as a common hagiographical topos.[177] In Gregory's *Life* of Lazaros there is an elaborate and eloquent description of heavenly space. This description also includes a precise explanation—and visualization—of the spatial relation between heavenly and earthly space as well as the holy man's role in that relation. This narrative is part of a story about Lazaros, which had been orally transmitted to Gregory by a monk named Photios. The latter had had a vision where he had been eyewitness to Lazaros' communication with both God and humans.

The narrative consists of a detailed description of a spatial setting—and several distinct places therein—as well as by an explanation of the reception of this space by its viewers. This scene is an excellent example of 'telling a holy story spatially':

> While ⟨Photios⟩ was in this ⟨state⟩ he saw an awesome and holy vision, not only in his mind but with his physical eyes as well. He said he saw a building complex between heaven and earth, which boasted wonderful constructions ⟨including⟩ a church and residences, and was extremely beautiful to behold and pleasant as a place to live. Up above this complex, near heaven, he seemed to see another complex that was much more glorious and splendid than the former; ⟨indeed⟩ the human tongue is unable to describe its beauty and splendour. Between both complexes there was a ladder set up that flashed more brightly than the sun's rays. The holy father was sometimes to be seen lingering in the lower complex and apparently delivering words of instruction to some people, his lips flowing with honey, at other times ascending the ladder to the habitation near heaven and hastening to enter heaven, his face beaming; then he could be seen descending the ladder ⟨again⟩ and appearing as before; then going back up it again. ⟨The father⟩ astonished the

[174] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.28–9.
[175] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.29–31.
[176] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117. See the Greek text, English translation as well as a discussion of this passage in Chapter 8.
[177] Pratsch 2005, 57.

> man who was watching by doing this many times. So, when the monk saw a crowd of distinguished people coming along the path, who were astonished at the beauty and the splendour of the residences and were asking each other what these ⟨buildings⟩ might be and whose ⟨they were⟩, 'I was not at a loss,' said the monk, 'and, as if I had been instructed in ⟨the meaning of⟩ the vision, I answered their questions unerringly. 'What you can see' I said to them, 'are the constructions of holy Lazaros. His ascension into the height of heaven to the higher construction indicates his progress through spiritual contemplation; while his descent displays his deliberate association and sympathetic interaction with those whom he is leading to God; his reascension ⟨illustrates⟩ his continuous and easy access to God.[178]

In this description of Photios' vision, the physical experience by means of the visual sense is emphasized (ὁρᾷ οὐ τοῖς νοεροῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος θέαν τινὰ φρικώδη καὶ θείαν). Spirituality is narrated in physical-material terms.

Spiritual order is visualized by means of architecture. Three distinct spiritual levels between the mundane and divinity are described in spatial terms: as architectural complexes (i.e., as social spaces) lying at three different heights. The building complex of the narrator (and the eye witness) is the earthly one at the lowest level. At a second higher level, there is the building complex of the holy man (τοῦ θείου Λαζάρου ὑπάρχουσιν οἰκοδομαί). At the third, highest, level there is the heavenly, amazing and unutterable, divine building complex which is the residence of God. The structure reminds of an early modern depiction of St Symeon the Stylite by W. Burges (Figure 1).

Furthermore, holy agency is visualized by means of movement on a vertical axis, upwards to God and downwards to the humans (Ὡρᾶτο δὲ ... ἐπανερχόμενος). Thus, the spatial relationships are specifically defined. Amongst these three levels, the holy man's field of existence involves the second and third levels which are

[178] Ὡς δὲ ἐν τούτοις ἦν, ὁρᾷ οὐ τοῖς νοεροῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος θέαν τινὰ φρικώδη καὶ θείαν· ἰδεῖν γὰρ ἔλεγεν ἀνὰ μέσον οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς κτίσιν τινά, θαυμαστὰς οἰκοδομὰς ναοῦ καὶ οἰκημάτων αὐχοῦσαν λίαν τε ὡραίαν ἰδέσθαι καὶ εἰς κατοικίαν ἐράσμιον, ὑπὲρ ἄνω δὲ τῆς κτίσεως ταύτης τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πλησίον κτίσιν ἑτέραν ὁρᾶν ἐδόκει, πολύ γε τῆς προτέρας περιφανεστέραν καὶ λαμπροτέραν, ἧς τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα ἀνθρώπου γλῶσσα διηγήσασθαι οὐ δυνήσεται· μέσον δὲ τῶν κτίσεων ἀμφοτέρων βαθμὶς ἐπηρείδετο, ὑπὲρ ἡλίου αὐγὰς ἐξαστράπτουσα. Ὡρᾶτο δὲ ὁ θεῖος πατὴρ ποτὲ μὲν τῇ κατωτέρᾳ κτίσει ἐνδιατρίβων καὶ ὡς πρός τινας διδασκαλίας ῥήματα διὰ χειλέων προϊέμενος μελιρύτων, ἐνίοτε δὲ ἀνερχόμενος ἐν τῇ βαθμίδι καὶ τῇ ἐγγὺς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατοικίᾳ καὶ ἔνδον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ φαιδροῦ τοῦ προσώπου ἐπισπεύδων γενέσθαι, εἶτα κατιὼν τῆς βαθμίδος καὶ ὡς πρώην δεικνύμενος καὶ αὖθις εἰς ἐκείνην ἐπανερχόμενος. Τοῦτο δὴ πολλάκις ποιήσας ἐξέπληττε τὸν ὁρῶντα. Ὡς οὖν καὶ πλῆθός τινων ἐπιφανῶν ἑώρα ὁ μοναχὸς τὴν ὁδὸν διερχομένων καὶ τὸ τῶν οἰκημάτων κάλλος καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα ἐκπληττομένων καὶ ἀλλήλους ἐπερωτώντων, τί ἂν εἴη ταῦτα καὶ τίνος; Ἐγώ, φησὶν ὁ μοναχός, οὐκ ἀπορῶν ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μυηθεὶς τὰ φαινόμενα ἀψευδῶς ἐπέλυον τὸ ζητούμενον. Καὶ ὁρᾶτε ταῦτα τὰ φαινόμενα, πρὸς ἐκείνους ἔλεγον, τοῦ θείου Λαζάρου ὑπάρχουσιν οἰκοδομαί· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀνέρχεσθαι εἰς τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἀνωτέραν οἰκοδομὴν τὴν διὰ θεωρίας αὐτοῦ προκοπὴν σημαίνει, τὸ δὲ αὖθις κατέρχεσθαι τὴν οἰκονομικὴν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ προσαγομένους ἐμφαίνει συγκατάβασιν καὶ συμπάθειαν, ἡ δὲ αὖθις ἀνάβασις τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν διηνεκῆ τούτου σχολήν. *L. Laz.* §85, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6.

linked by the ladder. From his second level, which is his residence, he can communicate with the mundane world at the first level, yet he does not go or belong there.

No similar use of the topos of heaven can be found in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*. Literally, the word only appears as a brief mention of the "heavenly knowledge (γνῶσις οὐράνιος)".[179] Otherwise, heaven is regularly inferred by the glory of God in Symeon's visions.[180]

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have shown that spatial topoi have a significant function in the *Lives* of Symeon the New Theologian and Lazaros. They occupy a substantial part of the narrative. Furthermore, certain spatial topoi predominate throughout the texts, for example the church and the monastery in both texts, the light in Symeon's *Life*, and the mountain and the road/path in Lazaros' *Life*.

Hence, the narrative structuring of the two *Lives* can be perceived as consisting of two distinct narrative spaces: (a) the space of the topoi and (b) the space of the individual story. The two hagiographers seem to have been involved in a selective 'spatial' narrative practice while composing their texts: they inserted and articulated 'places' of common literary and cultural memory (topoi) within their individual story of the holy man they wished to venerate.

The topoi recur periodically according to their importance for the individual story. Churches, cells, and monasteries are the most frequent, since they are a holy man's natural environment and field of action. The divine light is frequent in Symeon's *Life* because it constitutes a central element of his theological thought. Respectively, the road/path, the mountain, and the pillar have a constant presence in Lazaros' *Life* because they reflect his own perspective of holiness: a continuation of the traditional motifs of the 'wandering saint' and the stylite. In other cases, topoi are employed to move the story along at specific turning points. For example, the mountain emerges in Symeon's story only to establish the new reality of an exiled saint, while the school is mentioned in both texts to prove the saints' learning and innate piousness and exceptional nature.

Should one consider the narrative space shared between the two distinct elements (topoi and individual story), it seems to be grosso modo equal. As far as the function of each element is concerned, they construct verisimilitude on two different levels. The individual story, on the one hand, provides the basis of real-life persons and facts. The topoi, on the other, confirm these persons' attachment to the Christian tradition of holy men and women. In this way a traditional Christian story of holiness is founded upon real-life Byzantine people, geographies and societies.

[179] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §113.19.

[180] Visions are discussed in detail in other parts of this study; see Chapters 2 and 5.

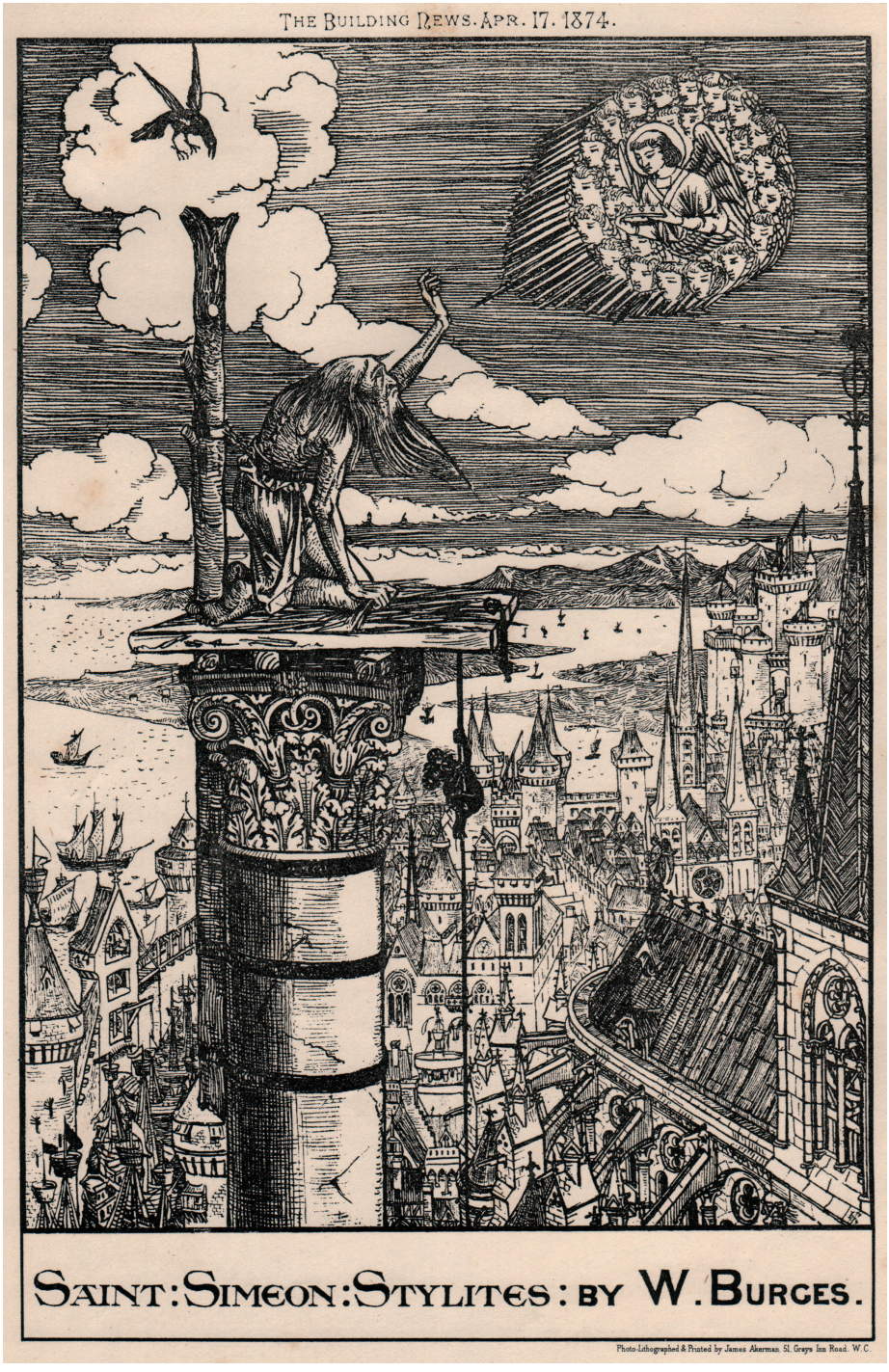


FIGURE 1. Drawing representation of Saint Simeon Stylites by William Burges in 1874.

4

Narrative space in the *Lives*: Vertical versus horizontal perceptions and respective narrative strategies

In the following seven chapters of this study, I argue that the literary spatialities (literary social spaces and spatial practices) narrated in the two hagiographical texts under discussion, do not constitute their authors' random choices. Instead, their employment in the stories is directly linked to these authors' specific narrative strategies: space is not merely a static background for narrative events in the texts, it is also actively involved in those events.[1]

Therefore, speaking from a theoretical point of view, literary space must also be looked at as narrative space, i.e., from the aspect of its narrative role within the text. The term 'narrative space' includes not only the abstract space but also the particular places which provide the physical environment in which the characters live and move.[2] Both the abstract space and these particular places, in the plot, help the readers construct cognitive maps (i.e. mental models of spatial relations) as well as a global vision of the world; these maps enable them to situate events and understand the plot.[3] The readers' mental models and global visions are based upon their own spatial experience (moving through space, seeing, hearing, and smelling the world) as well as upon their reading of the texts.[4] This construction process continues as far as it offers a cognitive advantage to the reading, i.e. as far as it is needed to achieve immersion in the narrative and understanding of the action; in Marie-Laure Ryan's words, 'People read for the plot and not for the map, unless they are literary cartographers.'[5]

In this chapter, I will discuss narrative space to distinguish ways in which the Byzantine hagiographical texts might have been understood. I will also try to show that space and narrative intersect not at a single point, but converge around several interrelated axes throughout the *Lives* by means of narrative strategies which also steer the entire texts. Initial tools towards the identification of these strategies spring from a process of 'distinguishing the individual locations in which narratively significant events take place from the total space implied by these events', following Ruth Ronen's suggestion.[6] Ryan has further synthesized existing theory

[1] Foote & Ryan 2016, 9.
[2] Buchholz & Jahn 2005, 3.
[3] Ryan 2016, 77, 99.
[4] Ryan 2016, 77.
[5] Ryan 2016, 100.
[6] Ronen 1986, 421–38.

on this process, by suggesting five analytical categories which allow distinguishing among different 'laminations' of narrative space.[7] Albeit defined on the basis of modern literary texts, these categories, in my opinion, allow revealing 'spatial' narrative strategies in the Byzantine texts discussed here. I use them in that sense in a comparative analysis of the two texts below, after a brief explication of my analytical tools.

RYAN'S ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES OF NARRATIVE SPACE

In a process of 'zooming-out' from the most literal and concretely-phrased space by the author towards the metaphorical and elusive space of the readers, Ryan's five categories are spatial frames, setting, story space, narrative (or story) world, and narrative universe. In her own words, these are defined as follows:

- The spatial frames are the immediate surroundings of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse or by the image. Spatial frames are shifting scenes of action, and they may flow into each other as the characters move in space, thus their boundaries may be either clear-cut or fuzzy (e.g., a landscape may slowly change as a character moves through it).
- The setting is the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place; in contrast to spatial frames, this is a relatively stable category which embraces the entire text.
- The story-space is the space relevant to the plot, as mapped by the actions and thoughts of the characters. Therefore, it consists of all the spatial frames plus all the locations mentioned by the text that are not the scene of occurring events.
- The narrative (or story) world is the story space completed by the reader's imagination based on cultural knowledge and real-world experience. So, while story space consists of selected places separated by voids, the narrative world is conceived by the imagination as a coherent, unified, ontologically full, and materially existing geographical entity, even when it is a fictional world that possesses none of these properties. In a story that refers to both real and imaginary locations, the narrative world superimposes the locations specific to the text onto the geography of the actual world.
- The narrative universe is the world (in the spatio-temporal sense of the term) presented as actual by the text, plus all the counterfactual worlds constructed by characters as beliefs, wishes, fears, speculations, hypothetical thinking, dreams, and fantasies. What is especially important is that for a potential world to be part of the metaphorical concept of narrative universe, it must be textually activated.[8]

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE SPACE IN THE TWO *LIVES*

The spatial frames

Starting from the immediate surroundings of actual events and shifting scenes of action in the two Byzantine narratives, these present a striking difference in the amount and the variety of places. Symeon the New Theologian seems to have in-

[7] Ryan 2014, §5.
[8] Ryan 2014, §5.

tentionally remained in the Byzantine capital and its surrounding areas, except for one visit to his home village in Paphlagonia in Asia Minor; this region was not that remote from Constantinople considering the total size of the eleventh-century Byzantine Empire. On the contrary, Lazaros spent his life in constant relocation, both within and outside of Byzantine territory.

A detailed account of the spatial frames in the two texts reveals this contrast. Symeon the New Theologian, according to Niketas, was born at the village Galati in Paphlagonia.[9] His parents sent him to Constantinople when he was eleven years old, where he stayed at his uncle's house until he was fourteen.[10] Then, he decided to become a monk and entered the Stoudios monastery where he had his first mystical experience, the Uncreated Light (ἄκτιστον φῶς), at the age of twenty.[11] After that, he only briefly visited his village in order to announce his decision to depart from the secular world to his family, and he returned to the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople as a novice.[12] Because of some inter-communal dispute, he moved a few hundred meters away, to the nearby Monastery of St Mamas near the Xerokerkos Gate of the Walls; here he became a monk, and later he was designated abbot.[13] He remained there for twenty-five years, until his legal battle with Stephanos and his circle of influence within the Patriarchate ended up in his defeat and subsequent exile to the opposite side of the Bosporus.[14] After a short time in exile, his reputation was restored by the Patriarch and his unjust exile was negated.[15] Although he was now welcome to return to the Byzantine capital, he declined this alternative and remained in his monastery near Chrysoupolis, where he spent the rest of his life.[16]

In contrast, Lazaros' life is, according to Gregory, characterized by constant relocation, as already discussed in other parts of this study.[17] Indeed, Gregory finds it important to mention this relocation in his succinct summary of the saint's life story of holification at the end of the text:

> Thus, our blessed and divinely inspired father Lazaros, full of human and spiritual days, ended his life excellently and in a manner most dear to God after he had lived for eighty-six years altogether. He was [thus] about eighteen years old when he left his homeland, and twenty years went by before he returned to it again by the divine will; he [then] spent seven years at the [monastery of] St Marina and forty-one years on Mt Galesion. He died, as I have said, on the previously

[9] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §2.
[10] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §2–4.
[11] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §4–5. Cf. Symeon, *Discourses*, XXVIII.2 Cor. 6:16.
[12] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6–12.
[13] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §12–33.
[14] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §34–93.
[15] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §94–108.
[16] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109–29.
[17] See Chapters 3, 6, 9 below.

> mentioned seventh [day] of the month of November in the six-thousand five-hundred and sixty-second year after the creation of the world, indiction seven.[18]

Specifically, Lazaros was born at the village of Theotokos near Magnesia on the Meander in Asia Minor.[19] When he was between six and fourteen years old, he was sent by his parents to different monasteries to study: from Kalathai he was moved to Orovoi and then again to Kalathai from where he tried, unsuccessfully, to escape.[20] He was resent to Kalathai, then to Strovelion and only managed to escape when he was eighteen and set out for the Holy Land.[21] After a long and adventurous journey through Cappadocia, he managed to get to Attaleia, where he entered a monastery and became a monk.[22] From there he later left for Jerusalem where he stayed for sixteen to eighteen years: first, at the Monastery of St Sabas from where he was expelled due to disobedience, then to nearby Lavra of St Efthymios, only to return to St Sabbas prior to leaving Palestine for good due to Arab persecution of Christians, returning to Asia Minor at the age of forty-two.[23] Following a rather unusual itinerary (through Cilicia, Cappadocia and the Black Sea) he ended up at Chonai and then in Ephesos.[24] After a short visit to his village, he settled in a hermitage near Kepion. There, he eventually settled on top of a pillar, at the age of forty-five, and became famous as a stylite, building a monastery for the brethren assembling around him.[25] Yet, all this attention made him flee again seven years later, seeking shelter and hesychia on a nearby barren, deserted and inaccessible mountain, Galesion.[26] On this mountain, he changed his place of residence several times, relocating his pillar in a way so as to gradually climb higher towards the top of the mountain: from the cave of St Paphnoutios to the Soter, the Theotokos, and the Resurrection Monasteries which he founded in order to host monastic communities forming around his pillars.[27] During his entire forty-one-year stay on the mountain, all his relocations were associated with instances of renegotiations

[18] Οὕτως ὁ ὅσιος καὶ θεοφόρος πατὴρ ἡμῶν Λάζαρος πλήρης ἡμερῶν τῶν τε ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ τῶν τοῦ πνεύματος γεγονὼς ἄριστα καὶ ὅσον Θεῷ φίλον τὸν αὐτοῦ κατέλυσε βίον, ἔτη ζήσας τὰ πάντα ὀγδοήκοντα πρὸς τοῖς ἓξ· ἦν γάρ, ὅτε τῆς αὐτοῦ πατρίδος ἐξῆλθεν, ὡς ἐτῶν ὀκτωκαίδεκα, καὶ ἕως πάλιν πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐπανέστρεψε κατὰ θείαν βούλησιν, ἔτη παρερρύησαν εἴκοσι, καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν Μαρίναν ἔτη ἑπτὰ διετέλεσε καὶ εἰς τὸ Γαλήσιον ὄρος ἔτη τεσσαράκοντα ἕν. Τελευτᾷ δὲ ὡς ἔφην τῇ δηλωθείσῃ ἑβδόμῃ τοῦ νοεμβρίου μηνός, ἔτει ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ἑξακισχιλιοστῷ πεντακοσιοστῷ ἑξηκοστῷ δευτέρῳ, ἰνδικτιῶνος ἑβδόμης. *L. Laz.* §254, translation by Greenfield 2000, 364.

[19] *L. Laz.* §2.

[20] *L. Laz.* §3–4.

[21] *L. Laz.* §5.

[22] *L. Laz.* §6–9.

[23] *L. Laz.* §16–20. On the historical event see Greenfield 2000, 98: n. 92.

[24] *L. Laz.* §21–9.

[25] *L. Laz.* §30–3.

[26] *L. Laz.* §36.

[27] *L. Laz.* §37–230.

of social and power relations as well as of monastic 'morals' and practices, with his surroundings.[28]

All the above illustrate well, I think, a significant difference in the plot between the two texts. For Lazaros, relocation seems to have been a constant need and way of life intricately connected to his means of communication with his social context. On the contrary, Symeon the New Theologian seems to have willingly and intentionally stayed around the Byzantine capital during his entire life. Relocation in his case came as an unwilling event: Niketas colours Symeon's exile from the capital with clearly negative connotations.[29]

The setting

As far as the setting of the story is concerned, that is, the general socio-historic and geographical environment in which the action takes place, both texts present a common feature: a contemporary Byzantine Empire. Lazaros' *Life* refers to the years 967–1054, while Symeon the New Theologian's to the years 949–1054. This common feature implies a broad set of geographical, political, social, and cultural connotations which constitute the setting of the two texts.[30]

This common ground ends where the two narratives' geographical and social context begins; these two contexts differ greatly. Niketas writes about the secular and monastic communities living in the greater area of Constantinople, he refers to their relations with the Patriarchate, and implies or indirectly comments upon political forces and socio-political relations in the Byzantine capital. On the contrary, Gregory, despite his Constantinopolitan origin, is indifferent to the capital, as was Lazaros himself it seems, since he never visited Constantinople despite his many travels. As Ihor Ševčenko put it, "the author of Lazaros' *Vita* came from the capital but he did not trust it",[31] a point discussed in another part of this study.[32] Instead, Gregory focuses on the multicultural countryside, narrating stories which refer to all social strata and especially the lower ones, living conditions and customs of small rural settlements, and the relations of monks and laymen with power holders (local dignitaries, military, and the clergy). And although most people we meet in the *Life* are Greek, there are sufficient numbers of other ethnic groups such as Arabs, Georgians, Armenians, as well as a Bulgarian village near Mount Galesion.[33]

[28] See Chapter 9 below.
[29] See Chapter 2 and the discussion of story-space below.
[30] On this issue, see Chapter 1.
[31] Ševčenko 1981, 725.
[32] See Chapter 1.
[33] Cf. Ševčenko 1981, 726.

The story-space

Proceeding to the story-space, i.e., the entire space relevant to the plot, as mapped by both the actions and the thoughts of the characters, the difference between the two texts becomes even more pronounced. The story-space in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life* is extremely limited, as compared to that in Lazaros' *Life*, and it has a different orientation. The main action takes place, at first, in Constantinople presented as a city great and splendid. The plot passes through the urban monasteries, the middle and working-class neighbourhoods, and the Patriarchate (§1–99). In the following part of the text (§100–40), the plot is transferred to the opposite coast of the Bosphorus with negative connotations: the place is presented as a poor, waterless and deserted:[34]

> The men who were transporting Symeon crossed the Bosporus between Constantinople and Chrysopolis and beached the boat at a small settlement called Paloukiton.[35] There were no amenities there in the winter, and those cruel men stopped in a deserted spot, where a column of the condemned dolphin stands, and left the saint there, completely alone, not even being sufficiently considerate to give him enough food for the day.[36]

The saint's relocations are confined to three settlements in total: his village in Paphlagonia, Constantinople, and the coast by Paloukiton. Niketas completely ignores Symeon the New Theologian's very few travels, most likely because, in his opinion, the very travelling process is insignificant for the saint's spiritual and social itineraries. Except for one occasion,[37] Symeon's relocations are only laconically mentioned, never narrated in any detail: "With these words Symeon set off on his journey and swiftly reached his home."[38]

A limited number of other places are mentioned in the text outside the spatial frames of actual action: a few monasteries and churches in the metropolitan area of the capital (Kosmidiou, Vardainas, Evgeniou, Anaplou, and St Stephen on Vouno Afxendiou near Chalkedon), Nicomedia as the metropolitan see of synkellos Stephanos, the Gallos River at Bithynia, Dysis (standing for Italy and Rome), the Black Sea and the Latros Mountain, as origins of monks, Venice as a

[34] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219. See the entire paragraph with a more detailed discussion in Chapter 8.

[35] ...ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν προποντίδα τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς Χρυσοπόλεως διαπεράσαντες τὸν μακάριον ἐπί τι πολίχνιον οἱ ἀπάγοντες αὐτὸν προσώκειλαν τὸ πλοιάριον, ὃ Παλουκιτὼν ὀνομάζεται, *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95.8–11, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219.

[36] ...ἄσκευον πάντη χειμῶνος ὥρᾳ καὶ ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῦ κατακρίτου δελφῖνος ἵσταται κίων, τὸν ἅγιον ἔστησαν μονώτατον αὐτὸν καταλείψαντες καὶ μηδὲ τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς ἀξιώσαντες, *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95.11–5, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219.

[37] See Chapter 3.

[38] Εἶπε καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖσε φερούσης ἀψάμενος πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα διὰ τάχους ἐγίνετο, *L. Sym. New Theol.* §6.23–5, translation by Greenfield 2013, 17.

merchant's homeland, Ethiopia as land of people with demonic looks, and Israel with historical rather than geographical meaning.[39]

In the *Life* of Lazaros, however, the story space consists of an amazing number (189) of topographic references and geographic descriptions. The plot unfolds in numerous small and large settlements, monasteries, and the hinterland of Byzantine Eastern provinces and the Arabic Middle East. His travels are described in astonishing detail:

> [Now, however], he mulled over these points in his mind and then slipped away one night without being observed by anyone, and set out on the [journey] to Jerusalem. He took nothing with him, but left the monastery without bread or any other necessity, with only one tunic, without shoes, and without staff or knapsack, carrying with him only his trust in God. So, he left there and set out.
>
> As he neared the great [city] of Antioch, Lazaros saw some people standing in the middle of the road, lamenting over a girl who had just been abducted by the Armenian army as it passed by there. When he found out about this, he immediately started to pursue the[se] soldiers. Reaching the place where they had taken up their quarters, he went up to some of them and asked if they would point out their commander to him.[40]

In this passage, Gregory's narration focuses on close descriptions of Lazaros' trip: the time of departure, the conditions of his travel (clothing, belongings, food, spirit), the stops, the events and challenges he envisaged as well as the ways in which he dealt with them. In other cases, the challenges are bigger, as in Lazaros wandering around the desert together with another monk in paragraphs 21 and 22.[41] First of all, they meet a monk who robs them while they are asleep.[42] Then they continue their journey through the desert, where it was terribly hot and they grew extremely thirsty; God saves them by miraculously leading them to a place where there was water hidden by a bush.[43] Finally, as they lie down in the shade of the bush to rest, a last challenge appears before the men's eyes in the form of wild beasts. They look up and see in horror four lions coming towards them.[44] The men raise their hands and eyes in supplication to God and call on Him for help.[45] With God's help, the

[39] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §14, 52–3, 71, 74–93, 120, 110, 115, 141, 143, 145, 151–2.

[40] Νυκτός ποτε τοὺς πάντων λαθὼν ὀφθαλμοὺς τὴν πρὸς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα μεταστέλλεται, μηδὲν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ λαβὼν ἐκ τῆς μονῆς ἐξερχόμενος, οὐκ ἄρτον, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν πρὸς τὴν χρείαν, ἀλλὰ μονοχίτων καὶ ἀνυπόδετος, ἄνευ ῥάβδου τε καὶ πήρας, μόνην τὴν εἰς Θεὸν ἐλπίδα μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ περιφέρων. Ἐκεῖθεν οὖν ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύετο. Ὡς δὲ πλησίον τῆς μεγάλης Ἀντιοχείας γέγονεν, ὁρᾷ τινας μέσον τῆς ὁδοῦ ἑστῶτας καὶ θρῆνον ποιοῦντας διά τινα κόρην, προσφάτως ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν Ἀρμενίων στρατοῦ ἐκεῖσε διελθόντος ἁρπαγεῖσαν. Τοῦτο ἐκεῖνος μαθὼν εὐθὺς ἤρξατο καταδιώκειν αὐτούς· καὶ φθάσας ἔν τινι τόπῳ καταλύσαντας, προσελθών τισιν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπηρώτησεν, εἴ πως ὑποδείξωσιν αὐτῷ τὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς πρωτεύοντα, *L. Laz.* §14.16–23,15.1–9, translation by Greenfield 2000, 92–3.

[41] *L. Laz.* §21–2, translation by Greenfield 2000, 105–6. See the Greek text and translation on pp. 53–5..

[42] *L. Laz.* §21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 105.

[43] *L. Laz.* §22.1–10, translation by Greenfield 2000, 105–6.

[44] *L. Laz.* §22.11–4, translation by Greenfield 2000, 106.

[45] *L. Laz.* §22.15–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 106.

lions thus come up to them, smell them from head to toe and lick them with their tongues, and then they pass by wagging their tails, just like pet dogs do when they see their masters.[46] In this passage, Lazaros' travel is narrated as if by an eyewitness. The characters, the landscape, and even natural features, such as the spring and the beasts that inhabited the area, are offered to the reader. The scene of interaction with the lions, in specific, involves an extremely lively description of motions, feelings, and intentions. All these details in this passage work as a narrative device which makes the scene 'real' to the reader and simultaneously it proves Lazaros' holiness by enhancing its author's credibility.

Outside the main action, Gregory's entire known world seems to pass through the text: from Byzantine Greece and the Black Sea to Italy, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, and Africa.[47] In this category of narrative space, the Byzantine capital also appears: Gregory uses the reference to the Byzantine emperor to better illustrate the weight of Lazaros' holiness and fame. He writes that Lazaros had sent at least two letters to Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) and he had received at least one answer from him.[48] In fact, according to the *Life*, Lazaros had predicted Constantine's ascension to the throne and, for this reason, the latter offered 720 solidi and an imperial furnishing to one of Lazaros' foundations, the Church of the Virgin at Bessai.[49]

The storyworld

Moving on to the storyworld (which is, in brief, the world of the reader), my understanding is that the world narrated by Niketas is quite different from that narrated by Gregory. Niketas' world is the microcosm of the capital, and it is illustrated as a space which is closed, controlled, spiritual, a place of intellectuals and politicians, as well as crowds of poor laymen. This is very much a space of politics and power, in which secular politics compete or interfere with God's authoritative sphere. On the contrary, Gregory's world is the large, unlimited, wide-open space of the countryside. As evident also from the extracts above, this space lacks tangible material boundaries, it is uncontrollable and diverse in composition, and it holds endless surprises generated by the indomitable nature and its weak human inhabitants. It seems, indeed, to be a world in great need of help and order by God and his holy men.

The narrative universe

I conclude this comparative analysis with a consideration of the narrative universe of the two texts, that is, the entirety of real-and-imagined spaces of charac-

[46] *L. Laz.* §22.19–33, translation by Greenfield 2000, 106.

[47] Indicatively: *L. Laz.* §37 (Athens), 76 (Chios), 228 (Crete), 27 (Pontus), 20, 29, 37, 39 (Rome), 33 (Calabria), 119, 229 (Bulgaria), 114 (Georgia), 91 (Armenia), 19, 71 (Egypt).

[48] *L. Laz.* §230, 245.

[49] *L. Laz.* §245.

ters' real or imaginary action in the stories. This narrative universe, then, includes the reader's fictional geography of human, divine and sacred space, within the eleventh-century Christian Eastern Mediterranean. The common denominator among the three—human, divine, and (human and divine) sacred spaces, both 'real' and 'imaginary'—is the human body which emerges as the primary, and most important space.

The body plays a similar and equally significant role in both our stories, as a measure, a limit, and a tool within all space surrounding it. First, land belongs to living bodies, i.e., its physical inhabitants. People claim and control their living space, as manifested through several incidents in both texts. In the *Life* of Lazaros, local people attack the newcomer/outsider, while similar things happen in Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*: in the two instances, the locals object to the construction of a monastery and attempt to hinder the works by attacking the holy man. The progressive construction of the saints' 'holy territories' is a critical narrative device of Niketas and Gregory; these issues are discussed in detail in Chapter Ten.

Secondly, the holy man's mortal yet unique body (occasionally even 'supernatural' through its gifts and skills) is the limit that he either surpasses or is submitted to during his holification process. For example, Lazaros seems to have unceasingly travelled for days, climbing mountains at night all alone as a mere young boy, and yet this strength never kept him from getting sick, while his body set physical limits that spirituality could never surpass, as at the occasion when he almost died of thirst. Symeon the New Theologian himself dies of sickness, but he is said to have foreseen his own death. What is interesting then, in this case, is this constant dialogue between the natural and the supernatural body of the holy man, which works as an important narrative device in both texts; these issues are discussed in detail in Chapter Eleven.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the body in both texts plays the role of a means—or a tool—of holification at a spiritual and symbolic level. Byzantine asceticism seems to have been a process of physical and social isolation in an extremely limited space, which functioned in such a way as to create the possibility for unlimited imagination. The idea was that the placement of the human body within a tiny cell (in Symeon's case) or on top of a pillar (in the case of Lazaros) worked as a means of holification. This was possible because the isolation together with either the physical elevation or the spiritual uplift led to a sort of transmutation or transubstantiation.[50] In Symeon the New Theologian's case, the cell as a physical space turns into a supernatural, mystical space since it actually 'disappears' through his visions. In Lazaros' case, the physical space of a pillar is transformed into an in-between symbolic space between the earth and the sky, which confers on him the spiritual and social role of a holy man. These changes are employed to

[50] See Chapters 5 and 10 below.

work as major narrative devices in these hagiographical texts; these issues are considered in detain in Chapter Five.

VERTICAL VERSUS HORIZONTAL PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE AS NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

The comparative analysis of five categories of narrative space in the *Lives* under discussion has revealed many similarities and differences between the two in the uses of space as a narrative device. These comparisons and contrasts suggest that either similar or different 'spatial' narrative strategies have been adopted by the writers of the two texts. One principal difference in the use of space as a narrative device stands out: Niketas and Gregory have narrative strategies which are based on different perceptions of space which focus upon either the vertical or the horizontal axis. I here briefly outline this major difference, which I thoroughly examine in the following chapters.

In the *Life* of Lazaros, there is extreme mobility, on the horizontal axis and much less on the vertical one. This kind of mobility functions as a transformative value of existence in the narrative. The knowledge of the existing natural and social space, offered by movement and travel, relate to a simple boy's pursuance and accomplishment of holification. In this way, relocation transforms the very substance of the boy from human to holy. Here, the vertical axis is limited to the physical form of the pillar and the mountain. Yet in both cases, this vertical dimension is, at the same time, accompanied by horizontal relocation: the saint moves higher but also deeper into the mountain, and the pillar moves higher, but also further away, up the mountain. In a way this text has an extroversive and inclusive approach.

The main principle in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian, on the contrary, is immobility. Relocation on the horizontal axis relates to very few—'annoying'—subversions to the plot; in no way does it constantly move the story along as in the *Life* of Lazaros. Here too, relocation is certainly an important narrative device, as in the *Life* of Lazaros. Yet, in this case it is not presented as Symeon the New Theologian's persistent spiritual need; instead, it emerges as an occasional condition which signifies an overturn of the plot. The main emphasis lies on the vertical axis throughout this text, and this is manifested in a wide variety of ways.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of narrative space in the *Lives*, under discussion, with the help of Marie-Laure Ryan's five categories (laminations of narrative space) has revealed many similarities and differences between the two in the use of space as a narrative device. These similarities and differences correspond to authorial choices for two different 'spatial' narrative strategies. I consider this major difference between the two texts as an aspect of paramount importance to the narration.

I suggest that this difference is the core of two intentional narrative strategies by Niketas and Gregory. In what follows, I wish to show that these strategies correspond to the authors' different personal theological backgrounds and preferences, and thus to their intended 'ideal readership', i.e., the historical persons to whom they address their works. This discussion, then, has an inevitable impact on theoretical and methodological issues such as the approach to hagiography through a historiographical lens.

5

Vertical perceptions of space: height with the meaning of spiritual value (or The Power of Place)

> The pillar has lifted Luke to the height; Luke, in his turn, has lifted his spirit towards God, for whom he strives.[1]

This chapter examines the key role of specific literary places (monastic cells and ascetic pillars) in Byzantine processes of 'holification'. I look at in-cell visions as hagiographical narratives spaces, and at ascetic pillars as both material and hagiographical narrative spaces. I show that these were constructed in the narratives to become sacred spaces in that they constituted, by their form and function, mediators between the high spaces of divinity and the low spaces of the humans. I argue that the isolated and elevated position in an in-cell-vision and upon a pillar allowed one—specific—human body (i.e., that of a special, 'holy' man) to be in the world yet not of it, here and beyond at the same time, in-between the earth and the sky. Hence, an in-cell-vision and a pillar were constructed to constitute spaces 'in-between' the divine and the human: that is, with elements from both, but corresponding to neither of the two.

Consequently, I intend to show that this quality transformed these spaces into technical narratological devices, appropriate for the Byzantine narration of the sanctification process. This discussion is supported by a consideration of the real-life materiality of Byzantine pillars, by means of an examination of traditional methods of pillar construction. The analysis of pillars' material construction in relation to their spatial experience, based on available archaeological evidence (in the case of the pillars), pictorial representations, and narrative texts, complements my argument shaped on the basis of the two examples of hagiographical narratives studied here.

Literary performances of height as spiritual value: hagiographical visions and pillars as 'in-between' experienced-and-imagined spaces

In the following analysis I make use of a tool from cultural geography: the analytical category of 'in-between spaces'. This category emerged during the 1990s due to a need to create a sensitivity to the situatedness of theory within place and time, by contesting value-laden binary thinking as criticized in deconstructivism.[2] As explained by Lila Leontidou, binary categories were relativized by exploring

[1] Πρός ὕψος ἀνήνεγκε τὸν Λουκᾶν στύλος· Λουκᾶς δὲ τὸν νοῦν πρός Θεὸν πρός ὃν τρέχει. *Synaxarium*, December 11th, 81, English translation by Schachner 2010, 329.

[2] Leontidou 1996, 180. Cf. Bhabha 1990, 1994; Soja 1996.

geographical, socio-economical, and cultural in-between spaces.[3] The effort was to break free from the grand narratives of evolution and progress resulting in the 'infamous two-column tabulation, in which the space in-between awaits the anticipated arrival of a synthetic third term'.[4] Edward Soja defined this third alternative with the inclusive term of 'thirdspace'.[5] Soja's concept was inspired by Homi Bhabha's 'Third Space Theory', a postcolonial sociolinguistic theory of identity and community, which explained the uniqueness of each person, actor or context by interjecting the quality of 'hybrid'.[6] Soja understands thirdspace as 'space of extraordinary openness', an 'open-ended set of defining moments' which allows radical openness in the understanding of the spatiality of life.[7] Soja termed the 'thirdspace' domain of spatiality as 'Thirding-as-Othering' whose exploration is described as 'journeys' to what he calls 'the real-and-imagined'.[8]

The red thread of his perspective goes back to the 1970s and 1980s, to Henri Lefebvre's spatial trialectics in his work *La Production de l'espace* (translated as *The Production of Space*)[9] and Michel Foucault's heterotopological discourse in his work *Des espaces autres* (translated as *Of other spaces*).[10] Yet, in addition to those, Bhabha's, Leontidou's and Soja's conceptions open by definition another possibility: instead of seeking synthetic terms, there is room for constant further deconstruction, for the specification of yet more in-between or third spaces.[11] All these in-between spaces lay in a continuum that has two very different extremes—such as 'human' and 'divine' in my following discussion—as distinct hybrid categories.[12] In their interpretation, any original binary choice, proposed by modernity, is relativized: it is not entirely dismissed but it is subjected to a creative process of negotiating and restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from two opposite categories to open new alternatives of thought and action.[13] The real gain, in comparison to older approaches, is that, with the help of the categories of 'in-between' and 'third' space, our overall understanding of spatiality exceeds the bipolarity of modernity; hence, it is open for multiple and varied meaningful conceptions, such as the fluidity of spaces, and the spaces where identities are not fixed, but under endless reconstruction.[14]

[3] Leontidou 1996, 180.
[4] Doel 1992, 171. Cf. Leontidou 1996, 178–82, 186.
[5] Soja 1996.
[6] Bhabha 1990, 1994.
[7] Soja 1996, 5, 260.
[8] Soja 1996, 11.
[9] Lefebvre 1974.
[10] Foucault 1986.
[11] Leontidou 1996, 186.
[12] Bhabha 1990, esp. 211.
[13] Bhabha 1990, 204; Leontidou 1996, 184.
[14] Bhabha 1990.

In the following discussion, I argue that cells and pillars should be considered exactly as a third sacred space which is interjected between the two extremes of human and divine space, and which can also allow for further deconstruction, for the specification of yet more in-between spaces on the same continuum. This sacred space aims to represent a conceived and constructed 'third world', a liminal world pending between the earthly and the heavenly, where space is simply fluidified on a vertical axis. My main argument in this chapter is that the conception and construction of ascetic spaces (as specific kinds of dwelling in Byzantium) refers to their hybrid form and function as simultaneously both high-and-low, closed-and-open, and material-and-spiritual, real-and-imaginary spaces (thus neither of two opposites). The reason for this is that Byzantine ascetic spaces were meant to be constructed neither as divine nor as human spaces; instead, they were meant to be constructed as spaces which make happen the process of holification of a human.

SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN'S IN-CELL VISIONS

Fluidification of space on a vertical axis (or How to Float in the Air)

In Symeon the New Theologian's *Life* the notion of height is the par excellence transforming value and this is stated from the very beginning:

> For after a short time passed, the grace of the Spirit, finding his soul free of matter and inflamed with desire for the Creator, caught him up from earth on the wings of desire for intellectual apprehension and exalted him to the vision and revelations of the Lord.[15]

In one of his visions, the light explains the relations among body, height, and holiness: it speaks within him saying that during the Second Advent all the saints will be incorporeally clothed with spiritual bodies (τοιοῦτοι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ μέλλοντι ἔσονται πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι περιβεβλημένοι ἀσωμάτως πνευματικὰ σώματα).[16] These spiritual bodies will either be lighter, more subtle, and floating higher in the air, or more solid, heavier, and sinking down toward the ground depending on the saints' rank, and intimacy with God (ἢ κουφότερα καὶ λεπτότερα καὶ ὑψιπετέστερα ἢ παχύτερα καὶ βαρύτερα καὶ χαμαιπετέστερα, ἐξ ὧν ἡ στάσις καὶ ἡ τάξις καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν οἰκείωσις ἑκάστῳ τηνικαῦτα γενήσεται).[17]

Symeon the New Theologian's visions always emerge while he is in his cell, and they function as the condition that enables space to become fluid on a vertical axis, as in the following example:

[15] Μετὰ γὰρ ὀλίγου χρόνου παρέλευσιν ἡ χάρις τοῦ Πνεύματος εὑροῦσα τὴν ἐκείνου ψυχὴν ἐλευθέραν τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῷ πόθῳ πυρπολουμένην τοῦ Κτίσαντος ἥρπασεν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ γῆς πτερώσασα τῇ τῶν νοητῶν ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ πρὸς ὀπτασίαν καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις Κυρίου ἀνύψωσε. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §4.38–41, translation by Greenfield 2013, 11, 13.

[16] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §70.18–20, translation by Greenfield 2013, 159. See the Greek text and its translation on pp. 87.

[17] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §70.20–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 159.

> On one occasion then, while he was standing in pure prayer and conversing with God, he saw with his intellect the air start to shimmer, and although he was inside his cell, he seemed to be outside in the open air. It was night time, about the first watch. As it began to get light overhead like the glimmer of daybreak – oh, the awesome visions of this man! – the building and everything else disappeared and he seemed no longer to be inside. While he was in this state of complete ecstacy and was contemplating with his whole intellect the light that was appearing, it gradually increased. It made the air seem brighter, and he felt himself and his whole body transcending this earthly existence. The light continued to get brighter and brighter and seemed to be shining down on him from above like the sun at midday. As it did so, he felt himself standing in the midst of this manifestation and his whole body was completely filled with joy and tears from the sweetness that emanated from it. Then he saw the light taking hold of his flesh in a strange way and gradually merging into his limbs. The strangeness of this sight distracted him from his earlier vision and caused him to contemplate only what was happening within him in this completely extraordinary way. Thus, he watched until, little by little, the light was imparted to his whole body, to his heart and his internal organs, and rendered him wholly fire and light. And just as had happened before with the building, so now it caused him to lose awareness of the form, the structure, the mass, and the shape of his body, and he stopped wheeping. Then a voice came to him from out of the light, saying, 'This is how it has been determined that the holy ones who are alive and who remain are to be transformed at the last trumpet, and in this state caught up, as Paul says'.[18]

Here, the horizontal dimension is abated (or even annulled) through the placement of Symeon the New Theologian's body in limited space within the cell. Limited space allows not only the holy man's communication with God, but also his development on the vertical axis through the vision. Thus the limited horizontal space enables the process of holification as isolation and elevation lead to transubstantiation.

[18] Τοίνυν καὶ ἐν μιᾷ ὡς εἰς προσευχὴν ἱστάμενος ἦν καθαρὰν καὶ προσωμίλει Θεῷ, εἶδε καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀὴρ ἤρξατο διαυγάζειν αὐτοῦ τῷ νοΐ, ἔνδον δὲ ὢν τοῦ κελλίου ἐδόκει αἴθριος ἔξω διατελεῖν· νὺξ δὲ ἦν περὶ πρώτην αὐτῆς φυλακήν. Ὡς δὲ φαίνειν ἄνωθεν ἤρξατο δίκην αὐγῆς πρωϊνῆς – ὢ τῶν φρικτῶν ὄψεων τοῦ ἀνδρός! – ἡ οἰκία καὶ πάντα παρήρχοντο καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ οὐδόλως εἶναι ἐνόμιζεν. Ὡς ἐξίστατο δὲ ὅλως ὅλῳ κατανοῶν τῷ νοΐ ἐκεῖνο τὸ δεικνύμενον φῶς, ηὔξανέ τε κατὰ μικρὸν αὐτὸ καὶ τὸν ἀέρα ἐποίει λαμπρότερον φαίνεσθαι καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἔξω τῶν γηΐνων σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι κατενόει γινόμενον. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐπεὶ τρανότερον ἔτι φαιδρύνεσθαι τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο προσέθετο καὶ ὡς μεσημβρία ἡλίου ἄνωθεν ἐπιλάμποντος αὐτῷ ἑωρᾶτο, μέσον ἱστάμενον τοῦ φαινομένου ἑαυτὸν κατενόει καὶ ὅλον ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἐγγινομένης ἡδύτητος αὐτῷ χαρᾶς καὶ δακρύων ἔμπλεων. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ παραδόξως τὸ φῶς ἁπτόμενον ἔβλεπε τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ κατ' ὀλίγον γινόμενον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν αὐτοῦ. Τὸ παράδοξον οὖν τοῦ ὁράματος τούτου τῆς προτέρας αὐτὸν θεωρίας ἀπέστησε καὶ μόνον κατανοεῖν ἐποίει τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ πανεξαισίως τελούμενον. Ἔβλεπεν οὖν ἕως οὗ κατ' ὀλίγον ὅλον ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ, τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ἐγκάτοις αὐτοῦ ἐδόθη καὶ πῦρ ὅλον καὶ φῶς αὐτὸν ἀπετέλεσεν. Ὥσπερ δὲ πρότερον τὴν οἰκίαν, οὕτω τηνικαῦτα τὸ σχῆμα, τὴν θέσιν, τὸ πάχος καὶ τὸ εἶδος τοῦ σώματος ἀγνοῆσαι τοῦτον πεποίηκε, καὶ δακρύων ἐπαύσατο. Φωνὴ οὖν ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς ἐπ' αὐτῷ γίνεται καί φησιν· «οὕτως ἀλλαγῆναι τοὺς ζῶντας καὶ περιλειπομένους ἁγίους ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι κέκριται καὶ οἱ οὕτω γενόμενοι ἁρπαγήσονται, καθὰ καὶ Παῦλός φησιν.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §69, translation by Greenfield 2013, 155, 157.

The dissolution of physical space

Furthermore, as seen in the passage just cited, natural space is transformed into a supernatural one, simply because it is dissolved and then disappears. This is made even clearer in the continuation of the story in paragraph 70:

> The blessed one spent many hours standing in this fashion, praising God unceasingly with certain mystical utterances. But as he contemplated the glory that enveloped him and the blessedness that will be given eternally to the saints, he began to think and say to himself, 'Will I revert to my previous bodily form or am I going to stay like this?' As he was wondering about this, all of a sudden, he realized that he was still carrying his bodily form around with him like a shadow or some immaterial substance. For when, as I have said, he felt himself, along with his body, becoming wholly light that was immaterial and without shape or form, he knew that his body was still joint to him, although it was somehow incorporeal and spiritual in some way. For he had the sense that it now had no weight or solidity, and he was amazed to see himself as though he were incorporeal when he still had his body. But then again, the light, with the same voice as before, spoke within him and said, 'After the resurrection in the age to come, this is how all the saints will be incorporeally clothed with spiritual bodies. These will either be lighter, more subtle, and floating higher in the air, or more solid, heavier, and sinking down toward the ground, and by this means each will have their station, rank, and intimacy with God established at that time.'[19]

In this manner, through the glory of the vision Symeon the New Theologian is united with the divine and that causes a 'dematerialization' of the physical space surrounding his spirit: the monastery, the cell, and even his own human body dissolve and disappear. Niketas invents this narrative device, to tell his own—and his spiritual father, Symeon the New Theologian's—approach to monastic philosophy and practice. As also clarified in other works by both Niketas and Symeon, they supported the Byzantine theological approach, according to which a mystical unity with the Trinity and immediacy with God was possible: humans could connect with the divine in a direct and unmediated manner.[20] The light, which comes directly from the sky and then diffuses and penetrates everything, is an appropriate narrative device for Niketas to represent this process.[21] The holification process, in this case, is narrated and explicated by means of the ever-changing, ev-

[19] Ἐπὶ πολλὰς τοίνυν ὥρας οὕτω διατελῶν καὶ ἱστάμενος ὁ μακάριος καὶ μυστικαῖς τισιν ἀκαταπαύστως ἀνυμνῶν φωναῖς τὸν Θεόν, κατανοῶν τε τὴν περιέχουσαν αὐτὸν δόξαν καὶ τὴν δοθῆναι μέλλουσαν αἰωνίως τοῖς ἁγίοις μακαριότητα, ἤρξατο λογίζεσθαι καὶ λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ· «ἆρά γε πάλιν ἐπιστρέψω εἰς τὸ πρότερον σχῆμα τοῦ σώματος ἢ οὕτω διάγων ἔσομαι;» Ὡς οὖν τοῦτο διελογίσατο, αὐτίκα ὥσπερ σκιὰν ἤ ὡς πνεῦμα τέως ἔγνω τὸ σχῆμα περιφέρειν τοῦ σώματος· φῶς γὰρ ὅλον ἑαυτὸν ἀνείδεον ἀσχημάτιστόν τε καὶ ἄϋλον ὥσπερ εἴρηται κατενόει γενόμενον σὺν τῷ σώματι, καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα ἐγίνωσκε συνεῖναι αὐτῷ, πλὴν ἀσώματόν πως καὶ ὡς πνευματικόν· βάρος γὰρ ἢ παχύτητα τέως οὐδόλως ἔχειν τοῦτο ὑπώπτευε καὶ ἐθαύμαζεν ὁρῶν ἑαυτὸν ἐν σώματι ὡς ἀσώματον. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῇ προτέρᾳ φωνῇ πάλιν τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ λαλοῦν φῶς οὕτως ἔλεγε· «τοιοῦτοι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ μέλλοντι ἔσονται πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι περιβεβλημένοι ἀσωμάτως πνευματικὰ σώματα ἢ κουφότερα καὶ λεπτότερα καὶ ὑψιπετέστερα ἢ παχύτερα καὶ βαρύτερα καὶ χαμεπετέστερα, ἐξ ὧν ἡ στάσις καὶ ἡ τάξις καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν οἰκείωσις ἑκάστῳ τηνικαῦτα γενήσεται.» *L. Sym. New Theol*. §70, translation by Greenfield 2013, 159.

[20] See Turner 1990; Maloney 2005; Markopoulos 2016.

[21] On the role of divine light in Symeon's texts and its theological context see Krivocheine 1986; Alfeyev 2000.

er-diminishing, and finally dematerialized physical dimension: in this way, materiality disappears in favour of spirituality.

LAZAROS' PILLARS

Fluidification of space on a vertical axis (or How to Build a Pillar)

According to the text, the outstanding feature of Lazaros' ascetic practice was his confinement on an open pillar, continuing the stylite tradition. All his pillars were quite similar and built to order. They were open to the elements, lacking a roof to provide shelter:[22] "Lazaros persuaded the monks to construct a roofed pillar for him; he moved onto this and spent some time on it, but then decided to take the roof off and live in the open air on this ⟨pillar⟩, in imitation of the wondrous Symeon".[23] However, there was some sort of a wall which enclosed the top of the pillar and created a narrow 'cell' where Lazaros lived.[24] This wall was high enough to hide him from visitors, yet low enough to allow Lazaros, when standing, to be seen by those below and in front of his pillar; he in turn could see a great deal of what was going on within the monastery.[25] This cell atop the pillar had no door.[26] Instead, it had a window which provided access to the platform by means of a ladder; that window was large enough for him to lean out and for visitors to bend into the cell.[27]

As discussed in Chapter Two, this window was the liminal space between Lazaros' private space and the outside world: he could open the window in order to see his visitors and also to receive food and other utilities from his brothers, but he could also secure the window from the inside, thus shutting out the secular world.[28] As far as visual contact is concerned, Greenfield remarks that this window seems to have provided only a limited view of the area immediately outside, because Lazaros evidently was unable to see whether more than one person was waiting to talk to him:[29] "The father opened his little window and asked him if anyone else was standing there."[30] He also suggests that the cell at his last pillar probably

[22] *L. Laz.* §31, 111, 235.

[23] πείθει τοὺς μοναχοὺς στύλον αὐτῷ ὑπωρόφιον οἰκοδομῆσαι· εἰς ὃν καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ χρόνον τινὰ ἐν αὐτῷ οὕτω ποιήσας, ἔκρινε τοῦ ἆραι τὴν στέγην καὶ αἴθριον αὐτὸν ἐν τούτῳ τελεῖν κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Συμεών. *L. Laz.* §31.14–18, translation by Greenfield 2000, 118. See a detailed discussion of Lazaros' pillar in Chapter 3.

[24] *L. Laz.* §81, 117, 128, 142.

[25] Greenfield 2000, 17; cf. *L. Laz.* §81, 117, 128, 142, 108, 109, 236.

[26] *L. Laz.* §249; cf. Greenfield 2000, 17.

[27] *L. Laz.* §219, 249, 87, 120, 114, 75, 107, 117. See also Greenfield 2000, 17–8.

[28] *L. Laz.* §219; cf. Greenfield 2000, 17.

[29] Greenfield 2000, 17; cf. *L. Laz.* §88, 103–4.

[30] ἀνοίξας ὁ πατὴρ τὸ θυρίδιον ἐπηρώτησε τοῦτον, εἰ ἔστι τις καὶ ἄλλος ἑστὼς ἐκεῖσε. *L. Laz.* §88.43–45, translation by Greenfield 2000, 179.

had a second small window that opened toward, or even into, the church, yet this seems like an ambiguous point of the *Life*.[31]

To get an idea about the size of the cell at the top of the pillar, according to the text, it seems to have been quite narrow. Although its width is literally written as "within a three-spans-wide pillar",[32] that is around 0.6m, it seems that it was a space allowing Lazaros and a second person to stand, as well as room for a chair, food, drink and some tokens or coins on the floor.[33] Despite its size and simplicity, each of Lazaros' pillars was undoubtfully a miniature residence, including a toilet (ἔνθα τὴν αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἐποίει), and one perhaps even incorporating a built-in cistern (λάκκος τοῦ ὕδατος).[34] Lazaros himself seems to have been attributing his residence with specific identity by means of engraving the symbol of the cross, hence demarcating it as a holy place.

What is a particularly important aspect of the role of this pillar in both the holy man's life and in the narrative is the height of the pillars, which is, moreover, never specified in the text. Greenfield suggests that they must have been relatively low, since a normal conversation could be conducted with people on the ground, and Lazaros could easily be heard, when preaching or addressing the monks.[35]

The history of Lazaros' idea undoubtedly goes back to Symeon the Stylite the Elder, the founder of a peculiar way of asceticism in the fifth century. Gregory mentions this aspect in paragraph 31, although Greenfield suggests that he really means St Symeon the Younger due to the adjective "wondrous (θαυμαστοῦ)" referring to the Wondrous Mountain near Antioch, which Lazaros visited on his way back from Jerusalem.[36] However, Lazaros' magic number of four pillars rather points to his imitation of the life of Symeon the Elder. In any case, Lazaros, Symeon the Younger, as well as a vast number of later stylites followed this extreme form of asceticism established by Symeon the Stylite the Elder in the Limestone Massif of Syria. There, on top of a hill at Telanissos, Symeon had erected three successive columns, thus initiating a long tradition (lasting until the nineteenth century) of ascetic individuals who have been characterized as "aerial martyrs" or "fakirs of Christianism".[37] Stylites were venerated in all strata of society for the mastery they showed over their own mortal bodies and the forces of nature.[38] Byzantine pictorial representations of pillars offer another insight in their materiality, such as those included in the illuminated manuscript made for the emperor Basil II around 1000 (the *Menologion of Basil II* in the codex Vat.Gr. 1613).[39] Additionally,

[31] See relevant discussion by Greenfield 2000, 18.
[32] ἐν τῷ τρισπιθάμῳ ἐκείνῳ στύλῳ. *L. Laz.* §235.42, translation by Greenfield 2000, 335.
[33] *L. Laz.* §235, 114, 75, 113, 145, 248; cf. Greenfield 2000, 19, 20: n. 94.
[34] *L. Laz.* §81.26–7, 222.10. See also the discussion by Greenfield 2000, 19, 316: n. 882.
[35] Greenfield 2000, 19.
[36] Greenfield 2000, 118. See the Greek text and a discussion of paragraph 31 on p. 146–7.
[37] Fernandez 1975, 195; Schachner 2010, 329; Schlumberger and Dardel 1884, 411.
[38] Schachner 2010, 330.
[39] *Menologion*, XIII, 1–430.

recent studies have developed our knowledge of more tangible material aspects of this tradition. Lukas Amadeus Schachner has systematized the physical remains of the stylites' activity in an extensive article, in which he provides archaeological evidence of eighteen pillars spread around the Holy Land, Egypt and three locations in Asia Minor.[40] Jean-Pierre Sodini's recent publications have also systematized older literature and shed new light on the important site of Qal'at Sim'an, the site of St Symeon the Elder's pillar, after its recent excavations.[41]

To get an idea of the materiality of these pillars, I will now briefly account for the archaeological evidence of such constructions. This evidence shows that pillars consisted of three parts: a base, a shaft (often composed of three drums, recalling the Holy Trinity), and some sort of platform at the top for the ascetic to live on.[42] Bases were either square or cylindrical, set against or carved from the living rock.[43] As shown in archaeological reconstructions, the bases could be surrounded by screens.[44] Occasionally, a balcony facing the pillar (a 'visitors' platform') might have provided controlled access to the stylite.[45] The pillars' shaft's height ranged greatly from a couple up to 40 cubits excluding the base, estimated to 17.64m by Schachner and to 16.4m by Sodini;[46] according to Schachner, the archaeological finds suggest heights from 4.5m to 'very tall'.[47] Similar heights are mentioned in the saints' *Lives*, where the number of cubits play a prominent role and increase in height throughout a stylite's life: Symeon the Elder is said to have occupied increasingly higher pillars, from four cubits (1.76m) to thirty cubits (13.23m) and finally forty cubits (17.64m) according to Schachner's estimations.[48] As to their stability, the masonry pillars stand out for their superiority, but they are very rare.[49] The top platforms, that is the dwelling places of the stylites, are also archaeologically unattested. The sources allow for a hypothetical estimation of around two cubits in circumference (less than a metre); that is why some visitors found stylites living there "stifling and extremely confined".[50]

A ladder facilitated communication between the stylite and the community on the ground. Ladders in the narrative texts are a constantly recurring theme: they occur in a number of contexts, allowing visitors to ascend and, more rarely, the stylite to descend, as well as making possible the deposition of the stylites' mortal

[40] Schachner 2010, where finds' distribution is shown on p. 331: fig. 1.
[41] Sodini 2016; 2017. See also Biscop 2005; Sodini et al. 2010; Sodini 2017.
[42] Schachner 2010, 335.
[43] Schachner 2010, 335–7.
[44] Schachner 2010, 337, 352: fig. 7; Sodini 2017, 6: fig. 6, and n. 12.
[45] Schachner 2010, 340.
[46] Schachner 2010, 337.
[47] Schachner 2010, 339.
[48] *L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Ant.* §12, 17; Schachner 2010, 337.
[49] Schachner 2017, 342–6.
[50] Schachner 2017, 350–3.

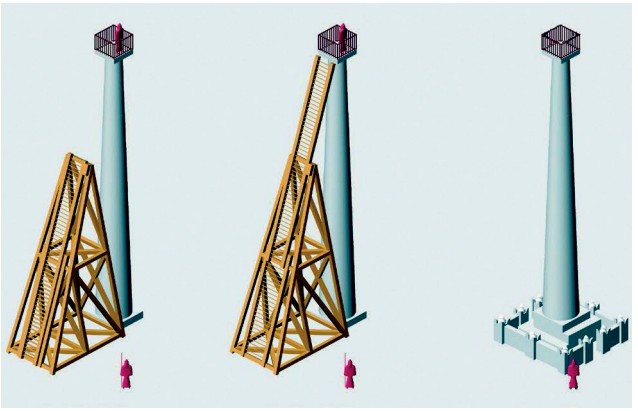


FIGURE 2. St Symeon the Elder's last-pillar reconstruction by Jean-Luc Biscop (after Sodini 2017, p. 6: fig. 6).

remains after death.[51] These ladders are not archaeologically attested; Schachner notes that, if some ladders were meant to bridge gaps of up to 18m, mounting these ladders without risking the pillar's stability must have been a difficult enterprise.[52] Some texts suggest removable ladders rather than permanent ones as also at Qal'at Sim'ān according to reconstructions (Figure 2).[53]

The ability to remove these ladders (or at least their upper part) was a necessity: the stylite had to ensure a way in which to withdraw from the secular world (κοσμική πολιτεία)[54] in order to maintain a certain amount of privacy.[55] St Symeon the Elder's pillars, in particular, are both archaeologically attested and described in narratives. Near the borders between Cilicia and Syria, 30km east of Aleppo, Symeon lived, at first, in a simple enclosure (μάνδρα),[56] but then came the pillars for the ascetic to avoid the crowds.[57] He first experimented with a wooden prototype and then he occupied three increasingly higher pillars, made of local limestone, of which traces survive.[58] The upper part of the ladder was retractable for the stylite to select his visitors.[59] The first two were of square section, while the last was circular, as also shown in a later icon depicting scenes from his life (Figure

[51] Schachner 2017, 346.
[52] Schachner 2017, 346–7.
[53] *L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* §27; *L. Daniel Styl.* §8, 42; *L. Timothy (Styl.)* §19.3.
[54] Frank 1964, 35.
[55] Schachner 2017, 346.
[56] Lent 1915, 129.
[57] Sodini 2017, 3.
[58] Sodini 2017, 6.
[59] Sodini 2017, 6: fig. 6, and n. 12.

FIGURE 3. Pictorial representations of Symeon the Elder's pillars on the Icon of Saint Symeon the Stylite with Scenes from his Life (1550–1575, Collection of the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, front view).

3): here the last pillar is shown to supersede the mountains and reach the clouds, metaphorically suggesting that height's spiritual value also corresponded to real physical dimensions.

Based on these examples, the attributes which characterize Byzantine ascetic pillars as in-between spaces, can be defined as follows: (a) they are spaces extending on a vertical axis; (b) they have a dual arrangement which constitutes them as both open and closed spaces. So the notion of height is recurrent in the saints' *Lives* not as physical dimension but with the meaning of value. Holy men's virtue and spirit are expressed as a value on a conceivable vertical axis extending from the ground up to the sky. In earlier hagiographical texts, such as the *Lives* of St Luke, the stylites are said to live atop "columns of enormous height":

> After leaving life on this very ground that we all step upon in common, because it is low-lying, and after refusing to be on earth, they were wandering lifting their entire selves upon these tower-like pillars, that is on highly-elevated columns of extreme height, by fixing timbers, on which they lived like some lonesome birds, in the middle of the air, with no roof or belongings, equal to the birds, and they were training to live in a manner equal to the angels', although they were inside bodies, and to do things for the sake of humans, albeit growing above them, for many years.[60]

The stylites' elevated position, then, afforded by their pillars, symbolized the isolation of these very special and remarkable individuals from the concerns and sinfulness of ordinary material existence, and emphasized their status as beings whose way of life was closer to that of angels than of men (ἰσάγγελον πολιτείαν or ἀγγελικός βίος in the texts).[61] Standing half-way between heaven and earth, the stylites demonstrably enjoyed supernatural protection and favour as well as mundane fame and respect. Consequently, they were respected and sought out as intermediaries who could effectively present the concerns of ordinary mortals to those who had power at the heavenly court. Atop their pillars they were "literally in the world yet not of it".[62]

But why a pillar and not another architectural form, such as a tower? The texts often refer to them with the name "confinement-pillar (ἐγκλειστήριος στῦλος)" indicating a physical shape of enclosure.[63] 'Becoming holy' presupposed isolation of the ascete from his social environment, seclusion within some physical environment, and self-seclusion in one's own body by food deprivation. The limited space atop a pillar imposed a confinement of the stylite's body thus provoking

[60] Οἱ καὶ αὐτὸ τῆς γῆς τὸ κοινῇ πᾶσι πατούμενον ἔδαφος ὡς χαμαίζηλον ἀπολιπόντες ἐνδιαίτημα καὶ τὴν γεώδη διατριβὴν ἀπαρνησάμενοι ἔν τισι στύλοις πυργοειδέσιν ἤτοι κίοσιν ὑπερανεστηκόσιν εἰς μήκιστον ὕψος ὅλους ἑαυτοὺς μετεωρίσαντες καλιὰς τε πηξάμενοι καθάπερ ὄρνιθές τινες φιλέρημοι τῷ ἀέρι τε μέσον ἄστεγοι καὶ ἄσκευοι πτηνῶν δίκην ἐνδιαιτώμενοι, τὴν ἰσάγγελον ἐν σώματι πολιτείαν καὶ τὴν ὑπέρ ἄνθρωπον διαγωγὴν ἐπὶ πλείστοις ἔτεσιν ὑπερφυῶς διήρκεσαν ἐξασκούμενοι. *L. Luke Styl.* §2, author's English translation.

[61] Frank 1964, 20, 67; Schachner 2010, 330.

[62] Ashbrook Harvey 1992, 10.

[63] Festugière 1961, vol. IV/1, 41, n. 2; Delehaye 1962, cxxxii, cxxxviii and clix; Congourdeau 1993, 139–49.

the liberation of his spirit on a vertical axis. This way of seclusion and isolation oriented towards a vertical axis made a symbolic image of the holy-way-straight-to-heaven; at the same time, the corporeal torture was the guarantee for a safe way upwards-to-paradise.

On the other hand, stylites were also part of monastic and wider communities. They had brothers who brought them food and took care of them, as well as visitors who admired them and came for advice. In some archaeological remains, there is indeed evidence of niches, probably serving for the deposition of goods, which speak in favour of such relations of exchange, just like the pictorial representations.[64] A dual arrangement of the top of the pillar into a both closed-and-open space offered the possibility of both corporeal confinement and selective contact.[65] Thus, it also established a double reality: personal and public at the same time and in the same space—or neither of the two, i.e. simply in-between.

The predominance of physical space

Thus, unlike the case of dissolution of physical space in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian, in the case of the pillars their architecture seems to have been the critical aspect of the holification process. The specific spatial arrangement transformed the pillar into the appropriate environment for the ascete's interaction with both the sacred and the mundane, to make out of him a holy man. Indeed, as Gregory writes: Lazaros "full of human and spiritual days ended his life excellently, and in a manner most dear to God".[66]

This relationship is well expressed through pictorial representations of stylites in the form of icons and simple graffiti (Figure 4).[67] Here the focus is exactly: (a) on the vertical axis signifying the contact between the high and the low and (b) this dual arrangement of the space at the top, depicted also with the sign of a cross, signifying a process of sanctification which passes through two different kinds of rituals. These are, on one hand, the rituals related to the stylite's private struggle for holiness, and, on the other, those related to his public discourse and his distinct identity of holy man within a community. Each of his rituals (such as the stylite's prayer or his reception of guests) is situated at a specific place on the pillar, whose space can be imagined as yet another liminal in-between space on the divine-human continuum.

The outcome of this ritual space and its specific arrangement is a use of space as a means of holification. Thus, this use of space corresponds to a holification process which is an indirect (mediated) contact with God; this is an approach to monastic theology and practice, different from the one expressed by Niketas'

[64] Schachner 2010, 348: fig. 5a.

[65] See Chapter 8, below.

[66] πλήρης ἡμερῶν τῶν τε ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ τῶν τοῦ πνεύματος γεγονὼς ἄριστα καὶ ὅσον Θεῷ φίλον τὸν αὐτοῦ κατέλυσε βίον. *L. Laz.* §254; Greenfield 2000, 364.

[67] Schachner 2010, 372: fig. 13.

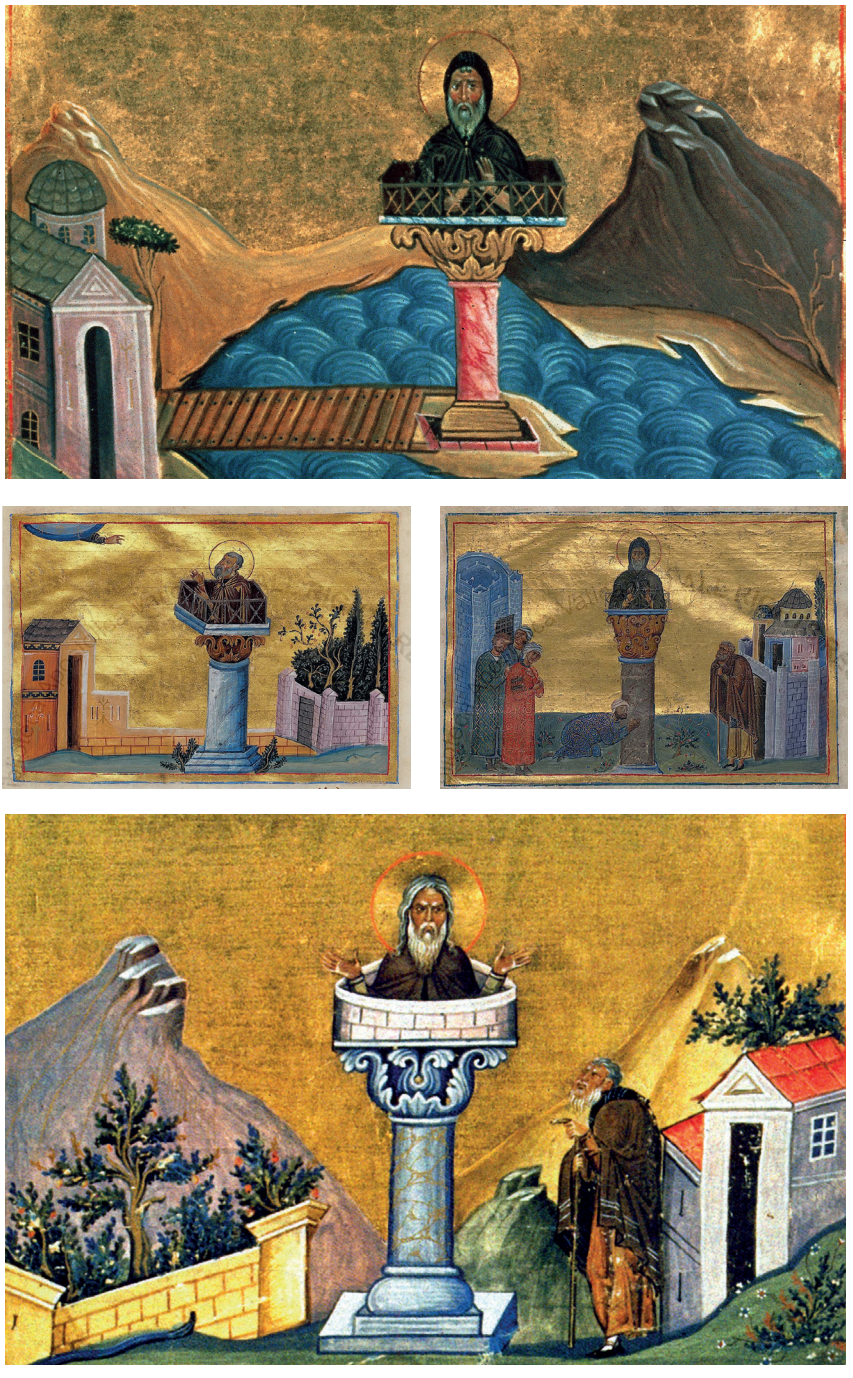


FIGURE 4. Stylites' pictorial representations in the Menologion of the emperor Basil II (Vat.Gr. 1613). From top left clockwise: St Daniel, St Luke, St Alypios, and St Symeon the Elder (Facsimilés by the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, pp. 237, 238, 208, 2.)

and Symeon the New Theologian's texts, discussed above.[68] The theological approach, discerned in Gregory's life story of Lazaros, relied on itinerant asceticism as a means of holification;[69] it originally sprang from the Late Antique Christian scriptures of the Desert Fathers (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) and their contemporary *Lives* of St Antony and St Pachomius.[70] One of the most striking features of these early texts is their emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge (γνῶσις); exhortations to know and understand recur throughout them and are clearly rooted in a theology for which knowledge is at the centre.[71] Samuel Rubenson summarizes the main attributes of this kind of knowledge as follows:

> Knowledge is necessary in order to be saved—that is, to return to God. This knowledge is primarily self-knowledge: one must come to know the self in order to know God; one must return to self in order to return to God. Knowledge of God is possible since humans participate in God, a participation found in a person's ousia noera (intellectual substance). The body must be cleansed and made subject to the spirit so that it does not tie one to what is material and passing. The redemption brought by Christ is the granting of the power to return and become again a spiritual unity. Behind these notions lie, no doubt, a Platonic understanding of the human being and as is evident in some passages an Origenistic interpretation of Christianity. [...] A very important aspect of Antony's teaching is his emphasis on the natural condition of human beings. Virtue is nothing foreign to human nature; on the contrary, salvation is the return of the human being to a natural state. Nature is not fallen and should not be rejected. God thus calls human beings primarily through the natural law laid down in their hearts. The written (scriptural) law, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, those other ways in which God calls human beings, do not contain anything new. The coming of Jesus, his presence, reveals what is already laid down in creation—it re-establishes the unity that once existed.[72]

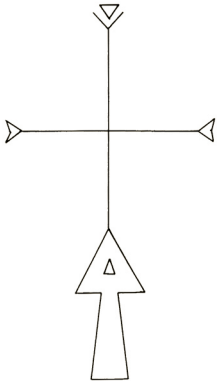
Hence, the acquisition of this knowledge in monastic asceticism was a process characterized by the need to purify each member of the body, and the need to be guided and strengthened by the spirit. This interpretation was practiced in front of the people and personified in the monk, 'the holy man.'

The narrations of holy men's life stories reveal that this practice was also itinerant: it involved a need for separation from ordinary human life and the creation of an autonomous "city" or "community (πόλις)".[73] That separation was performed by spatial practices (relocation, distancing etc), as discussed in other parts of this study.[74] The separation from their ordinary human life was the decisive factor which brought the ascetics closer to the natural law and their natural condition as human beings. The fact that the monk was independent of ordinary society, even almost independent of bodily needs, meant that he could be trusted as a mediator

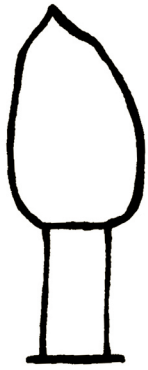
[68] McGinn 2002.
[69] Rubenson 2002.
[70] See Harmless 2004; Rubenson 2002, 50–1.
[71] Rubenson 2002, 53.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Rubenson 2002, 55.
[74] See Chapters 2, 6, and 8.

a: Dayr Bāshakūḥ (Jabal Barīshā): stylite graffito on stable (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 264, fig. 77).

b: Aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa [23] (Jabal Barīshā): graffito on bottom pillar drum (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 248, fig. 48).



c: Burj Nassir (Jabal Barīshā): stylite graffito (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 415, fig. 119).



d: Surqānya (Jabal Simʿān): stylite (?) graffito (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 412, fig. 107).

FIGURE 5. Stylite representations in graffiti from Syria (after Schachner 2010, 372: fig. 13.)

not only of God, but also of other human beings.[75] As an ascetic and a man without civil obligations, the monk was freer than most; these issues are more closely discussed in Chapters Nine and Ten. What is important to note at this point is the way in which this entire process is narrated and represented as a process of knowledge acquisition reified in association with very specific places and spatial practices.[76] As we have seen (Chapters Two and Three), the places involved appear as recurrent topoi in the texts, and the spatial practices appear as narrative devices. In this narration, then, spatiality functions as a paramount strategy throughout.

Fusion of human and divine sacred space in the form of an in-cell vision and a pillar

In addition to the considerations above, people upon pillars, unlike people on towers, must have offered a very impressive spectacle: gaunt old men with long hair and beards were 'exhibited' as extraordinary individuals, conveying a message of authority. This feature is well illustrated also in pictorial representations of stylites (St Daniel, St Luke, St Alypios, and St Symeon the Elder) in the Byzantine miniatures of the Menologion of Basil II (Figure 5).[77]

Their condition of being apart from, while at the same time in constant discourse with, their community (reflecting the saints' often competitive involvement in both heavenly and earthly matters) is narrated in spatial terms within the texts. Thus, stylites' location atop the pillars seems to also have been a device for a constant re-negotiation of identity and authority in the secular world: the style constructed and established their differentiation and superiority. This is clear in many saints' *Lives*, including Lazaros', in which the holy men are shown to relocate themselves to new locations atop new pillars because of conflict or differences with their environment.

These issues are thoroughly discussed in Chapter Nine below, but one example should be noted here: Lazaros' relocation atop his second pillar emerges after an argument with his disciples over the constant visits to the community of a nun from Ephesos.[78] As a result of the dispute, Lazaros acts as follows. He summons one of the monks who knew about construction, and tells him to go up to the higher part of the gorge with two other brothers; he indicates the place to him and instructs him to cut down the wild olive tree that stood there and to make a pit near it for burning lime. In the place where the tree stood Lazaros tells him to build a pillar for him like the one on which he was before, elevated and without a roof.[79] When the brother has finished the pillar just as the father has ordered,

[75] Brown 1971; Rubenson 2002, 55.
[76] See also Chapters 2 and 9.
[77] *Menologion*, 2, 208, 237, 238.
[78] *L. Laz.* §57–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145–6. See the Greek text and translation on pp. 133–5.
[79] *L. Laz.* §58.10, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

Lazaros leaves his previous pillar one night, without any of the brothers there seeing him, climbs up to the newly built pillar, and gets onto it.[80] So Lazaros is once more "as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof there".[81] The metaphor of the bird has a two-fold symbolism. On one hand, it comes from a psalm of David signifying Jesus, sung by Lazaros earlier in the *Life*.[82] On the other, it signifies the holy man's spiritual flight to the sky. The passage makes clear that Lazaros had to continuously negotiate his identity of holy man with everybody (with his God, his demons, his monastic and secular surroundings), and he seems to have been doing this through a ritual construction of pillars. This relationship is well expressed through pictorial representations of stylites in the graffiti, which symbolize the stylites holification rituals (see figure 4).

The vertical axis here signifies the contact between the high and the low, and serves to fluidify the space in-between the two extremes. The space of the pillar can be imagined as a single liminal in-between space on the divine-human continuum; here, the holification rituals (such as the prayer in the abstract) provoke an overall fusion of divine and human sacred space on the pillar. These two qualities (liminality and fusion) distinguish the pillar as a hybrid space, experienced as a different, 'other', 'third', real-and-imagined space.

The same fusion is a paramount feature of space within an in-cell vision, yet in a different way: here light is the means of a fluidification of space on a vertical axis, and for a fusion of human and divine space. This process is the core of the mystical religious experience, as discussed above, which manages to bridge the distance between God and people, and unify the two. In Niketas' narrations of Symeon the New Theologian's visions in his cell, the power of this 'unifying light' is shown to create a fusion of human and divine space within the space of the vision:

> While he was standing in prayer one night, with his own pure intellect communing with the Prime Intellect, he suddenly saw a pure and immense light shining on him from the heavens above, illuminating everything and making it bright as day. He too was illuminated by it, and it seemed that the whole building, along with the cell in which he was standing, vanished and all at once dissolved into nothingness, but he himself was caught up into the air and completely forgot about his body. [...] While he was in the midst of this light, then, he looked, and behold, in the vault of heaven there was a kind of very bright cloud without any form or shape and full of the ineffable glory of God. And—oh, what an awesome sight!—to the right of this cloud he saw his own spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes, standing in the usual clothes which he wore in life, gazing unwaveringly at that divine light and praying continually. Being in this state of ecstasy for a long time and seeing his own spiritual father standing at the right hand of the glory of God, as he later affirmed and said, he could not tell whether he was in his body at that time or out of his body. Sometime later the light gradually faded and he came back to himself in his body and in his cell.[83]

[80] *L. Laz.* §58.12–4, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[81] καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖσε πάλιν ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον. *L. Laz.* §58.20–2, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[82] *Psalm* 102.7 (*KJV*): 'I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top'; *Psalm* 102.6 (NIV): 'I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof' (for all versions available see *OPBP* 2014). Cf. *L. Laz.* §53.

[83] Τοίνυν καὶ ὡς ἱστάμενος ἦν εἰς προσευχὴν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν καὶ νοῒ καθαρῷ τῷ πρώτῳ συναπτόμενος

In this passage, light serves as the agent of unification of all available space between Symeon the New Theologian's spirit and God depicted in a glory (*φῶς ἄνωθεν … ἅπλετον τὸ πᾶν τε καταφωτίσαν … ὑφ' οὗ δηλαδὴ καὶ αὐτὸς φωτιζόμενος ἐδόκει τὸν οἶκον ἅπαντα σὺν τῇ κέλλῃ, ἐν ᾗ ἱστάμενος ἔτυχεν, ἀφανισθέντα καὶ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν εὐθέως χωρήσαντα*). In Niketas' story, this space includes the entire material environment of his spirit, narrated as his body, his cell, and his house, in an outwards motion. It also includes another saint, his spiritual father (Symeon Eulabes), floating in the sky in-between himself and God.

As he writes, space is fused to the degree that Symeon the New Theologian cannot feel at all whether he is part of the human or the divine surroundings, while he is having the vision (*ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἁρπαγέντα ἐν τῷ ἀέρι καὶ τοῦ σώματος ὅλως ἐπιλαθόμενον / οὐκ ἠσθάνετο, κἂν τε ἐν σώματι τὸ τηνικαῦτα ἦν κἂν τε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος, ὡς διεβεβαιοῦτο καὶ ἔλεγεν ὕστερον*). This space is then not the ordinary space as normally experienced in everyday life. It is an 'other' space in which life is different than normal. Its exceptional experience distinguishes it as like Soja's 'thirdspace' of 'extraordinary openness' for our understanding of spatiality of life.

CONCLUSION: IN-BETWEEN SPACES AND THE POWER OF PLACE

In this chapter, I have tried to show that cells and pillars should be considered as a 'third' sacred space which is interjected between the two extremes of human and divine space, and which can also allow for further deconstruction, for the specification of yet more in-between spaces on the same continuum. This sacred space aims to represent a conceived and constructed third world, a liminal world pending between the earthly and the heavenly, where space is simply fluidified on a vertical axis. My main argument is that the Byzantine conception of ascetic spaces in-between the divine and the secular is expressed through their hybrid function as simultaneously both high-and-low, closed-and-open, and material-and-spiritual spaces (thus neither of the two opposites) and reified in a hybrid form of an in-cell vision and a column or pillar. This hybrid of both high-and-low, closed-and-open, and material and-spiritual sacred space guarantees the reciprocal accessibility and

νῷ, φῶς ἄνωθεν εἶδε λάμψαν ἐξαίφνης ἐξ οὐρανῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν εἰλικρινές τε καὶ ἅπλετον τὸ πᾶν τε καταφωτίσαν καὶ καθαρὰν ὥσπερ ἡμέραν ἀπεργασάμενον, ὑφ' οὗ δηλαδὴ καὶ αὐτὸς φωτιζόμενος ἐδόκει τὸν οἶκον ἅπαντα σὺν τῇ κέλλῃ, ἐν ᾗ ἱστάμενος ἔτυχεν, ἀφανισθέντα καὶ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν εὐθέως χωρήσαντα, ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἁρπαγέντα ἐν τῷ ἀέρι καὶ τοῦ σώματος ὅλως ἐπιλαθόμενον. […] Ἐν γοῦν τῷ τοιούτῳ φωτὶ ἐνεργούμενος εἶδε, καὶ ἰδοὺ εἶδος φωτεινοτάτης νεφέλης ἀμόρφου τε καὶ ἀσχηματίστου καὶ πλήρους ἀρρήτου δόξης Θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκ δεξιῶν δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης νεφέλης ἱστάμενον ἑώρα τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα Συμεώνην τὸν Εὐλαβῆ – ὦ τοῦ φρικτοῦ ὁράματος! – ἐν τῇ συνήθει ταύτῃ στολῇ, ἣν περιέκειτο ζῶν, ἐνατενίζοντά τε ἀκλινῶς τῷ θείῳ ἐκείνῳ φωτὶ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπερισπάστως δεόμενον. Ἐπὶ πολὺ οὖν οὕτως ἐν ἐκστάσει ὢν καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ πατέρα ἐκ δεξιῶν παρεστῶτα τῆς δόξης ὁρῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἠσθάνετο, κἂν τε ἐν σώματι τὸ τηνικαῦτα ἦν κἂν τε ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος, ὡς διεβεβαιοῦτο καὶ ἔλεγεν ὕστερον. Ὡς δέ ποτε τοῦ φωτὸς ἐκείνου κατὰ βραχὺ συσταλέντος πρὸς ἑαυτό, πάλιν ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ τῆς κέλλης ἐντὸς ἑαυτὸν κατενόησε. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.1–10, 5.18–33, translation by Greenfield 2013, 13, 15.

interaction of the divine and the profane, which is the only way to conduct the process of sanctification.

How would that really work? Edward Casey developed a particular phenomenological approach to bridge the ancient views to place, as expressed by Aristotle and other thinkers, with respective postmodern discourses. "To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in", he concludes.[84] "There is knowledge and sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in position to perceive it. Knowledge of place is not, then, subsequent to perception but is ingredient in perception itself. [...] Local knowledge is at one with the lived experience."[85] "Place, the privileged site of lived experience and daily life, is necessarily at the centre of our understandings of the world" David Harvey confirms.[86]

I hope to have shown how the in-cell vision and the pillar are conceived in Byzantine hagiography as idiosyncratic religious/cultural spaces, i.e., as hybrid places characterized by a synthesis of antithetic qualities: both ideal-and-practical, real-and-imaginary, open-and-closed, high-and-low, human-and-divine, etc. The reason for that was exactly the ways in which these places were experienced. In fact, their invention was aiming to such an experience: Byzantine ascetic spaces were meant to be constructed neither as divine nor as human spaces. Instead, they were meant to be constructed as spaces which make happen the process of sanctification of a human. Their specific conception and consequent experience intended to produce a system of relationships in which the holy man in Christianity came in as a third (obviously hybrid and inevitably in-between) category to negotiate with God and humans the salvation of humanity. Holy men did that through selective bodily rituals which introduce their involvement in both co-existing heavenly and earthly matters, which were spatially conceived and defined (doxa, bed, body/platform, balcony, ladder) as in-between spaces within specific places: a cell or a pillar.

[84] Casey 1996, 18.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Harvey 2009, 167.

6

Horizontal perceptions of space

A striking outcome of the research on spatialities of Byzantine Saints' *Lives* is the—often outstanding—amount of relocations and mobility, space constructions and re-constructions, as well as the attention drawn in definitions and accounts of spaces. The text of the *Life* of Lazaros provides a good impression of this mobility: the entire account of his early stages of life is an unending sequence of relocation verbs accompanied by spatial definitions.[1] In fact, the impression of mobility in the plot is so strong, that readers find themselves wishing that characters would stay still for a second in the next sentence.

Evidently this was an important narrative device, but what was the purpose? A couple of studies have been dedicated to this question. In 1959, Eleanor Ducket first suggested some mutual motives for the saints' wandering: "Release from the world; Solitude for the following of the ways of prayer; A lively seeking for knowledge; A passion for sacrifice and self-denial; A driving concern for the souls of their fellow-men; For these ends they wandered wherever their time called them."[2] More recently, Maribel Dietz named this wandering 'ascetic travel' and considered it as a transcultural feature, a common topos throughout the medieval Mediterranean; as to its significance, she interpreted it as a practical way of visiting living and dead holy people and as a means of religious expression of homelessness and temporal exile.[3] She distinguished one main metaphor in use throughout the texts:

> Monastic travel mirrored an interior journey or quest on both an individual level, the journey of the soul toward God and heavenly Jerusalem, and on the level of the church as a whole, as manifested in Augustine's notion of the City of God's journey on Earth. This mirroring quality of the inward journey attracted many early Christians. Travel was viewed as an imitation of the life of Christ, a literal rendering of the life of a Christian, a life only "temporarily on this earth".[4] Dietz further observed that physical travel also served as a corporeal metaphor for spiritual progress and movement, with the journey itself reflecting the spiritual growth of the traveller.[5]

In this chapter, I build on Dietz's thoughts in order to expand the perception of medieval hagiographical writing by suggesting a slightly different interpretation: that spatiality was employed by the *Lives'* authors not only in a metaphorical sense, but also as a very efficient, direct means of connecting with the reader's real-life experience and emotions. I argue that the authors seem to have used spatiality as a very important narrative method. The latter was intended to communicate typical

[1] On this matter see also Chapter 2.
[2] Ducket 1959, 27.
[3] Dietz 2005.
[4] Dietz 2005, 3.
[5] Dietz 2005, 3–4.

'saintly practices' within performances of holiness, in which a person's sanctification experience was built upon their constant dialogue and negotiations with local social environments. On the other hand, becoming holy presupposed asceticism, i.e. an isolation of the ascete from his social environment (*stabilitas loci*).[6] This condition of being apart from—and at the same time in constant dialogue with—a community is narrated in spatial terms within the texts.

Relocation and displacement (spatial mobility of human bodies, in a wider sense) were used as narrative devices in two ways. Firstly, they allowed constructing a process of holiness for the saint's body as well as a process of holiness for different spaces, sanctified by the presence of the saint and transformed in potential spaces for pilgrimage. This was done by means of a constant voluntary or involuntary change of place of residence and re-construction of personal space. In both Gregory's and Niketas' narrative strategies, corporeal mobility (the saint's wandering or relocating body) serves as indication of a modification of the saint's state of mind and spirit. Secondly, it allows all characters to perform iterative negotiations of identity and difference within the particular storyworlds.[7]

CORPOREAL MOBILITY AND RELOCATION AS A NARRATIVE DEVICE

Relocation as a narrative device is of exemplary use in Gregory the Cellarer's account of the life of Lazaros. The latter, born near Magnesia on the Meander, first sets off for an adventurous journey to visit the Holy Land at the age of eighteen, thus fulfilling his life-long dream.[8] That is the beginning of twenty-five years of circular wandering across Asia Minor and the Holy Land before returning to his homeland, Ephesos. Despite what one would expect, a new phase of wandering around Ephesos and the nearby Mount Galesion awaited Lazaros back home. His first, completely intentional, large-scale-wandering phase is a narrative technique used by Gregory to communicate a process of personal education, spiritual improvement, and making of a new identity as an ascete by means of interaction with God and with his fellow Byzantines. The second, smaller-scale wandering of Lazaros around Mount Galesion, is Gregory's device to narrate a subsequent stage of the holification process, which involves a negotiation and performance of Lazaros' new identity as a holy man within his local social environment.

Starting from his first wandering phase, Lazaros travelled to the Holy Land and back, around Asia Minor, visiting renowned pilgrimage sites to worship local saints. And yet, he repeatedly came across places and their inhospitable inhabitants who denied him food and water:

> When daylight came, Lazaros decided not to leave the village that day until the divine liturgy had been celebrated, ⟨partly⟩ because of the solemnity of the day, as it was the feast of the Forty

[6] See Herman 1955.
[7] On this issue, see also Chapter 8.
[8] For a detailed account of Lazaros' wandering, see Chapter 2.

> Martyrs of Christ, but at the same time as a test of the uncharitable people ⟨who lived⟩ there. When the time for the liturgy had come, however, and the divine service had been celebrated, ⟨still⟩ no one had given him even a crumb of bread to eat. Then Lazaros realized that they had no concept at all of sharing. He did not get angry or shout insults at them, but raised his hands and his eyes toward heaven and offered up some such words of thanks to God ⟨as these⟩: 'Lord, I give you thanks; and if you should consider me worthy to live in some place where it is clearly your will ⟨for me to do so⟩, I will not eat by myself the bread that you send me, but I will also serve it as food to all those, rich and poor, who come to me in your name.' After he had said this, he left the village. As he saw a small chapel somewhere nearby, he went to it. He found a nun established in it who, when she saw him, got up and brought him bread and water and made him take some food. After he had partaken of ⟨this⟩ nourishment, he gave thanks to God (for he did everything to the glory of God and, if anything ever happened to him, whether happy or sad, it became an occasion for him to thank God) and then also blessed the nun, before setting off on his way.[9]

Lazaros, in this passage, is a special (holy) person but he is also a traveller. It goes without saying that, as a traveller, he is also a tired, hungry and thirsty man. His wish to settle somewhere and find means of support is obvious in his words of promise to God (Κύριε, λέγων ... εἰς τροφὴν παραθήσω). Considering this presentation of the main character in the story, a modern reader might have expected that local people in the village assisted and protected the fragile—and, in God's eyes, precious—person. This does not happen in Gregory's story, because his priority is to illustrate the holy man's difficult training process (οὐδεὶς ... ἀνθρώπων). Lazaros' mission, according to Gregory, is to survive on his own, and save humanity from its weakmindedness and heartlessness. His only alternative to facing people's weaknesses is to pass by them and look for better Christians (Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ... ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν τροφῆς μεταλαβεῖν).

In Gregory's entire biography of Lazaros, the latter does nothing else but relocate in order to encounter the optimal conditions for his process of holification. Namely, he is looking for the 'place which feels right' for his performance of holy identity within the context of a community. Following Gregory's account into the second wandering phase of Lazaros around Ephesos and Mount Galesion, the

[9] Ὡς δὲ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, ἔκρινε μὴ ἐξελθεῖν τῆς κώμης τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, μέχρις ἂν ἡ θεία λειτουργία τελεσθῇ διὰ τὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐπίσημον, ἦν γὰρ ἡ μνήμη τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ τεσσαράκοντα μαρτύρων, ἅμα δὲ καὶ πρὸς δοκιμὴν τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἀνελεημόνων ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ δὴ τοῦ καιροῦ τῆς λειτουργίας ἐφεστῶτος καὶ τῆς θείας ἱερουργίας τελεσθείσης, οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ κἂν κλάσμα ἄρτου εἰς τροφὴν δέδωκεν. Ὁ δὲ ἰδὼν τὸ τῆς γνώμης αὐτῶν ἀμετάδοτον, οὐκ ἠγανάκτησεν, οὐ λόγον ὑβριστικὸν κατ' αὐτῶν ἀφῆκεν, ἀλλὰ χεῖρας ἅμα καὶ ὄμματα εἰς οὐρανὸν ἄρας πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν τοιαύτας φωνὰς εὐχαριστηρίους ἀφίει· Κύριε, λέγων, εὐχαριστῶ σοι· ἐὰν δέ με καταξιώσῃς ἐν τόπῳ, ὅπου δηλαδὴ τὸ σὸν θέλημά ἐστι, τὴν κατοίκησιν ποιῆσαι, οὐ μή μου τὸν ἄρτον, ὃν αὐτός μοι ἀποστέλλεις, μόνος φάγωμαι, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι τοῖς πρός με διὰ τὸ σὸν ὄνομα ἐρχομένοις, πλουσίοις τε καὶ πένησιν, εἰς τροφὴν παραθήσω. Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἐξῆλθε τῆς κώμης. Μικρὸν δὲ εὐκτήριον ἐγγύς που ἰδών, πρὸς αὐτὸ ἦλθεν· ἐν ᾧ εὗρε μοναχήν τινα καθεζομένην· ἥτις ἰδοῦσα αὐτόν, ἀναστᾶσα καὶ ἄρτον καὶ ὕδωρ αὐτῷ προσκομίσασα ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν τροφῆς μεταλαβεῖν. Μεταλαβὼν οὖν τροφῆς καὶ τῷ Θεῷ εὐχαριστήσας, καὶ γὰρ πάντα εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ ἐποίει καὶ εἴ τι ἂν συνέβαινε τούτῳ, εἴτε λυπηρὸν εἴτε χαροποιόν, ἀφορμὴ αὐτῷ τῆς πρὸς Θεὸν εὐχαριστίας ἐγίνετο, εἶτα καὶ τὴν μονάζουσαν εὐξάμενος τὴν ὁδὸν ἐστέλλετο τὴν αὐτοῦ. *L. Laz.* §28.1–29, translation by Greenfield 2000, 112–3. 10 On this issue, see Chapter 8.

pattern of relocation becomes even clearer. Lazaros keeps negotiating his identity of holy man by relocating himself on a smaller scale, by selecting his place for residence and by constructing his personal space.[10]

In a way, relocating his body allowed Lazaros contact with people outside his own community network and a wider knowledge of the world. In this process, finding the right refuge for his wandering body was never an easy task for him. In the second wandering phase, Gregory makes Lazaros' selection of place of residence emerge from divine instruction through a number of signs:

> Since our father Lazaros, as has already been made clear, was contemplating the ascent of the mountain, he got up in the night without the knowledge of any of his companions and went up toward it. But as he began to climb up he decided that he ought first to go up and see the stylite who was on Petra above the village, for he was ascending from there and had heard that this man wanted to leave his pillar. For this reason, Lazaros was going up to him to ask if the place was suitable for his purpose so that, when ⟨the stylite⟩ left, he might move in himself. ⟨Lengths of⟩ wood had been fastened to the rock with other ⟨slats⟩ lying flat on top of them (indeed the peg which is still now to be seen fastened to Petra bears witness to this), and there was a rope tied at both ends on either side, which those going up used as a guide. The father, using the same method, thus started up toward the stylite, stepping on the ⟨slats⟩ of wood; but, when he had already reached the middle of the rock, the rope he was holding with his hand as a guide suddenly broke and he fell on his face onto the ⟨slats⟩ of wood. This was all the work of the Evil One and a contrivance ⟨designed⟩ to kill him by making him fall down from there. But the grace of God, which was always with him and kept him safe everywhere, rendered that ⟨Evil⟩ One's devices useless, for Lazaros stood up and, holding onto the rock with his hands and going little by little, set off ⟨again⟩ toward the stylite. When, ⟨however⟩, he saw and spoke with the man, he learned from him that the place was unsuitable for spiritual peace, 'For I myself,' said ⟨the stylite⟩, 'am about to withdraw from this place for this ⟨very⟩ reason.' He advised Lazaros to set off for holy Paphnoutios' cave, and so, after he had come down from there, he started up the mountain, singing as he climbed. But when he reached the rock where there is the extremely narrow passage, he finished the office he was singing and, being about to say the prayer, stretched out his right hand and made the sign of the cross on the rock; he kissed it, said his prayer, and ⟨then⟩ passed the place. The cross is still visible now carved ⟨in the rock⟩, for it was engraved afterward on the father's order as a phylactery for those passing by there. When he reached the cave, he went in and looked round and, since it was to his liking, he stayed in it for six months. He used to go out and wander around the mountain, but return to it again and go inside.[11]

[10] On this issue, see Chapter 8.

[11] Ὁ δέ γε πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ὡς ἤδη προδεδήλωται, σκοπῶν τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὄρος ἀνάβασιν, ἀναστὰς νυκτὸς μηδενὸς τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰδότος, ἄνεισι πρὸς αὐτό. Ὡς δὲ ἤρξατο ἀνέρχεσθαι, δεῖν ἔκρινε πρῶτον ἀνελθεῖν καὶ τὸν ἐν τῇ Πέτρᾳ ὄντα στυλίτην ἄνωθεν τοῦ χωρίου ἰδεῖν. Ἐκεῖθεν γὰρ ἀνήρχετο. Ἦν γὰρ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἀκούσας, ὅτι ἐξελθεῖν τοῦ στύλου βούλεται. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀνήρχετο πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι, εἰ ἔστιν ὁ τόπος πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ σκοπὸν ἐπιτήδειος, ὥστε ἐκείνου ἐξελθόντος αὐτὸν εἰσελθεῖν. Ἦσαν δὲ ξύλα πεπηγμένα ἐπὶ τῆς Πέτρας καὶ ἕτερα ἐπάνω αὐτῶν ὕπτια κείμενα· καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τοῦτο ὁ ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἐπὶ τῆς Πέτρας πάσσαλος πεπηγμένος ὁρώμενος. Κάλως δὲ ἦν ταῖς δυσὶν ἀρχαῖς ἐξ ἑκατέρου μέρους δεδεμένος, ᾧ καὶ ἐχρῶντο οἱ ἀνερχόμενοι ἀντὶ χειραγωγοῦ. Ὡς οὖν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ χρώμενος βαδίζων ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων πρὸς τὸν στυλίτην ἀπῄει καὶ ἤδη πρὸς τὸ μέσον τῆς πέτρας ἔφθασεν, ἄφνω τοῦ κάλω, ὃν ἀντὶ χειραγωγοῦ ταῖς χερσὶν ἐκράτει, κοπέντος, αὐτὸς ἐπάνω τῶν ξύλων κατὰ πρόσωπον πέπτωκε. Τοῦτο πάντως ἔργον ἦν τοῦ πονηροῦ καὶ μηχάνημα πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖθεν κρημνίσαντα θανατῶσαι. Ἀλλ' ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάρις, ἡ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἀεὶ οὖσα καὶ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ τοῦτον περιφρουροῦσα, ἀπράκτους ἐποίει τὰς ἐκείνου μηχανάς. Ἀναστὰς γὰρ καὶ ταῖς χερσὶ τὴν πέτραν κρατῶν, κατὰ μικρὸν βαδίζων ἀπῆλθε πρὸς τὸν

Every single step of Lazaros on his path along the mountain is accompanied by ritual, it is symbolic and spiritually charged. A number of natural and human features (the village, the stylite, the rocks, the wooden bridge, the rope, the slats, the narrow passage, the cross) are performed by the holy man in a particular manner, narrated in great detail by Gregory. This performance is that of a holy man: he perceives and conceives the dangerous mountain in a way different than other humans. He belongs there and he surpasses his fear and the dangers with the help of God. The exchangeability of holy space and a holy place (as one saint takes the place of another) is an additional argument by Gregory in favour of Lazaros' 'owning the mountain'.[12]

The account is full of signs which are meant to communicate specific physical, social and religious meaning as well as a variety of emotions (fear, danger, comfort, relief) to the reader or listener. This is obvious through Gregory's extremely detailed account of spaces, as well as of the gestures, movements, and trajectory of the holy man. In this passage, the 'spatial narration' is clearly supposed to ring multiple 'bells' in the audience's ears, and especially if the listeners or readers are locals. All this information serves the purpose of verisimilitude and credibility, as literally stated on two occasions. The peg is still now to be seen fastened to Petra and bears witness to the first event (καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τοῦτο ... ὁρώμενος). The cross from the second event is still visible now carved in the rock, for it was engraved afterward on the father's order as a phylactery for those passing by (Ὁ δὲ σταυρὸς ... τῶν ἐκεῖσε διερχομένων). At a second level, the narration of this entire ritual process by Gregory serves to imply to the audience that this process is a modifier of the saint's state of mind and spirit, thus moving the holification story along.

Niketas also uses this relocation pattern as a narrative technique for showing progress in the holification process. Symeon the New Theologian's relocation, however, is confined to the first part of his life story (it ends completely after §109) and it takes place within a much smaller geographical range than that of Lazaros.[13] While Symeon's origin from Paphlagonia is simply mentioned, his moving is limited within the city of Constantinople, and a small area on the opposite coast of the Bosphorus near Chrysopolis. From the imperial court he relocates to the

στυλίτην· καὶ ἰδὼν καὶ ὁμιλήσας αὐτῷ, ἤκουε παρ' ἐκείνου μὴ εἶναι τὸν τόπον πρὸς ἡσυχίαν ἐπιτήδειον. Καὶ γάρ, φησί, κἀγὼ διὰ τοῦτο μέλλω ἐκ τῶν ὧδε ἀναχωρῆσαι'. Συνεβούλευε δὲ καὶ οὗτος αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Παφνουτίου σπήλαιον ἀπελθεῖν. Κατελθὼν οὖν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀρξάμενος τοῦ ὄρους ψάλλων ἀνήρχετο. Ὡς δὲ ἔφθασεν εἰς τὴν Πέτραν, ἔνθα ἐστὶν ἡ πάνυ στενοτάτη διάβασις, τελέσας τὴν ὥραν ἣν ἔψαλλε καὶ μέλλων τὴν εὐχὴν ποιῆσαι, ἐκτείνας τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα καὶ τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας ποιήσας, ἀσπασάμενος αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν εὐχὴν εἰπών, τὸν τόπον παρῆλθεν. Ὁ δὲ σταυρὸς μέχρι τοῦ νῦν κεκολαμμένος ὢν καθορᾶται, ἐγκολαφθεὶς μετέπειτα κελεύσει τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς εἰς φυλακτήριον τῶν ἐκεῖσε διερχομένων. Φθάσας δὲ ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸ καὶ ἀρεσθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτῷ, ἔμεινεν ἐν αὐτῷ μῆνας ἕξ. Ἐξερχόμενος δὲ καὶ περιπολεύων τὸ ὄρος, πάλιν ὑποστρέφων εἰς αὐτὸ εἰσήρχετο. *L. Laz.* §41, translated by Greenfield 2000, 127–8.

[12] See also Chapter 9.

[13] See the detailed account of Symeon's mobility in Chapter 2.

Stoudios monastery thus publicizing his desire to become a trainee monk. His temporary return to Paphlagonia, to announce the news to his family, makes his decision definite and introduces his new identity to his community. Later on, his next relocation from Stoudios to St Mamas monastery, a couple of kilometres to the north, was the result of a dispute with his brothers.[14]

In the plot, corporeal mobility (the wandering body) serves as modifier of the saint's state of mind and spirit. The most eloquent example of Niketas' use of relocation as a device that moves the story along comes from the narration of Symeon the New Theologian's later years. During most of his life (§1–94), Symeon had only been interested in residing within the area of the Byzantine capital, and he had clearly been extremely unhappy to be forced by the authorities to leave it for a remote location on the opposite coast of the Bosphorus (§95–100). Not very long after that his reputation was restored by the Patriarch and his unjust exile was cancelled; he was again welcome to the Byzantine capital and he was allowed to be ordained as a metropolitan in a city (§101– 8). Hence it is very surprising that, instead of returning to an urban environment (which was so familiar to him and for which he had longed for so much), Symeon chooses to keep his monastery on the opposite coast, as permitted to him by the Patriarch, and develop his life over there in the way he wanted it (i.e. maintaining his ideas and celebrating his spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes).[15] He returned to his monastery near Chrysoupolis supported by his followers, and spent the rest of his life there.[16] Niketas narrates how Symeon left the patriarchate rejoicing, and after teaching everyone to whom he was known and loved in the house of the wondrous Christopher Phagouras, he 'crossed over to the solitude that was so dear to him as he wanted to build a cell there in which to practice spiritual tranquillity'.[17] And God 'rained down a shower of resources upon the blessed one and opened the treasuries of the ruling elites to him, for everyone together, relatives, friends, and children, provided a great quantity of gold' for Symeon to construct the new monastery.[18]

In this case, Niketas uses relocation as a narrative device that marks a new stage in the story of Symeon the New Theologian's path to holiness: his discovery of his 'real home'. Symeon is now shown as obviously re-established in the capital's political and social life; upon his return to the capital for the announcement of the end of his punishment, he is welcomed by the Patriarch himself and by members of all strata of the ecclesiastical and monastic hierarchy.[19] Then, back in Chrysopolis, a prominent citizen who had supported him from the very beginning (Christo-

[14] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §21–2, translation by Greenfield 2013, 49–53.
[15] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §103–4. This part of the text is discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 29–30.
[16] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109–12.
[17] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109.16–7, translation by Greenfield 2013, 253. For the Greek text see Chapter 8, on p. 132.
[18] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109.19–25, translation by Greenfield 2013, 253. For the Greek text see Chapter 8, on p. 132.
[19] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §103–4. This part of the text is discussed in Chapter 2, on pp. 29–30.

pher Phagouras) welcomes him in his home, where many people seek his teaching and actively approve of it by donating money to his new monastery. However, Symeon does not stay in the capital, which used to be his hometown. In order to show continuity from Symeon's previous stage of his route to holiness, Niketas wants him to continue his hesychia at the previous, and familiar, remote location on the other side of the Bosporus. He also wants him to have his own monastery where he is free to teach his theological beliefs in his own way, undisturbed. The return to Chrysopolis means the establishment of Symeon the New Theologian as a holy man.

In brief, in the *Lives* here discussed, Gregory and Niketas succeed in communicating culture by describing corporeal motion in space. How would that work? First of all, the pronounced spatiality and mobility in Lazaros' story reflects the spatialities of Byzantine culture: Lazaros' character is relocating within the *Life* because that is what a Byzantine holy man was supposed to do. In Symeon the New Theologian's *Life*, corporeal spatial motion on the horizontal axis exists yet in a lesser degree so as to leave space for Niketas' intentional emphasis on spiritual/corporeal motion on the vertical axis, which is the saint's main virtue and means of holification.[20]

Secondly, the literary cultural practices of mobility worked in a bidirectional way; here lies exactly the purpose of the narrative strategies under discussion. In one direction, becoming holy was practiced by corporeal relocation; in the opposite direction, telling of 'a mobile body' was the way of telling of 'a mobile soul'. In recent studies, walking has been shown to be much more than a destination-oriented, functional mode of transport. Within 'walking studies' in cultural geography and social anthropology, pedestrianism (as lived or practiced realities of walking) has been variously understood as being reflective of changing social forms and norms, and as expressive of diverse cultural meanings.[21] These understandings open up a new set of possibilities for thinking about ways in which wandering might have actually been working in hagiographical narratives, and how their authors directed their characters' movement through space in order to construct spatial stories, or forms of narrative understanding, for their audience.[22]

'IN' AND 'OUT': OPEN VERSUS CLOSED SPACE

Alongside relocation, the authors of the two *Lives* use another tool for 'regulating' Symeon the New Theologian's and Lazaros' contacts with God, on one hand, and with the mundane world, on the other. They open up or close down their personal space according to their wish: they receive other characters in or they shut them out, thus rendering the space public or private. At other parts of the texts, open space meets as reference to heaven. The pillar and the in-cell vision again appear

[20] For elaborations of these complex mobility patterns, see also Chapters 2–5, 8, 10.
[21] Cresswell & Merriman 2010.
[22] Tilley 1994, 28.

as hybrid spaces in-between 'in' and 'out'—hence bridging the two extremes.[23] In what follows I discuss various ways in which in-between and liminal space, on the horizontal axis, works as a narrative device.

Elective contact and accessibility, private and public space

Symeon the New Theologian and Lazaros open up or close down their personal space according to their wish. Opening up their personal space to others—and hence rendering it public—means that it is time for teaching: they receive their flock and disciples. Closing down their personal space to others—hence rendering it private—signifies that it is time to seek spiritual contact with their master. Eventually, this rule is (selectively) broken, and the aforementioned order is interrupted by the authors: this interruption comes as a narrative technique to exemplify the man's holiness to the audience. The following episode from Gregory's narration illustrates such an interruption:

> As the most Evil One was unable to trip Lazaros up by using these many various devices, he tried something else. The brother *went up as usual* and *took Lazaros his water* with the pulse but, *after he had gone*, ⟨the Devil⟩ *made a scorpion come out and sting* the father on the foot. Lazaros *jerked his foot at the sudden blow and broke the pot that was standing there*, ⟨thus⟩ *spilling the water*. When the father saw this, he decided not to eat the pulses, preferring not eating at all to eating without drinking. He remained in this state until the Friday without tasting anything at all. But God, Who loves men and does not abandon His own servants in the end, even though He does allow them to be tested for a time, revealed Himself by means of an angel *to a layman called Loukianos who lived in the village of Kepion*; because of his faith in the father and because he used to entrust his thoughts to him, he was Lazaros' spiritual son. ⟨The angel⟩ said, 'You are sleeping without a care, but your father Lazaros is even now on the point of dying from thirst.' The brother *woke up* and knew from the vision in his sleep what had happened to the father; so, *he got up, took a jar full of water, and went running up to him*. When he got ⟨there⟩ he found Lazaros just about to die from thirst, for it was summer time. The father *took the water and drank*, and when he had recovered he gave glory to God who had *thus miraculously sent him the water by means of this brother*, just as of old he sent food to Daniel in the ⟨lions'⟩ den by Abbakoum. From that time on God gave Lazaros the grace of *controlling and binding scorpions with his own hands and, by stretching out his hand from the pillar to the hands ⟨of others⟩, of passing it on to those outside*. As a result ⟨of this incident⟩, he yielded to the entreaties of the brothers that one of *them should go up and live in the cave* to assist him because of the obstacles ⟨put in his way⟩ by the Evil One; and so one of them, called Kosmas, *went up ⟨there⟩*.[24]

[23] See Chapter 5.

[24] Ὡς δὲ τοιαύταις καὶ πολλαῖς τέχναις ὁ παμπόνηρος χρησάμενος ὑποσκελίσαι τοῦτον οὐκ ἠδυνήθη, ἄλλως πάλιν ἐπιχειρεῖ. Ὡς γὰρ ἀνῆλθεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς κατὰ τὸ ἔθος καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ μετὰ τοῦ ὀσπρίου ἐκόμισε, μετὰ τὸ κατελθεῖν αὐτὸν σκορπίον ποιεῖ προσελθεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ποδὸς πλῆξαι τὸν πατέρα· ὃς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἰφνιδίου κρούματος τὸν πόδα τινάξας, τὸ κεράμιον ἐκεῖσε κείμενον κρούσας, ἐκχέει τὸ ὕδωρ. Τοῦτο ἰδὼν ὁ πατὴρ ἔκρινε μηδὲ τοῦ ὀσπρίου γεύσασθαι, λογισάμενος, ὅτι κρεῖσσον μηδ' ὅλως φαγεῖν ἢ φαγόντα μὴ πιεῖν. Καὶ ἔμεινεν οὕτως μέχρι τῆς παρασκευῆς, μηδ' ὅλως τινὸς γευσάμενος. Ὁ δὲ φιλάνθρωπος Θεός, ὁ μὴ εἰς τέλος τοὺς οἰκείους δούλους καταλιμπάνων, εἰ καὶ πρὸς καιρὸν παραχωρεῖ τούτους πειράζεσθαι, κοσμικῷ τινι τὴν οἴκησιν εἰς τὸ χωρίον ἔχοντι τὸ Κηπίον, Λουκιανῷ τοὔνομα, ὃς διά τε τὴν πίστιν ἣν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἶχε καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν λογισμῶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνάθεσιν υἱὸς πνευματικὸς αὐτῷ ἦν, δι' ἀγγέλου ὀπτάνεται αὐτῷ ὑπνοῦντι λέγων·Σὺ μὲν ἀμερίμνως ὑπνοῖς, ὁ δὲ σὸς πατὴρ Λάζαρος ἤδη ἐκ

Here, Lazaros isolates himself on the pillar and, because of a scorpion sting, he does not eat and drink for several days until he almost dies of thirst. God intervenes by means of contacting a disciple in his dream and instructing him to take care of his father. The disciple goes over to the pillar and saves Lazaros. After that, the disciples decide that one of them should go up and live with the old man to take care of him. While Lazaros chooses isolation and never invites anyone to live with him, God's intervention through the disciple, serves as proof of Lazaros' holiness to the audience. Gregory's 'spatial narration', here, consists first of all of descriptions of the spatial setting of the salvation of Lazaros' life, i.e. his pillar, the monastery, the cave, the village of Kepion (ἀνῆλθεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς κατὰ τὸ ἔθος, τὴν οἴκησιν εἰς τὸ χωρίον ἔχοντι τὸ Κηπίον). Secondly, a series of details allow the audience to mentally reconstruct the setting of developments: the food and the water, the vessels, and Lazaros' movement within his cell atop the pillar (τὸ ὕδωρ μετὰ τοῦ ὀσπρίου ἐκόμισε, μετὰ τὸ κατελθεῖν αὐτὸν σκορπίον ποιεῖ προσελθεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ποδὸς πλῆξαι τὸν πατέρα· ὃς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἰφνιδίου κρούματος τὸν πόδα τινάξας, τὸ κεράμιον ἐκεῖσε κείμενον κρούσας, ἐκχέει τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἐκ τοῦ στύλου τὴν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα προτείνοντι παρέχειν). Thirdly, the plot unfolds through a designation of characters' positions or movements in space by means of a series of verb forms (ἀνῆλθεν, ἐκόμισε, κατελθεῖν, προσελθεῖν, τινάξας, ἐκχέει, ἔμεινεν, καταλιμπάνων, ὀπτάνεται, ἐκλείπει, διυπνισθεὶς, ἀναστὰς καὶ λαβὼν, δρομαῖος ἄνεισι, ἐλθὼν εὗρεν, ἐκλείπειν μέλλοντα, καταπεμψαμένῳ, κρατεῖν καὶ δεσμεύειν, προτείνοντι, ἀνελθών, κάθηται, ἀνῆλθεν).

A very similar narrative device is used by Niketas in paragraph 117 of the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian.[25] Symeon's disciple, Nikephoros, narrates his relationship to the father. The latter would not let any of his other fellow monks join him or stay in the same cell with him at all, except for Nikephoros; he was always very careful and strict that no one else should ever know what he did in his cell.[26] One night, Symeon lets Nikephoros lie in a corner on the floor of his cell and sleep; this happens perhaps because the latter is innocent and without guile, as he is still a child, or because Symeon needs the latter's help in his old age, or because

τῆς δίψης ὅσον οὔπω ἐκλείπει. Διυπνισθεὶς οὖν ὁ ἀδελφὸς καὶ γνοὺς ἐκ τῆς καθ' ὕπνον φαντασίας, τί συνέβη τῷ πατρί, ἀναστὰς καὶ λαβὼν στάμνον μεστὴν ὕδατος, δρομαῖος ἄνεισι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐλθὼν εὗρεν αὐτὸν μικροῦ ἐκλείπειν μέλλοντα ἐκ τῆς δίψης. Ἦν γὰρ ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ θέρους. Λαβὼν οὖν ὁ πατὴρ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ πιὼν καὶ ἀνακτησάμενος ἑαυτόν, δόξαν ἀνέπεμψε τῷ Θεῷ τῷ οὕτως παραδόξως, ὥσπερ πάλαι τῷ Δανιὴλ ἐν τῷ λάκκῳ διὰ τοῦ Ἀββακοὺμ τὴν βρῶσιν ἀπέστειλε, καὶ αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦδε καταπεμψαμένῳ τὸ ὕδωρ· χάρις δὲ αὐτῷ ἔκτοτε ἐδόθη παρὰ Θεοῦ, ὥστε ταῖς οἰκείαις χερσὶ τοὺς σκορπίους κρατεῖν καὶ δεσμεύειν καὶ ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἐκ τοῦ στύλου τὴν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα προτείνοντι παρέχειν τοῖς ἔξω. Παρακληθεὶς οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν κατεδέξατο, ἵνα ἀνελθών τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ πρὸς τὸ ὑπουργεῖν αὐτῷ κάθηται διὰ τὰ τοῦ πονηροῦ σκάνδαλα. Καὶ δὴ ἀνῆλθεν εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Κοσμᾶς. *L. Laz.* §55, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142–3.

[25] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117, translation by Greenfield 2013, 275–7. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 8, on p. 140.

[26] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.1–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 275.

it is a result of God's own planning (so that Nikephoros would tell people about Symeon's accomplishments).[27] For Nikephoros is awakened around midnight by something he sees—wide awake with his eyes wide open; a wonder involving him occurs.[28] A large icon of the Deesis is hung high up there, close to the ceiling of his cell, and a lamp is burning in front of the icon; and behold, he sees the saint suspended in the air at a height of around four cubits, at the same level as the icon.[29] He has his hands raised in prayer and is completely light, completely radiant.[30] Nikephoros is frightened when he sees this awesome and extraordinary miracle, so he puts his head under the mattress and hides his face.[31] In the morning, he is still afraid and tells the saint privately what he has seen, but the latter is angry and orders him not to tell anyone at all about this.[32]

In this passage, Niketas makes clear that Symeon the New Theologian's cell is his personal space and closed to everyone else. A single exception is made for personal reasons or under divine planning: either the holy man's old age is used as a pretext for his sharing that space once with a disciple or the narrative strategy makes it necessary to have it in this way for the sake of authorial credibility. This allows the story to have an eye-witness of Symeon's in-cell visions.

'Breadth' as 'divinity' and 'narrowness' as 'humanity'

In the conclusion of his narration, Gregory explains the whole point of his telling Lazaros' life story. He puts it concisely as follows:

> This ⟨then⟩ was the career, this the life of that earthly angel and heavenly man, our blessed father Lazaros. He kept on earth to the straight and narrow path, as the Gospel ⟨has it⟩, and has ⟨thus now⟩ passed on to the open spaces and ever-enduring life in heaven, ⟨where⟩ he stands with the angels in the presence of the holy and life-giving Trinity, receiving abundant rewards for his many labours. ⟨There⟩ he constantly and eagerly intercedes on behalf of us who speak his praises on earth, so that we may receive from God release from the grievous ⟨ills⟩ that oppress us and ⟨forgiveness⟩ for the sins we have committed, and in order that we too, after we have made holy remembrance of him with spiritual joy and have eagerly striven to emulate his life as far as we can, may offer up praise to the Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.[33]

[27] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.6–17, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[28] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.18–21, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[29] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.21–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[30] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.27–8, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[31] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117.28–31, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[32] *L. Sym. New Theol*. §117.31–4, translation by Greenfield 2013, 277.
[33] Αὕτη ἡ πολιτεία, οὗτος ὁ βίος τοῦ ἐπιγείου ἀγγέλου καὶ οὐρανίου ἀνθρώπου, τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Λαζάρου, ὃς τὴν στενὴν καὶ τεθλιμμένην ἐπὶ γῆς εὐαγγελικῶς … ὁδὸν τηρῶν πρὸς τὴν εὐρύχωρον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον ἐν οὐρανοῖς ζωὴν μεταβέβηκε καὶ σὺν ἀγγέλοις τῇ ἁγίᾳ καὶ ζωαρχικῇ παρέστη Τριάδι, τῶν πολλῶν αὐτοῦ καμάτων δαψιλεῖς ἀπολαμβάνων τὰς ἀμοιβάς, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς αὐτὸν εὐφημούντων ἐκτενῶς ἀεὶ πρεσβεύων, ὡς ἂν τῶν συνεχόντων ἡμᾶς ἀνιαρῶν καὶ τῶν ἐπταισμένων ἡμῖν ἁμαρτιῶν λύσιν πρὸς Θεοῦ λάβοιμεν, ἵνα δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν ἱερὰν αὐτοῦ μνήμην ἐν χαρμοσύνῃ ἐκτελοῦντες πνευματικῇ καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ βίον κατὰ δύναμιν ζηλοῦν σπεύδοντες δόξαν τῷ Υἱῷ ἅμα τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι ἀναπέμψωμεν, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν. *L. Laz.* §255, translation by Greenfield 2000, 365.

Heaven is here described as εὐρύχωρος, literally meaning 'broad space'. Yet it has been translated by Greenfield as 'open space', which is relevant based on the textual context. Specifically, in the text that immediately follows, the space in which Lazaros lives is narrated as open in both directions: there angels and saints live in close contact with the Holy Trinity, while at the same time overlooking the closed mundane world underneath (ἐν οὐρανοῖς ζωὴν ... ἀεὶ πρεσβεύων).

The contact between the two worlds, the high and the low, is provided by the saints, who serve as the intermediates that negotiate with God the salvation of the sinners. For that reason, the humans are to celebrate the saints' lives and efforts towards holiness on earth. These efforts are described as a space extremely limited and closed: a 'straight and narrow path' (τὴν στενὴν καὶ τεθλιμμένην ἐπὶ γῆς εὐαγγελικῶς ὁδὸν τηρῶν). The breadth and openness of the divine world are thus contrasted to the narrowness and closedness of the mundane. The main feature of the space of holy men, lying in-between the earth and the heaven, is that it is permeable from both sides (the human and the divine) and it has access to both.

The pillar and cell as 'in-between' (in-and-out, open-and-closed) spaces

The pillar and the in-cell vision have already been discussed as 'in-between spaces' on the vertical axis, constituting narrative devices that move the story along.[34] I have suggested that the in-cell vision and the pillar are conceived in Byzantine hagiography as idiosyncratic religious/cultural spaces, i.e. as hybrid places characterized by a synthesis of antithetic qualities: both ideal-and-practical, real-and-imaginary, open-and-closed, high-and-low, human-and-divine etc. Here, I wish to add to that discussion that these spaces are also similarly conceived by Gregory and Niketas as hybrid in-between spaces on the horizontal axis. They are 'open-and-closed' on the horizontal axis, thus allowing the saint to be simultaneously in-and-out.

Symeon the New Theologian's experience, as narrated by Niketas, is very telling regarding this matter.[35] While he was standing in prayer one night, with his own pure intellect communing with God, he suddenly saw a pure and immense light shining on him from the heavens above, illuminating everything and making it bright as day.[36] He too was illuminated by it, and it seemed that the whole building, along with the cell in which he was standing, vanished and all at once dissolved into nothingness, but he himself was taken up into the air and completely forgot about his body (ὑφ' οὗ δηλαδὴ ... ἐπιλαθόμενον).[37] While he was in the midst of this light, he looked in the vault of heaven where there was a kind of very bright cloud

[34] See Chapter 5.

[35] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5, translated by Greenfield 2013, 13, 15. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 5, on pp. 99–100..

[36] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.1–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 13.

[37] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.6–10, translation by Greenfield 2013, 13.

without any form or shape and full of the ineffable glory of God.[38] To the right of this cloud he saw his own spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes, standing in the usual clothes which he wore in life, gazing unwaveringly at that divine light and praying continually.[39] Being in this state of ecstasy for a long time and seeing his own spiritual father standing at the right hand of the glory of God, he could not tell whether he was in his body at that time or out of his body.[40] Sometime later the light gradually faded and he came back to himself in his body and in his cell.[41] In this paragraph, Niketas narrates how the light creates Symeon the New Theologian's vision and dissolves physical spaces: the cell, the building, and even the saint's body. In this way, 'in' and 'out' (of the cell, of the building, of the body) no longer exist. Through this same light, which unifies the glory on earth with the glory in heaven, Symeon can see his God in heaven without having moved at all from the interior of his cell.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have argued that, in their texts, Gregory and Niketas, by means of describing corporeal motion in space, succeed in conveying a number of complex social, cultural and theological messages to their audience/readers. The dynamic mobility on the horizontal axis, in Lazaros' story, reflects his rise in state and knowledge. In Symeon the New Theologian's story, the same rise is expressed through mobility on the vertical axis. The authors of the two *Lives* also employ a 'spatial' narrative technique to clarify the holy men's position in-between earth and heaven. They narrate Symeon the New Theologian's and Lazaros' life stories as a sequence of elective contacts and interactions with God, on one hand, and with the mundane world, on the other. The two authors have the holy men's opening up or closing down personal space according to their wish. Lazaros and Symeon receive other characters or shut them out, thus rendering their personal space either public or private as they wish. Furthermore, narrow space is found as a metaphor for the mundane world while open space acts as a reference to heaven. Within this necessarily bipolar system in a story of holification, the pillar and the in-cell vision appear as hybrid spaces: they lie in-between 'in' and 'out', hence they serve to bridge the two extremes.

[38] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.18–21, translation by Greenfield 2013, 13.
[39] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.21–6, translation by Greenfield 2013, 15.
[40] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.26–30, translation by Greenfield 2013, 15.
[41] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §5.31–3, translation by Greenfield 2013, 15.

7

Vertical-and-horizontal perceptions of space

Another sort of mobility, which stretches along both the vertical and the horizontal axes, is the narrative technique for Gregory's construction of a holy mountain in the *Life* of Lazaros. As I wish to show in this chapter, with the help of extracts from the *Life*, during his second wandering phase, Lazaros is presented as constantly relocating around the area of Ephesos. His movement involves a gradual shifting away from settled areas (city, villages, monasteries, hermitages) in an upward direction towards the top of Mount Galesion.

A NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF A HOLY MOUNTAIN

Lazaros' career as a stylite begins with the construction of his very first pillar at the hermitage of St Marina, near the village of Kepion. Yet it seems that the nearby mountain had a tradition of being a 'sacred' place.[1] Lazaros had already started planning his relocation to the mountain at the hermitage of St Marina. The narrative motif which reifies this turn in the plot is the intrusion of lay people in the holy man's hesychia in paragraph 36.[2] Lazaros' pillar was crowded everyday: he drew everyone to him like a beacon by the brilliant illumination of his lifestyle (ὁ πατὴρ καὶ οἷά τις πυρσὸς ταῖς τοῦ βίου σελασφόροις ἐλλάμψεσι πάντας πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἵλκε).[3] Yet, another reason was that "the monastery was near the road, so everyone who passed by there used to go up to him, one for spiritual help, another out of physical need, and another again due to some crisis in his life (καὶ γὰρ διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὴν μονὴν ... διά τινας βιωτικὰς περιστάσεις)".[4] A third reason was Lazaros' eagerness to assist. Not one of those who went up to him was ever seen to return from there without having received the proper medicine for his sickness; all who went up to him grieving over their particular misfortunes joyfully returned home from him (οὐκ ἦν τινα ἰδεῖν ... πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ὑπέστρεφον).[5]

However, Lazaros saw himself as being mobbed by everybody every day, especially because the monastery lay near the road, and his ears were ringing with the voices of travellers and overseers and farm workers in the fields (βλέπων ἑαυτὸν ... οὐ μικρῶς ἠχούμενον ταῖς φωναῖς).[6] Thus, Lazaros began to seek a quieter place that would enable him to get away from the annoyance of this mass of people (ἐζήτει

[1] *L. Laz.* §62. See the discussion of this part of the text, on pp. 121–2.
[2] *L. Laz.* §36, the following summary is based upon the translation by Greenfield 2000, 122–3. See the Greek text and translation in Chapter 8.
[3] *L. Laz.* §36.1–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 122.
[4] *L. Laz.* §36.3–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[5] *L. Laz.* §36.8–10, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[6] *L. Laz.* §36.14–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.

τόπον ... ἀπαλλάξαι ὀχλήσεως).[7] What could be better than a high mountain? Mount Galesion stood right there, and it happened not only to be impassable and craggy and very rugged, but was in addition waterless, and for these reasons was able to offer much tranquillity to the person who went there (Τὸ γοῦν ἄντικρυς κείμενον Γαλήσιον ... παρέχειν δυνάμενον).[8] Lazaros thus decided that it was just the right place for him and he knew that he had to go up onto it and make his home there (ἀρεστὸν ἑαυτῷ ... κατοικίαν ποιήσασθαι).[9] An additional feature that helped him to make up his mind was that Galesion had a holy feature: it was an ascetic place: "especially he learned from many people that there was a cave on it in which, many years before, a monk called Paphnoutios had ended his days in asceticism (καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι ... τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τετέλεκε βίον)".[10]

So, it all starts with Lazaros' search for a quiet place that would allow him to escape being mobbed by a mass of lay people. "Mount Galesion stood right there" and it looked like the perfect place to discourage visitors: "it was impassable, craggy, very rugged, and waterless" hence "able to offer tranquillity".[11] Therefore, "it was just the right place for Lazaros and he knew that he had to go up onto it and make his home there". Here is how he put his plan into action.[12] Lazaros wished to have a pillar, so his ascent began by visiting a stylite. The latter advised him to settle, instead, in a sacred place: the cave of another holy man, Paphnoutios, who was deceased. Lazaros headed for the cave with a ritual performance (walking, singing, place-making) which allowed him to appropriate that space. Gregory mentions the formation of a monastic community around the cave (called 'the Savior') including the construction of a church.[13]

Yet, after six months, the ecclesiastical authorities ask him to leave the mountain; the conflict with the Church is part of the holy man's struggle to establish Galesion as a holy mountain, which according to Gregory is the holy man's greatest miracle.[14] Hence, in Gregory's story, Lazaros disobeys the authorities and, when the metropolitan leaves for Constantinople, he returns to the cave. He begins by sending a builder and a monk to renovate the small cistern associated with the cave.[15] When this cistern has been rebuilt and the winter season began and it was filled with the water that ran down the mountain, the father left the monastery of St Marina one night and went up towards the mountain together with

[7] *L. Laz.* §36.18–20, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[8] *L. Laz.* §36.20–4, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[9] *L. Laz.* §36.24–6, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[10] *L. Laz.* §36.26–9, translation by Greenfield 2000, 123.
[11] See the original text above.
[12] *L. Laz.* §41, translation by Greenfield 2000, 127–8. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this passage in Chapter 6.
[13] *L. Laz.* §42.
[14] On this issue see pp. 132–4, 166–7.
[15] *L. Laz.* §53.18–20. The following summary of the paragraph is based upon, translation by Greenfield 2000, 140–2. See the Greek text and translation a discussion of this paragraph in Chapter 9.

three other monks and a priest who knew the cave.[16] They came to a river that they crossed by means of a boat. The men offered Lazaros an animal to ride and go up in this fashion, yet the father refused and instead travelled on foot with his companions; he sang the psalms of David as he went, and only reached the place after completing the entire Psalter.[17] On the way, he also met a stylite and after that he went up onto the mountain. When they got close to the cave, they began trying to find it, because it was still dark; but then, while they were searching for it like this, the father himself happened to find it.[18] He called out to them, went inside the cave with them and stood there singing psalms all night.[19] Lazaros sent the men off, but asked them to bring him water and food; the men went down from the cave. Lazaros stayed in the cave until the brothers built him a pillar in the middle of the dry stream bed, open to the air, as he wished: he then went onto this and lived as frugally as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof, although he kept company with God through his unceasing songs of praise, vigils, and prayers.[20] By means of this entire ritual performance, Lazaros made the mountain 'his holy territory'.[21] This is his second pillar, at the Saviour, where he stayed for twelve years.

Shortly after the narration of this episode, Gregory uses exactly the same pattern as before (the intrusion of lay people) as a device that moves his story along by provoking another relocation of Lazaros:

> After a short time, as Lazaros' fame had again spread among the surrounding places, some people began going up to him. A woman, called Irene, who lived at 'the Beloved' [Ephesos] and who had just lost her husband, heard all about Lazaros and went up to him herself. When the woman saw him like that, persevering in that place alone and in the open air on his pillar, she was immediately struck in the heart by the arrow of salvation ⟨and got the idea⟩ that she herself should leave everything, take the holy habit, and, if the father agreed, construct a cell for herself near him and live there with him. However, when the father had heard her ⟨plans⟩, he would not let her do this right away but ⟨instead⟩ counseled her, gave her a rule for the conduct of her life, and then dismissed her with a blessing. But she really was a disciple of Christ and another Magdalene; she did not want to be separated from the father even for an hour, and kept on going up to him day and night and provided him with anything he might need out of her own resources.[22]

[16] *L. Laz.* §53.20–5, translation by Greenfield 2000, 140.
[17] *L. Laz.* §53.25–34, translation by Greenfield 2000, 141.
[18] *L. Laz.* §53.34–9, translation by Greenfield 2000, 141.
[19] *L. Laz.* §53.39–40, translation by Greenfield 2000, 141.
[20] *L. Laz.* §53.40–53, translation by Greenfield 2000, 141–2. For the meaning of the sparrow see p. 99.
[21] See Chapter 9.
[22] Ὡς δὲ πάλιν ἡ αὐτοῦ φήμη δι' ὀλίγου ἐν τοῖς πλησίον τόποις διεδόθη, ἤρξαντό τινες πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνέρχεσθαι. Καὶ γυνή τις τὴν οἴκησιν εἰς τὸν Ἠγαπημένον ἔχουσα, τοὔνομα Εἰρήνη, ἄρτι τὸν ἄνδρα θανάτῳ ζημιωθεῖσα, ἀκούσασα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἄνεισι καὶ αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτόν· ἥτις αὐτὸν ἰδοῦσα ἐν τῷ τόπῳ μόνον οὕτως αἴθριον ἐν τῷ στύλῳ προσκαρτεροῦντα, εὐθὺς τῷ σωτηρίῳ βέλει πλήττεται τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα καὶ αὐτὴ πάντα καταλιποῦσα καὶ τὸ ἅγιον σχῆμα λαβοῦσα, εἰ ἔστιν ἀρεστὸν τῷ πατρί, ἐγγὺς αὐτοῦ κελλίον ἑαυτῇ δομησαμένη τὴν οἴκησιν ἐκεῖσε μετ' αὐτοῦ ποιήσηται. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὁ πατὴρ παρ' αὐτῆς ἀκηκόει, οὐκ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτῇ τέως ἄρτι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι· ἀλλὰ νουθετήσας αὐτῇ καὶ κανόνα δοὺς αὐτῇ, ὅπως δεῖ αὐτὴν πολιτεύεσθαι, εὐξάμενος αὐτὴν ἀπέλυσε. Ἡ δὲ ὄντως μαθήτρια τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ

The presence of Irene moves the story along. It serves as the pretext that provokes yet another relocation of Lazaros away from the community and higher up the mountain. In his next paragraphs, Gregory narrates that Lazaros left there one day and went up to the higher part of the gorge.[23] His act was part of his effort to display his disappointment with his disciples' behaviour and set boundaries for them.[24] He summoned some monks, who knew about construction, and told them to go up to the higher part of the gorge; he indicated a place to them, asked them to cut down a wild olive tree that stood there and to make a pit near it for burning lime.[25] In the place where the tree stood, Lazaros told them to build a pillar for him similar to the one he currently inhabited.[26] When they had finished it as he had ordered, Lazaros left his previous pillar one night, without any of the brothers seeing him, climbed up to the newly built pillar, and got onto it.[27] In the morning the brothers realized what had happened, and they all went straight up to him; they saw him and then returned to the monastery of the Saviour, leaving him there alone.[28] This is Lazaros' third pillar, at Theotokos. Immediately, visitors began to appear in order to see the famous holy man.[29] Starting with the construction of a dry-stone apse immediately opposite the pillar, where a priest from the Saviour monastery would come and officiate for Lazaros,[30] another monastic community gradually developed around the old man, while he was performing miracles for his visitors.[31] Gregory does not specify the circumstances of his moving onto his last pillar, at the holy Resurrection, higher up on the mountain; he just begins his 82nd paragraph at this new place: "After the father went up to the holy Resurrection, he engaged in week-long fasting only during Lent."[32] A narration of Lazaros' interaction with his endless visitors at the new place continues for several paragraphs, until the reader suddenly understands that a brand-new monastery has emerged around Lazaros' last pillar and that Galesion is now a settled place, a monastic 'village':

ἑτέρα Μαγδαληνή, μὴ θέλουσα καὶ πρὸς ὥραν χωρισθῆναι τοῦ πατρός, οὐ διέλιπεν ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ἀνερχομένη πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῇ ὑπαρχόντων διακονοῦσα αὐτῷ, εἴ τινος ἔχρῃζεν. *L. Laz.* §56.1–21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 143.

[23] *L. Laz.* §58, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this passage in Chapter 8.

[24] This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 8. *L. Laz.* §57, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145. See the Greek text on pp. 133–4.

[25] *L. Laz.* §58.1–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[26] *L. Laz.* §58.8–10, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[27] *L. Laz.* §58.10–14, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[28] *L. Laz.* §58.14–20, translation by Greenfield 2000, 146.

[29] *L. Laz.* §59 f.

[30] *L. Laz.* §64.3–10.

[31] *L. Laz.* §64–81.

[32] Τὴν γὰρ μεγάλην τεσσαρακοστὴν ... νῆστις τὰς ἑβδομάδας διετέλει. *L. Laz.* §82.1–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 171.

> When the builders were going to construct our refectory, the father, standing on his pillar, sketched out its length and width for ⟨them⟩ by pointing with his right hand. One of the brothers, Matthew by name (and it was him who told me about this), when he saw the plan of the project, apparently found fault with the father in his own mind. Looking up at him, he said, 'Why is such effort going to be wasted on this ill-timed work? Where are the ⟨monks⟩ who are going to fill it'? For the brothers were ⟨then⟩ still few and easy to count. 'Don't you know,' he continued, 'that after your death the people who live in the village of Galesion are going to chase us out and make this a barn for their animals?'[33]

Towards the end of Lazaros' *Life*, Mount Galesion is thus a space experienced by the monks as a 'village'. In the eleventh century, the village was the type of Byzantine settlement which directly signified collective identity and responsibility, close social bonds and community, and financial unity.[34] Monastic communities of that time can be seen as 'religious versions' of this type of settlement. They also seem to have been unwanted by the secular settlements due to disrupting the local agreements upon the sharing of resources. This is illustrated in both *Lives*. In the *Life* of Lazaros, apart from the phrase in this paragraph (μετὰ τὴν σὴν τελευτὴν ... τῶν οἰκείων θρεμμάτων), conflicts are narrated between the monasteries of Lazaros, founded by an intruding 'outsider', and the local Church authorities.[35] In the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian, a similar event of opposition to the creation of a new monastery by the locals is narrated.[36] The mountain alone had an ascetic tradition even before Lazaros' arrival and activity; however, constructing a holy mountain is, in Gregory's words, a completely different thing:

> There was never a time when a monk was not living on the mountain, even before the father came up onto it. The holy Paphnoutios testifies to this, and, after him, the shepherd, as indeed also ⟨does⟩ the man who built the church of the Holy Trinity and who constructed, together with it, the church of the Prodromos. There is also said to have been a woman, a nun by her habit, living on the ⟨mountain⟩ at the time when the father came up onto it. All these people, however, saved only themselves by persevering on the mountain; but our blessed father Lazaros, who came up onto this mountain through the providence of God, organized it and caused a previously obscure ⟨place⟩ to become well known and familiar to everybody. He did not only save himself ⟨here⟩, but others as well, and he continues to save ⟨them⟩ up to the present, ⟨as he will⟩ until the end ⟨of time⟩. He promised ⟨this to⟩ those who persevered on the mountain, for these are his own words: 'He who believes in my Christ (Who has given His blessing to the building of these churches on this mountain) and who perseveres here for His sake even if he is careless

[33] Ὡς γὰρ τὸ ἀριστήριον ἡμῶν οἱ οἰκοδόμοι ἔμελλον ἀνεγείρειν, ὁ πατὴρ ἑστὼς ἐπάνω τοῦ στύλου καὶ μετὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ δεξιᾶς δακτυλοδεικτῶν τοῖς οἰκοδόμοις τό τε μῆκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος αὐτοῦ ὑπέγραφεν. Εἷς δὲ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, Ματθαῖος ὀνόματι, ὅστις μοι καὶ διηγήσατο ταῦτα, τὸν σχηματισμὸν τοῦ ἔργου ἰδὼν καὶ ὡς ἔοικε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ μεμψάμενος λογισμῷ, ἀτενίσας πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔφη· Ἵνα τί μέλλει ὁ τοσοῦτος κόπος καταβληθῆναι εἰς τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἄκαιρον ἔργον; ποῦ γάρ εἰσιν οἱ τοῦτο ἐκπληροῦν μέλλοντες; Ἔτι γὰρ ὀλίγοι καὶ εὐαρίθμητοι ὑπῆρχον οἱ ἀδελφοί. Ἢ ἀγνοεῖς, φησίν, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν σὴν τελευτὴν οἱ τοῦ χωρίου Γαλησίου οἰκήτορες καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιῶξαι ἔχουσιν καὶ τοῦτο μάνδραν ἀποτελέσαι τῶν οἰκείων θρεμμάτων; *L. Laz.* §109.1–16, translation by Greenfield 2000, 201.

[34] Laiou 2005, esp. 46–73.

[35] See pp. 32–3, as well as Chapters 8, 9.

[36] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §110, translation by Greenfield 2013, 255, 257. See the Greek text and translation as well as a discussion of this passage in Chapter 9.

> and lazy but nevertheless perseveres on the mountain because of this hope that he has, will never be deprived of this hope, but will also receive forgiveness for the sins he committed of old in the world. As this narrative proceeds, it will make these things clearer in the proper place; but now, however, let it hold to its present sequence and let it deal with the following matters.[37]

Through this account of a construction of a holy mountain, Gregory narrates Lazaros' theology and his idea of holiness. A few monks lived on Mount Galesion before, he writes, but this is not enough to make a mountain holy. What Lazaros did differently was that he 'pulled' the local society up there with him, hence he is a holy man. He inhabited Galesion with monks, he made it known as a holy mountain. And, most important, he did not save only himself as the previous monks did (Ἀλλ' οὗτοι πάντες εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσκαρτερήσαντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μόνον σεσώκασιν). Instead, he tried to save everybody together with himself (ὁ δὲ γε ὅσιος πατὴρ ... αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐστιν αὕτη ἡ φωνή).

Greenfield has discussed how the 'making' of a holy mountain was not a simple and easy enterprise in Lazaros' story.[38] Nevertheless, once established as a holy man, monks, laymen, generals, and emperors alike sought Lazaros' advice and blessing.[39] He had acquired an astonishing reputation as a holy man, a repute as the intermediary, or actual possessor, of superhuman powers (due to numerous stories of miraculous acts, healing, exorcism, protection, insight, and foresight) and he had endless visitors.[40] The flourishing community of some three hundred monks, which had sprung up around him on the barren and inhospitable mountain, was viewed by the author as the greatest miracle Lazaros ever performed.[41] Gregory specifically writes that, as for miracles, the following is the greatest.[42] Lazaros came up alone onto Mount Galesion, with only one little leather tunic and

[37] Οὐδὲ γάρ ποτε διέλιπε, καὶ πρὶν ἢ τὸν πατέρα εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἀνελθεῖν, μὴ μοναχὸν οἰκεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τοῦτο ὅ τε ἅγιος Παφνούτιος καὶ ὁ μετ' αὐτὸν ποιμήν, ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁ τὸν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ναὸν ἀνεγείρας καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸν τοῦ Προδρόμου ναὸν οἰκοδομήσας. Ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκά τινα μοναχὴν τῷ σχήματι ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις, ὅτε ὁ πατὴρ εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἀνῆλθεν, ἐν αὐτῷ εἶναι λέγεται. Ἀλλ' οὗτοι πάντες εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσκαρτερήσαντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μόνον σεσώκασιν, ὁ δὲ γε ὅσιος πατὴρ ἡμῶν Λάζαρος ἐκ προνοίας θείας εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο ἀνελθὼν αὐτὸ μὲν τὸ ὄρος κατεκόσμησε καὶ ἀφανὲς πρὶν ὂν τοῖς πᾶσι κατάδηλον καὶ γνώριμον γενέσθαι ἐποίησε, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλους ἔσωσε καὶ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἕως τῆς συντελείας, καθὼς αὐτὸς τοῖς εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσκαρτεροῦσιν ἐπηγγείλατο, σῴζει· αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐστιν αὕτη ἡ φωνή· Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Χριστόν μου τὸν εὐδοκήσαντα ταύτας τὰς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οἰκοδομηθῆναι ὅ τε δι' αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα προσκαρτερῶν, εἰ καὶ ἀμελὴς καὶ ῥᾳθυμος ὑπάρχει, ἀλλ' οὖν δι' αὐτὴν τὴν ἐλπίδα, ἣν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσκαρτερεῖ, οὐ μὴ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἐκπέσῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πάλαι αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἡμαρτημένων τὴν συγχώρησιν λήψεται. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν προϊὼν ὁ λόγος δηλώσει σαφέστερον ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τόπῳ, τὸ δὲ νῦν ἔχον τῆς ἀκολουθίας ἐχέσθω καὶ τῶν ἑξῆς ἐφαπτέσθω. *L. Laz.* §62, translation by Greenfield 2000, 149–50.

[38] Greenfield 2006.

[39] See *L. Laz.* §80–253.

[40] Greenfield 2000, 3.

[41] Greenfield 2000, 3.

[42] *L. Laz.* §79, translation by Greenfield 2000, 168–9. See the Greek text, and a discussion of this paragraph, in Chapter 9.

without shelter and shoes.[43] And yet, not only did he found three monasteries on Galesion (and in addition constructed the monastery at Bessai) but he also gathered three hundred monks in them, provided everything they needed, and maintained many guests in the monasteries every day not only in Lazaros' but also in Gregory's days.[44] In Gregory's own words:

> If someone bears these ⟨facts⟩ in mind, as I have said, I do not think he will find anything superior as far as a miracle is concerned, considering the extent to which Lazaros ⟨lacked⟩ ancestral treasuries or inheritances ⟨when⟩ he founded these ⟨monasteries⟩, ⟨and that he did this⟩ with ⟨only⟩ the help and assistance of some of his relatives and friends.[45]

In Gregory's idea of holiness, success is structured in terms of social contribution. The most important of Lazaros' great accomplishments is his benefaction of the local society. He found ways to settle and feed so many people, although he started out himself as one of the poorest. At the same time, by means of his blessing and his curing, he also established contacts among the monasteries which he founded and the local communities. In this way, Lazaros strengthened the diachronic presence and role of monastic communities in the area, which Gregory considers as the greatest virtue.

THE MOUNTAIN AS NARRATIVE SPACE

Gregory's account of Lazaros' mountain dominates most of the holy man's life story. It is the space that serves as a constant setting for the plot and, at the same time, it is moving the plot along. As a barren, harsh, and waterless place it is the appropriate tool for holification. Furthermore, it would also be a challenge for any holy man; in Veronica Della Dora's words:

> Among all geographical objects, mountains are surely the most dramatic. Majestic and awe-inspiring, they are the first features to capture our attention in the landscape. They cause sudden breaks on the horizon. We find in mountains obstacles, if not to the body, at least to the gaze. Mountains are insistently material. As Mircea Eliade writes, their rocky matter transcends the precariousness of humanity. It is an 'absolute mode of being'. Its solid permanence, size, and strange shapes are none of them human; 'they indicate the presence of something that fascinates, terrifies, attracts and threatens, all at once'.[46]

Della Dora investigates the perception of mountains as sacred spaces in various texts, from the Old and New Testaments to Kosmas Indikopleustes' *Topography*, showing how holy mountains can be envisaged as physical and imaginative

[43] *L. Laz.* §79.13–14, translation by Greenfield 2000, 168.

[44] *L. Laz.* §79.16–23, translation by Greenfield 2000, 168.

[45] Εἰ ταῦτά τις εἰς νοῦν, ὡς εἴρηται, λάβῃ, οὐδὲν ὡς οἶμαι εἴς γε θαύματος λόγον ὑπερβάλλον εὑρήσει, ἐκ ποίων ἄρα θησαυρῶν ἢ κλήρων πατρικῶν ταῦτα συνεστήσατο λογιζόμενος, τίνας τῶν αὐτοῦ συγγενῶν ἢ γνωρίμων συναιρομένους ἔχων καὶ συναρήγοντας. *L. Laz.* §79.23–32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 169.

[46] Della Dora 2018, 147. For Mircea Eliade's citation, see Eliade 1959, 216.

nodes of extensive spiritual networks.[47] She discusses ways in which a number of new (non-biblical) peaks hosting hermits and subsequent monastic communities emerged in the Empire between the fifth and the eleventh century.[48] The challenge for the founders was to tame the inhospitable terrain and to transform it, literally or figuratively, into gardens of Eden.[49] The emergence of these holy peaks were based on the paradigm of holy mountains in the biblical tradition (Sinai, Tabor etc). However, they were not sacred spaces because of hosting a famous event in the Scripture; they were 'sanctified through the prayers and miracles of their holy founders, rather than by biblical theophanies'.[50]

Lazaros' relation to mountains in the *Life* is a narrative motif used by Gregory to connect Lazaros with the holy mountains in the biblical tradition as well as with the famous Byzantine holy mountains such as Mt Olympos of Mysia and Mt Athos in the Aegean. The same device is used by Niketas in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian, yet in this case it is only employed once: it marks the final phase of Symeon's development into a holy man, through being exiled to a barren mountain.[51] Furthermore, wilderness and isolation were prerequisites for the spiritual hesychia any hermit seeks for, so (like deserts) the barren mountains are ideal places for that purpose. Last but not least, the mountain in this case operates as a powerful locus memoriae for both Lazaros and Symeon the New Theologian on the intradiegetic level, and for the audience in real life. As Della Dora observes:

> Holy mountains in saints' *Lives*, are 'nodes of spiritual 'memory networks', which could spatially extend for several hundreds of kilometers and temporally extend for several centuries, as the founders of new holy mountains always drew on older sacred topographies. [...] The lives of saints were articulated through different mountains.[52]

Based on several examples, Della Dora shows that for the Byzantines, biblical mountains were not only actual locations where epiphanies took place but also archetypal topoi and 'maps' which guided the ascetic on his spiritual journey.[53] Lazaros' path to holiness involves the regular climbing of mountains from the very beginning, long before his settlement on Mount Galesion. First of all, as a young boy, he diverts from the road and climbs a mountain near Attaleia in order to be rescued from a greedy monk who tries to sell him as slave to shipowners in the harbour.[54] While Lazaros is on the lower slopes, night falls.[55] He begins his ascent

[47] Della Dora 2018, 147–75.
[48] Della Dora 2018, esp. 148.
[49] Della Dora 2018, 148.
[50] Della Dora 2018, 161.
[51] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95–6. See Chapter 2.2.5, for a discussion of this passage.
[52] Della Dora 2018, 162.
[53] Della Dora 2018, 165.
[54] *L. Laz.* §9.1–11, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86. See the Greek text and translation on pp. 164–5.
[55] *L. Laz.* §9.12–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86.

but, because of the darkness of the night and the great steepness of the mountain, he spends the whole night struggling along by hand and foot; only at dawn is he able with difficulty to climb up on top.[56] When, however, he does reach the top of the mountain, he finds a worn path and goes along it; while he is walking along by himself like this, an old monk meets him and questions him.[57] The monk dissuades him from continuing his journey to Jerusalem because of his youth.[58] Instead he recommends that he should follow his advice and go with him to his monastery (for the old man is the superior of a small flock); persuaded by the old man's words, Lazaros follows him.[59] Climbing a mountain with no food and water, in the middle of the night, sounds very uncommon for a young boy alone. This spatial practice is used by Gregory as a narrative device to show the child's unusual qualities, spiritual strength, and holy destination. God helps him: an old monk finds the boy and gives him shelter.

Later on, Gregory mentions in passing that he 'went up and worshiped Mount Tabor' together with his travelling partner, Paul.[60] After that, the two men arrive in Laodikaia where they part ways, and Lazaros climbs, first, the Wondrous Mountain in Antioch and, then, Mount Argeas in Cappadocia:

> Upon leaving Laodikaia the father went to Antioch and so to the Wondrous Mountain and the monastery of St Symeon; then he left there, crossed Cilicia, and came to the region of Cappadocia. When he reached ⟨Mt⟩ Argeas, he wanted to climb it but he was stopped by those ⟨who lived⟩ there because it was winter. Lazaros, however, put all his hope in our Lord Jesus Christ and His mother and started to climb. When he was halfway up the mountain, ⟨such⟩ a ⟨dense⟩ fog came down around him, as he used to relate, that, even though he strained his eyes, he could not see to the right or left or anywhere else. He did not give up his attempt, however, but bent down and, using his hands to guide him, went on up. While he was climbing like this, he met a bear, as he used to say, and neither he nor it sensed the approach of the other until they came ⟨so close that⟩ they bumped into each other. The only explanation for this was that it was a device of the Evil One intended to frighten him into turning back, or rather of God allowing ⟨this⟩ as a trial of his faith and hope. The ⟨bear⟩ came to a halt at their sudden collision and left the path, while Lazaros went on his way unhindered, heartily singing the Davidic psalms. When he had climbed up ⟨to the top⟩ he found that the door ⟨of the chapel⟩ had been securely barred. He opened it and went inside; when he had prayed, he came out, closed the door securely, and went down the mountain again.[61]

[56] *L. Laz.* §9.13–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86.
[57] *L. Laz.* §9.18–21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86.
[58] *L. Laz.* §9.21–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86.
[59] *L. Laz.* §9.23–5, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86–7.
[60] *L. Laz.* §24.
[61] Ὁ δὲ πατὴρ τῆς Λαοδικείας ἐξελθὼν ἦλθεν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, εἶθ' οὕτως εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν ὄρος ἐν τῇ μονῇ τοῦ ἁγίου Συμεών · κἀκεῖθεν κατελθὼν καὶ τὴν Κιλικίαν διαβὰς ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς Καππαδοκίας μέρη· καὶ φθάσας εἰς τὸν Ἀργέαν καὶ βουλόμενος εἰς αὐτὸν ἀνελθεῖν, ἐκωλύετο ὑπο τῶν ἐκεῖσε διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὸν καιρὸν χειμέριον. Αὐτὸς δὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ μητέρα ὁλικῶς ἀναθέμενος, ἤρξατο ἀνέρχεσθαι. Ὡς δὲ μέσον τοῦ ὄρους ἔφθασεν, ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ, ὡς ἔλεγεν, ὁμίχλη, ὥστε μήτε ἀριστερὰ μήτε δεξιὰ μήτε ἀλλαχοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀτενίσαντα δύνασθοι ὁρᾶν. Ἀλλ' οὐδ' οὕτως τῆς ὁρμῆς ἔστη, ἀλλὰ κύπτων καὶ ταῖς χερσὶν ὡς ὁδηγῷ χρώμενος, οὕτως βαδίζων ἀνήρχετο. Ἀνερχομένῳ δὲ οὕτω συναντᾷ, ὡς ἔλεγεν, αὐτῶι ἄρκτος· καὶ οὔτε αὐτὸς οὔτε ἐκείνη ἤσθοντο ἕτερος τῆς

Climbing the mountain signifies an ascetic practice (ἄσκησις) as much as a trial: Lazaros is faced with a number of obstacles (the weather, the harsh ground and high relief, the wild animals). Gregory's narrative records Lazaros himself to have been the original narrator. This is literally mentioned twice (Ὡς δὲ μέσον τοῦ ὄρους ... αὐτῶι ἄρκτος) and also implied by means of the detailed description of the event and its entire setting.

Lazaros, on one hand, faces the cold and the dense fog as natural challenges to which God will help him live up to. On the other hand, the bear is considered by Gregory as a challenge set to Lazaros either by the Devil—who is trying to scare him off—or by God who wants to try his faith. A practice of ritual climbing using all parts of his body and singing psalms is employed by Gregory as the narrative means that allows Lazaros to meet these challenges.

Furthermore, Lazaros must have remembered—and narrated—his coming face to face with a bear for life (Ἀνερχομένῳ δὲ οὕτω συναντᾷ, ὡς ἔλεγεν, αὐτῶι ἄρκτος). As already mentioned, Gregory emphasizes that he heard the story from the holy man himself. This presence of the bear in this story sets precisely the boundaries between wilderness and civilization. The story illustrates that Lazaros is moving on the limit between the two. He is still a human but he has almost reached the world of the wild beasts.

The triumph of the young boy is signified by his reaching the top of the mountain. There he gains contact with God. This contact takes place within a private space. Amid the wilderness, the chapel is a place of human civilization from which wild beasts and other animals are excluded. It is maintained by Lazaros as such: Gregory does not forget to mention that the door of the chapel must remain securely closed at all times.

CONCLUSION

Gregory's account of Lazaros' mountains dominates most of the holy man's life story. It is the space that serves as a constant setting for the plot and, at the same time, it is moving the plot along. As a barren, harsh, and waterless place it is the appropriate tool for holification.

During his first wandering phase in Asia Minor and the Holy Land, Lazaros climbs mountains as a young boy, a motif that displays his spiritual and physical power and links him to the holy mountains of the biblical traditions. During his second wandering phase, Lazaros is presented as constantly relocating around the

τοῦ ἑτέρου βαδίσεως, ἕως οὗ ἐλθόντες ἀλλήλοις προσέκρουσαν. Τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἦν ἄλλως ἐννοῆσαι, εἰ μὴ τέχνην εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ πρὸς τὸ δειλιάσαντα αὐτὸν εἰς τοὐπίσω στραφῆναι, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ συγχωροῦντος πρὸς δοκιμὴν τῆς αὐτοῦ πίστεώς τε καὶ ἐλπίδος· ἀλλ' ἐκείνη μὲν ἐκ τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἄφνω προσκρούσεως σταθεῖσα, ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ἀκωλύτως καὶ εὐπροθύμως τοὺς Δαϋιτικοὺς ψαλμοὺς ᾄδων, τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπορεύετο. Ἀνελθὼν οὖν καὶ τὴν θύραν ἀσφαλῶς πεφραγμένην εὑρὼν ἀνοίξας τε καὶ ἔνδον εἰσελθὼν καὶ εὐξάμενος ἐξῆλθε· καὶ τὴν θύραν ἀσφαλῶς κλείσας, πάλιν τοῦ ὄρους κατῆλθεν. *L. Laz.* §25, translation by Greenfield 2000, 109–10.

area of Ephesos. His movement involves a gradual moving away from settled areas (city, villages, monasteries, hermitages) in an upward direction towards the top of Mount Galesion. In this second stage, Lazaros creates his own holy mountain. The latter is, according to Gregory, the greatest accomplishment of a holy man.

8

Negotiations of identity and otherness, spatially narrated

Locality—and especially the change of it—is used extensively by Gregory and Niketas as a narrative technique that moves their stories along.[1] In this chapter, I explore a different dimension to these techniques: the social interaction read through the lines of the spatial narratives. Byzantine saints' life stories aim to show that (and how) an ordinary person becomes a holy person: how they are perceived as such by their own Christian society and are established as such by future Christian societies. Hence, the storyteller's main focus and concern should be to exemplify the social interaction leading to a person's acknowledgement as holy.

In what follows, I show different ways in which personal and public spaces are performed in the *Lives* of Lazaros and Symeon the New Theologian in order to reflect social interaction.[2] This interaction involves constant negotiations of the distinct identity of a 'holy man' by Lazaros and Symeon: (a) with laymen; (b) with disciples or other monks and ascetics, within their own monastic communities; and (c) with Church authorities and other monastic authorities. I discuss ways in which spatial performances are used as narrative devices for identity negotiations by the persons at different occasions. I consider three kinds of social performances: (a) voluntary and involuntary relocations; (b) personal/social space constructions; and (c) living 'at the threshold'.

voluntary relocation

Starting with voluntary relocation, this narrative technique is exemplary in Gregory the Cellarer's account of the life of Lazaros. The narrative practice of 'moving away' is Gregory's way of showing Lazaros' endless negotiations of his 'holy' identity, throughout the *Life*. For instance, Lazaros performs a new way of living as a holy man by selecting a new place of residence.

In paragraphs 31 and 32, Lazaros' ideal personal space comes with precise specifications in terms of location and structure: a pillar in a small place located near a monastery, there is drinking water and a small hermitage with two welcoming resident ascetics.[3] In order to be able to construct this personal space, Lazaros keeps relocating.

[1] See Chapter 6.
[2] On this issue see also Chapters 9 and 10 below.
[3] See the Greek text and translation on pp. 146–8.

First of all (§31), he goes to the presbyter of the village Malpadeas, Georgios, who accepts the presence of Lazaros in the area and helps him find a monastery that will host him.[4] Then, he goes to Appionos monastery, where the abbot also accepts him and helps him find a place to stay by taking him to the ascetic cell of St Marina.[5] The two monks at the hermitage also make that space a 'holy' residence: they accept and welcome the newcomer, and they help him construct his preferred personal space in the form of a pillar.[6] In all these negotiations of Lazaros' identity as a holy man, all characters accept Lazaros' presence, acknowledge his identity and approve of his new role in the religious and secular communities in the area of Ephesos.

Yet, in the next paragraph, the wide acceptance of the newcomer by the secular part of the community—also narrated in spatial terms, i.e. through mobility—, generates the need for a new round of negotiations of Lazaros' residence.[7] The lay people in the area show their acceptance of Lazaros by visiting him to ask for his blessing.[8] The amount of this mobility is said by Gregory to be the main cause of conflict between Lazaros and the other monks, since the locals honoured Lazaros, although he was a newcomer, a stranger, and unknown, more than them who were locals and well known (βλέποντες καὶ ... γνωρίμους τιμῶσι).[9] The monks tell him to stop accepting the laymen and offering them food or else leave (προσελθόντες αὐτῷ ... ὧδε ὑποχώρησον).[10] Thus the monks' reaction is not only a matter of jealousy but also of finances: all these visitors consume most of their provisions. But Lazaros, first of all, insists that the identity of a holy man is inseparable from sharing what he owns; secondly, he claims the space for himself, by replying that he will not leave for such a reason (οὔτε τὸ μὴ δέχεσθαι ... ἀναχωρῶ).[11] The negotiation is concluded with the monks' departure. They relocate to another mountain and build their own monastery (ταῦτα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ... ἀνεχώρησαν).[12] With their departure, Lazaros' space becomes more private.

On another occasion, though, Lazaros negotiates his identity as holy man with his secular environment:

> Because the father was living in this superior way and thus drew everyone to him like a beacon by the brilliant illumination of his life style, and because the monastery was near the road, everyone that passed by there used to go up to him, one for spiritual help, another out of physical need, and another again due to some crisis in his life; but not one of those who went up to him was ⟨ever⟩ seen to return from there without having received the proper medicine for his sickness. For

[4] *L. Laz.* §31.1–12.
[5] *L. Laz.* §31.12–8.
[6] *L. Laz.* §31.18–22.
[7] *L. Laz.* §32.
[8] *L. Laz.* §32.1–7.
[9] *L. Laz.* §32.8–10.
[10] *L. Laz.* §32.10–4.
[11] *L. Laz.* §32.14–9.
[12] *L. Laz.* §32.19–22.

> all who went up to him grieving over their particular misfortunes joyfully returned home from him, giving glory to God. When, however, Lazaros saw himself being mobbed in this way by everybody every day, and especially because the monastery, as has been mentioned, lay near the road, and his ears were thus ringing with the voices of travellers and overseers and farm workers in the fields, he began to seek a quiet place that would enable him to get away from the annoyance of this mass of people. Now Mt. Galesion stood right there, and it happened not only to be impassable and craggy and very rugged, but was in addition waterless, and for these reasons was able to offer much tranquillity to the person who went there. Lazaros thus decided that it was just the right place for him and he knew that he had to go up onto it and make his home there, especially because he learned from many people that there was a cave on it in which, many years before, a monk called Paphnoutios had ended his days in asceticism.[13]

Lazaros sets boundaries himself, when he feels mobbed by the lay people in his vicinity: he negotiates with them by means of relocating himself. By moving on to Mount Galesion, he shows the people that a holy man cannot only spend his time giving to his flock; he also has to work towards holiness and contact with his God, and that is his main duty and prime destination. For that purpose, he must insist on having his private space exactly as he wants it.

Niketas, too, uses this relocation pattern as a narrative device for showing progress in the holification process by means of Symeon the New Theologian's 'spatial' ways of negotiating his identity of 'holy man' within his community. From the imperial court he relocates to the Stoudios monastery, thus publicizing his desire to become a trainee monk: a new social identity. His temporary return to Paphlagonia, to announce the news to his family, constructs his decision as definite and introduces this new identity to his native community.[14]

However, the most eloquent example of Niketas' use of relocation as a device that moves the story along comes from the narration of Symeon the New Theologian's later years. During most of his life (§1–94), Symeon had only been interested in residing within the area of the Byzantine capital, and he had clearly been extremely unhappy to be forced by the authorities to leave it for a remote location on the opposite coast of the Bosporus (§95–100). Not very long after that his repu-

[13] Ὡς οὖν ἐν τούτοις τοῖς προτερήμασιν ἦν ὁ πατὴρ καὶ οἷά τις πυρσὸς ταῖς τοῦ βίου σελασφόροις ἐλλάμψεσι πάντας πρὸς ἑαυτὸν εἵλκε, καὶ γὰρ διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὴν μονὴν πλησίον του δρόμου οὐκ ἦν τινα ἐκεῖσε διερχόμενον μὴ ἀνελθεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν, τὸν μὲν διὰ ψυχικὴν ὠφέλειαν, τὸν δὲ διὰ σωματικὴν χρείαν, ἕτερον δὲ πάλιν διά τινας βιωτικὰς περιστάσεις, οὐκ ἦν τινα ἰδεῖν τῶν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνερχομένων μὴ τὸ κατάλληλον φάρμακον τῆς νόσου δεξάμενον ἐκεῖθεν ἐπαναστρέψαι. Πάντες γὰρ λυπούμενοι πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τὰς ἰδίας συμφορὰς ἀνερχόμενοι μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ τὸν Θεὸν δοξάζοντες ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ὑπέστρεφον. Διὸ βλέπων οὕτως ἑαυτὸν καθ' ἑκάστην ὑπὸ πάντων ὀχλούμενον, καὶ μάλιστα ὡς τῆς μονῆς πλησίον, ὡς εἴρηται, τοῦ δρόμου κειμένης, ἔκ τε τῶν ὁδιτῶν ἔκ τε τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀρούραις τηρητῶν τε καὶ γεηπόνων οὐ μικρῶς ἠχούμενον ταῖς φωναῖς, ἐζήτει τόπον ἥσυχον, δυνάμενον τῆς τῶν πολλῶν αὐτὸν ἀπαλλάξαι ὀχλήσεως. Τὸ γοῦν ἄντικρυς κείμενον Γαλήσιον ὄρος, δύσβατον καὶ πετρῶδες καὶ λίαν τραχὺ τυγχάνον, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ ἄνυδρον καὶ διὰ ταῦτα πολλὴν ἡσυχίαν τῷ ἐκεῖ γενομένῳ παρέχειν δυνάμενον, ἀρεστὸν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐπιτήδειον κρίνας, δεῖν ἔγνω εἰς αὐτὸ ἀνελθεῖν κἀκεῖ τὴν κατοικίαν ποιήσασθαι, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι καὶ παρὰ πολλῶν ἐμάνθανε σπήλαιον ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπάρχειν· ἐν ᾧ τις μοναχὸς ὀνόματι Παφνούτιος πρὸ πολλῶν χρόνων ἀσκητικῶς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τετέλεκε βίον. *L. Laz.* §36, translation by Greenfield 2000, 122–3.

[14] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §8–10, translation by Greenfield 2013, 23, 25, 27.

tation was restored by the Patriarch and his unjust exile was cancelled, and he was again welcome to the Byzantine capital and cities and he is offered a metropolitan seat in the vicinity (§101–8).[15] Hence it is very surprising that instead of coming back to his familiar urban environment, which he used to long for, Symeon rejected this alternative. For a number of reasons, he returned to his monastery near Chrysopolis and spent the rest of his life there:[16]

> The blessed Symeon had thus shown himself to be a willing martyr, even without persecution, both in the martyrdom of his conscience and in his endurance of the trials which befell him on account of God's commandment. He left the patriarchate rejoicing, along with his beloved children, the members of the ruling elite who have been mentioned, and was entertained with all of them in the house of the wondrous Christopher Phagouras. He spent a good many days there, first giving his spiritual assistance liberally to Christopher and his two brothers and then also providing many others with an abundant share of the honeyed words of his teaching: priests, deacons, members of the ruling elite, ordinary people, men and women, children and old people, that is to say, everyone by whom he was known and loved. Afterward he crossed over to the solitude that was so dear to him as he wanted to build a cell there ⟨in which to practice⟩ spiritual tranquillity. And God, who gives a nest to the nestlings of eagles and bread to people for food, rained down a shower of resources upon the blessed one and opened the treasuries of the ruling elites to him, for everyone together, relatives, friends, and children, provided a great quantity of gold. When the blessed Symeon received this, he placed his truth in God, prayed to Him about the ⟨project⟩, and so set to work on the construction of the monastery.[17]

Here, Niketas uses relocation as a narrative device that marks Symeon the New Theologian's new boundaries against his old community. His reputation is restored, his theology is now respected, and his personality is re-established in the capital's political and social life. And yet Symeon no longer wishes to stay in the capital that used to be his hometown and which he mourned for when he was forced to leave. In order to demonstrate the continuity from Symeon's previous stage in his route to holiness, Niketas wants him to continue his hesychia at the previous, familiar and personal, remote location on the other side of the Bospo-

[15] For a discussion of this part of the text, see Chapter 2.

[16] For these reasons, see Chapters 1 and 4.

[17] Ὁ οὖν μακάριος Συμεών, ὁ καὶ δίχα διωγμοῦ ἐθελούσιος μάρτυς ἀναδειχθεὶς ἔν τε τῷ τῆς συνειδήσεως μαρτυρίῳ καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ τῶν διὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπελθόντων αὐτῷ πειρασμῶν, τοῖς φίλοις αὐτοῦ τέκνοις, τοῖς δηλωθεῖσιν ἄρχουσι, τοῦ πατριαρχείου χαίρων συνεξελθών, μετὰ πάντων ἐκείνων ξενίζεται ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Χριστοφόρου, ᾧ ἦν ἡ Φαγούρα το ἐπώνυμον, κἀκεῖσε ἡμέρας πεποιηκὼς οὐκ ὀλίγας, αὐτῷ τε πρῶτον καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ δυσὶν ἀδελφοῖς μεταδοὺς τῆς ὠφελείας ἀφθόνως, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ πολλοῖς ἄλλοις τῆς διδασκαλίας τῶν αὐτοῦ μελιρρύτων λόγων τὴν μέθεξιν δαψιλῆ χαρισάμενος, ἱερεῦσι, λευΐταις, ἄρχουσιν, ἰδιώταις, ἀνδράσι τε καὶ γυναιξί, παισί τε καὶ γέρουσι, καὶ ὅσοις δηλαδὴ καταφανὴς ἦν ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ ἐπέραστος, διαπερᾷ πρὸς τὴν φίλην αὐτοῦ ἐρημίαν ἡσυχίας ἐκεῖσε ποθῶν κατασκευάσαι κελλίον. Ὁ δὲ διδοὺς νεοσσοῖς ἀετῶν νοσσιὰν καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν ἀνθρώποις Θεὸς ὗει δίκην ὑετοῦ καὶ τῷ μακαρίῳ τούτῳ τὰ χρήματα καὶ ἀνοίγει αὐτῷ τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν ἀρχόντων, καὶ πάντες ὁμοῦ χορηγοῦσι, συγγενεῖς, φίλοι, τέκνα, χρυσοῦ ποσότητα ἱκανὴν, ἣν δεξάμενος ὁ μακάριος ἅπτεται Θεῷ θαρρήσας, ᾧ καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου προσηύξατο, τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τῆς ἀνοικοδομῆς τοῦ μοναστηρίου. *L. Sym. New Theol*. §109, translation by Greenfield 2013, 251–3.

rus. More aspects of this important turning point in the plot have been discussed above.[18]

'SELECTING RESIDENCE' AS 'SETTING BOUNDARIES'

Following Gregory's account of the second wandering phase of Lazaros around Ephesos and Mount Galesion, the pattern of relocation becomes even clearer. Lazaros kept negotiating his identity as a holy man with the locals, again by relocating himself on a smaller scale, by selecting his place for residence and by constructing his personal space.

Here, a very important aspect of this narrative strategy of space performance is involved in the construction of Lazaros' personal space on Mount Galesion. His status as a holy man was based chiefly on his extraordinary perseverance as a pillar ascetic or stylite. The outstanding feature of his ascetic practice was the confinement of his body on an open pillar for more than forty years, which was suitable for his holy performance. He occupied a total of four pillars, all built to order and all similar in their basic features. They seem to have been constructed in a particular way so as to be liminal spaces between his body and nature, land and heaven, himself and his community. So, a most interesting relocation strategy of Lazaros involved his moving his pillar together with his body, three times, higher and higher up Mount Galesion, always looking to escape from the community's attention who were simply following him on his way up, forming monastic settlements around him and his pillars. Every re-settling meant a reconstruction of his own place within a process of renegotiation of his identity with his disciples or lay men and women, as shown in the following passage:

> After the father had spent twelve years at the ⟨monastery of the⟩ Savior, he left there and went up to the higher part of the gorge. I must speak about this matter ⟨now, and explain⟩ the reason why he came to leave the ⟨monastery of the⟩ Savior and go off there, as I have learned it from those who know. The aforementioned blessed woman [Irene] used to go up to Lazaros ⟨even⟩ more frequently after she had been tonsured. One day, when she was there and was standing in the church, the father was standing up on his pillar with the brothers standing round it, and he was rebuking one of them for some fault; this was that, when he was eating a piece of fruit, he had peeled off the skin and thrown it away as no good. But this man, instead of humbling himself as he should have done and prostrating himself so that he might receive forgiveness, dashed off brazenly from the place where he had been standing and went running into the church; there he seized the nun by her scapular and led her out of the church. He brought her before the father and said, 'It is this woman who is hurting me and these ⟨others⟩,' indicating to Lazaros the brothers who were standing there, 'and not the things for which you are apparently rebuking me.' The other brothers backed him up ⟨and confirmed⟩ that this was the case. The father was not upset by that brazen fellow's shameless outspokenness, but grew a little sad, and replied to them calmly and coolly in a sad voice, 'It is not this woman who is hurting you, but I, for she only comes up here on my account.' After saying this to them, he turned to the nun and said, 'Go back to your

[18] See Chapter 2.

> cell and don't come up here anymore.' She prostrated herself and then went down the mountain, weeping and wailing at being deprived of the father.[19]

The spatial indicators of hierarchy are very clear in this passage. The father sets his disciples in order from his high position on the pillar. The courtyard is the place of assemblage of the faithful and as such it is space controlled by the superior from his high position. Due to its public function, it has the role of exemplifying good and normative practice but also hosting disciplinary education. As such, the courtyard is also the perfect place for performing individual or collective acts of protest against the authority, and, in that context, it is also perfect for establishing the duties and responsibilities of different hierarchies in the monastery (the 'brazen fellow' shown to be 'first among equals'), as well as negotiating the rules of cohabitation, such as the presence of a woman in the monastic facilities.

Gregory continues by narrating the aftermath of this conflict, again by stressing the spatial aspects of his characters' agencies:

> Several days later the father summoned one of the monks who knew about construction and told him to go up to the higher part of the gorge with two other brothers; he indicated the place to him and ⟨instructed him⟩ to cut down the wild olive tree that stood there and to make a pit near it for burning lime. In the place where the tree stood Lazaros ⟨told him⟩ to build a pillar for him rather like the one on which he was, ⟨that is,⟩ elevated and without a roof. When the brother had finished the pillar just as the father had ordered, ⟨the latter⟩ left his previous pillar one night, without any of the brothers there seeing him, climbed up to the newly built pillar, and got onto it. When the time came for hammering ⟨the semantron⟩ for church and the brothers realized what had happened, they all went straight up to him. They saw him and then went down again to the ⟨monastery of the⟩ Savior, leaving him there alone. So Lazaros was once more as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof there; he had wandered far off and had lodged in the wilder places, and was awaiting God Who would save him from faintheartedness and from the tempest of the wicked demons and Who would drown the malicious and ill-intentioned designs and contrivances with which they were attacking him every day. For as ⟨soon as⟩ the first night fell, they drew near

[19] Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ πατὴρ μετὰ τὸ πληρῶσαι εἰς τὸν Σωτῆρα χρόνους δώδεκα, ἀπάρας ἐκεῖθεν πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον μέρος τῆς φάραγγος ἀνῆλθε, χρὴ κἀμὲ περὶ τούτου εἰπεῖν, τίς ἡ αἰτία, ὡς παρὰ τῶν εἰδότων μεμάθηκα, δι' ἣν συνέβη αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἀναχωρῆσαι καὶ ἐκεῖσε ἀπελθεῖν. Ὡς γὰρ ἡ προειρημένη μακαρία γυνὴ καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποκαρῆναι συχνοτέρως πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπήρχετο, ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκεῖσε αὐτῆς οὔσης καὶ ἔνδον τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἑστώσης, τοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἐπάνω τοῦ στύλου ἱσταμένου καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν πέριξ τοῦ στύλου παρεστώτων, τινὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὁ πατὴρ διά τι πταῖσμα ἦν ἐγκαλῶν· τὸ δὲ ἦν, ὅτι ὀπώραν φαγὼν τὴν αὐτῆς ὄψιν ὡς ἄχρηστον ἀποξύσας ἔρριψεν. Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἀντὶ τοῦ ταπεινωθῆναι, ὅπερ ὤφειλε ποιῆσαι, καὶ βαλεῖν μετάνοιαν, ἵνα συγχώρησιν λάβῃ, ἰταμῶς ἐξ οὗ τόπου ἵστατο ἐκπηδήσας δρομαίως εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν εἰσῆλθε καὶ τὴν μονάζουσαν ἐκ τῆς ἐπωμίδος δραξάμενος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐξάγει. Καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν ταύτην ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρός· Αὕτη, φησίν, ἡ κἀμὲ καὶ τούτους βλάπτουσα ὑποδείξας αὐτῷ τοὺς ἐκεῖ ἑστῶτας ἀδελφούς, καὶ οὐχί, ἃ ἐγκαλῶν μοι φαίνῃ. Συνεμαρτύρουν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει. Ὁ δὲ πατὴρ μὴ ταραχθεὶς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ ἰταμοῦ ἐκείνου ἀναισχύντῳ παρρησίᾳ, ἀλλὰ μικρόν τι στυγνάσας, ἀταράχως καὶ ὁμαλῶς στυγνῇ τῇ φωνῇ ἀποκριθεὶς ἔφη πρὸς αὐτούς· Οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμᾶς ἡ βλάπτουσα αὕτη, ἀλλ' ἐγώ· καὶ γὰρ αὕτη οὐ δι' ἄλλον ἀνέρχεται ὧδε, ἀλλ' ἢ δι' ἐμέ. Καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἐκείνους εἰπὼν στραφεὶς πρὸς τὴν μονάζουσαν· Ἄπελθε, φησίν, εἰς τὸ κελλίον σου καὶ μηκέτι ὧδε ἀνέλθῃς. Ἡ δὲ βάλλουσα μετάνοιαν, κλαίουσα καὶ ὀδυρομένη διὰ τὴν στέρησιν τοῦ πατρὸς κατῆλθε τοῦ ὄρους. *L. Laz.* §57, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145.

> too, intending to terrify him from the start, and began to throw stones at him; and they continued doing this not only on that night and the following one, but for many ⟨nights⟩ until he put them to flight by hurling prayers at them like rocks.[20]

Lazaros seems to have been, again, clearly disappointed by his disciples' weak-minded and heartless way of treating himself and the nun in this story. So, first of all, he had to make his point, one way or another, by setting his boundaries against such inappropriate behaviour. Secondly, he was also getting rather impatient: dealing with these sort of 'low' matters, instead of teaching these disciples their way towards God, was becoming an obstacle between him and his own process of holification. A 'technical solution' is Gregory's narrative device. He uses physical distance in order to portray Lazaros' decision to establish his mental and social distancing from these problems, which are central to Gregory's theological approach. Lazaros relocates to another pillar, at a remote place on the mountain.

Symeon the New Theologian acts in exactly the same way, as narrated by Niketas. As a result of an intercommunal dispute in the monastery of Stoudios, caused by the monks' envy towards Symeon and his spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes, they both change their place of residence to the nearby monastery of St Mamas:

> Not long afterward, however, those who were jealous of Symeon went to the superior and fanned the embers of his anger toward him more fiercely, because they saw that he was still making progress in the virtues and developing even more faith in his spiritual father. The superior summoned the noble Symeon and had a conversation with him during which he strove, partly by promises, partly by threats, to distance him from his teacher and win him over to his side; for the abbot was envious, as he should not have been, of the great elder. But when he realized that Symeon's mind was not going to be changed and that his faith in the elder was immovable, defeated by the shrewdness and wisdom of Symeon's words, he gave immediate orders to expel the blessed one from the monastery. When the great spiritual father [Symeon Eulabes] saw the envy of the abbot and the others, he took his disciple and went to see Antony, who was renowned at that time for his virtue and was superior of the nearby monastery of Saint Mamas. He entrusted Symeon to this man like a treasury for all that is good. Then what? Did the Evil One keep quiet for a while after this and give up his envy and his attacks on Symeon? Certainly not! For now, he stirred up

[20] Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας τινὰς προσκαλεσάμενος ὁ πατήρ τινα τῶν μοναχῶν τῶν περὶ τὴν οἰκοδομικὴν ἐπισταμένων, προστάσσει αὐτῷ μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων δύο ἀδελφῶν ἀπελθεῖν πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον μέρος τῆς φάραγγος, διδάξας αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν τόπον, καὶ ἐκτεμεῖν τὸ ἐκεῖσε ἑστὼς ἀγριέλαιον δένδρον καὶ πλησίον αὐτοῦ λάκκον ποιῆσαι εἰς καῦσιν ἀσβέστου, ἐν ᾧ δὲ τόπῳ τὸ δένδρον ἵσταται, κτίσαι αὐτῷ στύλον παρεμφερῆ τῷ ἐν ᾧ ἦν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀνώφορον καὶ ἄστεγον. Τελέσαντος οὖν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τὸν στύλον, καθὼς αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ προσέταξε, μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου στύλου, μηδενὸς τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀδελφῶν ἰδόντος ἀνελθὼν πρὸς τὸν νεοπαγῆ στύλον εἰσῆλθεν. Ὡς δὲ ἡ ὥρα τοῦ κρούματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἔφθασε καὶ εἰς γνῶσιν τοῦτο ἦλθε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, εὐθὺς πάντες πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνῆλθον. Καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν καὶ εὐχὴν καὶ παραγγελίαν, ὅπως δεῖ εἶναι αὐτούς, παρ' αὐτοῦ λαβόντες, κατῆλθον πάλιν πρὸς τὸν Σωτῆρα, μόνον αὐτὸν ἐκεῖσε καταλιπόντες. Καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖσε πάλιν ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον, φυγαδεύων καὶ αὐλιζόμενος ἐν τοῖς ἐρημοτέροις τόποις, προσδεχόμενός τε Θεὸν τὸν σῴζοντα αὐτὸν ἀπὸ ὀλιγοψυχίας καὶ ἀπὸ καταιγίδος τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων καταποντίζοντά τε τὰς ἐκείνων κακοβουλίας καὶ κακομηχάνους τέχνας καὶ μεθοδείας, ἃς αὐτῷ καθ' ἑκάστην προσέφερον. Ὡς γὰρ ἡ πρώτη νὺξ ἐπέστη, παρέστησαν καὶ αὐτοί, ἐκ πρώτης οἰόμενοι ἐκφοβεῖν αὐτόν, καὶ λίθους κατ' αὐτοῦ ἔβαλλον· οὐκ ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ νυκτὶ μόνῃ ἢ καὶ τῇ ἐπιούσῃ τοῦτο ποιήσαντες ἐπαύσαντο, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πολλαῖς, ἕως οὗ καὶ αὐτὸς τὰς εὐχὰς ὡς λίθους κατ' αὐτῶν ἀφιεὶς φυγάδας τούτους εἰργάσατο. *L. Laz.* §58, translation by Greenfield 2000, 145–6.

> his natural father again and some members of the senate and they tried to prevent Symeon from renouncing the world and those in the world. But the noble athlete of Christ remained unshaken and invincible, inflamed with his intense longing for God.[21]

In these paragraphs, Symeon the New Theologian—like Lazaros—is disappointed by his disciples' weak spirits, envy and hostility, which Niketas ascribes to the Evil One and his demons. The abbot of the Stoudios monastery tries to physically distance Symeon the New Theologian from his spiritual father in order to distance them spiritually. When this proves impossible, he expels both of them from the monastery. This is a forced relocation as discussed below.

However, Symeon Eulabes also sets his own boundaries against what he considers as inappropriate monastic behaviour by means of relocating to another nearby monastery. This move within the same neighbourhood demonstrates that not the area but the particular place (the environment at Stoudios monastery) had become the obstacle between the two men and God in their process of holification.

The new place, the monastery of St Mamas, is portrayed as the right place for Symeon the New Theologian and his spiritual father. That is clear by the boy's refusal to deny his new environment and his relationship with the spiritual father, even when his natural father with the senators try to pull him out of there.

Hence, Niketas here uses the same 'technical solution' as Gregory, with the narrative device of relocation. He employs the motif of physical distance in order to portray Symeon's mental and social distancing from mundane social problems. At the textual level, they employ a 'spatial' kind of narration to communicate terms of social interaction and religious culture through the spatial expressions of the latter. The audience understands these terms not because they are directly and literally narrated; instead, it indirectly perceives them because they are implied by the authors through the interference of characters with spaces and the expression of the interaction among characters through spatial practices.

[21] Ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ πολὺ τὸ ἐν μέσῳ, και οὕτω βλέποντες αὐτὸν τῇ προκοπῇ τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ τῇ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πίστει ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐπεκτεινόμενον οἱ βασκαίνοντες, προσελθόντες τῷ ἡγουμένῳ ἐμφυσῶσι δεινότερον κατὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τοὺς ἄνθρακας τοῦ θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ. Ὁ δὲ ἐπεὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν γενναῖον εἰς λόγους συνῆλθεν αὐτῷ, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὑποσχέσεσι, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἀπειλαῖς ἔσπευδεν ἀποσπᾶσαι αὐτὸν τοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπισπάσασθαι· ἦν γὰρ φθόνον ἔχων, ὡς οὐκ ὤφελε, κατ' ἐκείνου τοῦ μεγάλου γέροντος ὁ προεστώς. Ὡς εἶδε τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ Συμεὼν ἀταπείνωτον καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν γέροντα πίστεως ἀμετακίνητον, ἡττηθεὶς τῇ πυκνότητι καὶ σοφίᾳ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ ἐκέλευσεν εὐθὺς καὶ ἐξωθοῦσι τὸν μακάριον τῆς μονῆς. Ἰδὼν οὖν τὸν φθόνον ὁ μέγας ἐκεῖνος πατὴρ τοῦ ἡγουμένου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, λαβὼν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ μαθητὴν φοιτᾷ πρὸς Ἀντώνιον ἐκεῖνον τὸν τηνικαῦτα τῇ ἀρετῇ περιβόητον, ἡγούμενον ὄντα τῆς ἀγχοῦ παρακειμένης μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντος, και τούτῳ ὡς θησαυρὸν τῶν καλῶν παρατίθεται τὸν Συμεών. Τί δαί; Ἠρέμησε ποσῶς ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ πονηρὸς καὶ ὑφῆκε τοῦ φθόνου καὶ τῶν κατὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς πολέμων; Οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλ' ἐγείρει πάλιν τὸν κατὰ σάρκα τούτου πατέρα καὶ τῶν τῆς συγκλήτου τινὰς καὶ σπουδὴν τίθενται κωλῦσαι τοῦ μὴ ἀποτάξασθαι τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἐν κόσμῳ τὸν Συμεώνην. Ἀλλ' ὁ γενναῖος ἀθλητὴς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀκατάσειστος καὶ ἀταπείνωτος ἔμενε πυρπολούμενος τῷ ἔρωτι τοῦ Θεοῦ. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §21–2, translation by Greenfield 2013, 49–53.

INVOLUNTARY RELOCATION OR DISPLACEMENT

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, relocation marks a break in the narrative flow and a turning point in the plot (the saint's life story). It often comes as due to the saint's voluntary practice.[22] However, it can also occur as a result of the saint's displacement due to developments imposed by other social (religious and non-religious) actors.

As noted above, Symeon the New Theologian's involuntary relocation from Stoudios to St Mamas monastery, a couple of kilometres to the north, is the result of a dispute with his brothers.[23] Symeon is 'pushed out' of the monastic community of Stoudios and, when Symeon Eulabes refuses to send him off, they are both expelled from it by the abbot. The relocation to St Mamas monastery is used by Niketas so as to demonstrate Symeon's holy 'otherness', his religious excellence, his superiority as compared to the common monk of his time. It is also used as a way to negotiate this identity within the monastic communities of Constantinople in his time.

Yet, later on, Niketas narrates in much more negative terms Symeon the New Theologian's mourning of the displacement and exile from the Byzantine capital. Symeon's feelings about having been displaced are reported at length:

> This, my friends, was what that wise synkellos, that monk and priest, accomplished in his wisdom, this the most glorious height to which his acclaimed knowledge ascended, along with his love for his neighbour! Alas that we of priestly rank have become like a people without knowledge, as it has been said, and we have unfortunately been given a childless womb with dry breasts. Those who were transporting the blessed Symeon crossed the Bosporus between Constantinople and Chrysopolis and beached the boat at a small settlement called Paloukiton. There were no amenities there in the winter, and those cruel men stopped in a deserted spot, where a column of the condemned dolphin stands, and left the saint there, completely alone. They were not even sufficiently considerate to give him enough food for the day. But when the most blessed Symeon saw that the synkellos' madness had triumphed and his envy of him had achieved what the latter wanted, he gave thanks, without recrimination, to God, who had allowed this to happen to him. So while he was wandering about on that rugged mountain, he chanted with a cheerful soul the words of the psalm, I cried with my voice to the Lord, with my voice I made supplication to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before Him. I tell my trouble before Him. In the path, where I was walking, they hid a trap for me. I looked to my right hand and I saw no one who recognized me. And again, Behold, God is my Saviour and my Lord. I will be confident in Him and I will be saved by Him and I will not be afraid, for the Lord is my glory and my praise, and He has become my Saviour.[24]

[22] See Chapters 2 and 6.

[23] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §21–2, translation by Greenfield 2013, 49–53.

[24] Τοιοῦτον, ὦ φίλοι, τὸ τοῦ σοφοῦ συγκέλλου καὶ μοναχοῦ καὶ ἱερέως σοφὸν ἀποτέλεσμα, καὶ ἐς τοσοῦτον ἀνέβη ὕψος λαμπρότατον ἡ βεβοημένη γνῶσις αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῆς εἰς τὸν πλησίον ἀγάπης. Οἴμοι! ὅτι ὡμοιώθημεν λαῷ οἱ τῆς ἱερᾶς τάξεως μὴ ἔχοντι γνῶσιν κατὰ τὸν εἰρηκότα, καὶ ἐδόθη ἡμῖν μήτρα δυστυχῶς ἀτεκνοῦσα καὶ μαστοὶ ξηροί. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν προποντίδα τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς Χρυσοπόλεως διαπεράσαντες τὸν μακάριον ἐπί τι πολίχνιον οἱ ἀπάγοντες αὐτὸν προσώκειλαν τὸ πλοιάριον, ὃ Παλουκιτὼν ὀνομάζεται, ἄσκευον πάντη χειμῶνος ὥρᾳ καὶ ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῦ κατακρίτου δελφῖνος ἵσταται κίων, τὸν ἅγιον ἔστησαν μονώτατον αὐτὸν καταλείψαντες καὶ μηδὲ τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς οἱ ἀσυμπαθεῖς ἀξιώσαντες.

Symeon the New Theologian finds himself 'wandering all alone on a deserted, rugged mountain with no amenities in winter, and not even with one day's food', less than a handful of kilometres from the Byzantine capital from which he is divided by water. To comfort himself he sings a psalm saying that he has fallen in a trap, hidden for him, as he was walking, that no one recognizes him, but he will not be afraid, because he trusts his God and Saviour.[25]

This major change in Symeon's life due to displacement signifies an important turning point in the narrative. The saint is taken out of his comfort zone and routines, he is separated from his people and his disciples. He starts going through a period of major suffering and trial which will bring him in even closer contact with God. Displacement is used to make a 'real ascetic' out of this aristocrat and Constantinopolitan holy man.

LIVING 'ON THE THRESHOLD' AS A SYMBOL OF HOLINESS

In other parts of this study, the pillar and the in-cell vision are discussed as literary liminal spaces, as well as narrative ritual spaces where the saints' holy performances take place.[26] In what follows, I argue that living on a pillar and experiencing an in-cell vision are used by Gregory and Niketas as narrative devices which communicate the threshold between the divine and the mundane world. In both texts, the spaces of pillars and in-cell visions are perceived as thresholds by third-person eyewitnesses.

In Lazaros' *Life*, it is a monk called Photios that tells Gregory the following story narrated in paragraphs 84 and 85.[27] Photios was very sceptical about Lazaros' holiness, having heard bad things about him by some monk, so he asks to meet Lazaros in person alone.[28] After meeting him, he sits in another monks' cell reflecting on the great impression the holy father made on him.[29] Suddenly, the cell disappears through a vision. Photios sees a building complex between heaven and earth, extremely beautiful and pleasant as a place to live.[30] Up above this complex,

Ὁ οὖν μακαριώτατος Συμεὼν ὡς τὴν τοῦ συγκέλλου μανίαν εἶδε νικήσασαν καὶ τὸν φθόνον αὐτοῦ τὸν βεβουλευμένον διαπεράναντα ηὐχαρίστει μὴ σκυθρωπάσας τῷ κατ' αὐτὸν οὕτω γενέσθαι συγκεχωρηκότι Θεῷ. Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ τραχυτάτου βουνοῦ ἐκείνου ἀναστρεφόμενος εὐθύμῳ πως ἔψαλλε τῇ ψυχῇ λέγων· «Φωνῇ μου πρὸς Κύριον ἐκέκραξα, φωνῇ μου πρὸς Κύριον ἐδεήθην. Ἐκχεῶ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ τὴν δέησίν μου, τὴν θλῖψίν μου ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ἀπαγγελῶ. Ἐν ὁδῷ ταύτῃ, ᾗ ἐπορευόμην, ἔκρυψαν παγίδα μοι. Κατενόουν εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ ἐπέβλεπον, καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ ἐπιγινώσκων με.» Καὶ πάλιν· «Ἰδοὺ ὁ Θεὸς μου σωτήρ μου Κύριος, καὶ πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ σωθήσομαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ φοβηθήσομαι, διότι ἡ δόξα μου καὶ ἡ αἴνεσίς μου Κύριος, καὶ ἐγένετό μοι σωτήρ.» *L. Sym. New Theol.* §95, translation by Greenfield 2013, 219–21.

[25] See also Greenfield 2013, 220.

[26] See Chapters 2, 3, 10.

[27] *L. Laz.* §85, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175–6. See the Greek text and translation on pp. 66–7.

[28] *L. Laz.* §84.1–30, translation by Greenfield 2000, 173–4.

[29] *L. Laz.* §84.30–45, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175.

[30] *L. Laz.* §85.1–6, translation by Greenfield 2000, 175.

near heaven, he sees another complex much more glorious and splendid than the former; between both complexes there is a ladder set up that flashed more brightly than the sun's rays.[31] The holy father is sometimes to be seen lingering in the lower complex and apparently delivering words of instruction to some people, his lips flowing with honey, at other times ascending the ladder to the habitation near heaven and hastening to enter heaven; then going back down it again.[32] When the monk saw a crowd of distinguished people coming along the path, who were astonished at the beauty and the splendour of the residences and were asking each other what these buildings might be and whose they were, he said to them:[33]

> 'What you can see,' I said to them, 'are the constructions of holy Lazaros. His ascension into the height of heaven to the higher construction indicates his progress through spiritual contemplation; while his descent displays his deliberate association and sympathetic interaction with those whom he is leading to God; his reascension ⟨illustrates⟩ his continuous and easy access to God.' But while I was still seeing these things,' ⟨Photios⟩ continued, 'the owner of the cell [Elias] was suddenly there and tore me away from my vision, for I had been completely entranced and inspired by amazement.'[34]

In this passage, 'living on the threshold' is referred to by Gregory as an 'angelic way of life' (ἀγγελομίμητον πολιτείαν). The threshold is a place that allows Lazaros to periodically go up (towards the divine) and down (towards his flock), thus maintaining his contact with both. This is the narrative device that epitomizes the process of holification.

The experience of an in-cell vision is Niketas' narrative device to demonstrate Symeon the New Theologian's negotiation of his holy identity within his occasional environment including his spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes, and the rest of the monks in the monastery. In paragraphs 18–20 of the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian, it is time for such negotiations. The monks at the Stoudios monastery dislike the boy's austere routine and they try to weaken him through various temptations. Nevertheless, Symeon Eulabes encourages Symeon the New Theologian to persevere and remain disciplined.

At that point Niketas uses Symeon's in-cell vision as a divine confirmation that the latter is on the right path to holiness. The result of Symeon the New Theologian's vision, a holy wisdom that springs directly from God—not from reading the holy scripts—, is the element that moves the story along: it provokes the envy of the other monks who make the abbot expel Symeon together with Symeon

[31] *L. Laz.* §85.6–13, translation by Greenfield 2000, 176.

[32] *L. Laz.* §85.13–21, translation by Greenfield 2000, 176.

[33] *L. Laz.* §85.22–7, translation by Greenfield 2000, 176.

[34] Καὶ ὁρᾶτε ταῦτα τὰ φαινόμενα, πρὸς ἐκείνους ἔλεγον, τοῦ θείου Λαζάρου ὑπάρχουσιν οἰκοδομαί· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀνέρχεσθαι εἰς τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἀνωτέραν οἰκοδομὴν τὴν διὰ θεωρίας αὐτοῦ προκοπὴν σημαίνει, τὸ δὲ αὖθις κατέρχεσθαι τὴν οἰκονομικὴν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ προσαγομένους ἐμφαίνει συγκατάβασιν καὶ συμπάθειαν, ἡ δὲ αὖθις ἀνάβασις τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν διηνεκῆ τούτου σχολήν. Ὡς οὖν ταῦτα ἑώρων, φησίν, ἰδοὺ καὶ ὁ κύριος τῆς κέλλης καὶ ἀφήρπασέ με τῆς θεωρίας, λίαν ἐξεστηκότα καὶ ἔνθουν ὑπὸ θάμβους ὑπάρχοντα. *L. Laz.* §85.27–41, translation by Greenfield 2000, 176.

Eulabes from the Stoudios monastery.[35] The same device of the in-cell vision ultimately serves to persuade Symeon's disciple, Nikephoros-Symeon, about the former's holiness, in an episode presented by Niketas as an eyewitness story:

> From the time I came to be very close to the saint and enjoyed much love and spiritual care for him' ⟨continued Nikephoros,⟩ 'he wouldn't let any of his other fellow monks join him or stay in the same cell with him at all, except for me. I can't say whether this was because I was innocent and without guile, inasmuch as I was still a child (for he was always very careful and strict that no one should ever know what he did ⟨in his cell⟩), or because he needed my help in his old age, or because it was a result of God's own planning (so that Symeon and the nature of his accomplishments in his life, right here in this world and this city in the present generation, might be made known, because he was just about to return to God), but until then no one had ever stayed in his cell with him. 'So, on one occasion when I was lying in a corner on the floor of his cell, I was awakened around midnight by something and I saw then, wide awake with my eyes wide open, a wonder occur involving him that was awesome to see and hear about. A large icon of the Deesis hung high up there, close to the ceiling of his cell, and a lamp was burning in front of the icon. And behold, I saw the saint—Christ the Truth is my witness—suspended in the air at a height of around four cubits, at the same level as the icon. He had his hands raised in prayer and was completely light, completely radiant. As I was a child and without any experience of such things, I was frightened when I saw this awesome and extraordinary miracle, and so I put my head under the mattress and hid my face. In the morning, because I was still afraid, I told the saint privately what I had seen. But he was angry and ordered me not to tell anyone at all about this.[36]

Here, Symeon the New Theologian and Nikephoros-Symeon share the same cell, which allows the latter to witness Symeon's in-cell vision. The cell is set forth as an extremely important place: it is Symeon's very private space of holification, which no other monk was allowed to share.

According to Nikephoros, only he is allowed to stay because he is a young boy and because Symeon needs him. This permits Nikephoros to be an eyewitness of

[35] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §21.

[36] Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐπεὶ συνήθης εἰς πάντα ἐγενόμην τῷ ἁγίῳ, καὶ πολλῆς ἀπήλαυον παρ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης τε καὶ κηδεμονίας τῆς κατὰ πνεῦμα, οὐκ ἐδίδου χώραν ἑτέρῳ τῶν συνόντων αὐτῷ μοναχῶν συνεῖναι καθόλου ἢ συμμένειν αὐτῷ ἐν ἑνί καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ κελλίῳ πλὴν ἐμοῦ, εἴτε διὰ τὸ εἶναί με ἄκακον καὶ ἀπόνηρον εἰς παῖδας ἔτι τελοῦντα – πολλὴ γὰρ ἡ φροντὶς ἦν αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ ἀκρίβεια διὰ παντὸς τοῦ μὴ παρά τινος γνωσθῆναί ποτε τὴν ἐργασίαν αὐτοῦ –, εἴτε διὰ δουλείαν τινὰ τοῦ γήρως αὐτοῦ ἢ καὶ ἐξ οἰκονομίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὥστε φανερωθῆναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν ἐργασίαν αὐτοῦ ὁποία τίς ἐστιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ μέσον κόσμου καὶ πόλεως κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν γενεάν, διὰ τὸ μέλλειν αὐτὸν ὅσον οὔπω ἀναδραμεῖν εἰς Θεόν, οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν, ἕως τότε μηδενός ποτε ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ αὐτοῦ ἔνδον μείναντος μετ' αὐτοῦ. Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ὡς ἐν μιᾷ γωνίᾳ ἐκείμην ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους τῆς κέλλης αὐτοῦ, ποτὲ κατὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον ὡς ὑπό τινος διυπνισθείς, εἶδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγρηγορόσι φρικτὸν θέαμα καὶ ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι τηνικαῦτα τελεσθὲν ἐπ' αὐτῷ. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἡ δέησις, εἰκὼν μεγάλη, τῇ στέγῃ πλησιάζουσα τῆς κέλλης αὐτοῦ ὕπερθεν ἀπῃώρητο καὶ λύχνος ἦν καιόμενος ἔμπροσθεν τῆς εἰκόνος, εἶδον καὶ ἰδοὺ κατὰ τὰ ἴσα τῆς εἰκόνος ἐκρεμᾶτο – μαρτυρεῖ μοι Χριστὸς ἡ ἀλήθεια – εἰς τὸν ἀέρα ὁ ἅγιος ὡσεί πήχεις τέσσαρας, τὰς χεῖρας ἔχων ὑψοῦ καὶ εὐχόμενος, ὅλος φωτὸς καὶ ὅλος λαμπρότητος. Τοῦτο τὸ φρικτὸν ὡς εἶδον καὶ ἐξαίσιον θαῦμα παιδίον ὢν καὶ ἄπειρος τοιούτων, δεδοικὼς ὑπὸ τὸ στρῶμα εἰσῆλθον τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καλύψας. Πρωΐας δὲ γενομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ φόβου συνεχόμενος εἶπον τῷ ἁγίῳ τὸ ὅραμα κατ' ἰδίαν. Ὁ δὲ μηδενὶ τοῦτο εἰπεῖν καθόλου ἐμβριμησάμενός με ἐπέσκηψεν. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §117, translation by Greenfield 2013, 275–7.

Symeon's vision late at night. In this vision, Niketas presents Symeon to Nikephoros as being on the threshold between the divine and the mundane world.

The threshold has specific spatial attributes: it is placed at a height of four cubits next to an icon of the Deesis and a burning lamp beside it. The notion of the threshold is narrated by a hybrid space which combines physical and metaphysical elements: Symeon maintains the form of his physical body in the vision, while he is suspended in the air at the exact height of a holy icon hanging on the wall of the cell. He is indeed presented to the audience as a 'living icon'.[37]

At the textual level, Niketas' manner is a 'spatial' kind of narration, in which social interaction and culture are communicated simply by means of describing spaces and spatial practices to his audience. The narration of spaces and spatial practices serve to complete the missing link between the text and the audience. It allows the audience to comprehend the human agency, narrated in the text, by means of directly feeling it (through its spatialization) rather than reflectively conceiving it.

CONCLUSION

Gregory presents Lazaros as having an astonishing reputation as a holy man, endless visitors, and reputed to be the intermediary or possessor of superhuman powers due to numerous stories of miraculous acts. Yet, as observed by Greenfield, Gregory viewed the flourishing community of some three hundred monks, who had sprung up around Lazaros on the barren and inhospitable mountain, as the greatest miracle Lazaros ever performed.[38] Some monks even carried impressive reports of Lazaros' sanctity to Constantinople, bringing back recognition from the imperial court in the form of grants of land and money. Thus, at the story level, space transformation worked as a way to transform society. The same holds true for Symeon the New Theologian's relocations and displacements, which construct his impact on the society of the Byzantine capital.

The hagiographers, Gregory and Niketas Stethatos, succeed in giving these impressions by narrating in spatial terms the iterative performances of the characters' identities. Spatial practices such as relocation (voluntary or involuntary), the selection of residence as a way of communicating the setting of boundaries, and life at the liminal space of a 'threshold' between divinity and the mundane world, are the narrative devices used for the construction of these performances. The audience would have received the message: 'This is how a saint acts'.

In Chapter 10, I argue that holiness in the saints' *Lives* is a spatial performance where the saint's body is the primary space of performativity. In the cases of the spatially performed negotiations of identity, narrated in the two saints' *Lives* which I have discussed in this chapter, performativity is encompassed by spatiality

[37] An expression I borrow from Greenfield 2000, 2.
[38] Greenfield 2000, 28.

at two levels. The first level is the story level, where performativity is encompassed by spatiality through the character's spatial performances. The second is the textual level, where performativity is encompassed by spatiality through the author's speech acts, which work to create an impression about space in the audience.[39] In this narrative strategy, the full descriptions of spaces constantly serve to function as the missing link between the characters' agency and the audience's own lived experience. Hence, the precise spatial descriptions create verisimilitude: they turn the author into a trustworthy narrator by proving than he was there when everything was happening.

[39] See Rose 1999.

9

From space to place: Appropriation of space and place-making as narrative devices

This work has so far been mostly concerned with the primacy of space in literary writing. The present chapter instead focuses on place, along the line of thought introduced in Chapter Three. It considers the characters' literary 'place-making' and the latter's role in the narrative. The experience of place must not be seen as a secondary grid overlaid on the primacy of space, but rather as 'the most fundamental form of embodied experience—the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time'.[1]

'spatial' narration of power relations

Following the lead of Merleau-Ponty, Edward Casey, in his classic work 'How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time', has shown how being in a place is knowing or becoming aware of one's very consciousness and sensuous presence in the world.[2] This located and situated embodied knowledge is examined below, where several aspects of the 'holy performativity' within the two saints' *Lives* here explored are discussed.[3] Above, I have considered literary performances of spaces themselves, both private and public.[4] I hope to have shown that these literary performances aim to deliver eloquent and persuasive narratives of a social interaction that involves the main characters' constant negotiations of their identities with their environment. Negotiations happen throughout the text between the 'holy men' on one side, and laymen, their disciples, other monks, ecclesiastical, monastic, and secular authorities, even God himself, on the other. More often than not power games are hidden behind all these literary performances. This is not at all uncommon: in Judith Butler's words:

> Performative acts are forms of authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power. Implicated in a network of authorization and punishment, performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed.[5]

[1] Feld & Basso 1996, 9.
[2] Casey 1996, 13–52.
[3] See Chapter 10.
[4] See Chapter 8.
[5] Butler 1993, 171.

In this chapter, I wish to bring together literary performativity, relations of embodiment and power and explain how they fit into Gregory's and Niketas' narrative strategies. I wish to explain the precise ways in which performativity, embodiment and power relations are spatially narrated by the two authors with the help of two narrative devices which are literary versions of two spatial social practices: (a) appropriation of space and (b) place-making. I aim to show ways in which both literary practices result in the characters' definition of territory (space of power) which can be spaces personal or collective, tangible or spiritual.

'HOLY TERRITORIES' ESTABLISHED BY LITERARY PRACTICES OF SPACE APPROPRIATION

Throughout the *Life*, Gregory presents Lazaros' endless negotiations for a place to stay with local laymen, hermits, monks, abbots, bishops etc. Such negotiation is never an easy task for a wandering saint: space always belongs to someone else. Itinerants and nomads always have to claim a spot. The spatial practice of relocation is, again, Gregory's device to narrate Lazaros' power relations, his territorial negotiations, and his claim and appropriation of personal space. The same stands for Niketas' narration of Symeon the New Theologian's life story: relocation here is even more focused and linked to territorial negotiations that move the story along. Many aspects of such episodes are discussed throughout the present study.[6]

Power relations between the holy man and other monks and/or laymen

In the episode which follows, Lazaros has just returned home to Ephesos, after his long experience in the Holy Land and his tour as a pilgrim in Asia Minor. He now seeks (once more) a place to settle down and live as an ascetic in the area. In this episode, Gregory presents a series of such negotiations of Lazaros with several individuals:

> Lazaros entered the town and then left ⟨again⟩ after praying in the church of the Theologian. Led by ⟨God⟩, who was directing him, he traveled on, and came to a village called Malpadeas. As the day was already ⟨lengthening⟩ into evening, he turned off the road and went into ⟨the village⟩, where *he was taken in by a priest called George. After this man had generously entertained him, he was asked by Lazaros if there was a monastery in the area where he might take up residence. ⟨George⟩ led him to the monastery of the most holy Theotokos, which is above the village of Kepion and is called ⟨the monastery⟩ of Appion. Lazaros went into this ⟨place⟩, but did not like living there ⟨and so⟩, directed by the superior of the monastery, he came to the foothills of the mountain called Koumaron where there was a spring and also a small chapel* ⟨dedicated to⟩ that victorious martyr for Christ, Marina. Here two monks were living, brothers by birth called Hilarios and Leontios. These men took Lazaros in and they both decided that they should live together. After a while, Lazaros *persuaded the monks to construct a roofed pillar for him; he moved onto this and spent some time on it, but then decided to take the roof off and live in the open air on this ⟨pillar⟩*, in imitation of the wondrous Symeon. And so he did.[7]

[6] See Chapters 8, 10.

[7] Καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ εὐξάμενος ἐν τῷ τοῦ Θεολόγου ναῷ, ἐξελθών, ἔνθα αὐτὸν ὁ φέρων ὡδήγει, ἐπορεύετο·

Here, Lazaros performs his new way of 'living as a holy man' by seeking an appropriate place of residence. His first negotiation takes place at Malpadeas village, where he consults its presbyter, Georgios, about a monastery in the area which would be eager to accept him. The presbyter advises him to head for Appionos monastery, which Lazaros does. The abbot of the monastery welcomes him to the religious community of the area by helping him find a place to stay: he takes him to a nearby hermitage of St Marina. The latter is inhabited by two monks who also present that space as a 'holy' residence: they accept and welcome the newcomer, and help him construct his prefered personal space in the form of a pillar. Hence, in all these negotiations of Lazaros' identity as a 'holy man', all other characters accept his presence, acknowledge his identity, and approve of his new role within the religious and secular communities around Ephesos. Yet, in Gregory's next paragraph, the wide acceptance of the newcomer by the secular part of the community—also narrated in spatial terms, through mobility— generates the need for a new round of negotiations of Lazaros' residence:

> Within a short time Lazaros' reputation spread almost everywhere and many people, rich and poor, began coming to him from the villages and towns nearby. He received these people kindly, ⟨thus⟩ fulfilling the vow to God that he had made earlier on; for he would break up and distribute to them the bread that He sent him for his nourishment through the Christian faithful. The monks who were there before ⟨him⟩ saw this ⟨happening⟩ and that *the people who lived there were showing more respect for Lazaros, who was a newcomer, a stranger, and unknown, than they were for them, who were locals and well known*. So, they went to Lazaros and said, '*Either stop welcoming everyone and giving away to them* in this reckless fashion the things God sends for our use, *or else go away from here. If you won't, then we will have to leave ourselves!'* The father replied to them, 'It's impossible for me not to receive all these people and not to offer them ⟨a share⟩ of what God provides for us; *nor am I going to leave here for such a reason*. As for you, do whatever seems right to you!' When the monks heard this from the father, they considered ⟨their position⟩ carefully and then, after discussing it thoroughly with each other, left Lazaros there and went away. They went off to the hill called Hypselos, above the village of Legos; *they found a place where there was a spring, and there they built a monastery*. It is still standing today and bears the name of the monk Hilarion.[8]

καὶ φθάσας εἰς χωρίον Μαλπαδέας λεγόμενον, ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας πρὸς ἑσπέραν οὔσης, ἐκκλίνας τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰσῆλθε· καὶ ὑπεδέχθη παρά τινος πρεσβυτέρου τοὔνομα Γεωργίου, ὅστις μετὰ τὸ ξενίσαι αὐτὸν φιλοτίμως ἐρωτηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός, εἰ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς ἐκεῖσε τόποις μοναστήριον, ὅπως ἐν αὐτῷ ποιήσηται τὴν κατοίκησιν, ὡδήγησεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν μονὴν τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, τὴν ἄνωθεν Κηπίου χωρίου, τὴν οὕτω καλουμένην Ἀππίονος· εἰς ἣν καὶ ἀπελθὼν καὶ μὴ ἀρεσθεὶς ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν κατοίκησιν ποιήσασθαι, ὁδηγηθεὶς παρὰ τοῦ τῆς μονῆς ἡγουμένου ἔρχεται παρὰ τοὺς πρόποδας τοῦ βουνοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Κουμαρῶνος, ἔνθα ἦν πηγὴ ὕδατος καὶ εὐκτήριον μικρὸν τῆς καλλινίκου μάρτυρος τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μαρίνης, ἐν ᾧ ἐκάθηντο μοναχοὶ δύο, ἀδελφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα ὑπάρχοντες, Ἱλάριος καὶ Λεόντιος καλούμενοι· οἵτινες καὶ δεξάμενοι αὐτὸν ἠρετίσαντο ἀμφότεροι τὴν κατοίκησιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσασθαι. Χρόνου δέ τινος παρελθόντος, πείθει τοὺς μοναχοὺς στύλον αὐτῷ ὑπωρόφιον οἰκοδομῆσαι· εἰς ὃν καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ χρόνον τινὰ ἐν αὐτῷ οὕτω ποιήσας, ἔκρινε τοῦ ἆραι τὴν στέγην καὶ αἴθριον αὐτὸν ἐν τούτῳ τελεῖν κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Συμεών· ὃ καὶ πεποίηκεν. *L. Laz.* §31, translation by Greenfield 2000, 117–8.

[8] Ὡς δὲ ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἡ αὐτοῦ φήμη πάντα σχεδὸν ἐπλήρωσεν, ἤρξαντο πρὸς αὐτὸν φοιτᾶν ἐκ τῶν πέριξ κωμῶν τε καὶ πόλεων οὐκ ὀλίγοι πλούσιοι ὁμοῦ τε καὶ πένητες· οὓς εὐμενῶς ὑποδεχόμενος καὶ ἣν πάλαι τῷ Θεῷ εὐχὴν ηὔξατο ἐκπληρῶν, ὃν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ἄρτον εἰς τροφὴν ἐκ τῶν φιλοχρίστων ἔπεμπε, τοῦτον

The lay people in the area show their acceptance of Lazaros by visiting him to ask for his blessing. This mobility and its financial repercussions for the other residents of the hermitage is said by Gregory to be the main cause of conflict between Lazaros and the two monks; it is a matter of envy, hierarchy and finances (all these visitors consumed most of their provisions). Lazaros was not entitled to so many visitors and resources as them, who were locals and well known, because he was a newcomer, a stranger, and unknown (*νέηλυν καὶ ξένον καὶ ἄγνωστον τοῖς ἐκεῖσε ὄντα*).

So, the two monks claim their lost ground. They tell him to stop accepting the visitors or else they will claim back the place for themselves; otherwise, he has to leave the place. Lazaros claims back the place for himself on theological grounds: the identity of a holy man is inseparable from sharing his belongings. He firmly replies that he will not leave for such a reason. In this negotiation Lazaros is a winner but also a bit of a loser: the two monks relocate to another place and build their own monastery. They leave the hermitage to him but also abandon him all alone on that mountain. Lazaros has made this location a place of his own and he is the winner of the conflict with the two monks.

Symeon the New Theologian loses a similar battle and is forced out of the Stoudios monastery, as discussed above.[9] Yet, in many cases he is presented as obliged to negotiate with laymen who turn against his claim to their territory. Such an episode will be discussed next. After his status has been restored by the Patriarchate, Symeon is honoured by his fellow citizens and he is (finally) welcome again to Constantinople. When Symeon chooses instead to return to his monastery on the opposite coast of the Bosporus, his fellow citizens and disciples offer him gifts and money for the restoration of his monastery of St Marina.[10] But a surprise awaits him:

> But who could possibly relate the trials that, once again from that time on, were produced for him by the demons and his neighbors? *The former acted invisibly at all hours, the latter visibly, grinding their teeth against him, throwing stones, abusing him with insults, scaring him with threats, and giving him frights.* Indeed, what did they not do to thwart his construction of the monastery? But Symeon, who was clothed in the rock [Christ] and always had the foundation of

αὐτοῖς διαθρύπτων ἀπέλυε. Ταῦτα οἱ μοναχοὶ οἱ πρὶν ἐκεῖσε ὄντες βλέποντες καὶ ὅτι ἐκεῖνον, νέηλυν καὶ ξένον καὶ ἄγνωστον τοῖς ἐκεῖσε ὄντα, ὑπὲρ ἐκείνους τοὺς ἐντοπίους καὶ γνωρίμους τιμῶσι, προσελθόντες αὐτῷ λέγουσιν· Ἢ ἔκκοψον τὸ ὑποδέχεσθαι πάντας καὶ τὸ οὕτως ἀφειδῶς παρέχειν αὐτοῖς, ἃ εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν ὁ Θεὸς χρείαν πέμπει, ἢ τῶν ὧδε ὑποχώρησον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἡμεῖς ἀναχωρῆσαι ἔχομεν. Καὶ ὁ πατὴρ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει· Οὔτε τὸ μὴ δέχεσθαι πάντας καὶ ἐξ ὧν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς χορηγεῖ μὴ παρέχειν αὐτοῖς δύναμαι ποιῆσαι οὔτε πάλιν τῶν ὧδε διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην αἰτίαν ἀναχωρῶ. Περὶ δὲ ὑμῶν ὃ καλὸν ὑμῖν δοκεῖ εἶναι, ποιήσατε. Ταῦτα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς οἱ μοναχοὶ ἀκούσαντες, καθ' ἑαυτοὺς σκεψάμενοι καὶ καλῶς βουλευσάμενοι, καταλιπόντες αὐτὸν ἐκεῖσε ἀνεχώρησαν. Καὶ ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὸν βουνὸν τὸν καλούμενον Ὑψηλόν, ἄνωθεν τοῦ χωρίου τῆς Λήγου, εὑρόντες τε ἐν τόπῳ τινὶ πηγὴν ὕδατος, οἰκοδομοῦσιν ἐκεῖ μοναστήριον, ὃ καὶ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἵσταται, τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν φέρον τοῦ μοναχοῦ Ἱλαρίωνος. L. Laz. §32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 118–9.

[9] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §12–3.

[10] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §109. See the Greek text and its translation in Chapter 8.

his thought firmly based on this, remained unshaken and unmoved by the onslaughts and fierce gales of these trials. *His neighbors, motivated by envy, hindered him openly with threats and tried to chase him away by throwing stones, while the demons, who had fought against him in the past, shook his buildings without being seen and caused trouble for him again. But need I say more? A sea of ills, full of tempestuous waves, was raised up against him every day, a veritable tidal wave of trials from demons and men alike.* Nevertheless, as a result of much harder work*, he completed this tiny monastery, as may be seen today, and he planted a garden and vineyard in it to provision the monks who were going to live in it*. So Symeon was ⟨busy⟩ again, assembling another flock and celebrating his spiritual father's feast day even more munificently than before. *For the clergy of the Great Church of God [Hagia Sophia], led by the laosynaktes, along with many monks and laypeople, gathered nearby in the church of the Theotokos at Ta Eugeniou, where Symeon had purchased a metochion*, and the celebration of the festival went on for eight whole days, and now there was no one trying to stop it or find fault with it as in the past.[11]

Here, Symeon the New Theologian's neighbours attempt to obstruct his effort to restore his monastery and expand his territory. The means they use are daily oral and physical abuse (such as stone-throwing, threatening, sending him demons etc.) similar to 'a sea of ills with tempestuous waves'. But Symeon resists their aggression and wins the battle by significantly expanding his 'holy territory': he not only renovates the monastery but also establishes an agrarian area (garden and vineyard) in its vicinity and consolidates it by founding a metochion in the neighbourhood of Ta Eugeniou in the capital.

The successful establishment of this territory is narrated by Niketas as an important stage in Symeon's story of holification. First of all, the latter is the winner in this conflict with the local community. Secondly, he now has an indisputable place of his own which serves his holy purpose. This larger monastery, as well as its metochion in the capital, enable Symeon the New Theologian to consolidate the celebration of Symeon Eulabes, for which he had been formerly accused by Stephanos of false practice and exiled by the Patriarch.

[11] Ἀλλὰ τίς ἱκανὸς τοὺς ἀναφυέντας πάλιν ἐκεῖθεν αὐτῷ πειρασμοὺς ἀπό τε δαιμόνων καὶ τῶν πλησιοχώρων ἐκδιηγήσασθαι; Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀφανῶς ὅσαι ὥραι, οἱ δὲ φανερῶς τοὺς ὀδόντας ἔβρυχον κατ' αὐτοῦ, λίθοις ἔβαλλον, ὕβρεσιν ἔπλυνον, ἀπειλαῖς καὶ φόβοις ἐξεδειμάτουν αὐτόν. Τί οὐκ ἐποίουν πρὸς τὸ ἀναχαιτίσαι αὐτὸν τῆς τοῦ φροντιστηρίου οἰκοδομῆς; Ἀλλ' ὁ τὴν πέτραν ἐνδεδυμένος Συμεών, ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἐρηρεισμένας ἔχων ἀεὶ τὰς βάσεις τῆς διανοίας αὐτοῦ, ταῖς τῶν πειρασμῶν προσβολαῖς τε καὶ ἀντιπνοίαις ἀκατάσειστος καὶ ἀκράδαντος ἔμεινεν. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρόσοικοι φθόνῳ βαλλόμενοι ταῖς ἀπειλαῖς φανερῶς διεκώλυον καὶ ταῖς βολαῖς τῶν λίθων αὐτὸν ἐξεδίωκον, οἱ δὲ πάλαι ἐκπολεμωθέντες αὐτῷ δαίμονες τὰς οἰκοδομὰς κατέσειον αὐτοῦ ἀφανῶς καὶ κόπους αὖθις παρεῖχον αὐτῷ. Καὶ τί πολλὰ λέγω; Θάλασσα κακῶν ἐπὶ ἀγρίοις κύμασιν αὐτῷ καθ' ἑκάστην ἠγείρετο ἡ τῶν πειρασμῶν τρικυμία ἐκ διαμόνων καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὁμοῦ. Πλὴν ὅμως διὰ πολλῶν πόνων πρὸς αὐτοῦ τελειοῦται, ὡς νῦν ὁρᾶται, τὸ βραχύτατον τοῦτο ποίμνιον, παράδεισον ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀμπελῶνα φυτεύσαντος εἰς παραμυθίαν τῶν μελλόντων προσκαρτερεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ μοναχῶν. Ἦν οὖν ὁ Συμεὼν πάλιν συγκροτῶν ἄλλο ποίμνιον καὶ φιλοτιμότερον ἑορτάζων τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἑορτὴν ἢ πρότερον. Συνήρχετο γὰρ σχεδὸν ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῆς Θεοτόκου τῶν Εὐγενίου, ἔνθα καὶ μετόχιον ἐξωνήσατο, ὁ τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας κλῆρος τῷ λαοσυνάκτῃ ἑπόμενος καὶ πολλοὶ ἔκ τε μοναζόντων καὶ λαϊκῶν, καὶ ἐν ἡμέραις ὅλαις ὀκτὼ τὰ τῆς ἑορτῆς ἐτελεῖτο, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἦν ὁ κωλύων ἢ κατηγορῶν ὡς τὸ πρότερον. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §110, translation by Greenfield 2013, 255, 257.

Hence, this new territory is used to move Niketas' story along. In this way, Niketas concludes the incontestable establishment of Symeon the New Theologian in the religious and social life of the Byzantine capital. Furthermore, he illustrates that Symeon's theology has now triumphed and the celebration of Symeon Eulabes as a Byzantine saint has been imposed. All of Symeon's enemies have been defeated; the holy man's virtue has prevailed.

Power relations between the holy man and Church authorities

Symeon the New Theologian's dispute with synkellos Stephanos ended up being resolved by the supreme authority of the Byzantine Church, the Patriarch himself.[12] Symeon's punishment for venerating Symeon Eulabes, despite the fact that the latter was not officially established as a saint, was his deprivation of his entire territory and belongings, by means of being sent into exile.[13] After his terrible punishment, Symeon the New Theologian provokes Stephanos with a letter.[14] This leads to Stephanos' answer: he provokes an extreme violation of Symeon's former holy territory and personal space (his cell at St Mamas monastery) by the Church authorities:

> As soon as he could, the synkellos thus met with the patriarch concerning Symeon. *He whispered maliciously in his ear and fanned the coals of his anger with his false accusations until he ignited them again and stirred up a fresh firestorm of troubles for Symeon.* Precisely because he had witnessed the noble Symeon's munificent celebration of his spiritual father's feast days and his extremely generous distribution of money to the poor, *he imagined (since he himself, like Midas, saw gold everywhere) that Symeon had stacks of gold buried under the cell in which he used to shed the sweat of his ascetic labors. He thus persuaded the patriarch to send out his men again to search for the saint's treasure, which he had told him about, and to seize as well, along with the gold, all Symeon's possessions*—I mean his books and other necessities and even his clothing. Do you see what envy and hatred of one's neighbour does? For it is truly blind and imagines that things which do not actually exist do exist, and treats things that are unreal as though they were real and fights with them. *So the blessed Symeon's cell, which once had the treasure of the graces of the Spirit dwelling in it, was searched for the buried stacks of gold ⟨supposedly belonging⟩ to this man who loathed all material possessions and threw them away and owned nothing except for the hair shirt and the mantle that he had to cover his body* (which was itself so withered by his great asceticism that even the appendage of his flesh was a burden to it). So *his cell was searched with shovels and various implements. The floor was excavated, holes were dug in the walls, the roof was opened up, and even the soil itself was winnowed in the open air. The inanimate cell was thoroughly examined all day long and underwent a punishment equal to that of its owner.* But *despite being badly scarred*, it yielded none of those things for which it had been examined and thus its searchers were eager to find. But *the books that were kept in it were seized, along with what little comfort Symeon had for his body, namely the tunic and clothing which he needed in his frailty.*[15]

[12] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §86–98.

[13] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §94.

[14] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §96.

[15] Τοίνυν καὶ τῷ πατριάρχῃ ὡς εἶχεν εὐθὺς κατὰ τοῦ Συμεὼν ἐντυχὼν καὶ ἐπιψιθυρίσας αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ οὖς καὶ ταῖς διαβολαῖς τοὺς ἄνθρακας τοῦ θυμοῦ δυνατῶς ἐμφυσήσας, ἀνάπτει πάλιν αὐτοὺς καὶ φλόγα μεγίστην ἐγείρει αὖθις τῷ Συμεὼν πειρασμῶν. Ὡς γὰρ τὸ φιλότιμον ἀκριβῶς ᾔδει τοῦ γενναίου ἐν ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς ἑορταῖς καὶ τὴν εἰς τοὺς πένητας ἀφθονωτάτην τῶν χρημάτων διάδοσιν, ὑπονοεῖ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ὁ κατὰ

In this passage, Symeon the New Theologian's personal space is literally torn to pieces and turned upside down and inside out by the authorities, in their search for gold. Niketas uses a detailed description of the space and the characters' acts in space—something he rarely does in the *Life*. The Patriarch's people excavated the floor with shovels and other tools, they dug holes in the walls, they opened up the roof and even inspected the interior of the soil (Διερευνᾶται ... λικμιζομένου).

Furthermore, Niketas uses a metaphor including a personification of the room: the latter 'underwent a punishment equal to that of its owner' and 'it was scarred' like Symeon himself but offered no material goods to its intruders (Ὡς δὲ πολλὰ ... ἀπέδωκε). First of all, Symeon's room is demonstrated by Niketas as the holy man's personal space, an emotionally sensitive space, an important extension of Symeon's personality. Secondly, the contrast between material goods and spiritual virtue is enhanced through Niketas' illustration of Symeon's cell in this passage. Niketas narrates that, on one hand, treasures in gold existed in Stephanos' mind but not in Symeon's cell. On the other hand Niketas implies that holiness (materialized in the form of books as well as clothes, that wrapped the holy body) existed in Symeon's cell but not in Stephanos' world.

In all these ways, Niketas sets forth the holy man's cell as a space which is symbolically a great part of Symeon. Its violation in the text serves as a symbolic second violation of Symeon's personality as a holy man. This second violation emerges after his first in the form of exile. That first violation also involved the deprivation of Symeon from his personal space and his personal belongings within that space, which all made up his entire life and practice as well as his profile as a saint.

'HOLY TERRITORIES' ESTABLISHED BY SPATIAL PRACTICES OF PLACE-MAKING

Spatial practices of place-making also establish the saint's 'holy territory'. Place-making, in Gregory's and Niketas' narrations, takes place during Lazaros'

τὸν Μίδαν ἐκεῖνον τὰ πάντα βλέπων χρυσόν, χρυσοῦ θησαυροὺς κατορωρυγμένους ἔχειν τὸν ἄνδρα, ὑφ' ἣν τοὺς ἀσκητικοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ ἱδρῶτας κατεβάλλετο κέλλαν· καὶ αὖθις πείθει τὸν πατριάρχην ἐξαποστεῖλαι καὶ τοὺς θησαυροὺς ἀνερευνῆσαι τοὺς μηνυθέντας αὐτῷ τοῦ ἁγίου. Οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ σὺν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν ἅπασαν δημεῦσαι τὴν ἐνοῦσαν αὐτῷ εὐπορίαν, βίβλων, λέγω, καὶ χρειῶν ἄλλων καὶ σκεπασμάτων τοῦ σώματος. Ὁρᾶτε οἷα ὁ φθόνος καὶ τὸ κατὰ τοῦ πλησίον μῖσος ἐργάζεται; Τυφλώττει γὰρ ἀληθῶς καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα φαντάζεται καὶ καθ' ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις ὡς ἐνυποστάτοις αὐτοῖς χρῆται καὶ διαμάχεται. Διερευνᾶται οὖν ἡ τοῦ μακαρίου κέλλα, ἡ τὸν θησαυρὸν ἐσχηκυῖά ποτε τῶν χαρισμάτων τοῦ Πνεύματος ἔνοικον, περὶ θησαυρῶν χρυσίων κατορυχθέντων τοῦ τὰ πάντα βδελυξαμένου καὶ ῥίψαντος καὶ μηδὲν πλὴν τοῦ τριχίνου καὶ τῆς ἀμπεχόνης τῶν σκεπασμάτων κτησαμένου τοῦ σώματος, ᾧ καὶ τὸ ἐφόλκιον εἰς βάρος ἦν τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ αὐτὸ ἐκτεταριχευμένον ὑπὸ τῆς ἄγαν ἀσκήσεως. Διερευνᾶται δὲ σκαφείοις τισὶ καὶ μηχανήμασιν ἀνασκαλευομένου τοῦ ἐδάφους, διορυττομένων τῶν τοίχων, ἀνακαλυπτομένης τῆς στέγης καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ χοὸς εἰς ἀέρα λικμιζομένου. Ὡς δὲ πολλὰ δι' ὅλης ἡμέρας ἡ ἄψυχος ἀπαιτούμενη κέλλα καὶ ἴσην τῷ οἰκοδεσπότῃ αὐτῆς ὑποστᾶσα τὴν τιμωρίαν, οὐδὲν, ὧν ἀπῃτεῖτο καὶ ὧν ἐπόθουν οἱ ἐρευνῶντες τυχεῖν, καταστιχθεῖσα ἀπέδωκε, δημεύεται τὰς ἀποκειμένας ἐν αὐτῇ βίβλους καὶ τὴν μικρὰν ἐκείνου παραμυθίαν τοῦ σώματος, ὅση περὶ τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ τὰ σκεπάσματα ἦν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διὰ τὴν ἐνοῦσαν ἀσθένειαν. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §97.12–29, 98.1–23, translation by Greenfield 2013, 223–7.

and Symeon the New Theologian's travelling, as well as during their inhabiting new spots such as a cave, a barren place, a mountain. This place-making basically signifies that the saints appropriate the aforementioned spaces and make them 'their own' places.

Travelling/walking

Lazaros had problems with the ecclesiastical authorities in Ephesos from his first appearance on the Galesion mountain. These problems, due to Ephesos' legal ownership of the mountain and its insistence that Lazaros, and the monastic communities he was forming, had no rights there, are explained later in the *Life*.[16] At the very beginning, Lazaros is ordered off the mountain by the metropolitan very soon after his initial move there from the hermitage of St Marina. It is only due to the metropolitan's absence in Constantinople that Lazaros finds the opportunity to settle down on the mountain:

> The father spent six months alone on the mountain, as has already been made clear, but, when the metropolitan of Ephesos learned of it, he made him leave the mountain by means of a personal letter and *go down again* to the ⟨monastery of the⟩ holy Marina, even though Lazaros did not want to ⟨do this⟩. A little while later, however, when the metropolitan went to Constantinople, *the father sent a builder and a monk to renovate the small cistern associated with the cave.* The ⟨same⟩ man who ⟨built⟩ the church of the Prodromos, which is called 'Marmastos,' constructed this ⟨cistern⟩ long ago. As the story goes, *the old man built this ⟨cistern⟩ earlier so that he might live in the cave, and indeed he did live there* for some time; ⟨but then⟩, either because he got discouraged or because God moved him to do this, *he left the cave and went down to the aforesaid church of the Prodromos, which, as has been said, he built*; and there he died. *When this ⟨cistern⟩ had been rebuilt and the winter season began and it was filled by the water that ran down the mountain, the father left the ⟨monastery of the⟩ holy Marina one night; he took with him the priest George (who was mentioned above), his own brother Ignatios, and three other monks, and went up toward the mountain. Because the river was then in spate, they went down. They crossed ⟨it⟩ by means of the boat. I don't know how he found out ⟨about this⟩, but he had anticipated it, and was standing on the other side with a ⟨pack⟩ animal as well so that the father might ride it and go up in this fashion as far as the lower slopes of the mountain. He had labored in vain, however, for the father was not persuaded to do this and instead traveled on foot with his companions; he sang the psalms of David ⟨as he went⟩ and ⟨only⟩ reached the place after completing the whole psalter. ⟨On the way⟩ he went up and saw the stylite again, and then, coming down from there, went up onto the mountain*.
>
> When they got close to the cave they began trying to find it, because it was still dark; but then, while they were searching for it like this, the father ⟨himself⟩ happened to find it. *He called out and made them go there too; then he went inside the cave with them and stood there singing* psalms until day came. Lazaros blessed his ⟨companions⟩ and then dismissed them, but he asked them ⟨to make sure⟩ that one of the brothers came up once a week to bring him a pot full of water and a few pulses ⟨soaked⟩ in water. So the ⟨others⟩ did obeisance and went down from the cave, *but Lazaros stayed on in it until the brothers built him a pillar in the middle of the dry stream bed,*

[16] *L. Laz.* §245.

open to the air, as he wished. He then went onto this and was as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof, although he kept company with God through his unceasing songs of praise, vigils, and prayers.[17]

In this long passage, Lazaros establishes his holy territory through walking and 'making places of his own'. He does that in a process of appropriating the mountain and transforming it successfully into a holy mountain. This process consists of a ritual travelling on foot up and down the slopes, which includes his crossing a river on foot, his visiting a stylite, his singing psalms, his discovering an unknown 'holy cave' which people had only heard of, and finally his settling down there, first in the cave and then on a pillar.

This ritual travel reifies Lazaros' process of 'holy place-making' on Mount Galesion. This process begins with the initiation of Galesion as a holy mountain by the old man who built the cistern and lived in the cave; Lazaros' decision to move to the mountain is founded upon and legitimized by this holy tradition. The process continues with Lazaros' plan of resettlement which is structured upon several different stages. First, he creates the right conditions for settlement: he has the cistern restored. Secondly, he selects the appropriate time for moving (after the winter). Thirdly, he acknowledges the mountain's 'holy landmarks': the old-man's

[17] Ὁ δέ γε πατὴρ μόνος, ὡς προδεδήλωται, μῆνας ἓξ εἰς τὸ ὄρος πεποίηκεν. Ὁ δὲ τῆς Ἐφέσου μητροπολίτης τοῦτο μαθών, δι' οἰκείας γραφῆς καὶ μὴ βουλόμενον τοῦ ὄρους κατελθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐποίησε καὶ εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίναν πάλιν ἀπελθεῖν. Καὶ δὴ μετά τινα καιρὸν εἰσελθόντος τοῦ μητροπολίτου ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, ἀποστέλλει ὁ πατὴρ οἰκοδόμον μετὰ καὶ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ ἀνακαινίζουσι τὴν πρὸς τὸ σπήλαιον μικρὰν δεξαμενὴν οὖσαν, ἣν πάλαι ὁ τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Προδρόμου τὸν λεγόμενον Μαρμαστὸν ᾠκοδόμησεν. Αὐτὸς γάρ, ὡς λόγος κρατεῖ, προῳκοδόμησε ταύτην, ὅπως ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ κατοικήσῃ. Καὶ δὴ χρόνον τινὰ οἰκήσας ἐκεῖ, εἴτε ἀκηδιάσας ὁ γέρων, εἴτε καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸς τοῦτο αὐτὸν κινήσαντος, ἐξελθὼν τοῦ σπηλαίου καὶ κατελθὼν εἰς τὸν ῥηθέντα τοῦ Προδρόμου ναόν, ὃν ὡς εἴρηται ᾠκοδόμησεν, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς τέλος ἐδέξατο. Ταύτης οὖν ἀνοικοδομηθείσης καὶ τοῦ καιροῦ τοῦ χειμῶνος ἐνστάντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καταρρέοντος τοῦ ὄρους ὕδατος πλησθείσης, μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν παραλαβὼν ὁ πατὴρ μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸν προμνημονευθέντα πρεσβύτερον Γεώργιον καὶ τὸν ἴδιον ἀδελφὸν Ἰγνάτιον καὶ ἑτέρους τρεῖς μοναχούς, ἀπάρας ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίνης πρὸς τὸ ὄρος ἄνεισι. Διὰ δὲ τὸ πλημμυρεῖν τότε τὸν ποταμὸν κατελθόντες διὰ τοῦ καράβου ἐπέρασαν. Τοῦτο οὐκ οἶδ' ὅθεν μαθών, προλαβὼν ἵστατο ἐπὶ τὸ πέραν μετὰ καὶ ζῴου πρὸς τὸ τὸν πατέρα ἐπ' αὐτῷ καθίσαντα οὕτως μέχρι τῶν προπόδων τοῦ ὄρους ἀπελθεῖν· ἀλλ' εἰς μάτην κεκοπίακεν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπείσθη ὁ πατὴρ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, ἀλλὰ πεζῇ βαδίζων μετὰ καὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ δαυϊτικοὺς ψαλμοὺς ᾀδων μέχρι τοῦ τόπου ἔφθασε τελέσας ἅπαν τὸ ψαλτήριον. Καὶ οὕτως ἀνελθὼν καὶ τὸν στυλίτην πάλιν ἰδών, κατελθὼν ἐκεῖθεν ἀνέρχεται εἰς τὸ ὄρος.

Καὶ φθάσαντες πλησίον τοῦ σπηλαίου διὰ τὸ εἶναι ἀκμὴν νύκτα, ἐζήτουν αὐτὸ εὑρεῖν· καὶ δὴ οὕτως αὐτῶν τὸ σπήλαιον ζητούντων, ἔτυχε τὸν πατέρα τοῦτο εὑρεῖν. Καὶ φωνήσας ἐποίησε κἀκείνους ἐκεῖ ἐλθεῖν. Καὶ εἰσελθὼν μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσω τοῦ σπηλαίου, ἔστη ψάλλων, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο. Καὶ οὕτως εὐξάμενος τούτους ἀπέλυσε, παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ἅπαξ τῆς ἑβδομάδος ἀνέρχηταί τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν, κομίζων αὐτῷ κεράμιον μεστὸν ὕδατος καὶ ὄσπριον βραχὺ ἐν ὕδατι. Καὶ οἱ μὲν βαλόντες μετάνοιαν τοῦ σπηλαίου κατῆλθον. Αὐτὸς δὲ ἀπομείνας ἦν ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ ἕως οὗ μέσον τοῦ χειμάρρου στύλον αἴθριον οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ θελήσει αὐτῷ ᾠκοδόμησαν· ἔνθα καὶ εἰσελθών, ἦν ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον ἐπὶ δώματος καὶ καταμόνας τῷ Θεῷ διὰ τῶν ἀκαταπαύστων ὑμνῳδιῶν ἀγρυπνιῶν τε καὶ προσευχῶν συγγινόμενος. *L. Laz.* §53, translation by Greenfield 2000, 140–2.

cave and then the stylite. He sings psalms and he blesses his brothers. This ritual walking precedes his final settling down on the mountain, alone 'like a sparrow'.[18]

This ritual process is not surprising. In fact, in Gregory's narrative strategy, travelling is Lazaros' main practice of place-making and symbolic appropriation of space throughout the *Life*. Yet, in this case, we are allowed a lengthy series of glances into the details of Lazaros' relocation and the way he makes 'his own places' out of all the spaces he visits. Most important, Gregory makes clear the outcome of this process: Lazaros' own 'places' delineate his 'holy territory', real and symbolic.

Inhabiting

Lazaros had an astonishing reputation as a holy man, through his endless visitors, and even his repute as the intermediary, or actual possessor, of superhuman powers (due to numerous stories of miraculous acts, healing, exorcism, protection, insight, and foresight).[19] And yet the flourishing community of some three hundred monks, who had sprung up around him on an inhospitable mountain, was viewed by the author as Lazaros' greatest miracle ever:[20]

> ⟨As for⟩ the miracles, what needs to be said? For it is ⟨surely enough⟩ by itself for someone to bear in mind how, *although he came up alone onto this mountain*, *without shelter, without shoes, and with only one little leather tunic and the irons which he wore to crush his body*, *Lazaros was yet able to found the three monasteries ⟨on Galesion⟩ and in addition to construct the monastery at Bessai, to gather some three hundred monks in them, to provide everything they needed, and moreover to maintain so many guests, then as now, in the monastery every day.* If someone bears these ⟨facts⟩ in mind, as I have said*, I do not think he will find anything superior as far as a miracle is concerned*, considering the extent to which Lazaros ⟨lacked⟩ ancestral treasuries or inheritances ⟨when⟩ he founded these ⟨monasteries⟩, ⟨and that he did this⟩ with ⟨only⟩ the help and assistance of some of his relatives and friends. Nevertheless, even if these ⟨facts⟩ are worthy of amazement without any other miracle story, all the same I will have no problem either in establishing the veracity of ⟨those of⟩ his miracles that are unknown to most people or in narrating those which are ⟨already⟩ well known.[21]

The monks' occupation of the mountain is portrayed by Gregory as an act of power at a local level, because it does not only concern the person of Lazaros alone, but

[18] See discussion on pp. 98–9.

[19] Greenfield 2000, 3.

[20] On this issue see also *L. Laz.* §62, 85.

[21] Περὶ γὰρ τῶν θαυμάτων τί χρὴ καὶ λέγειν; τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον ἐάνπερ τις εἰς νοῦν λάβῃ, πῶς μόνος ἀνελθὼν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ὄρει ἀσκεπής, ἀνυπόδετος, μετὰ ἑνὸς χιτωνίσκου δερματίνου καὶ τῶν σιδήρων, ὧν πρὸς πιεσμὸν τοῦ σώματος περικείμενος ἦν, ἠδυνήθη τε τὰ τρία συστήσασθαι μοναστήρια, πρὸς τούτοις καὶ τὴν ἐν ταῖς Βέσσαις ἀνεγεῖραι μονὴν καὶ περὶ τοὺς τριακοσίους ἀδελφοὺς ἐν τούτοις ἀθροῖσαι καὶ τὰ πρὸς χρείαν τούτοις χορηγεῖν ἅπασαν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ξένους τοσούτους καὶ τότε καὶ νῦν καθ' ἑκάστην ἐν τῇ μονῇ διατρέφεσθαι· εἰ ταῦτά τις εἰς νοῦν, ὡς εἴρηται, λάβῃ, οὐδὲν ὡς οἶμαι εἴς γε θαύματος λόγον ὑπερβάλλον εὑρήσει, ἐκ ποίων ἄρα θησαυρῶν ἢ κλήρων πατρικῶν ταῦτα συνεστήσατο λογιζόμενος, τίνας τῶν αὐτοῦ συγγενῶν ἢ γνωρίμων συναιρομένους ἔχων καὶ συναρήγοντας· ἀλλ' οὖν γε εἰ καὶ ταῦτα χωρὶς ἑτέρου λόγου θαύματός εἰσιν ἄξια, ὅμως οὐκ ἀπορήσω πιστοποιήσασθαί τε ὁμοῦ τὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀγνοούμενα καὶ τῶν φανερῶν αὐτοῦ θαυμάτων θέσθαι διήγησιν. *L. Laz.* §79.11–31, translation by Greenfield 2000, 168–9.

it also has a great impact on the local communities. Lazaros' territorial establishment not only affected the human geography of the area and the religious politics of Ephesos (regarding the competition with the metropolitan). It also marked the empire's sacred geography and cultural map. Some of the monks carried impressive reports of Lazaros' holiness to Constantinople, and brought back recognition by the Byzantine imperial court itself, in the form of grants of land and money. The donation by Constantine XI Monomachos and Maria Skleraina assured the survival of the monastic community that Lazaros created.[22] As this endured according to Lazaros' wishes in his will, Galesion eventually came to be ranked among the other holy mountains of the Byzantine world.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I hope to have shown that performativity, embodiment and power relations are spatially narrated by the two authors of the *Lives*. This spatial narration is reified by means of two narrative devices which are literary versions of two spatial social practices: the first practice is the appropriation of space, and the second is place-making.

In the *Lives*, the literary versions of these two spatial social practices produce the characters' definition of territory. Among them, I distinguish three important literary practices related to territorial definitions and discuss their effects on the texts. These are: (a) the 'spatial' narration of power relations; (b) the establishment of 'holy territories' through claims and appropriations of space among the characters; and (c) the establishment of 'holy territories' through the characters' place-makings by means of travelling or walking, and inhabiting.

[22] *L. Laz.* §245–6.

10

Bodies in the Arena of Holiness: Space Performativity and Embodiment as Agents of Holification

In 1803, Jean-Georges Noverre described in only a few sentences how performance works much more efficiently in a corporeal and spatial, rather than in a verbal, manner:

> There are, undoubtedly, a great many things which pantomime can only indicate, but in regard to the passions there is a degree of expression to which words cannot attain or rather there are passions for which no words exist. Then dancing allied with action triumphs. A pas, a gesture, a movement, and an attitude express what no words can say; the more violent the sentiments it is required to depict, the less able is one to find words to express them. Exclamations, which are the apex to which the language of passions can reach, become insufficient, and have to be replaced by gesture.[1]

A step, a gesture and a movement communicate emotions much more successfully than words; in the present chapter I investigate ways in which this process is inscribed in narrative texts and, in specific, in the Byzantine saints' *Lives* here discussed. As I will show, telling these life stories by narrating corporeal movement and gestures (and performance in general) seems to be more efficient in communicating characters' emotions than the narration of their actual dialogues.

The Arena of Holiness: Aspects of Performativity and Embodied Knowledge in the Byzantine Saints' *Lives*

Performativity in these Byzantine saints' *Lives* has already been discussed in relation to perceptions of the acting human body.[2] Based on Goffman's theory on social performance, Stavroula Constantinou's study of female corporeal performances has demonstrated the theatricality of hagiographical texts as well as the principal role of a body performing spatially in public, in a process which targets both an internal and an external audience.[3] This idea was further developed by

[1] Il y a sans doute une foule de choses que la pantomime ne peut qu'indiquer, mais dans les passions il est un degré d'expression que les paroles ne peuvent atteindre, ou plutôt, pour lequel il n'est plus de paroles. C'est alors que la danse en action triomphe. Un pas, un geste, un mouvement et une attitude disent ce que rien ne peut exprimer: plus de sentiments que l'on a à peindre sont violents, moins il se trouve pour les rendre. Les exclamations qui sont comme le dernier terme où le langage des passions puisse monter deviennent insuffisantes et alors elles sont remplacées par le geste. Noverre 1803, vii; English translation by Pappacena 2011, 8.

[2] Krueger 1996.

[3] Constantinou 2005; Goffman 1959.

Constantinou in her discussion of Byzantine holy fools and cross-dressers.[4] Constantinou's research on *Lives* of holy fools and cross-dressers has recently been followed by Julie van Pelt, who proposes that writing a story of performance allows and sometimes requires the text to 'perform' accordingly: saints' *Lives*, in specific, exploit the double audience of the saint's performance (the intra- and extra-diegetic audience) for certain literary effects.[5] Van Pelt has combined performative and narratological theory to interrelate: (a) an analysis of the events that are narrated in the *Lives* of disguised saints ('intra-diegetic' performance); (b) a scrutiny of the questions concerning their narration ('narrative performance); and (c) the final consumption of the narrative, i.e. the 'public performance' in which the selected corpus must have reached its audience.[6] Van Pelt supports, in this way, Eva von Contzen's approach to narrative as a performance,[7] and suggests that it is relevant because it creates awareness of an 'audience', a 'recipient', even if that recipient is only implied, which allows a focus on communicative aspects of narration.[8] In van Pelt's words:

> To read narrative communicatively is to maintain a pragmatic approach to the text, and allows to focus on how something is communicated, instead of on what is communicated. This approach recognizes, therefore, that the way in which a story is narrated is inevitably important for how the audience (the real audience outside of the text) receives the message.[9]

Both von Contzen's argument and van Pelt's use of it seem particularly useful in this case: this strategy is most purposeful when dealing with open texts such as the *Lives* here discussed. In von Contzen's words: 'to approach narrative as a performance means to consider it as an act rather than the product of an act'.[10] Hence, the performative approach considers hagiography as having, most likely, been used as a basis for actual storytelling in the Byzantine society, being the object of public readings.[11] Michael Psellos, in his encomium to John Kroustoulas (Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν μοναχὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν Κρουστουλᾶν ἀναγνόντα ἐν τῇ Ἁγία Σορῷ), praises the latter for his 'performance' of hagiographical texts.[12]

Van Pelt suggests that the narrator (not the author) of saints' *Lives* performed an act. I will show here that not only the intra-textual narrator, but also their historical author did exactly the same. In this chapter, I consider aspects of textual performativity, in the *Lives* of Lazaros and Symeon the New Theologian, relat-

[4] Constantinou 2014
[5] Van Pelt 2018
[6] Van Pelt 2019
[7] Von Contzen 2016, 41.
[8] Van Pelt 2019, 56.
[9] Van Pelt 2019, 57.
[10] Von Contzen 2016, 45.
[11] Van Pelt 2019, 57.
[12] *Encomium for Ioannes Kroustoulas*, l. 294. For a description of Ioannes performative reading see l. 113–98.

ed to the authorial choice of using a 'spatial language' as a narrative device. This choice belongs to the author's spatial experience underlying his writing act. Thus, it must be considered beyond the intra-diegetic level and the role of the narrator. In what follows I will show that this choice is crucial towards the authors' fulfilment of two tasks:

- to perform the 'holification process' to their audience, efficiently gaining access to the latter's eyes and ears, and
- to answer the audience's central—religious and pragmatic—question about the link of the materiality of the body to the performativity of holiness.

I take textual performativity to mean: (a) texts intended for performance; (b) ways in which texts are performed and (c) texts which themselves perform.[13] I am considering aspects such as the relation of text to performance, the enactment of ritual in which performance is inscribed, and the nature of performance together with its relation to reception.[14] I trace the traveling concept of performativity across Byzantine narratology by distinguishing yet another form of interdisciplinary transfer from the fields of geography and spatial studies.[15] Therefore, in this chapter, I build on earlier perspectives of Byzantine hagiographical texts as performative narratives by means of an examination of two different spaces, which in my opinion play a significant role in the stories: the saint's own body, viewed and sensed as space, on one hand, and the space that I call an 'arena of holiness', on the other.

The saint's own body is his inner, private space, while the arena of his holy performance, in which it interacts with other elements and bodies, is the outer, public space. I propose that in the narratives under discussion, these two spaces merge into a single both private and public through the performativity of the bodies. Human bodies, in the narratives, serve not only as the fields, but also as the media and the agents of sanctification. In that way, they function exactly like the non-corporeal spaces which constitute latent, but vital parts of these narratives, because they silently serve as settings, as tools, and as co-agents of the sanctification process, as I have also suggested above.[16]

My perspective of the human body is 'spatial'. I argue that one's space begins from one's body, not beyond it. The human body is a space with physical, spiritual and social dimensions; in Byzantine hagiographical texts, Constantinou defined this multidimensionality with the term 'the sublime body' of female saints.[17]

To take this argument even further, I argue that these three dimensions can be integrated into an interpretation of the 'corporeal performances of holiness' with the help of cultural theories around performativity and around 'embodied', 'located', and 'situated' (or situational) knowledge. Judith Butler's ideas on performa-

[13] Issacharoff & Jones 1988, 1.
[14] Issacharoff & Jones 1988, 1.
[15] See Berns 2009; Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016.
[16] See discussions of place-making and mobility in Chapters 3, 6, 9.
[17] Constantinou 2005, 196.

tive acts as devices for the constitution of social identities are reflected in stories of holification narrated in the Byzantine saints' *Lives* discussed here.[18]

In these stories, what constitutes the fixity of the body, its contours, its movements, is fully material, but materiality is rethought as the effect of power, as power's most productive effect.[19] I argue that just like gender, holiness comes as 'not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it is one of the norms by which the 'one' becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.'[20] Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson have offered insights into the ways in which both the production and reception of any art, pictorial or literary, is performative by both its creator and its readers:

> The artist (as the first reader of the work) and subsequent interpreters are caught up within the complex and fraught operations of representation – entangled in intersubjective spaces of desire, projection, and identification. As classed, raced, sexed, and gendered (fully socialized and embodied) subjects, both artist and interpreter are imbricated within any potential determinations of meaning. [...] Artistic meaning is enacted through interpretative engagements that are themselves performative in their intersubjectivity.[21]

Intersubjectivity is a key concept which connects performativity and the body. The notion of embodied knowledge, derived from the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, signifies a type of knowledge in which the body knows how to act (such as how to ride a bicycle): the body schema coordinates the movements of body parts into a unified action that corresponds to a given situation.[22]

Embodied knowledge is thus experienced as a pre-reflective correspondence between body and world, without being mediated by mental representations. Shogo Tanaka has developed Merleau-Ponty's concept by building upon his notion of 'intercorporeality' (intercorporéité);[23] the latter stresses the role of embodied interactions between the self and the other in the process of social understanding.[24] Tanaka shows that through these embodied interactions, intersubjective meanings are created and directly shared between the self and the other, without being mediated by mental representations.[25] From a similar perspective, Donna Haraway has defined the emerging subjective, located and embodied 'accounts of the truth' with the term 'situated knowledge'.[26]

The situated nature of human knowledge, i.e., the 'radical multiplicity of local knowledges'[27] also renders human knowledge 'situational' thus also subjective

[18] Butler 1988.
[19] Butler 1993, xii.
[20] Butler 1993, xii.
[21] Jones & Stephenson 1999, 1.
[22] Merleau-Ponty 1945/2012
[23] Merleau-Ponty 1960/1964; Tanaka 2015, 460–3.
[24] Tanaka 2011, 2013, 2015
[25] Tanaka 2015, 455.
[26] Haraway 1988
[27] Haraway 1988

in its locality and temporality. Haraway has used vision as the sensory experience which leads to this kind of knowledge.[28] Hence, the notion of space is central to her approach: in human perception, the body is the inner space where knowledge (always partial and positioned) is constructed based on the visual experience of the outer space (the universe). More recent approaches have elaborated on the performativity of space and the situatedness of place-making, by means of developing the concepts of 'lived space' and 'placedness' (i.e., the knowledge based on located acts of place-making).[29]

My association of Byzantine hagiography with the Roman arena spectacles is certainly less evident and must be clarified at this point. The origin of the arena games was the Roman conflation of discipline and popular spectacle in a theatrical setting: the connection between army and arena activities is an important albeit often neglected one. Romans went to the arena not so much because they enjoyed watching people suffer, but because of the excitement of an uncertain and dramatic outcome. Spectators also went there in order to watch a display of aggressive manliness and fighting skills.[30] Furthermore, the arena had an important political role. It was a productive institution which helped in the maintenance of Roman social relations from the top to the bottom: not only was it normal, but it participated in the production of normativity.[31] It was a culturally central institution which enabled a specific kind of vision of the Roman world, in which the Roman emperor and nobles were reaffirmed as legitimate authorities.[32] It was also a locus where social relations were reproduced in both the social and theatrical senses: the arena staged culturally vital spectacles.[33]

The connection with Byzantine hagiography lies precisely in the details of the saints' dramatic struggle and its culturally vital and 'political' roles. In the *Life* of St Gregory of Dekapolis ascetics are described as a 'wrestling-school' (ἀσκητικὴ παλαίστρα):

> Such is the angelic crowd of the ascetic wrestling school. They all despised passionate affection for the world, turned all their thinking to heaven, and presented their life on earth as a spectacle so that everyone, who takes up this image of edification, makes himself into a dwelling of the supernatural trinity. Our Gregory also grew out of this ascetic or, better said, angelic flock, crowd and community, who nourishes the hearts of all through the delicious virtues.[34]

[28] Haraway 1988, 581f.

[29] Gregson & Rose, 2000; Malpas 2016, 2017, 2018; Tanaka 2011. On 'lived space' and place-making see Chapters 1, 3, 7.

[30] Welch 2003, 4.

[31] Gunderson 1996, 122, 126–33, 136–42, 146–9.

[32] Gunderson 1996, 119, 123–6.

[33] Gunderson 1996, 120, 133–6.

[34] Τοιοῦτος καὶ ὁ τῆς ἀσκητικῆς παλαίστρας ἀγγελοφανέστατος ὅμιλος πᾶσαν τὴν τοῦ κόσμου διαπτύσας προσπάθειαν καὶ ὅλην πρὸς οὐρανὸν μεταθεὶς τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ θέατρον ἐπὶ γῆς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ βίον στηλώσας ἀνέθηκεν, ἐν ᾧ πᾶς τις ὠφελείας ἰδέαν συναγηγερκὼς τῆς ὑπερθέου τριάδος ἑαυτὸν οἰκητήριον δείκνυσιν. Ταύτης δὲ τῆς ἀσκητικῆς, εἰπεῖν δὲ μᾶλλον ἀγγελικῆς ἀγέλης τε καὶ μάνδρας καὶ συναυλίας καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος

The field of their struggle against 'the demons' includes the spaces, first, of the human body and, secondly, of its interaction with its social environment at the intra-diegetic level. All this is a performance addressed to an audience which lies in a third, external space ('they set up their life as a spectacle on earth') at a both intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic level.

I here argue that the significance of arena spectacles in Roman culture (i.e., the connection between army and arena bloody struggles, and all addressed to an audience)[35] offers a hermeneutical tool for contextualizing the function of the human body as a ritual, liminal space, both physical and symbolic. To this end, I use concepts of liminality through ritual as conceived by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner.[36] In this interpretative scheme, the physical body becomes the space where perseverance, 'military' discipline, punishment, sacrifice, and knowledge are embodied and practiced, in order to allow its transformation into a symbolic space of personal holiness. This personal holiness is conceived within a collectivity where the self (the very physical body where everything started) is abandoned in favour of a collective ideal (sanctification) of Christian societies. The holy performance is presented as a culturally vital spectacle. The latter serves to reaffirm the divine as legitimized supreme authority thus producing religious normativity. This is the arena of holiness.

This point is constructed upon four arguments:

1. Sanctification starts with a ritual of acquiring holiness as embodied knowledge; it continues by claiming and negotiating holiness through corporeal performances.
2. Through its performative aspect a saint's body becomes a liminal space both private and public.
3. With the exception of martyria (which are public performances of purity) the 'arena of holiness' is a both private and public space: every performance of holiness is personal; it begins in private, but it is 'exhibited' in public.
4. Through a public performative metamorphosis the physicality of a saint's private body becomes obsolete, having been transformed into a spiritual identity.

The first two of these four points are made in the second section of this chapter, while the next two are made in the third section. I enhance this discussion by employing, as an exception, a handful of examples from three additional Byzantine hagiographical texts. The latter span over a longer period of time (sixth to eleventh centuries) and are the *Lives* of St Theodore of Sykeon, St Theoktiste of Lesbos, and St Nikon 'Metanoeite'.

ἔφυ Γρηγόριος τῇ τῶν ἀρετῶν καρυκείᾳ τὰ τῆς καρδίας ἁπάντων ἑστιῶν αἰσθητήρια. *L. Greg. Dekap.*, Prooimion, l. 35–42, English translation by the author.

[35] Welch 2003, 27–29.

[36] Van Gennep 1909/1960; Turner 1969, 2018.

CORPOREAL PERFORMANCES IN ASCETIC PLACES: THE BODY AS RITUAL LIMINAL SPACE

For holy men and women, who are the main characters of Byzantine saints' *Lives*, their bodies are their main—and only—means for sanctification. Niketas narrates with precision the different stages of this process in paragraph 69 of the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian.[37]

Specifically, Symeon is having an in-cell vision.[38] While praying one day, he sees with his intellect the air starting to shimmer, and although he is inside his cell, he seems to be outside in the open air. It is night time, but it begins to get light overhead like the glimmer of daybreak. Then, the building and everything around him disappears and he is no longer inside. While in this state of complete ecstasy he is contemplating with his whole intellect, the light gradually increases. It makes the air seem brighter, and he feels his whole body transcending the earthly existence. The light continues to get brighter and brighter and shines down on him from above like the sun at midday. As it does so, he feels his whole body filled with joy and tears. And then, the light takes hold of his flesh in a strange way, gradually merging into his limbs. The strangeness of this sight distracts him from his earlier vision and causes him to contemplate only what is happening within him in this completely extraordinary way. The light is slowly imparted to his whole body, to his heart and his internal organs, and renders him wholly fire and light. It causes him to lose awareness of the form, the structure, the mass, and the shape of his body. A voice comes to him from out of the light, saying that this is what will happen during the Second Advent. The holy man stands in this fashion for many hours, praising God unceasingly with mystical utterances. Then he begins to wonder whether he will ever revert to his previous body form or if he will stay like this forever. He realizes that his previous body is there yet it feels different, immaterial, like a shadow. He feels himself becoming light that is immaterial and without shape or form, and he has the sense of his body as still joined to him yet somehow weightless, unsolid, incorporeal and spiritual. And then the light, with the same voice as before, says to him that after the resurrection all the saints will be incorporeally clothed with spiritual bodies. According to their station, rank, and intimacy with God, their bodies will either be lighter, subtler, and floating higher in the air, or more solid, heavier, and sinking down toward the ground.

Niketas describes the body as ritual space. The passage from the secular and the sacred sphere (distinguished by van Gennep) requires a ceremony or ritual, hence rite of passage.[39] Rites of passage have three phases: separation, liminality, and incorporation, as van Gennep described. He calls the rites of separation from a previous world, pre-liminal rites, those executed during the transitional stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world

[37] *L. Sym. New Theol.* §69. See the Greek text and translation of this passage in Chapter 5.
[38] The following summary of the vision is based on Greenfield's English translation (2013, 155–9).
[39] Van Gennep 1909/1960.

post-liminal rites.[40] The transition (liminal) phase is the period between states, during which one has left one place or state but has not yet entered or joined the next. In Niketas' account, the body of Symeon the New Theologian is hosting the liminal stage of the rite of passage from the secular to the sacred sphere; in his body and with the help of light and vision, Symeon 'stands on the threshold' between his previous way of structuring his identity, time, or community, and a new way, which completing the rite establishes.

The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae (threshold people) are necessarily ambiguous by definition.[41] This is narrated by Gregory in the *Life* of Lazaros, where the holy man's mortal yet unique body (occasionally even 'supernatural' through its particular gifts and skills) is the limit that he either surpasses or is submitted to during his holification process. For example, Lazaros seems to have unceasingly travelled for days, climbing mountains at night all alone as a young boy:

> Traveling like this they reached Attaleia. There, however, that treacherous man who did not act like a real monk, that imitator of Judas, went to one of the shipowners and, speaking in the language of the Armenians, made an agreement to sell the boy to him. But, by the providence of God, one of the sailors overheard this and, while the monk was still talking to the shipowner, went and informed the youth about these things, for he was not ⟨there⟩ with the monk. As soon as he heard this, Lazaros took off and fled, just as he was. He turned off the main road and quickly started to climb the mountain that lay nearby but, while he was still on the lower slopes, night fell. He began his ascent but, because of the darkness of the night and the great steepness of the mountain, he spent the whole night, as he said, struggling ⟨along⟩ by hand and foot; only when the day had dawned was he able with difficulty to climb up on top. When, however, he did reach the top of the mountain, he found a worn path and went along it. While he was walking along by himself like this, an old monk met him and, when ⟨this monk⟩ had stopped and questioned him and found out all about him, he dissuaded him from ⟨continuing⟩ his journey to Jerusalem because of his youth. Instead, he recommended that he should follow his advice and go with him to his monastery (for the old man was superior of a small flock) and persevere there until such time as there might be no concern over his age. So, persuaded by the old man's words, Lazaros prostrated himself and followed him.[42]

[40] Van Gennep 1909/1960, 21.

[41] Turner 1969, 95.

[42] Οὕτως οὖν πορευόμενοι φθάνουσιν εἰς Ἀττάλειαν. Καὶ δὴ ὁ δολερὸς ἐκεῖνος ἀμόναχος καὶ τοῦ Ἰούδα μιμητὴς προσελθών τινι τῶν ναυκλήρων, διελέγετο αὐτῷ τῇ Ἀρμενίων διαλέκτῳ καὶ συνεφώνει πρὸς τὸ αὐτῷ τὸν παῖδα πωλῆσαι. Θεοῦ δὲ προνοίᾳ τις τῶν ναυτῶν τοῦτο ἀκούσας, ἀπελθὼν ἔτι τοῦ μοναχοῦ μετὰ τοῦ ναυκλήρου διαλεγομένου γνωρίζει ταῦτα τῷ νέῳ· οὐ γὰρ συμπαρῆν τῷ μοναχῷ. ὃς ἀκούσας εὐθέως, ὡς εἶχε, φυγὰς ᾤχετο καὶ τῆς εὐθείας ἐκκλίνας πρὸς τὸ παρακείμενον πλησίον ὄρος ἀνελθεῖν ἔσπευδεν. Ἔτι δὲ παρὰ τοὺς πρόποδας τοῦ ὄρους ὄντα ἡ νὺξ τοῦτον καταλαμβάνει. Ἀρξάμενος δὲ τοῦ ἀνέρχεσθαι, διά τε τὸ σκότος τῆς νυκτὸς διά τε τὸ λίαν τοῦ ὄρους ἄναντες ἐποίησεν, ὡς ἔλεγεν, ὅλην τὴν νύκτα χερσὶ καὶ ποσὶ πυκτεύων. Καὶ μόλις ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας ὑπαυγαζούσης ἠδυνήθη ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ἀνελθεῖν. Ὡς δὲ ὑπερανέβη τὸ ὄρος, ὁδόν τινα τετριμμένην εὑρὼν ἐπορεύετο. Οὕτως δὲ αὐτῷ μόνῳ περιπατοῦντι συναντᾷ αὐτῷ τις μοναχὸς γηραιός, ὃς στὰς καὶ ἐπερωτήσας αὐτὸν καὶ μαθὼν πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπεῖργεν αὐτὸν τῆς πρὸς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ὁδοῦ διὰ τὸ νέον τῆς ἡλικίας, συνεβούλευε δὲ αὐτῷ τοῖς ἐκείνου λόγοις μᾶλλον εἴξαι καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ μονὴν ἀπελθεῖν—ἦν γάρ τινος μικρᾶς ποίμνης ὁ γέρων προεστώς—κἀκεῖσε προσκαρτερῆσαι, ἕως οὗ τὸ ἄφοβον ἐκ τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτῷ προσγένηται. Καὶ δὴ πεισθεὶς τοῖς τοῦ γηραιοῦ

However, this strength never keeps him from getting sick and his body sets physical limits that spirituality can never surpass. In paragraph 55, a brother goes up as usual and takes Lazaros his water and food but, after he has gone, the Devil makes a scorpion come out and sting the father on the foot.[43] Lazaros jerks his foot at the sudden blow and breaks the pot that is standing there, thus spilling the water.[44] When the father sees this, he decides not to eat, preferring not eating at all to eating without drinking; he remains in this state until Friday without tasting anything at all.[45] But God reveals Himself by means of an angel to a layman called Loukianos who lives in the village of Kepion; because of his faith in the father, he is Lazaros' spiritual son.[46] The angel says, 'You are sleeping without a care, but your father Lazaros is even now on the point of dying from thirst?'[47] When he gets there he finds Lazaros just about to die from thirst (*Διυπνισθεὶς οὖν ὁ ἀδελφὸς καὶ γνοὺς ἐκ τῆς καθ' ὕπνον φαντασίας, τί συνέβη τῷ πατρί, ἀναστὰς καὶ λαβὼν στάμνον μεστὴν ὕδατος, δρομαῖος ἄνεισι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐλθὼν εὗρεν αὐτὸν μικροῦ ἐκλείπειν μέλλοντα ἐκ τῆς δίψης*).[48] The father takes the water and drinks, and when he has recovered he gives glory to God who has thus miraculously sent him the water (*Λαβὼν οὖν ὁ πατὴρ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ πιὼν καὶ ἀνακτησάμενος. ἑαυτόν, δόξαν ἀνέπεμψε τῷ Θεῷ τῷ οὕτως παραδόξως*).[49] From that time on God gives Lazaros the grace of controlling and binding scorpions with his own hands, a gift which he is able to pass to others. Furthermore, as a result of this incident, he yields to the entreaties of the brothers that one of them should go up and live in the cave to assist him because of the obstacles put in his way by the devil; and so one of them goes up there.[50] What is very interesting in the text is the constant dialogue and inquiry between the natural and the supernatural in the holy man's body. The latter functions indeed as a threshold—again as the liminal space hosting and reifying the stage of transition between secular and sacred. The same role of the holy man's body as a ritual space and the portal of the passage to holiness is also clearly stated regarding St Nikon 'Metanoeite', a holy man who went into exile, taking nothing with him.[51]

Sanctification begins with the acquirement of holiness as embodied knowledge, and it continues by claiming and negotiating holiness through corporeal performances. The saint's body is the inner and private space that he/she can control

λόγοις, μετάνοιαν βαλὼν ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ. *L. Laz.* §9.1–30, translation by Greenfield 2000, 86–7.

[43] *L. Laz.* §55, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142–3. See the Greek text and translation on pp. 110–11.

[44] *L. Laz.* §55.7–9, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142.

[45] *L. Laz.* §55.9–13, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142.

[46] *L. Laz.* §55.13–20, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142.

[47] *Σὺ μὲν ἀμερίμνως ὑπνοῖς, ὁ δὲ σὸς πατὴρ Λάζαρος ἤδη ἐκ τῆς δίψης ὅσον οὔπω ἐκλείπει*; *L. Laz.* §55.20–3, translation by Greenfield 2000, 142.

[48] *L. Laz.* §55.23–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 143.

[49] *L. Laz.* §55.29–32, translation by Greenfield 2000, 143.

[50] *L. Laz.* §55.34–8, translation by Greenfield 2000, 143.

[51] *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §4, translation by Sullivan 1987, 39.

and command. By travelling for pilgrimage, climbing mountains, crossing deserts, confining oneself in a cage, a cell, a pillar or a round circle, the saints are practicing holiness and through this embodied practice they learn holiness and become holy men and women. In the *Life* of St Theodore of Sykeon, the man becomes holy by a series of corporeal practices (selecting his food intake, daily activities, and learning experiences) and he negotiates this agency with his family and community.[52] For example, his mother reacts to his decision not to eat appropriately and to keep company in churches together with a pious man, instead of being at home and following his school program. She protests against his change of habits but, in spite of her threats and advice, she was unable to make him change his mind or break the rules he had prescribed for himself.[53]

An excellent example of performance that produces embodied knowledge of holiness is found in Theodore's *Life*. As a young child, Theodore is invited to perform a miracle for the first time: after Easter, a man appears in the oratory one day with his only son who is troubled by an unclean spirit and asks Theodore to help the boy.[54] Theodore just follows the instructions he is given by the boy's father. In this way he is practicing the miracle by means of specific ritual gestures and speech acts. He orders the demon to come out, puts some oil on the boy's head and makes the sign of a cross. In the end, the demon comes out of the boy and the latter lies as if dead. Again, following the father's instructions, Theodore gives his hand to the boy and pulls him up to his feet. The boy now stands in full health.[55] In this passage, Theodore is invited to perform the miracle without knowing how to do it. He learns how to make a miracle by actually performing it. He finally succeeds in extracting the demon from the other child's body just by 'acting as a saint' following the father's instructions.

A very similar literary account of a 'holy performance' is found in the *Life* of St Nikon 'Metanoeite': the latter is told to 'learn holiness' by means of embodied practices described explicitly in the long fifth paragraph of his anonymous *Life*.[56] In specific, through the abbot's instruction, Nikon begins his experience of be-

[52] *L. Theod. Syk*. §6–8, translation by Dawes & Baynes 1948, 90–2.

[53] *L. Theod. Syk.* §7, translation by Dawes & Baynes 1948, 91.

[54] *L. Theod. Syk.* §18.1–11 (translation by Dawes & Baynes 1948, 99): Πίστει φερόμενος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐδέετο τοῦ ἐναρέτου παιδὸς Θεοδώρου, ὅπως ἄσηται αὐτοῦ τὸ παιδίον. Ὁ δὲ εὐάρεστος παῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ οὐκ ᾔδει τί ἔμελλε ποιεῖν ἐπ'αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ γε καὶ ἐξενίζετο ὡς νέος ὤν. Ὁ δὲ πατήρ τοῦ δαιμονιῶντος ἐπέδωκεν αὐτῷ φραγγέλιον, καὶ μετὰ δακρύων εἶπεν αὐτῷ·'κύριέ μου, δοῦλε τοῦ Χριστοῦ, λαβών τοῦτο καὶ ἐμβριμησάμενος τῷ τέκνῳ μου τύψον αὐτὸν λέγων ·ἔξελθε, ἔξελθε, ἀκάθαρτον δαιμόνιον, ἐκ τοῦ παιδίου τούτου ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου μου. (The man, emboldened by faith, besought the virtuous boy, Theodore, to heal his son. But the virtuous child of Christ did not know what he ought to do for him and indeed was greatly perplexed, for he was so young. But the father of the demoniac gave him a little whip and said to him with tears, 'Dear master, servant of Christ, take this and rebuke my child and beat him and say, 'Come out, come out from this boy, you unclean demon, in the name of my Lord).

[55] *L. Theod. Syk*. §18.11–9, translation by Dawes & Baynes 1948, 99–100.

[56] *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §5, translation by Sullivan 1987, 41–7.

coming a holy person not through spiritual training but through physical exercise: 'The old man [...] judged all canonical examination superfluous, and considered it secondary [...] he clipped the hair of Niketas to the skin and gave him the monk's garb [...] Then he turned over to him the servicing of all kinds of needs.'[57] While at the same time cutting down on his food,[58] Nikon worked hard carrying water and wood, cleaning the entire monastery, smoking meat: 'there was no form of service which he was not eager to undertake by himself (or by his own body)'.[59] That is how he became a monk: 'That all virtue was accomplished by the just man in a community and with such great deeds [...] the all-great man displayed in all he did the eremitic and anchoritic state itself and was guided by few or by no one.'[60] The anonymous author here indicates that Nikon's new spiritual state derives from personal embodied knowledge which in turn was generated by his physical training and fasting, with minimal guidance.

THE SAINT'S BODY AS AN IN-BETWEEN LIMINAL SPACE

I hope to have shown the narrative function of the saints' bodies as liminal spaces in their transition from the secular to the sacred world. Here, I propose that these liminal spaces are not only ambiguous by definition, as suggested by Victor Turner, but they are also hybrid and in-between spaces.[61] In specific, the holy men's and women's bodies become both private and public through their performative aspect. They are spiritually transcendent and untouchable while being also vulnerable, exposed and thus accessible through their physical dimension.

For example, Theodore of Sykeon is said to have hidden himself in a mountain cave and having been discovered by his family two years later, in a dreadful physical condition—almost dead.[62] They brought him out looking like a corpse.[63] His head was covered with sores and puss, his hair was matted and an indescribable number of worms were lodged in it; his bones were all but through the flesh. In a word people looked on him 'as a second Job.'[64] As a result the bishop ordained the child subdeacon and priest; and to peoples' complaints (that he could not be a priest because he was just a young boy) he responded that God assured him that

[57] Ὁ γέρων [...] πᾶσαν κανονικὴν δοκιμασίαν [...] περιττὴν κρίνας καὶ ἐν παρέργῳ τιθέμενος, ἐν χρῷ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ κείρας καὶ μοναχὸν σχηματίσας [...] τὴν ἐν ταῖς χρείαις πάσαις ὑπηρεσίαν τούτῳ ἐπέτρεψεν. *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §5.15–23, translation by Sullivan 1987, 41, 43.

[58] *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §5.35–45, translation by Sullivan 1987, 43, 45.

[59] Οὐκ ἦν δ' εἶδος ὑπηρεσίας, ὅ μὴ αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος δι' ἑαυτοῦ ποιεῖν ἔσπευδε. *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §5.34–5, translation by Sullivan 1987, 43.

[60] Ὅτι δὲ ἐν κοινοβίῳ καὶ ἐν πράγμασι τοσούτοις πᾶσα μὲν ἀρετὴ τῷ δικαίῳ κατώρθωτο [...] πρὸς δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ἐρημικὴν καὶ ἀναχωρητικὴν πολιτείαν, οὕτω διὰ πάντων ὁ πάμμεγας οὗτος ἐπεδείκνυτο καὶ ὀλίγοις ἢ οὐδενὶ κατορθούμενος. *L. Nik. 'Metanoeite'* §6.1–5, translation by Sullivan 1987, 47.

[61] Turner 1969, 95. On in-between spaces see the discussion in Chapter 5.

[62] *L. Theod. Syk.* §19.22–3, 20.6–8.

[63] *L. Theod. Syk.* §20.13–4.

[64] *L. Theod. Syk.* §20.16–22.

the boy was worthy of the priesthood, and that most certainly this boy was 'from God' (Ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐπληροφόρησεν ὁ Θεὸς ἄξιον αὐτὸν ὑπάρχειν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, καὶ παρὰ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς ὁ παῖς οὗτος).[65]

Therefore, the 'arena of holiness' is both a private and public space. The process of sanctification is personal and begins in private, and so does every single corporeal performance of holiness, but exhibiting holiness (and also claiming and negotiating the identity of a holy person) takes place in public. Lazaros, in Gregory's *Life*, gives a number of holy performances with his body, addressed to different individuals: relocating his body is his means of constantly negotiating his identity with his disciples or laymen. In paragraphs 57 and 58, for example, a blessed woman, who used to go up to him frequently, is verbally attacked by one of his disciples with the brothers' consent.[66] Lazaros replies calmly but sadly that it was not the woman's fault but his own, and sends the woman away; however, some days later he asks some monks to build a pillar for him at another place, and relocates himself there overnight, without anyone seeing him. When the brothers realize it, they go straight up to him, see him and then go down again leaving him there alone struggling with the demons. Here, body relocation means a change of personal space, change of bodily and social identity, as well as change of human quality, since change of space on earth leads the saint to heaven, to a supernatural state of body and mind.

At the final stage of sanctification, the physicality of a saint's private body becomes obsolete through a public performative metamorphosis, which transforms it into a spiritual identity. In the *Life of St Theoktiste of Lesbos*, a complex narrative text 'hovering somewhere on the border between history and fiction' by reflecting collective cultural memory, the saint's body resembles a thread being blown by the wind.[67] Theoktiste's body is perceived by one (secular) narrator (out of the four different narrators) as a spider's web, 'almost a shadow, the shape alone resembling a human being' having 'the shape of a woman but the appearance of a superhuman being'. The passage reads as follows:

> I saw to the right of the church's holy altar something that resembled a thread being blown by the wind. I thought at the moment that I was seeing a spider's web, but when I decided to step forward and determine what was there, I heard a voice saying, 'Stay, ⟨my good⟩ man! Do not go further, nor come closer! For being a woman, I am ashamed to show myself to you in my nakedness. When I heard this, I was astounded by the unexpected ⟨voice⟩ and wished to flee. [...] When I recovered, I plucked up courage to ask who she was and how she came to be living in the wilderness. Again, a voice reached me saying, 'Throw me a cloak, I beg you, and when I have covered myself, I will not hesitate to tell all that God bids me ⟨to say⟩.' Right away I took off my outer garment, left it and ran out the door. She took it, put it on, and when I returned after a while, I saw her standing in her original position. 'She had the shape of a woman but the appearance of a

[65] *L. Theod. Syk.* §21.31–3, translation by Dawes & Baynes 1948, 102.

[66] *L. Laz.* §57–8. See the Greek text and its translation in Chapter 8.

[67] Nilsson 2010, 208. See also Høgel 2018 for the complex narrative structure and thematic issues of this text.

> superhuman being. Her hair was white; her face was black with an underlying tinge of whiteness; the skin alone kept the bones in place, for there was hardly any flesh. She was almost a shadow, the shape alone resembling a human being.[68]

The saint's human body has basically lost its physical dimension and it retains only its symbolic one. The storyteller uses the narrative device of the 'bodiless body' as the closest possible analogy to represent a Christian saint's holy identity. The narrative of the 'bodiless body' in this life is reminiscent of the objects of Byzantine cults of relics, textually represented; this aspect supports Nilsson's description of the text as lying somewhere between historicity and fictionality, being part of a widespread and collective cultural memory.[69]

The same notion of a 'bodiless body' comes in an entirely different form in Niketas' narration of Symeon the New Theologian's means of holification, the in-cell vision:

> When Symeon, our holy father, had given this advice and more besides to that wondrous Arsenios the superior and to the rest of the brethren, he entered the workshop of spiritual tranquility and engaged once again with even greater eagerness in his beloved ascetic philosophy. Since he had already completed the long course of asceticism, however, his spiritual gifts increased as his soul ascended to a higher and more divine state. Thus, while the labors of his sacred struggles became easy for him, or rather, strange to say, were transformed into the divine recreation of the incorporeal powers, the nature of his body was changed to incorruptibility, being altered by the superior power of his humility. And once again he was caught up in visions and revelations of the Lord, and he foresaw the outcome of future events.[70]

In this way Symeon the New Theologian's ascetic struggle transforms his physical body and makes it incorruptible. This corporeal state makes his spirit acquire

[68] Ὁρῶ δὲ κατὰ τὸ δεξιὸν τῆς ἁγίας τοῦ ναοῦ τραπέζης οἷά τινα κρόκην ὑπ' ἀνέμου ῥιπιζομένην, αὖθίς τε ἔδοξα βλέπειν ἀράχνης ἱστόν. Ὡς δὲ προβὰς διαγνῶναι τὸ φαινόμενον ἠβουλήθην, ἤκουσα φωνῆς λεγούσης· Στῆθι, μὴ προβῇς, ἄνθρωπε, πλέον μηδὲ πλησιάσῃς· αἰσχύνομαι γάρ, οὖσα γυνή, γυμνὴ θεαθῆναί σοι. Ταῦτ' οὖν ἀκούσας καὶ τῷ παραλόγῳ καταπλαγεὶς ἠβουλόμην φυγεῖν· [...] Εἰς ἑαυτὸν οὖν γενόμενος καὶ θαρρήσας ἠρώτων, ὅστις εἴη καὶ πῶς ταύτην κατοικεῖ τὴν ἔρημον. Καὶ πάλιν ἐξικνεῖτο φωνή· Ῥίψον μοι χιτῶνα, δέομαι, λέγουσα καὶ καλυψαμένη, ὅσον μοι τὸ θεῖον βούλημα κελεύει, λέγειν οὐκ ἀποκνήσω. Περιελόμενος οὖν εὐθὺς τὸν ἐπενδύτην ἀφῆκα, καὶ τῆς πύλης ἐξέδραμον· ἡ δὲ λαβοῦσα περιεβάλετο Μετὰ μικρὸν δὲ ὑποστρέψας ὁρῶ ταύτην ἔνθα καὶ πρὶν ἱσταμένην. Καὶ ἦν ἄρα τὸ μὲν σχῆμα γυνή, τὸ δὲ φαινόμενον ὑπεράνθρωπον· θριξ λευκή, πρόσωπον μέλαν, μικρὰν ὑποφαῖνον. λευκότητα, δερματὶς συνέχουσα τὴν ὀστῶν ἁρμονίαν, ἥκιστα σαρκὸς ἐμπεφυκυίας, σκιᾷ παραπλήσιος, εἶδος μόνον τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην σῴζον ἐμφέρειαν. *L. Theokt. Lesb*. §12.10–7, 13, translation by Hero 1996, 109–10.

[69] Nilsson 2010, 208.

[70] Ταῦτα τοιγαροῦν καὶ πλείονα τούτων ἕτερα παραινέσας αὐτῷ τε τῷ θαυμαστῷ Ἀρσενίῳ τῷ ἡγουμένῳ καὶ τῇ λοιπῇ ἀδελφότητι ὁ ἅγιος πατὴρ ἡμῶν Συμεών, τὸ τῆς ἡσυχίας ἐργαστήριον ὑπεισέρχεται καὶ τῆς φίλης αὖθις φιλοσοφίας μετὰ πλείονος τῆς προθέσεως ἅπτεται. Ὡς οὖν αὐτῷ μὲν ὁ μακρὸς τῆς ἀσκήσεως δίαυλος διηνύετο, προέκοπτον δὲ αἱ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπιδόσεις, ἐπὶ τὸ ὑψηλότερον καὶ θεοειδέστερον ἀναγόμενης αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ οἱ μὲν πόνοι τῶν ἱερῶν ἀγώνων ἐπὶ τὸ ἄπονον ἢ μᾶλλον ξένως εἰπεῖν ἐπὶ θεοπρεπεῖς ἀνέσεις τῶν ἀσωμάτων δυνάμεων μετηλλάττοντο, ἡ δὲ φύσις τοῦ σώματος ἠλλοιοῦτο πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν ἐξισταμένη δυνάμει κρείττονι τῆς ἑαυτῆς ταπεινώσεως, εἰς ὀπτασίας αὖθις καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις Κυρίου ἡρπάζετο καὶ τῶν μελλόντων προεθεώρει τὴν ἔκβασιν. *L. Sym. New Theol.* §68, translation by Greenfield 2013, 155.

supernatural power (allowing him to foresee the future, and have visions and theophanies) and it makes his 'soul ascend to a higher and more divine state'.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined two distinct narrative spaces in Byzantine saints' *Lives*: (a) the inner, personally constructed, space within the human body and (b) the outer, socially-constructed, space of the arena of holiness, in which the body deals with real-and-imagined 'friends' and 'enemies'.

Both these spaces in these narratives serve as fields, media and agents of sanctification. First of all, holiness is achieved within, by and through the human body; it emerges as embodied knowledge, where physical and spiritual agency cannot be distinguished from each other. Secondly, holiness 'exists' simply because it is constantly being 'practiced' through public performances within the space of interaction of a community. Last but not least, embodied knowledge is manifested by corporeal performances and these two make an inseparable pair of 'holy' competence.

By seeking holiness, a saint enters the process of transforming their body and personality in order to become a saviour; yet, while trying to save themselves, they also save others. Thus, personal accomplishment ends up as social qualification. In all these ways, private space and public space, in the *Lives*, merge into this one arena of bodies struggling for holiness.

II

Space as a vehicle for reception

'Lived space' in the *Lives* of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion and St Symeon the New Theologian

In the previous chapters, I hope to have shown the wide variety of ways in which human landscapes and spatial notions are used in the narration of Christian stories of holification. The concept of 'lived space', introduced by Henri Lefebvre in 1975, has here been used as a lens for looking at literary spaces and spatial experiences in two Byzantine hagiographical texts: the *Life* of St Symeon the New Theologian by Niketas Stethatos and the *Life* of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion by Gregory the cellarer.

Telling a story spatially involves a conception of a landscape as well as critical choices about position, distance, direction, perspective, and movement on the ground. The geography of a site is both a constraint and a fundamental dimension of the story: stories have to be woven around well-defined historical locations through which they gain verisimilitude and authority. This centrality of space was the main aspect of my reading of the two texts which are considered as performative narrative acts. In Chapter One I explained the rational of this interdisciplinary approach at the interjection of Byzantine and Spatial Studies. I discussed the historical context of the texts and their authorship within the eleventh-century Byzantine Empire and I outlined the theoretical and methodological framework and the aims of the research.

My main conclusions from this research were the following. Holiness in the two Byzantine hagiographical texts under discussion is a construction of embodied knowledge (or 'embodied accounts of truth') emerging from intersubjectivity. This knowledge is—always and inevitably—spatially defined and performed, located, and situated. Therefore, this knowledge is equally topologically understood and verbally expressed (narrated) in a 'spatial' manner. The two stories of holification display two different local knowledges of a single world system (Byzantine, Christian and Mediterranean) which emerged subjectively and were expressed through two distinct theological approaches to monastic practice. This concluding chapter is concerned with the role of space in the reception of the texts. It deals with the listeners' and readers' responses to the texts and the degree to which they are determined by the authors' intentions. It focuses, in specific, upon the authors' constructions of narrative landscapes and the latter's reconstructions by the readers or listeners. Concepts such as authorial cognitive maps and their reconstructions by ideal readers allow the articulation of the function of space as a diachronic feature of narrative strategies. In this interpretation, narrative landscapes

constitute the setting of storyworlds shared by the author and the ideal reader. As such, the narrative landscapes install a bridge between the author and the reader, hence constituting a comprehensive and effective vehicle for reception.

THE READERS' LANDSCAPE

Readers'/listeners' interpretations are always an elusive parameter for the study of narratives, even more so for the study of historical texts. In Roland Barthes' words: "Ce lecteur, il faut que je le cherche, (que je le « drague »), sans savoir où il est."[1] A reader is defined by Gerald Prince as 'a decoder, decipherer, and interpreter of written (narrative) text'.[2] To approach the concept, I here define my view of the reader and listener based on relevant narratological concepts: the reader's voice introduced by Barthes, the implied reader defined by Wolfgang Iser, the model reader defined by Umberto Eco, and finally the narratee and the ideal reader developed by Prince.

Barthes advocates that textual meaning is within the text itself, dispels the author's conclusiveness on the meaning of a text, and suggests the openness and multiplicity of textual meaning.[3] He suggests that the text is made by multiple writings, deriving from several cultures which converse with one another: the place in which this multiplicity is finally brought together again is the reader.[4] His concept of the 'reader's voice' considers the reader not as a historical person but as someone who holds all those traces, constituting the written text assembled in one place.[5]

Iser states that the meaning of a text generates from the reading process, a dialogue between the text and its reader; once a literary text is finished, it remains quiet and full of potentialities, waiting for reader to unfold it, waiting to realize itself in a reading process.[6] He distinguishes between the text, its concretization by the reader, and the work of art resulting from their convergence.[7] He argues that the text pre-structures and guides the production of meaning by gradually supplying skeletal aspects or schematized views of what will become the work of art, while leaving between them areas of indeterminacy or gaps to be filled by the reader completing the artwork.[8] Hence, Iser introduces the concept of the implied reader, which is not to be confused with a real reader.[9] This concept allows taking the text as well as the reading activity into account: the implied reader is both

[1] Barthes 1973, 11: "This reader, I have to look for him ('chat him up') without knowing where he is."
[2] Prince 2013, §1.
[3] Barthes 1968.
[4] Barthes 1968, 67.
[5] Barthes 1968, 68.
[6] Iser 1971, 1974, 1978
[7] Ibid.
[8] Prince 2013, §3.3.
[9] Iser 1978, 34.

a textual element, an entity deductible from the text, and a meaning-producing mechanism, a set of mental operations involved in sense-making (selecting and organizing information, relating past and present knowledge, anticipating facts and outcomes, constructing and modifying patterns).[10] Indeed, the implied reader could even be considered a kind of equivalent to authorial intention and textual meaning or to a set of preferred interpretations.[11]

The ideal reader, on the other hand, is a concept which begins according to Eco as the 'model reader'.[12] According to Eco, a text is the result of two components: the information that the author supplies and the information that the model reader adds, and which is more or less strictly determined by the author's input.[13] The model reader corresponds to the set of conditions that must be satisfied for the text's potential to be actualized.[14] This concept removes indeterminacies and fills in blanks with (modifiable and replaceable) sets of propositions or 'ghost chapters' that derive from codes, conventions, interpretive procedures, and knowledge shared with the author.[15]

Prince remarks that Iser is more interested in fiction than in narrative and draws mainly on phenomenology to elaborate his implied reader, while Eco is interested in narrativity and draws primarily on semiotics to develop the concept of 'model reader'; and yet, their concepts resemble each other in many ways.[16] Prince himself contributes with another couple of relative concepts: the narratee (the audience that the narrator in a given narrative addresses) and the ideal reader (who grasps and approves every aspect of the text).[17]

Accordingly, the ideal reader and/or listener of the two *Lives*, both in Byzantium and in other cultures, can be defined as a person who decodes and interprets the narrative in such a way as to produce those meanings which were originally intended in the author's composition. In that sense, the ideal reader is able to 'grasp and approve every aspect' of the author's text despite their subjective perceptions of their society and themselves. Specifically, the concept of space serves as an agent that is able to bridge any gaps, 'remove indeterminacies and fill in blanks with (modifiable and replaceable) sets of propositions'.[18]

Space does that by offering the ground for the ideal reader's access to the author's original 'cognitive map' when composing the particular narrative. This concept, as redefined by Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth E. Foote and Maoz Azaryahu,

[10] Prince 2013, §3.3.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Eco 1979, 7–12.
[13] Eco 1979, 206; Prince 2013, §3.4.
[14] Eco 1979, 11; Prince 2013, §3.4.
[15] Eco 1979, 214–5; Prince 2013, §3.4.
[16] Prince 2013, §3.4.
[17] Prince 1971, 1980, 1985.
[18] An expression I borrow from Prince, see note 15 above.

consists of a mental model of spatial relations.[19] The represented space can be real or imaginary, the mental model can be based on embodied experience or on the reading of the texts, and the text can be narrowly focused or treat space as a setting of narrative events.[20] Yet in all cases, the author's cognitive map springs from her/his experience of spatial relations. Through the author's transmission of spatial relations to the reader, the latter is potentially able to reproduce the author's version of social reality. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, this process is characterized by several functions of cognitive maps: the latter are means to structure and store knowledge; they are used as mnemonic devices; they serve as 'fields of dreams' to imagination; they enable people to give directions and 'rehearse spatial behaviour'.[21] Hence, they stimulate the readers' minds by means of an indirect form of guidance.[22] They function as Virginia Woolf's 'unwritten part of the text' which stimulates the reader's creative participation.[23] In that way, they allow the reader's imagination to engage in the task of working things out for herself/himself.[24]

Furthermore, the narration of spatial relations is imbued by the specific medieval collective experientiality, as proposed by Eva von Contzen: an experientiality that is tied much more to acting than to thinking.[25] Medieval collectivity is contained in and expressed through the exemplary individual's actions, which invite emulation on the part of the audience.[26] These actions are social; hence they are located and they are spatially enacted and performed. Von Contzen and Maximilian Alders summon the actual strategies employed by medieval authors so as to represent collective experience.[27] According to them, these strategies vary strongly because medieval authors respond not only to constraints of their periods but also to the needs of different genres and different purposes.[28] Particular uses of narrative space are especially central in narrative strategies by medieval authors of texts which assume an intermediary status between performance-oriented and book-oriented mediums.[29] As Christian Schneider proposes, the representation of narrative space in medieval epics, for example, is fundamentally influenced by the perceptual conditions of the audio-visual performance as a situation in which primary and secondary speech situations are being merged.[30]

[19] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 77.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Tuan 1975, 210–11.
[22] Iser 1974, 114.
[23] Woolf 1957, 174.
[24] Iser 1974, 275.
[25] Von Contzen 2015, 141–7.
[26] Von Contzen 2015, 141.
[27] Von Contzen & Alders 2015.
[28] Von Contzen & Alders 2015.
[29] Schneider 2018.
[30] Schneider 2018, 193.

In this study, I hope to have shown that for the two Byzantine authors, considered here, the 'spatial' narration was an efficient method for direct transmission of collective experientiality, within a monastic community and beyond it, by means of 'spatializing' it. The two *Lives* under discussion provide good examples for presenting the process of reconstruction of the authors' social 'realities' by the ideal reader/listener, based on the latter's reception of the authors' cognitive maps (or their narrated spatial relations). The centrality of space in subjective perceptions of society and the self are evident through a comparison of Gregory's ideal Byzantine reader in the province of Ephesos against that of Niketas' in the capital of Constantinople.

Niketas delivered a narrative of relative immobility, in which natural and social space are not that important, in the life story of Symeon the New Theologian. Descriptions of spaces seldom occur except for when they are relevant to Symeon's theological interests: the space of the cell and the space of the vision constitute these exceptions. Otherwise, Niketas seems to be writing for people in Constantinople, who are familiar with its landscape. For this reason, not only does he not elaborate upon the urban landscape but he often barely outlines this landscape in an abstract way. A good example of this narrative manner is Niketas' episode of the monks' revolt at the monastery of St Mamas.[31] Niketas does not give much detail about the fleeing monks' trajectory, the distances, the neighbourhoods and the social environment on the route from St Mamas to the Patriarchate where they result in protests against Symeon the New Theologian's monastic practices. It is as if Niketas takes for granted that the readers are familiar with the city and the meanings of its landmarks. The meaning of the place is communicated directly to the reader without elaborating on its spatial features. It is just like Symeon's theological beliefs: contact with God is achieved directly in a mystical way—not by mediation of the environment.

Even Symeon the New Theologian's experiences of direct contact with God through in-cell visions remain personal and private throughout the text. His process of holification remains curiously 'un-located' in respect to the Byzantine capital's social space, as he is 'hidden' in a monastic cell for years and years until metropolitan Stephanos provokes him. This 'un-location', his absence from the Constantinopolitan social life, symbolizes that his religious experience gestures toward a heavenly rather than an earthly reality. This was his initial determination as a young man, when he abandoned a career in the imperial court so as to devote himself to the monastic retreat and spiritual development.

On the contrary, Gregory's account of the life of Lazaros is dominated by an inherent landscape narrative.[32] Gregory narrates Lazaros' life story of holification by writing a story of a series of places. He begins with the monastic environments

[31] *L. Sym. New Theol*. §38; See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this episode, on pp. 48–9.
[32] See Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 160–80.

of Magnesia. He goes on to the roads and mountains of Western and South-Western Asia Minor; the cities, ports, deserts, and monasteries of the Holy Land; the pilgrim sites in Asia Minor; the hinterland of Ephesos. He concludes this journey through a narration of forty years of Lazaros' life as a sequence of paths and caves and rocks and pillars on Mount Galesion. To conclude, Gregory tells a story on the diachronic 'Christian way of life' by making connections among significant moments and places that would otherwise remain unconnected spatially and temporally.[33]

Furthermore, the main spatial feature of Gregory's story is a dynamic sense of mobility: this is the central device he uses in order to illustrate that Lazaros' religious experience also gestures toward a heavenly rather than an earthly reality. On one hand, this interchangeability of location in the story is meant to symbolize Lazaros' reluctance to 'dwell' on the earth. It shows his inability to lower his spiritual standards by making peace with social behaviours he disapproves of.[34] On the other hand, the ideal reader interprets mobility as progress, provided that s/he is also familiar with spatial relations in the storyworld of the *Life*. Namely, mobility within the geographic and cultural context of the Eastern Mediterranean is indicative of diachronic attitudes towards life in this area. The ideal reader is familiar with a context in which mobile societies have been diachronically and constantly moving through land and waters in their pursuit of contacts and their consumption of land as a resource.

LITERARY 'LIVED SPACE': LANDSCAPE AS NARRATIVE, NARRATIVE AS LANDSCAPE

In the Saints' *Lives* under discussion here, two thorough and consistent selections of 'spatial' vocabulary are used in the narration of the process of holification of two Byzantine men. My literary analysis, in the previous chapters, based on Henri Lefebvre's concept of 'lived space' as representational space, focused upon both distinguishing and interpreting similarities and differences between the two authors' selections of 'spatial' vocabularies. These vocabularies compose the authors' and readers' landscapes corresponding to the 'settings' of their storyworlds.

People presumably read for the plot and not for the setting, and yet this work has been largely concerned with space. My main aim has been to demonstrate that the social is inevitably spatial, and this also applies to narratives. People not only perceive them through their spatial aspect, but they also conceive them in spatial terms. As Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu observe: 'we construct mental models of narrative space only as far as we find a cognitive advantage in this activity—only as far as is needed to achieve immersion in the storyworld and understanding of the action'.[35]

[33] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 179.
[34] On this issue see Chapter 8.
[35] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 100.

Readers need mental maps to follow the plot, but they construe these maps on the basis of the plot: out of the movements of the characters they construct a global vision that enables them to situate events.[36] This construction requires a bidirectional interaction between author and reader. In Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu's words: 'While this global vision is construed through a bottom-up activity, it provides top-down guidance to the explorer of the textual world'.[37] Since the reader's imagination needs a mental model of space to simulate the narrative action, it is important to achieve a holistic representation of the storyworld. As shown by research on such mental models, the most frequently occurring elements in them are indeed all landscape features.[38]

Additionally, stories constitute themselves 'narrative landscapes'. The authors of the two saints' *Lives* discussed here composed two literary landscapes that consist of sequential narratives. The latter are defined as narratives structured along trails or paths, particularly when the story involves a 'point-to-point chronology'.[39] The two texts are structured along the trails of the life story of the respective saint. Both saints were well-known historical personalities within the monastic contexts in which the stories were composed by their disciples. A point-to-point chronology is imbued through the same historical setting, in which the saints have been in contact with people during their life time, and this contact—often miraculous—is still remembered in the community and documented by the authors.

Furthermore, the starting and the ending points of sequential narratives are frequently framed by gates or portals, and the chronological sequencing is sustained for readers using stops along paths.[40] In the *Lives* under discussion, the starting points, on one hand, are determined by distinct text parts: the *prooimia* and the concluding paragraphs. The stops along the narrated 'holy paths', on the other hand, are demarcated by a large number of recurrent topoi, which have been discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Last but not least, in sequential narratives, a large number of stories are serialized into many episodes that will be read in part or whole, in sequence and out of sequence, by readers who might differ considerably in background.[41] This is the performative setting which one would expect in the case of hagiographical texts; some features of this 'episodic' structure have already been analysed within the context of Byzantine storytelling.[42] The numerous episodes would be selectively read either in sequence or out of sequence, depending on the occasion within the rituals of everyday monastic life.[43]

[36] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 99.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 165.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 179.
[42] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 269–71.
[43] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 270–1.

By all these means, the two hagiographical texts discussed here offer an ideal reader—whether Byzantine or modern, individual or collective—two dynamic and flexible narrative landscapes. I hope to have shown in this study that these narrative landscapes constitute multi-dimensional and multi-functional devices which diachronically serve for teaching a Christian human faith and practice.

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Index