

A NEW STYLITE AT ANDRONA IN SYRIA

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Résumé : La découverte récente d'une colonne de stylite hors des murailles d'Androna en Syrie du Nord ajoute un nouveau cas d'imitateur de saint Syméon de Qala'at Sem'an. Nous ajoutons encore au dossier un autre cas méconnu, à Habsennas en Mésopotamie du Nord, qui combine les traits d'une colonne et d'une tour.

Because Jean-Pierre Sodini's important archaeological work in Syria includes Qala'at Sem'an, the shrine surrounding the column of the first stylite, Symeon the Elder (d. 459) in the Limestone Massif, the following offering may be considered appropriate in subject if not in its more humble scope. This short note, intended to thank Jean-Pierre for his support of my own work in Syria in the so-called Basalt Massif, serves as an introduction to another follower of Symeon in northern Syria, in this case at Androna. The relevant evidence known to date is somewhat scanty and requires further investigation. Future excavation of the new stylite's installation may yet uncover material to provide his identity, but already the remains of a column at Androna appear convincing. The presentation of this evidence is followed here by a brief reintroduction of another, innovative, column further north, at Habsennas in Mesopotamia.

ANDRONA

Androna (modern Andarin), situated approximately 75 km northeast of Hama (ancient Epiphaneia), is first attested as a *mansio* on the Chalcis Palmyra route in the late third century Antonine Itinerary (fig. 1). It is also referred to as a *kome* in a sixth-century (?) inscription on a mosaic pavement of unknown provenance. Yakut (AD 1225) described the site as in ruins. Despite its lack of city (*polis*) status, Androna enjoyed certain urban features. About a mile across, it had two sets of circuit walls and large extra-mural reservoirs. Its communal buildings included a *kastron*, a *loutron* (a public bath) — both built in and around 558 — numerous churches and an Umayyad bath¹ (fig. 2). Aerial photographs² indicate that the site was densely settled in contrast to

1. See M. MUNDELL MANGO, *Excavations and Survey at Androna, Syria: The Oxford Team 1999*, *DOP* 56, 2002, p. 303-310.

2. R. MOUTERDE, A. POIDEBARD, *Le Limes de Chalcis. Organisation de la steppe en Haute Syrie romaine*, Paris 1945, pls. CX-CXIII. These are now supplemented by the series of kite photographs

Mélanges Jean-Pierre Sodini, Travaux et Mémoires 15, Paris 2005, p. 329-342.

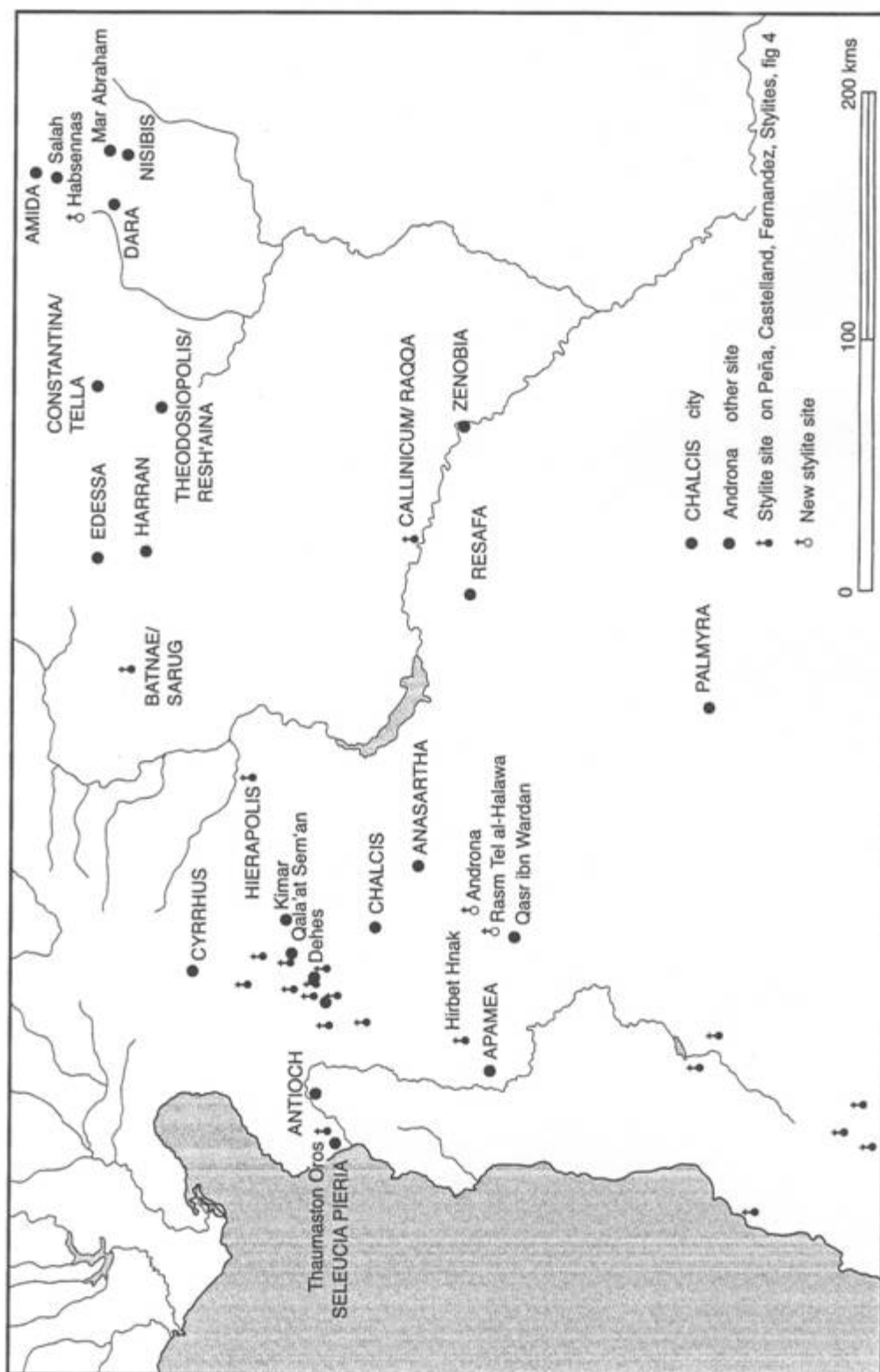


Fig. 1 – Map of northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia. Drawing A. Wilkins.

nearby Qasr ibn Wardan whose three buildings are dated 561-564³. To date, fifty Greek inscriptions are known at Androna⁴.

Androna was explored by the Princeton Expedition under H.C. Butler in 1905 and again in the 1930's by Mouterde and Poidebard's aerial survey⁵. The site is currently the focus of an international field project involving archaeologists from the Syrian Department of Antiquities, and the universities of Heidelberg and Oxford. This project aims to elucidate the diachronic development (from Roman to Islamic) of Androna's resources, defence, size and spatial organisation. Heidelberg's team, directed by Christine Strube, did a topographical survey of the site in 1997 and subsequently excavated the *kastron*, built by one Thomas in 558-559, and a domestic complex. It has also carried out work on parts of the circuit walls including two gates⁶. The Syrian team, directed by Abdurrazzaq Zaquq followed by Radi Ougdeh, has excavated H. C. Butler's *praetorium* which proved to be the Umayyad bath. Oxford's work has concentrated on buildings, installations and questions relating to the use of water at this desert site, including agriculture. Accordingly, we have excavated the well- and cistern-fed public bath, built opposite the *kastron* by Thomas after 559⁷, and two of the extra-mural foggara-fed reservoirs used for field irrigation; one being radiocarbon dated to the sixth-seventh centuries⁸. Our related investigation of traces of Androna's agriculture led to the discovery which forms the subject of this paper.

taken by R.C. Anderson during the course of our work at Androna, 1998-2003. See, e.g., MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1), figs. 4-5, 20-21.

3. MOUTERDE, POIDEBARD, *Limes* (cit. n. 2), p. 175, pls. CXIV-CXV; L. JALABERT, R. MOUTERDE, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, Paris 1955, nos. 1841-1843.

4. JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS* (cit. n. 3), nos. 1676-1713; MOUTERDE, POIDEBARD, *Limes* (cit. n. 2), p. 217, pl. CXIII; M. GRIESHEIMER, L'occupation byzantine sur les marges orientales du territoire d'Apamée de Syrie (d'après les inscriptions de *Taroutia emporon* et d'*Androna*), dans *Conquête de la steppe et appropriation des terres sur les marges arides du Croissant fertile*, ed. B. GEYER, Lyon 2001, p. 137-141; MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1), p. 309 and n. 24; C. STRUBE, Androna/al Andarin. Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen in den Jahren 1997-2001, mit Beiträgen von U. HESS, C.P. HAASE, P. KNÖTZELE, C. MEYER, AA 2003, p. 30-31, 92, 112-114. New inscriptions, particularly those reused in the Umayyad bath, await publication.

5. H.C. BUTLER ET AL., *Architecture, Section A, Southern Syria. Syria, Publications of the PUAES in 1904-1905 and 1909*, I, Leiden 1930, p. 52-53; II, Leiden 1920, *Section B, Northern Syria*, p. 47-63; III, Leiden 1922, nos. 909-945. MOUTERDE, POIDEBARD, *Limes* (cit. n. 2), p. 15, 61-63, 171-174, 217, pls. CX-CXIII.

6. STRUBE, Androna (cit. n. 4), p. 25-115; EADEM, Excavations at Andarin/Androna I: the Barracks, dans *La Syrie Moyenne de la Mer à la Steppe*. Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées, Damascus, in press; with M. MUNDELL MANGO, Report on the fourth campaign at el Anderin in August/September 2000 in *Chronique, AAAS*, in press.

7. According to the bath's inscribed lintel. A postulated period of use into the Umayyad era is supported by the pottery finds, being studied by Nigel Pollard. All is Byzantine or transitional Late Byzantine / Umayyad; nothing is definitely Abbasid. Comparanda exist at Dehes, Resafa, and Dibli Faraj. Imported pottery includes African Red Slip Ware, Late Roman C and D Wares, and Riley Carthage Late Roman 1 and 7 amphorae. Local wares include small buff bowls with decorated rims, Brittware, painted "North Syria amphorae", and buff amphorae with combed decoration.

8. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1); EADEM, Excavations and Survey at Androna, Syria: The Oxford Team 2000, *DOP* 57, 2003, p. 293-297; EADEM, Oxford Excavations at Andarin (Androna: September 1998 with contributions by M. DECKER, C. MANGO, N. POLLARD, C. SALTER, A. WILSON, AAAS, in press; EADEM, Oxford Excavations at Andarin (Androna): September 1999, AAAS, in press; EADEM, Excavations at Andarin/Androna II: The Bath and Water Supply, dans *La Syrie moyenne de la*

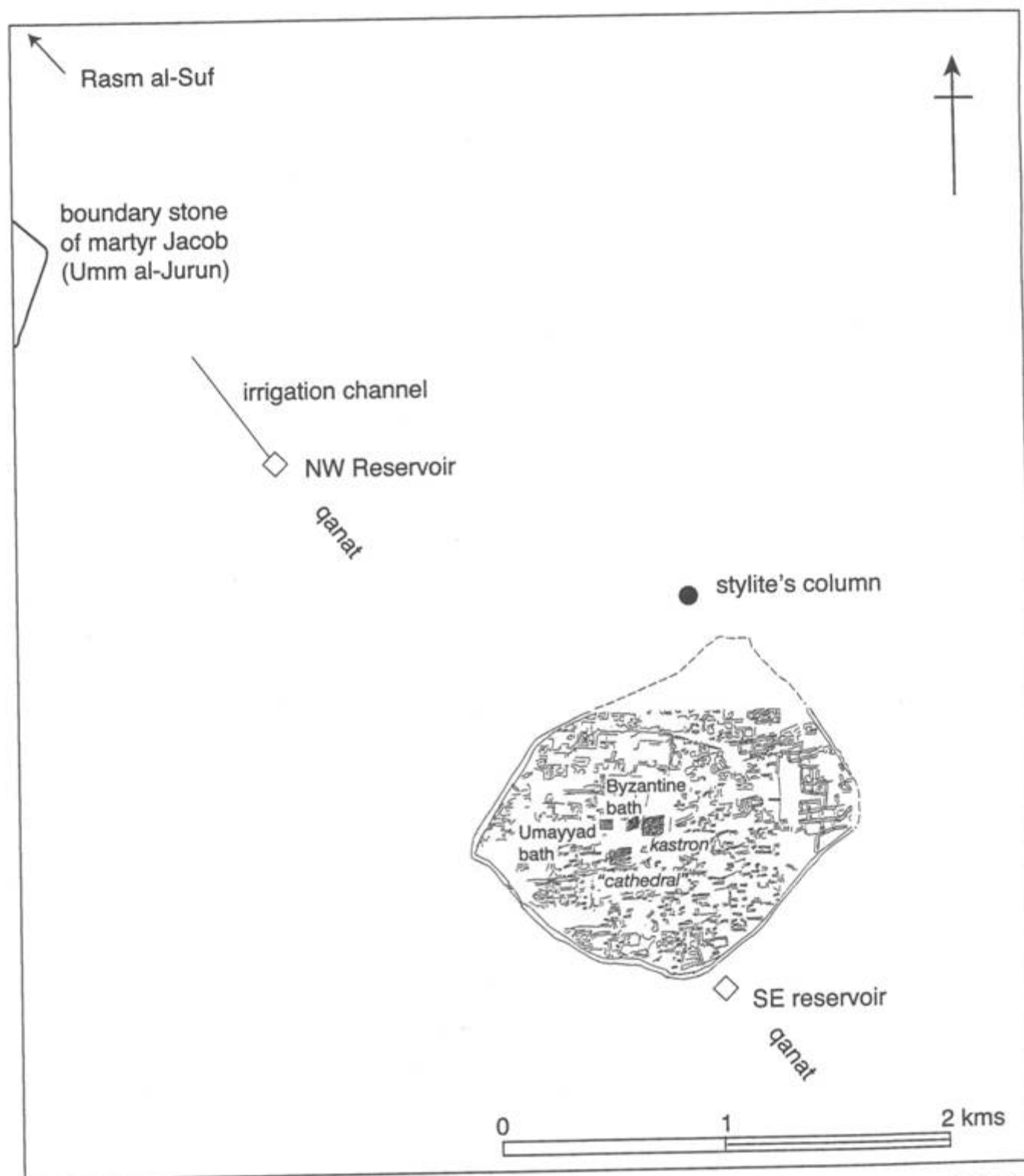
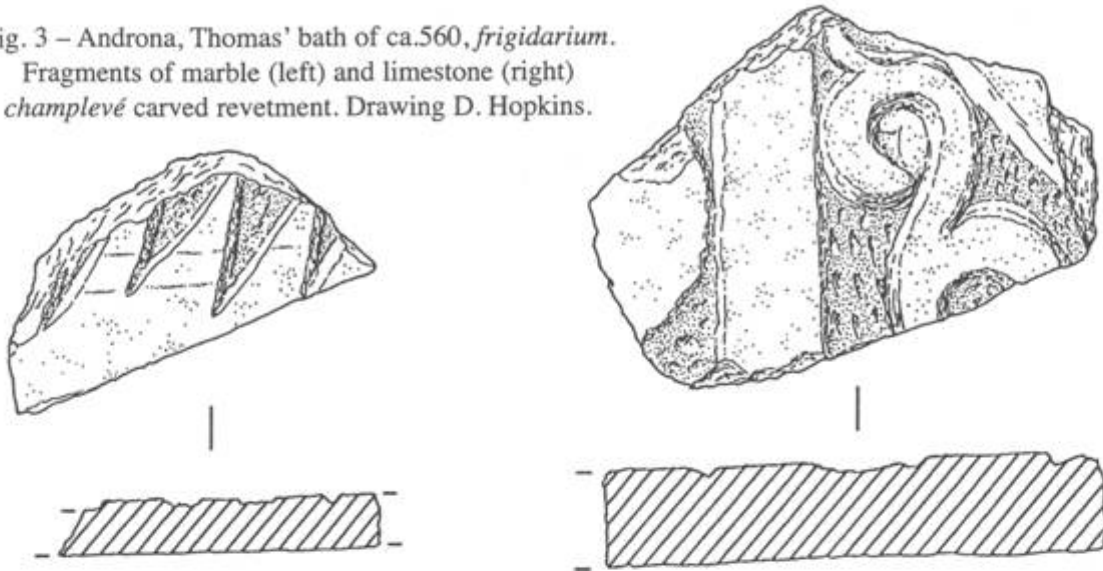


Fig. 2 – Plan of Androna and surrounding areas. Site plan digitized by A. Wickham, 1997, from aerial photograph in MOUTERDE, POIDEBARD, *Limes* (cit. n. 2), pl. CXI; surrounding locations added by C. Hritz, 2004, and redrawn by A. Wilkins.

Fig. 3 – Androna, Thomas' bath of ca.560, *frigidarium*.
Fragments of marble (left) and limestone (right)
champlevé carved revetment. Drawing D. Hopkins.



Oxford's excavated buildings at Androna share certain features with those at Qala' at Sem'an and related sites in Syria. Thomas' basalt and brick bath, richly decorated in marble, glass wall mosaic⁹, and wallpaintings¹⁰, recalls in several respects (size, layout, water supply, furnaces) urban baths of the period, in particular that built in ca. 550 at Zenobia (Halebiye) on the Euphrates¹¹. Prominent among urban features in the Androna bath was an extensive use of marble, by far the greatest amount of decorative material found there. A total of 506 kg of 19 types of marble¹² and other decorative stones has been classified by Olga Karagiorgou¹³ according to function, dimension and weight; over half by weight is Proconnesian marble. The use of marble and some individual decorative finds have parallels at Qala' at Sem'an: *champlevé* revetment (fig. 3)¹⁴, *opus sectile* pavements¹⁵, and a slab carved with a pattern of overlapping circles (fig. 4)¹⁶.

mer à la steppe. Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées, Damascus, in press; EADEM with C. STRUBE, Report on the fourth campaign at el Anderin in August/September 2000, dans *Chronique*, AAAS, in press; EADEM, Report on the fifth campaign at el Anderin in September 2001, dans *Chronique*, AAAS, in press; EADEM, Excavations and survey at Anderin: the Oxford team in *Hama and Orontes, history and civilization*, Damascus, in press; EADEM, Report on excavations at Andarin, September 2003, dans *Chronique*, AAAS, in press.

9. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1), p. 331.

10. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 2000 (cit. n. 8), p. 295, fig. 8; EADEM, Andarin 1998 (cit. n. 8), fig. 4.

11. M. MUNDELL MANGO, The Centre in and beyond the Periphery: Material Culture in the Early Byzantine Empire, dans *Byzantina - Metabyzantina. La périphérie dans le temps et l'espace*, ed. P. Odorico, Paris 2003, p. 124.

12. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1), p. 311, figs. 11-14; EADEM, Bath (cit. n. 8), figs. 5-6.

13. Her report is to appear in the final report on work carried out by the Oxford team 1998-2006.

14. S. BOYD, Champlevé Production in Early Byzantine Cyprus in *Medieval Cyprus. Studies in Architecture and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, eds. N.P. ŠEVČENKO and C. MOSS, Princeton, N.J. 1999, p. 49-51.

15. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 1999 (cit. n. 1), p. 311; EADEM, Androna 2000 (cit. n. 8), p. 295, fig. 11.

16. MUNDELL MANGO, Androna 2000 (cit. n. 8), p. 294, fig. 5. W. DJOBADZE, *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Stuttgart 1986, pl. 38 fig. 151.

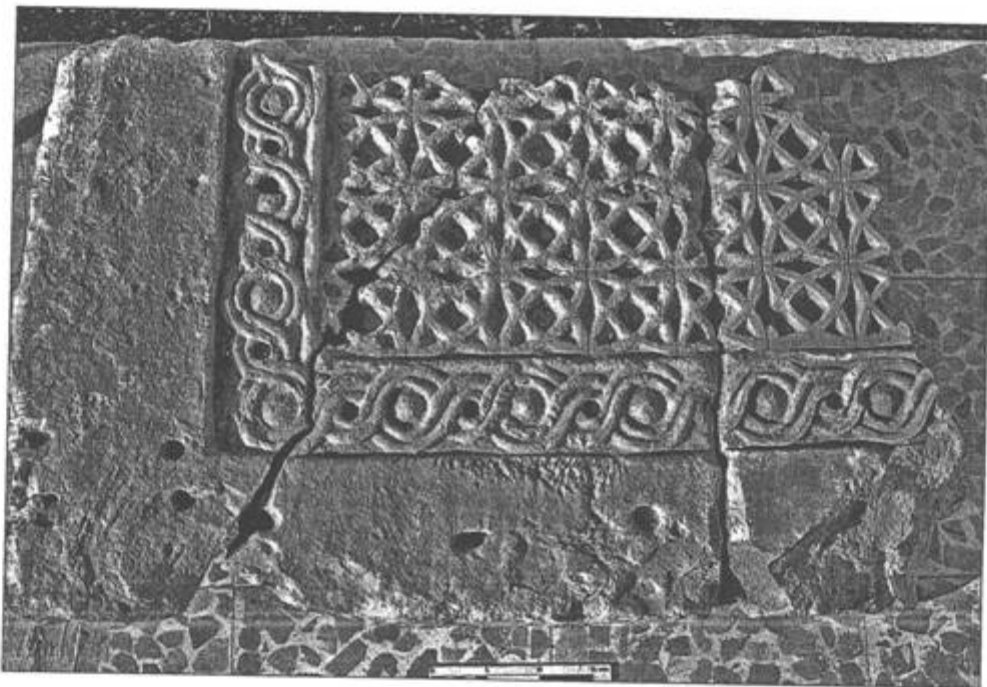


Fig. 4 – Androna, Thomas' bath of ca. 560, retrieved from cistern in entrance court. Fragmentary limestone slab. Photo M. M. Mango.

The partially excavated limestone reservoirs at Androna apparently had secondary functions in addition to irrigation, as indicated by their elaborate decoration of niches, pilasters, colonnettes and other sculpture. This array created, I have suggested elsewhere, a prestige setting for a water festival such as the *Maiuma*¹⁷. Stylistically, this sculpture finds comparisons at the complex of the younger stylite Symeon (ca 540-50) at Thaumaston Oros near Antioch, in particular both the reservoir colonnettes carved with various patterns (flutes, imbrication, palm trunk)¹⁸ also reminiscent of work at Amida (Diyarbakir)¹⁹, and a large, now fragmentary, relief of Jonah and the Whale²⁰ from the northwest reservoir which also recalls figural sculpture at Mar Abraham's monastery church (c 571) near Nisibis in Mesopotamia²¹.

In addition to the *kastron* and two baths excavated, Androna had up to a dozen intra-mural churches, including that within the *kastron*. One church was dedicated to the Trinity²². A double church was dedicated to the archangels, presumably Michael

17. I also pointed out that one of the reservoirs may have been used for fish breeding; M. MUNDELL MANGO, *Fishing in the desert in Golden Gate, Festschrift for Ihor Ševčenko*, eds. P. SCHREINER and O. STRAKHOV = *Palaeoslavica* 10, 2002, p. 309-316.

18. DJOBADZE, *Investigations* (cit. n. 16), pls. 34-38.

19. *Ibid.*, pls. 35 fig. 136; 36 fig. 145; 37 fig. 149.

20. MUNDELL MANGO in *Hama and Orontes* (cit. n. 8), fig. 11; DJOBADZE, *Investigations* (cit. n. 16), pls. 39-43.

21. M. MUNDELL MANGO, *Deux églises de Mésopotamie du Nord: Ambar et Mar Abraham de Kashkar*, *CArch.* 30, 1982, p. 47-70.

22. Butler's church 8; JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS*, no. 1677.

and Gabriel²³. The inscription on the lintel of another church invokes St. Theodore²⁴. Another cult is documented outside the walls of Androna, at about 2.8 km. to the northwest at Umm al-Jurun on a boundary inscription discovered by J. Lauffray and published in *IGLS*. In 2000 Cyril Mango located and photographed this inscription (fig. 5) which has since disappeared. It reads: “+ Boundaries of (the sanctuary of) the very holy martyr Jacob, set up following the sacred order of the very pious sovereigns Justinian and Theodora”. It thus dates to AD 527-548²⁵. A reliquary, minus its lid, (fig. 6) is preserved today a short distance to the north at Rasm al-Suf to where it was brought, possibly from Umm al-Jurun (fig. 2)²⁶. Another cult apparently flourished at Androna, that of a stylite.

Androna's stylite was situated about 300 m. to the north of the outer walls surrounding the site (fig. 2). Here lies a scatter of basalt stones, namely long ashlar blocks and round column shaft segments, the latter extending in a near straight line, apparently as fallen (fig. 7). Thanks to an olive mill lying among the debris, the remains attracted the attention of members of our team seeking evidence of ancient agricultural activity²⁷. In the following year, 1999, Michael Decker and Cassian Hall laid two trenches across the site in order to clarify the nature of a potential agricultural installation (with the column shafts acting as rollers). One trench crossed the area of the column itself, the other cut into a nearby mound. Pottery, glass and other material retrieved confirmed an Early Byzantine date for the complex. Under the column segments and ashlar blocks was uncovered not an olive pressing surface but a square area resembling the base of a



Fig. 5 – Umm al-Jurun, northwest of Androna. Loose inscription (2.00 x 0.39 m) mentioning boundary of martyr Jacob, established by Justinian and Theodora, 527-548. Photo C. Mango.

23. BUTLER, *Architecture* (cit. n. 5), II, B, p. 57-58; JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS* nos. 1691-1694. I. PEÑA, *Lieux de pèlerinage en Syrie*, Milan 2000, p. 18-19.

24. BUTLER, *Architecture* (cit. n. 5), II, B, p. 926; JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS* no. 1705. PEÑA, *Pèlerinage* (cit. n. 23), p. 26.

25. JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS* no. 1675 ter. A Jacob is also mentioned on a loose lintel 100 m south of the *kastron*; *ibid.*, no. 1687.

26. The source of other ancient worked stone brought to this village in recent years.

27. See M. DECKER and A. WILSON in MUNDELL MANGO, *Androna* 1999 (cit. n. 1), p. 314-316 and in EADEM, *Anderin* 1998 (cit. n. 8).

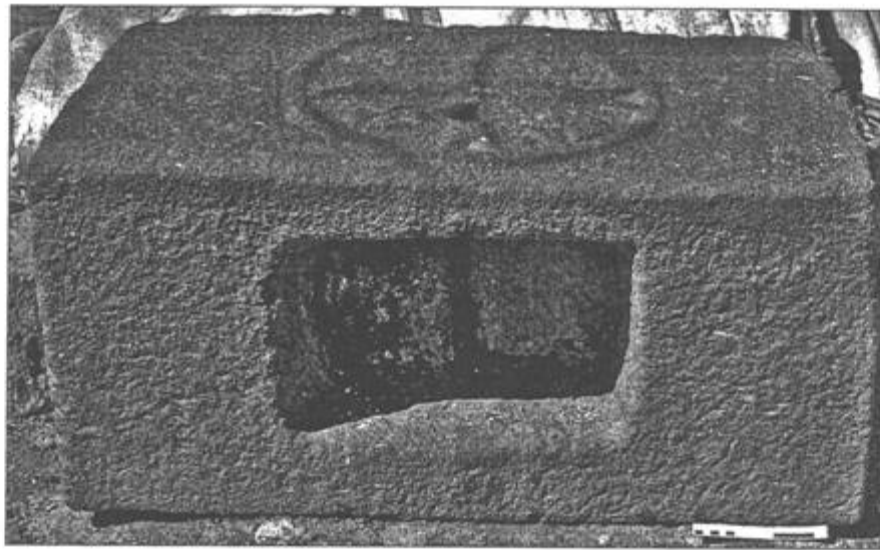


Fig. 6 – From Umm al-Jurun (?), now at Rasm al-Suf. Basalt reliquary body (0.43 x 0.55 x 0.45 m). Photo M. M. Mango.

monument²⁸. The mound contained a tiled pavement. The collapsed column was planned by Richard Anderson in situ, where it remains (fig. 8). All eight shaft segments are quite large, being 0.66 to 0.82 m in diameter. The reconstructed height of the column was over 10.81 m. The segments have distinctive sinkings for metal clamps once used with metal collars to hold them together. The inescapable conclusion is that the shafts were once assembled as an upright column. Since this was an unlikely place for an honorific column supporting a statue, it is probable that the column pieces were set up for a stylite.

The column remains at Androna most closely resemble those of the sixth-century stylite at Kimar, north of Qala'at Sem'an near a road between Apamea and Cyrrhus²⁹ (fig. 1). Here also the column had been composed of large shaft segments (diameters 0.82-1.18 m) acting as drums bound together by metal clamps and collars. This is one of three shafts preserved in near entirety in the Limestone Massif and, like that at Sheih Barakat, once stood at 16 m; that at Srir was ca. 12 m. The height of the final columns of the Elder and Younger Symeons, now gone, may have also once reached ca. 16 m³⁰.

A stylite's column was composed of three main parts, the base, the shaft and the upper platform (of wood or a capital)³¹. Of these, no capital or other platform survives at Androna. The dozen ashlar blocks probably formed part of the column's

28. MUNDELL MANGO in *Hama and Orontes* (cit. n. 8).

29. I. PEÑA, P. CASTELLANA, R. FERNANDEZ, *Les stylites syriens*, Milan 1975, p. 150-151, pl. 24, fig. 26; O. CALLOT, À propos de quelques colonnes de stylites syriens, dans *Architecture et poésie, hommage à G. Roux*, eds. R. ÉTIENNE, M.-T. LE DINAHET, M. YON, Lyon 1989, p. 114-118, figs. 4, 8. I thank the author for kindly drawing his article to my attention and for providing me with a copy. See also the recent article by O. CALLOT and P.-L. GATIER, *Les stylites de l'Antiochène*, *Topoi* Suppl. 5, 2004, p. 573-596, which I have been unable to consult.

30. DJOBADZE, *Investigations* (cit. n. 16), p. 62-65; CALLOT, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 113.

31. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 39-42.



Fig. 7 – Androna. Collapsed stylite's column. Photo R.C. Anderson.

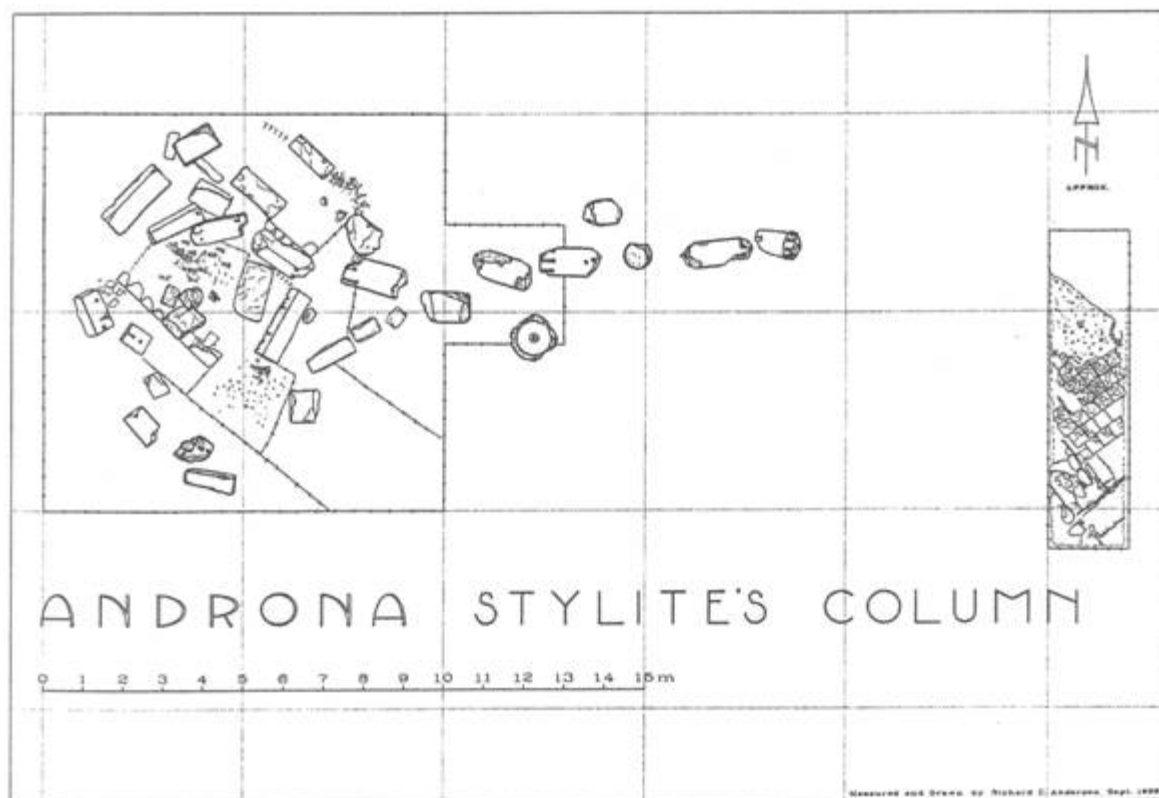


Fig. 8 – Androna. Collapsed stylite's column. Plan R.C. Anderson.

base. The precise reconstruction of the various elements requires further work which will take account of Olivier Callot's study³². Regarding the other elements found at Androna, the tiled floor under the mound may have belonged to a building. Stylite columns studied by Tchalenko and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez were usually accompanied by a chapel / oratory, monastery or habitation for followers, and/or a tomb and surrounded by an enclosure³³. Beside the collapsed column at Androna is a hole which may belong to a well, cistern or septic tank found at some sites³⁴. The olive mill at Androna (figs. 7-8) may have been used in oil production carried out by monastic followers of the stylite³⁵.

I. Peña's study shows, unsurprisingly, a concentration of stylites in the general vicinity of Qala'at Sem'an, throughout the Limestone Massif³⁶. East of this core group is a sprinkling of recorded stylites towards the Euphrates and, further to the north, in Mesopotamia (fig. 1). That mentioned by John Moschos at Hierapolis belongs to the seventh century and that at Batnae/Sarug to the tenth; the closest among those listed to the west of Androna was situated at Hirbet Knak in the eleventh³⁷. Likewise relevant to Androna's column is another, basalt in material and "Doric" in style, found collapsed by H. C. Butler on a small hill at Rasm Tel al-Halawa, ca. 14 km southwest of Androna (fig. 9)³⁸. Because there was no trace of

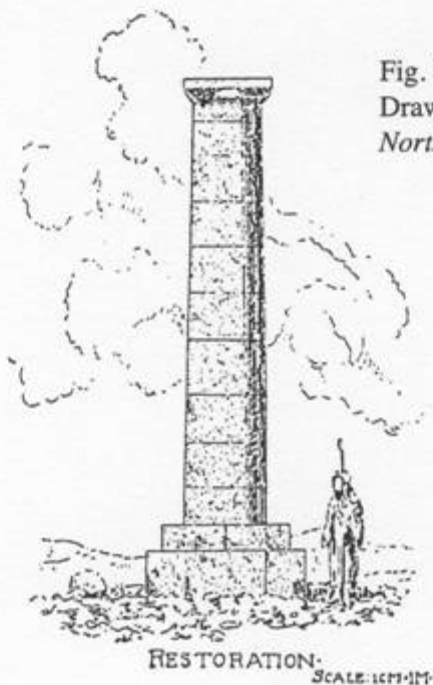


Fig. 9 – Rasm Tel al-Halawa. Roman (?) column reconstructed. Drawing after BUTLER, *Architecture. ... Section B, Northern Syria* (cit. n. 5), p. 65 ill. 64.

32. CALLOT, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 107-122.

33. G. TCHALENKO, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord*, Paris 1953-1958, I, p. 171-172, pls. L.2, LXXXVIII; PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 52-55, 76-77, 87-159.

34. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 58-59, pl. 3.

35. As at Symeon d-Zayte's Monastery of the Column near Nisibis. See below and n. 51.

36. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 87-159, fig. 1.

37. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 83.

38. BUTLER, *Architecture* (cit. n. 5), I, p. 53; II, B, p. 64-65, ill. 64.

buildings there, H. C. Butler considered the column to be a Roman “landmark or boundary monument”, but it may well have belonged to another stylite. Among those listed by I. Peña, the closest geographically and, presumably, chronologically to Androna may be those near Callinicum/Raqqā of the sixth century. According to Michael the Syrian³⁹, monks near Theodosiopolis/Resh`aina fleeing Tayayē (Arabs) in 631 travelled south to the Euphrates and founded the Monastery of the Column near a (stylite’s ?) column that had been set up a century earlier at Callinicum by the empress Theodora, protectress of Monophysites and considered a native of that city, sometime between 527 and 548. Perhaps this imperial gesture had been made in response to recent local events. In 520-522, two stylites active near Callinicum, Symeon and Thomas of Dara, had been martyred during Justin I’s Chalcedonian suppression of Monophysite monks⁴⁰. This part of northeastern Syria may be seen as an outpost of stylitism which developed from the sixth century⁴¹. Generally contemporary with Theodora’s column at Callinicum was the boundary established by her and Justinian outside Androna (at Umm al-Jurun) for the (shrine of ?) martyr Jacob⁴². Was he too a martyred stylite ? One would expect a stylite to be buried by his column. If the boundary inscription (fig. 5) discovered northwest of Androna was found in its original position, either the shrine of Jacob was located there at Umm al-Jurun, where there are remains of a large complex, or Jacob was a stylite buried by his column and the inscription marked a distant property boundary (fig. 2). If Jacob were buried at Umm al-Jurun — the possible origin of the newly discovered reliquary at Rasm al-Suf (fig. 6) — this would lessen the possibility that he was the stylite.

Whatever his precise identity, Androna’s stylite was well-placed outside the walls near a northeast gate opening onto the road that probably led to the city of Anasarthā (fig. 1), also a beneficiary of imperial action, in this case possibly that of Maurice, and that of Phocas, as stated in inscriptions (one later defaced) in the city’s new gate and circuit walls⁴³. Although positioned in the countryside, the Elder Symeon and his stylite followers were easily accessible to the public which sought their help. Often, as at Androna, their columns stood on or by main arteries connecting cities. The younger Symeon sat above the road leading from the harbour at Seleucia Pieria to Antioch; the Elder Symeon’s column stood near a presumed Apamea-Cyrrhus road⁴⁴.

Further work on Androna’s column is planned. The Oxford team has obtained a permit from the Director General for Antiquities and Museums, Damascus to conduct a landscape study around Androna, 2004-2005, with the intention of

39. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, éd. et trad. J.-B. CHABOT, Paris 1899-1905, II, p. 419; III, p. 26.

40. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 69.

41. It was in this region that a pagan ritual observed at the temple of Attargatis at Hierapolis — where twice annually a man mounted and stayed for a week on a column to pray for the faithful who made offerings — is thought to have served as inspiration for the Elder Symeon. Thus G. GOOSSENS, *Hiérapolis de Syrie*, Louvain 1943, p. 131-132.

42. See footnote 25 above.

43. On Anasarthā see JALABERT, MOUTERDE, *IGLS*, nos. 281, 288, 292, 298; MOUTERDE, POIDEBARD, *Limes* (cit. n. 2), p. 68.

44. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), figs. 9, 10, 15, 20.

integrating evidence obtained from excavation and study of the bath and reservoirs with the surrounding terrain. There we hope to gain a clearer picture of water use within local agricultural development. The study will also afford an opportunity to record all ancient vestiges in the designated area to ensure their future protection. Foremost on the list will be the stylite's column and its surrounds where recent intensification of local farming even since 1999 has led to ploughing extending right up to and within the cluster of shaft segments.

HABSENNAS

Some stylite columns may have been monoliths, in the case of the lower ones such as the first column of the Younger Symeon⁴⁵; most were composite, as that of the Elder Symeon at Qala'at Sem'an⁴⁶ and — presumably — that at Androna. However, a bold innovation in column design is documented in Northern Mesopotamia, at Habsennas, the column/tower. In his list of known stylites and columns, extending from the Elder Symeon through the nineteenth century and from sixth-century Gaul to medieval Georgia and Rumania⁴⁷, I. Peña cites nine stylites in northern Mesopotamia, through the Umayyad period⁴⁸. These include the chronicler Joshua the Stylite near Amida in the fifth century and the two martyred stylites near Callinicum in the sixth (see above). The others were located near Amida and possibly at Constantina/Tella (modern Viranşehir), in the sixth and seventh, respectively, as well as Zachariah near Edessa and Theodotos, archbishop of Amida who abdicated and mounted a column between that city and Dara, in the eighth century.

Habsennas is not included in this list and so its monument is worth a re-introduction here, as another "new" stylite's column (fig. 10). This is a partially preserved ashlar masonry column, with a base that resembles the lower stepped base of the column of the Younger Symeon⁴⁹ and an internal staircase; it still stands at the monastery of Mar Lazarus in the village of Habsennas north of Midyat in the Tur 'Abdin (fig. 1). Although briefly described by Gertrude Bell in 1913 as a round bell tower, according to local information⁵⁰, its true function may be revealed in the *Life of Symeon d-Zayte (of the Olives)*⁵¹.

45. DJOBADZE, *Investigations* (cit. n. 16), p. 61.

46. CALLOT, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 113-114.

47. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 60-84; see fig. 4 for greater Syria.

48. In addition to two in southern Mesopotamia near Hira; PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 80-81; seven other stylites are recorded elsewhere in the eighth century.

49. DJOBADZE, *Investigations* (cit. n. 16), pl. 29 fig. 116.

50. It "is the only round tower attached to a Christian church which is known to me in Mesopotamia or in Syria", according to G. BELL, *Churches and monasteries of the Tur 'Abdin*, ed. and annotated by M. MUNDELL MANGO, London 1982, p. 53, pl. 115.

51. S. BROCK, *The Fenqitho of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel in Tur 'Abdin*, *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 1979, p. 174-182.

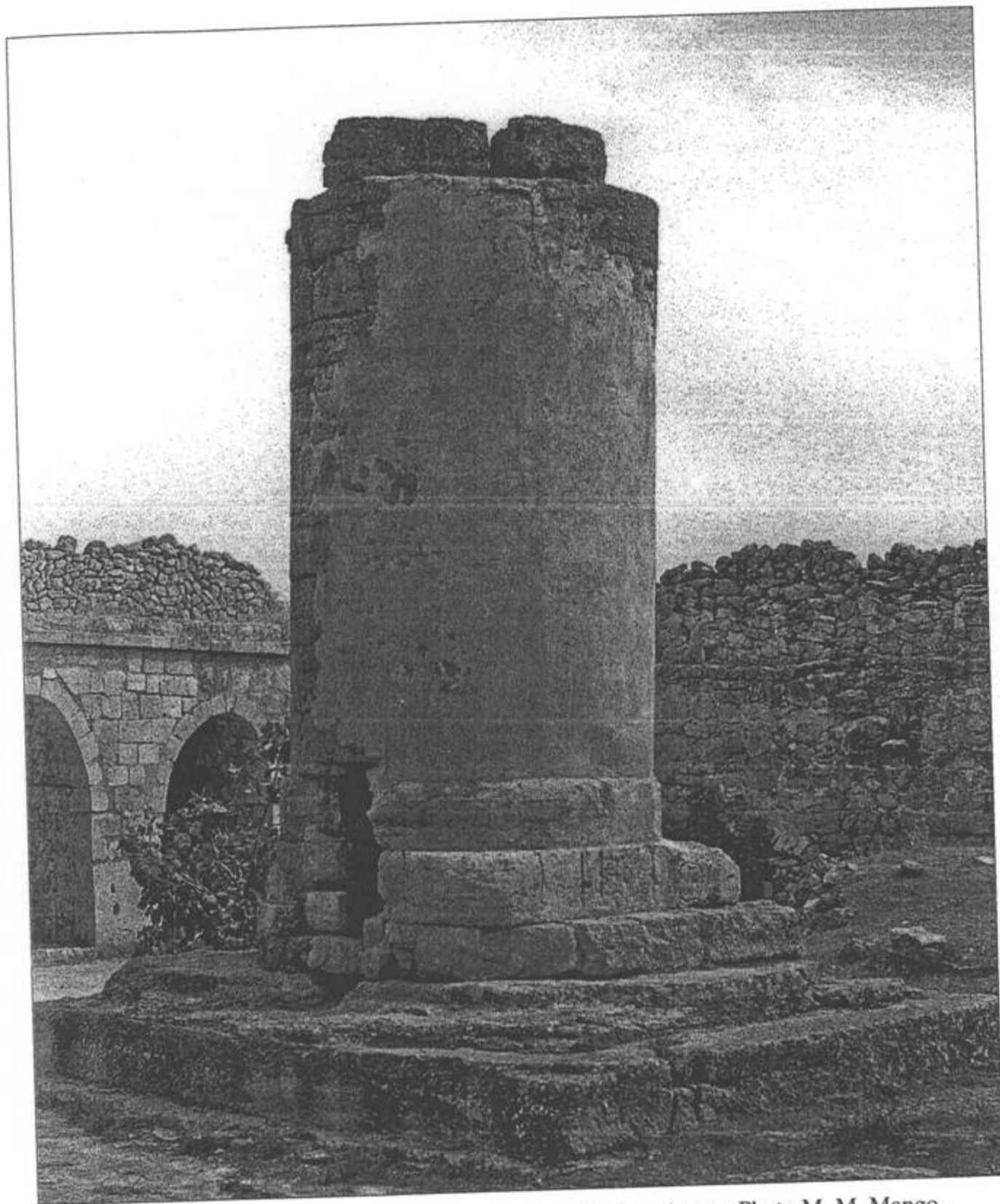


Fig. 10 – Habsennas, Monastery of Mar Lazarus. Column/tower. Photo M. M. Mango.

This text states that Symeon, a native of Habsennas, was abbot of the Monastery of the Column near Nisibis where he lived as a stylite and which he endowed with extensive olive plantations, producing oil⁵². Among other good works, he acquired and restored a ruined monastery outside the east gate of Nisibis which he provided with a "column for recluses" and a hostel⁵³. After he became bishop of Harran (700-734), Symeon brought the relics of Mar Lazarus from Harran⁵⁴ to his native Habsennas where he dedicated to this saint the church of an existing monastery ("built of hewn stone") and built a new monastery. He also built at the monastery "a column (*estona* = *stylos*) for recluses" which is also called a "tower" (*borga* = *pyrgos*), in which monks took turns to live as recluses⁵⁵. As I have previously pointed out⁵⁶, the structure's design combined the appearance of a stylite's column (*estona*) with the function (perhaps the convenience) of the tower (*borga*) of recluses of the sort mentioned in the Life of Jacob the Recluse active at nearby Salah, and observed at several sites in Syria⁵⁷. The internal staircase of the column/tower would allow the stylite/recluse an easier ascent to the top. An earlier column/tower is apparently attested before Symeon became bishop in 700: his successor as abbot of the Monastery of the Column near Nisibis is named as Jovinian, described as a *stylite* "who was a recluse in the tower" (my italics) of the monastery of Mar Elisha⁵⁸. The construction, before and in 700-734, of the latter and the Habsennas "column" with a tower-like solidity may have been a consequence of the violent storm of 646/7 when "trees were uprooted and many columns of stylites fell"⁵⁹. However, regarding the possibility of novelty, it should be recalled that the *Life* of Luke the Stylite (ninth century) mentions that the sixth-century column of Daniel on the Bosphoros above Constantinople had "the look of a tower"⁶⁰. I. Peña was aware of Symeon's "*borga*", from P.Y. Dawlabani's *History* of Mar Gabriel's monastery⁶¹, but not, apparently, of his "*estona*" nor of the columnar form of the extant monument at Habsennas.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 175-176.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

54. On Lazarus' monastery near Harran in Mesopotamia, possibly in the Tektek Mountains, see MUNDELL MANGO in BELL, *Tur 'Abdin* (cit. n. 50), p. 111 and 149.

55. BROCK, Fenqitho (cit. n. 51), p. 178.

56. In BELL, *Tur 'Abdin* (cit. n. 50), p. 111.

57. I. PEÑA, P. CASTELLANA, R. FERNANDEZ, *Les reclus syriens. Recherches sur les anciennes formes de vie solitaire en Syrie*, Milan 1980.

58. BROCK, Fenqitho (cit. n. 51), p. 176.

59. THEOPHANES, *Chronicle*, ed. DE BOOR, p. 343; (inaccurately) cited by PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 62 and n. 117.

60. *Vie de Saint Luc le stylite*, ed. F. VANDERSTUYF, PO XI/2, 1914, p. 51.9; cited by PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Stylites* (cit. n. 29), p. 37.

61. PEÑA, CASTELLANA, FERNANDEZ, *Reclus* (cit. n. 57), p. 52.