



BOOK LAUNCH

Barbara Crostini, Christian Høgel
(eds.) *Syrian Stylites: Rereadings and
Recastings of Late Ancient Superheroes*

ANAMED auditorium

Thursday, October 10, at 18:00

How did you meet your first stylite? In the ruins of a Syrian monastery or in the pages of a Byzantine menologion? In a poem by Tennyson or a movie by Buñuel? Perched up in a Thessalian tree, or performing endurance on the top of a pole in New York's Central Park? In a Cappadocian church fresco or a surrealist painting from the Second World War? Babbling incomprehensibly in a newly erected Umayyad minaret, or blogging from the tower chamber of an Austrian cathedral?

Pillar saints – stylites – flourished in Late Ancient Syria and have been the subject of enduring interest and fascination ever since. Showing commitment to a higher end by means of spending their lives standing on the top of pillars, towers and in trees, this perhaps most extreme and certainly most eye-catching form of Christian asceticism has evoked reactions of devotion, derision, admiration and contempt throughout the ages, leaving traces in Modern art and literature as much as in Orthodox Christian icons and vitas.

This volume, consisting of thirteen chapters by leading scholars in the field, looks at the textual and visual reception of stylites in a broad perspective, examining the rereadings and recastings of these Late Ancient superheroes in ways that demonstrate the historical and geographical continuity as well as discontinuity of the ideals they embodied. The volume is concluded with a short anthology of poems and images that illustrate the wide range of their reincarnations in religious and artistic imagination.

