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From Mystical Saint to Political Figure: St. Teresa of Avila and St. Simeon Stylites

In the Cornaro Chapel in Santa Maria della Vittorio, Rome, there is a sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini titled "The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa." Surrounding Teresa as she experiences this moment of divine love are a number of male onlookers- members of the Cornaro family, patrons of the chapel.[1] The dynamic between Teresa, the female mystic who lived a cloistered life free from worldly distractions, and the many male patrons who capitalized on her spiritual charisma comes into view in this image.

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Both Teresa, who lived 1515-1582 in Avila, Spain, and Simeon Stylites, who lived 390-459 near Aleppo, Syria, had complex relationships with political and clerical structures. While they lived ascetic lives that rejected worldly goods and power, their places of inhabitance became sites of construction for new and

[1] Howard Hibbard, "Gian Lorenzo Bernini," last modified June 24, 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Gian-Lorenzo-Bernini#ref120323.
[2] "Cornaro Chapel in Santa Maria Della Vittoria in Rome," last modified August 1, 2015, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Cornaro_chapel_in_Santa_.Maria_della_Vittoria_in_Rome_HDR.jpg

extravagant church buildings. This paper will examine the relationship of these saints to the power structures that would later build on their spiritual foundation and the significance of these sacred spaces to their respective communities.

Simeon was born in 390 in Sis, Cilia, on the border of present-day Turkey and Syria. In this early period of the Byzantine Empire, Christianity was both a unifying force and a source of division.[3] There were four sees at the time, all of which vied for prominence, and a raging debate on the nature of Christ. In her article "St. Simeon Stylites," Sarah Searight explains the link between theological strife and the acceptance of Christianity by the empire: the belief system was "subjected to a devastating search for precise definition…a definition which had been safely avoided during the centuries of [Christian] persecution."[4] In this time of heightened spiritual consciousness, monasticism was so prevalent in Simeon's area that economic activity suffered.[5] These Syrian monks lived isolated, ascetic lives, even when in close proximity to one another; they might only have met once a week to celebrate the liturgy.[6] Simeon lived in two such monasteries, neither of which ultimately allowed for his extreme ascetic practices. As a teenager, he joined a community in Telad, but was asked to leave in 415 after a rough palm fiber rope that he tied around his waist caused infected wounds and discontent among the other monks.[7] After a stay at the monastic community in Telnessin, he pursued more solitary settings, including a cistern, a small hut, and a rock to which he chained

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[3] Sarah Searight, "St Simeon Stylites," *History Today* 28 (1978): 242-243.
[4] Ibid., 243.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 244.

himself.[8] He amassed quite a following, the crowds becoming so overwhelming that he "accepted the suggestion of the Bishop of Antioch that he should raise himself above it all," and mounted a six-foot pillar.[9] Many of his hagiographers, though, claimed that his ascent of the pillar was a "divinely-ordained innovation."[10] Stories of angels commanding him to build were widespread. And so earthly and heavenly spiritual power cooperated in the foundation of Simeon's unique practice.

From his position on top of his pillar, which increased incrementally to a final height of 45 feet in 423, he took part in debates on the nature of Christ and the role of the Church. He wrote the emperor Theodosius quite frequently, who was "an ascetic man and became a great admirer of Simeon's habits."[11] Simeon informed Theodosius of the economic woes that his visitors suffered and advised him on dealing with theological controversy. In a sense, Simeon had a power among the masses that the emperor lacked. He was famous for the healing that he facilitated in Jesus' name,[12] and "the crowds that swarmed to Simeon's pillar gave him an influence that extended to the furthest corner of the empire."[13] The emperor had such respect for Simeon that their relationship reflects peer status. When Simeon's standing position gave him terrible ulcers on his legs, "the Emperor wrote beseeching him to come down for treatment. Simeon refused, insisted he could cure

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[8] Charles Stang, "Digging Holes and Building Pillars," *Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010): 457.
[9] Searight, "St Simeon," 245.
[10] Stang, "Digging Holes," 462.
[11] Searight, "St Simeon," 245.
[12] Stang, "Digging Holes," 459.
[13] Searight, "St Simeon," 245.

himself and did so- by fasting."[14] Simeon's ability to refuse the emperor and facilitate his own healing demonstrates the power that he held above the jurisdiction of the empire.

Simeon also took a prominent role in the debate on the nature of Christ. He sided with the emperor, affirming both Christ's humanity and divinity in one person. Searight cites this as a position of compromise and peace making, demonstrated visibly in his stylite practice.[15] "Simeon was better placed, literally, than most people to demonstrate the fusion of the divine and the human in Christ. To those praying at the foot of his column the statement that God is within every man, only more so in Christ, must have been conspicuously true as far as Simeon was concerned."[16] Indeed, many of Simeon's hagiographers found great value in comparing him to Christ. One of them, Antonius, remarked of Simeon's ascent of the pillar, "Holy Simeon imitated his teacher, Christ."[17] In Antonius' account, one of Simeon's wounds, an affliction from the devil, became the breeding ground for worms. They fell down from the pillar, and Simeon told those gathered, "'Eat from what the Lord has given to you.' The worms from Simeon's putrid wound [became] the Eucharistic elements…this living death atop a pillar [transformed] Simeon into Christ himself, whose body [was] given to his followers to eat."[18] Simeon's engagement in the theological debate was more than a matter of his statements; he led by example, and

[14] Searight, "St Simeon," 247.
[15] Ibid., 245.
[16] Ibid., 246.
[17] Stang, "Digging Holes," 459.
[18] Ibid., 460.

those who valued his contribution exemplified him along their lines of belief through hagiographic accounts and the circulation of popular stories.

Upon Simeon's death, the power that people ascribed to his body and his pillar became evident in a tangible way. Although the local population wanted to keep his body as a relic, the military commander of Antioch "was already on the spot with an armed guard to remove the body to Antioch" as earthquake protection.[19] This re-location to Antioch was contended by the capital, and Simeon himself had not especially cared for Antioch. But the appeal of preventing further disaster in Antioch won the emperor's approval; it was for the greatest good.[20] The emperor Zeno, who reigned from 474 to 490, laid claim to Simeon's pillar by surrounding it with a magnificent church. Searight notes the political advantage of such a project: "Zeno, never very secure on his throne, seems to have been partial to building churches; and a monumental church round the column of the champion of imperial unity and ecclesiastical orthodoxy must have seemed a wise political gesture."[21] While Simeon's pillar had been a symbol of his ascetic life, the church built around it was a display of wealth and extravagance. It contributed to the developing nature of sacred space in the expanding Christian world.

Known as Qalat Siman, Simeon's cruciform church differed from the single-chamber basilicas that dominated Syria at the time. It was built "on a scale and lavishness rarely seen in the East since the era of the great temples,"[22] about a third

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[19] Searight, "St Simeon," 247.
[20] Ibid., 247-8.
[21] Ibid., 248.
[22] Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: the transformation of an empire* (London: Routledge, 2010), 223.

the size of Herod's temple at Jerusalem. The basic structural layout is four basilicas that meet at the central octagon, forming a cross. Only one of the basilicas was used for services, while the others provided space for the influx of visitors, who were often unbaptized and thus not allowed to participate in the rites within the eastern basilica.[23]

In order to appreciate the complexity of Qalat Siman in relationship to Simeon's simple lifestyle, background on the Christian understanding of sacred space is crucial. Paul's epistles, circulated widely among the earliest Christians, undermined the power of earthly buildings by emphasizing believers' bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. In passages such as Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul's rhetoric describes the construction of a spiritual church, a community of believers "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone."[24] Minucius and Clement, other early Christian writers, refuted the use of pagan-style temples and images because the Christian God was uncontainable, His temple the creation of the Christian community.[25] Ann Marie Yasin traces the Christian practice of valuing buildings as sacred spaces to the emerging "devotional practices focused on holy sites in Jerusalem and those around tombs of saints,"[26] such as Simeon. Notably, the designation of the Holy Sepulcher as the location in which Christ's presence is "marked on the earthly landscape"[27] initiated this shift. Simeon's hagiographers describe him as similarly marking the landscape. In his

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[23] Searight, "St Simeon," 248.
[24] New International Version
[25] Ann Marie Yasin, *Saints and church spaces in the late antique Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 18-19.
[26] Ibid., 21.
[27] Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces*, 23.

article “Digging Holes and Building Pillars: Simeon Stylites and the ‘Geometry’ of Ascetic Practice,” Charles Stang argues that Simeon’s hagiographers envisioned him as creating an axis mundi through his time spent below and above ground. They understand his stylite period as emerging from his underground excursions into caves and wells, as completing “an ascetic program begun in holes, a final ascent that mirrors prior descents.”[28] His pillar becomes a site of cosmic centricity. Theodoret describes the crowds converging on him: “as they all come from every quarter, every road is like a river: one can see all collected in that spot a human sea.”[29] The magnetism of his spiritual energy was evident to contemporaries in the fact that both the Roman emperor and Persian king consulted him for advice.[30] Although his hagiographers seemed to understand his descent into demon-filled caves, healing interactions with locals, and ascent of the pillar as bridging a connection between the underworld and heaven, Simeon’s personal interpretation of the events remains unknown.[31] The dialogue between his body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and the potential sanctification of the ground on which his pillar stood is ambiguous.

[28] Stang, “Digging Holes,” 469.
[29] Ibid.,” 467.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.,” 470.

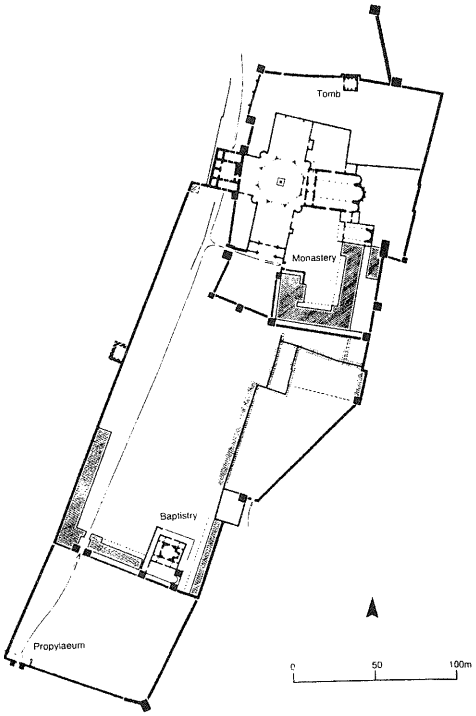

Figure 53 St Simeon Stylites (After Tchalenko)

[32] Qalat Siman is another interpretation of Simeon's spiritual power. Like the power imbued the very site of the Holy Sepulcher, Simeon's pillar was vested with power in its position at the very center of the church. Three early church designs converged around this pillar: "the central 'martyrium' plan, the basilica and the cross."[33] These were comprised of the octagon surrounding the pillar, the four basilicas joining at the octagon, and the triangular apse stemming from each basilica. As if to emphasize the reading that his column was an axis mundi connecting the universe's spiritual dimensions, many believe that the central octagon was uncovered and the pillar left exposed.[34] Even though it posed architectural difficulties, the central location of the column was of utmost importance. Simeon's column was on top of a hill, necessitating a complicated structure to keep the western half of the church level.[35]

Just as Simeon communicated with the Byzantine emperor and Persian king, Eastern and Western architectural designs come together in Qalat Siman. Ball notes that the attached monastery differs in design from the church:

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[32] Ball, *Rome in the East*, 224.
[33] Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces*, 23.
[34] Searight, "St Simeon," 248.
[35] Ibid.

[36] "The bold slab and lintel techniques of [its] porticoes, with its strong emphasis on simple verticals and horizontals, contrasts starkly with the more graceful curvilinear architecture of the church itself. These two contrasting styles probably represent a meeting – or clash? – of eastern and western forms: the curvilinear representing a western tradition that culminated in the Romanesque, and the trabeate being a much earlier Semitic tradition with its emphasis on simple angular forms."[37]

The idea of Simeon at the center of the empire, at the center of theological debate, at the center of power and populace, and even taking the center ground for Christ's human and divine nature, can be read into the synthesizing effects of this [38] structure. The church expands outward from this point of cosmic contact. It smoothly blends its three different structural designs,[39] meanwhile reconciling arch-like with angular patterns. Ball explains, "the walls of each wing are pierced by alternating arched windows and doorways, and the junctions of the wings are marked by semicircular exedra; these disparate parts are

[36] Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "St. Simeon Church; Monastery," *ARTstor*, 1977.
[37] Ball, *Rome in the East*, 223.
[38] Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "St. Simeon Church; Martyrium," *ARTstor*, 1977.
[39] Ibid.

then pulled together into a harmonious whole by two sharply delineated string courses, the lower one emphasizing the graceful curves of the openings."[40] This junction of linear and curvilinear is apparent in the above image, in which the string course over the windows is also visible. Capable of housing 10,000 congregants, the church drew in people just as it drew together these varying architectural components. An establishment known as Deir Siman cropped up surrounding Simeon's hill, full of hostels, churches, monasteries, and gift shops for pilgrims. Even after Muslims conquered this territory, the church remained independent and active through the tenth century, valuable for its magnificent architecture and ability to generate revenue.[41]

Teresa, like Simeon, left the monastic community that provided structure for nuns at her time. Teresa's relationship to authority proved more difficult than Simeon's, however. Born in Avila in 1515, Teresa entered a world that was rife with theological conflict. Unlike Simeon, she did not always align with the theological stance taken by those in power. The ongoing Inquisition prompted strict examination of religious practices and beliefs within Spain. Within Teresa's lifetime, Spaniards suspect of Jewish, Lutheran or *alumbrado* tendencies were persecuted. Alumbrados were people who "had been deceived in prayer and…had too much spiritual pride to admit that they had been so deceived."[42] Action against the alumbrado heresy included "redefining prayer as essentially vocal and as not an authoritative source of spiritual knowledge and of encouraging clerical mediation

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[40] Ball, *Rome in the East*, 223.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Gillian Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1964), 7.

and sometimes control over the spiritual lives of confessees."[43] Women were disproportionately targeted as alumbrado suspects and thus stripped of spiritual power. They were steered away from unmediated spiritual experience because they lacked judgment and were "easily confused and deceived by visionary and revelatory experiences."[44] Yet their prayers were powerful and their religious experiences convincing, such that "the more charismatic the woman, the more dangerous she seemed to the institutional church."[45] Although individual, mystical practice was growing, the ability for women to access and share relevant literature plummeted as the Valdés Index censored many works that were not written in Latin. Women did not typically have the education required to read these texts, so Teresa wrote works that would be accessible to them, as well as urging them to "develop their own spiritual resources."[46] In a world that was ambivalent to female spirituality, Teresa had to carve a place for herself.

Teresa was in a unique position to stand up to church authorities regarding their restrictions on female spiritual agency. She disagreed both with the church's censorship of spiritual literature and with current options for female claustration. This state of being cloistered ensured that the nuns' experiences would be "monitored and controlled," but Teresa found the spiritual experiences there lacking.[47] She began at the convent of la Encarnacíon at age 21, where she completed her Carmelite vows five years later. The social structure in La

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[43] Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, 7.
[44] Ibid., 8.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 19.
[47] Ibid., 26.

Encarnacíon mirrored that of the outside world, and Teresa's family wealth allowed her father to pay for her status as a doña, securing her a private apartment.[48] The sisters there engaged in "frivolous talk, character judgments, rumors and petty intrigues."[49] Teresa was well liked in this worldly environment, but she grew to despise it. While ill and on a leave of absence from the convent, she encountered books by Francisco de Osuña, who described "a method of prayer based upon a passive or quiet negation of self in order to attain a pure reception of God's will."[50] Though Teresa eventually became a powerful voice in dealing with religious and political authorities, her power stemmed from this receptive model of mental prayer. Over a twenty-year period, she developed the overwhelming realization that the community at la Encarnación was detrimental to her relationship with God. As she adopted ascetic customs that separated her from the sinful ways of the convent, she reported that "the Lord began to bestow favors" upon her.[51] Although she was having direct experiences of the divine, she worried that they could be demonic in origin, and sought guidance and support in the Jesuit Fathers of the Society of Jesus. At this point, she began to gather a group of religious men who confirmed the validity of her visions and supported her. In 1561, she received a divine command to establish her own convent, describing her vision as such:

> "The Lord gave me the most explicit commands to work for this aim with all my might and made me wonderful promises- that the convent would not fail to be

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[48] Bilinkoff, *The Avila of St. Teresa; Religious Reform and Urban Development, 1480-1620* (Princeton University, 1983): 188-189.
[49] Ibid., 187.
[50] Ibid., 192.
[51] Ibid., 193.

> established, that great service would be done to Him in it, that it should be called Saint Joseph's, that he would watch over us at one door and Our Lady at the other, that Christ would go with us, that the convent would be a star giving out the most brilliant light."[52]

Teresa's vision for Saint Joseph's differed dramatically from La Encarnación. There would be no dowry, no fixed income, no special titles, no private property. The nuns would be cloistered without ready access and attachment to the secular world. Although many tried to persuade her to establish a regular income, the principle of "holy freedom" was more important to her than financial stability.[53] Instead of remaining tied into the system of patronage, Teresa "found herself liberated from the burden of pleasing benefactors in order to secure donations for the convent."[54] With the support of her Jesuit confessors, she relied completely on the mercy of God and the people of Avila to support her convent. While she would not have to please patrons, she did have to win the support of the clergy and townspeople to establish her convent. Peter of Alcántara, a Jesuit priest who wholeheartedly supported Teresa's calling, worked to convince Bishop Alvaro de Mendoza of her worthiness. Mendoza was initially quite dubious, but "once convinced by Alcántara and by Daza…as to her divine inspiration, Mendoza became a steadfast supporter of Carmelite reform."[55] These clergymen could argue against one another, but they could not refuse God's will. It was the villagers and the Carmelite nuns of Encarnación who created the biggest obstacle for Teresa in

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[52] Bilinkoff, *The Avila of St. Teresa*, 199.
[53] Ibid., 203.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 226.

realizing her vision. Ahlgren explains their respective motives: "the nuns objected to San José because it competed with them for the favor of Avila's almsgivers. The townspeople rejected Teresa's idea of founding the convent without an endowment, since there was no guarantee that the nuns could support themselves and municipal resources were dwindling."[56] Teresa's model stood outside of the community's entrenched social hierarchy based on class and family status. In the case of these groups and the bishop, the backing of Teresa's visions by clergymen was the deciding factor in her eventual success. In some ways free from the bonds of societal hierarchy, as a woman Teresa remained under the scrutiny of men who had to legitimize her spiritual authenticity. Some factors that helped Teresa gain clerical support were the alignment of her strict cloister setup with Bishop Mendoza's Tridentine views,[57] and the humble and sincere rhetoric she employed in her writing that was "non-offensive" to religious authority.[58] By constantly expressing obedience to church authorities and God in straightforward prose, a niche opened for Teresa to "take on roles that were increasingly being limited to men."[59] Ahlgren argues that she was able to share her mystical writings and become an intercessor for the community because she did so under the banner of orthodoxy.

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[56] Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, 43.
[57] Bilinkoff, *The Avila of St. Teresa*, 227.
[58] Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, 84.
[59] Ibid.

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Tucked into the surrounding neighborhood, Teresa's Convent of St. Joseph conveys an aura of humility. It is both within the community, built on a small group of houses, yet separated from it by a gate. A close-up on the family crest outlines apparent on both sides of the front-facing top floor window reveals that they are blank- there is no specific family designation. Like the social structure inside the convent, the building reflects egalitarian ideals. The blank walls and stark utilitarian feel of the interior also demonstrate these values.[62] The embellished chapel pictured on the right was not built until after Teresa's death, in 1607. But this chapel was only one offspring of Teresa's posthumous following; the architect Fray Alonso de San José built an entire convent upon the site of her birth in 1636.[63]

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[60] "Convento de San José (Ávila)," *Serzi* (blog), *Wordpress*, https://serzisanz.wordpress.com/2015/06/06/la-fundacion-del-convento-de-san-jose/.

[61] "Avila- Convento de San Jose o de Las Madre," *Wikipedia*, last modified January 21, 2012, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Avila_-_Convento_de_San_Jose_o_de_las_Madres_24.jpg.

[62] "Casa Natal de Santa Teresa de Jesús," last modified 2015, http://www.teresadejesus.com/iglesia.php.

[63] "Casa Natal," http://www.teresadejesus.com/iglesia.php.

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In comparing these images of Fray Alonso de San José's convent with those of the convent of St. Joseph, there are certainly similarities. The Convent of St. Teresa imitates St. Joseph's on a larger scale. While St. Joseph's is nestled into the neighborhood, St. Teresa's juts out prominently, demanding attention. While Teresa was in some ways cornered by male clerical power while she lived, her legacy blossomed into quick canonization after she died. She was no longer a dangerous boon, but an image that could be manipulated out in the open. In one sense, she had more power, but only as appropriated by others. The front façade of St. Teresa's uses the same straightforward, angular design as St. Joseph's with archways in the entrance. Though the church built on St. Teresa's birthplace is more spacious, it features the same kind of gold altarpiece as that at St. Joseph's. A closer look at the exterior of St. Teresa's Convent reveals that the coats of arms are filled in. Family symbols are specified, unlike the blank crests at St. Joseph's.

This small but salient sign of worldly power demonstrates a larger trend after Teresa's death. Teresa became a quasi-political figure, a symbol for a particular set of beliefs about the future of Spain's monarchy. In 1617, an important

[64] Shmuel Magal, "Convent and Church of Santa Teresa, Nave, Dome, and Main Altar," *ARTstor.*
[65] Shmuel Magal, "Convent and Church of Santa Teresa, Main Façade," *ARTstor.*

faction of the Carmelite order, backed by the king and his chief advisor, petitioned the Castilian Parliament to elect Teresa co-patron saint of Spain. While most were in favor of her sharing this title with Santiago of Compostela, the archbishop of Santiago's cathedral led a strong campaign against it.[66] As Teresa's cult had grown, its "close identification…with the royal government and its policies had the effect of transforming patron sainthood into a highly charged reflection of the earthly political realm…[and] some who resisted Teresa's copatronage with Santiago did so motivated by a deeply rooted hostility to the notion of plural authority as embodied by dual patronage."[67] At the time, many people were suspicious of the immense amount of power held by the king's favored advisor, the Count-Duke of Olivares. They disagreed with such pluralistic power and distrusted his policies. Since the 1588 loss of the Spanish armada to England, Spain had experienced "governmental bankruptcies and natural disasters, such as famine, drought, and plague…[and] numerous threats and failures on the part of its foreign policy."[68] Many hoped and prayed for divine intervention that would strengthen the monarchy, Olivares offering the solution that Teresa's intercession as a patron saint would heal the country just as her elevation by the pope had miraculously healed Philip in 1627.[69] Priests strengthened this connection between the government and Teresa, tying the "past, present and future of the Habsburg monarchy to Teresa's intercession by maintaining that a special bond existed between Teresa and all the Habsburg

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[66] Erin Kathleen Rowe, "St. Teresa and Olivares," *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXVII (2006): 721.
[67] Ibid., 722
[68] Ibid., 726.
[69] Ibid.

monarchs."[70] Supporters also compared Teresa's closeness to God with Olivares' closeness to the king, creating a relationship between their power.[71] In response to this Olivares-backed teresiano cult, opponents linked Santiago's legitimacy to the initial conversion of Spain, arguing that patron sainthood predated temporal authority and superseded political factions. They used images of two-headed monsters and invoked the story of King Assuero's deceptive, selfish advisor in the Book of Esther to target Olivares' following.[72] In the end, Rowe argues, "the teresianos' failure…reflected the ultimate failure of the Habsburg monarchs to transcend regional and political factionalization and the limitations of royal authority even within Castile."[73] Teresa had become a symbol of by-gone golden days Philip IV tried to harness and even claim but failed. While this could be seen as a loss for Teresa, for this mystic who refused to allow patrons to dictate the status of her convent, it is just as likely a spiritual gain.

The extent to which images of Simeon and Teresa were manipulated by religious and political authorities is difficult to discern because the saints' own intentions remain somewhat veiled. Did Simeon envision his pillar as an axis mundi? Did Teresa write freely, or consciously use rhetoric that would make her less threatening to the patriarchal authorities? Although Teresa's path involved more upstream rowing than Simeon's, at the end of the day they both maintained a unique spiritual power directly linked to their mystical encounters. This power swayed the masses long after their deaths. The efforts of emperors and kings to channel this

[70] Rowe, "St. Teresa," 725.
[71] Ibid., 736.
[72] Ibid., 735.
[73] Ibid., 737.

power had varied success, from Simeon's fortifying influence to Philip IV's failure to rally the nation behind Teresa. Simultaneously, the popular imagination has maintained a great deal of power over the image and understanding of these saints, from Bernini's depiction of Teresa to icons that selectively show Simeon's pole and neglect the variety of his other ascetic practices. The churches and convents built with purpose over Teresa's home and Simeon's pole become the central places wherein this dialogue of power relations is hosted. In these spaces, the transcendent experiences of Teresa and Simeon meet the political realm of appropriation and interpretation.

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