



ROUTLEDGE



The Cult of  
Saint Katherine  
of Alexandria  
in Late-Medieval  
Nuremberg  
Saint and the City

Anne Simon

THE CULT OF SAINT KATHERINE OF  
ALEXANDRIA IN LATE-MEDIEVAL  
NUREMBERG

*For Jean*  
*For all my friends and family*

*In memoriam*  
*Alexander and Valerie Simon*  
*Nicholas Ainsworth*  
*Robert Hood*  
*Malcom and Margaret Emery*  
*Frank Shaw*

# The Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in Late-Medieval Nuremberg

Saint and the City

ANNE SIMON

*Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of London*

First published 2012 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Copyright © 2012 Anne Simon

Anne Simon has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

### **British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Simon, Anne.

The cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in late-medieval  
Nuremberg : saint and the city.

1. Catherine, of Alexandria, Saint–Cult–Germany–  
Nuremberg–History–To 1500. 2. Nuremberg (Germany)–  
Religious life and customs. 3. Religion and sociology–  
Germany–Nuremberg–History–To 1500.

I. Title

282.4'3324'0902-dc23

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Simon, Anne.

The cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in late-medieval Nuremberg : saint and the city / by Anne  
Simon.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4094-2071-2 (hardcover) 1. Catherine, of Alexandria, Saint–Cult–Germany–  
Nuremberg–History–To 1500. 2. Catherine, of Alexandria, Saint–Cult–Germany–Nuremberg–  
History–16th century. 3. Nuremberg (Germany)–Religious life and customs. I. Title.

BX4700.C45S56 2012

235'2-dc23

ISBN 9781409420712 (hbk)

ISBN 9781315615172 (ebk)



# Contents

<i>List of Plates</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xiii</i>
1 Saint and the City: Nuremberg and the Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria	1
2 Living the Dream: The Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria	45
Plate Section	117
3 Manifesting Martyrdom: The Miracles of Saint Katherine	131
4 Showcasing a Saint: Saint Katherine of Alexandria, Patrician Patronage and Empire in Fifteenth-Century Nuremberg	203
5 Spinning the Web: The Katharinenkloster and the City	237
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>303</i>

# List of Plates

1	Löffelholz Altar, Sebalduskirche: Saint Katherine and the Wheel	117
2	Löffelholz Altar, Sebalduskirche: Execution of Saint Katherine	118
3	Volckamer Window, Lorenzkirche	119
4	Konhofer Window (detail: Mystic Marriage), Lorenzkirche	120
5	Kaiserfenster (Imperial Window), Lorenzkirche	121
6	Memminger Altar, Lorenzkirche	122
7	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: Saint Katherine kneeling before the image of the Virgin Mary and Christ	123
8	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: Saint Katherine debating with the philosophers before Maxentius	124
9	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: Empress Faustina and Porphyrius visiting Saint Katherine in jail	125
10	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: the burning of the philosophers	126
11	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: the destruction of the wheel	127
12	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: the execution of Saint Katherine	128
13	Fütterer Altar, Lorenzkirche (formerly Katharinenkloster). Detail: Georg Fütterer and sons with Saint Andrew	129

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Preface

Any study of a city with as rich and complex a history as that of Nuremberg – and with such a wealth of archives and primary source material – will inevitably fail to do complete justice to every aspect of the topic under investigation. Any study of a saint whose cult was as widespread and popular as that of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in the Late Middle Ages will face similar problems of selection and omission. With world enough and time I would ideally have looked at Patrician wills, letters, late-medieval drama, variants on the legend and miracles of Saint Katherine in manuscript and print, altars, murals and windows etc. in churches around Nuremberg – the list of possible sources is endless. Similarly, a comparison of the cult of Saint Katherine to those of Sebaldus and Lawrence, patron saints of the city's two principal churches, or to that of Saint Dominic, founder of the order to which the Katharinenkloster belonged, would doubtless have shed revealing light on the importance of Saint Katherine to the city, as well as of saints' cults generally. However, this would also have resulted in a very different – or unmanageably lengthy – work, one in which Saint Katherine herself may have been submerged. Moreover, in trying to convey the interrelatedness of diverse aspects of Nuremberg life, played out as it was within mighty city walls and controlled as it was by a powerful Council, I may have written against the grain in places; or, indeed, presented arguments that overlap from one chapter to the next. So tightly knit were the ruling Patrician families, their identities and interests that overlap is almost inevitable. However, precisely therein lies the fascination of Nuremberg and of the saint who functioned virtually as the city logo, so I hope the reader will bear with any shortcomings this study will have. The same forbearing reader may consider the density of the footnoting one such shortcoming. However, information about the saint, the city and the Patricians who governed it has been culled, often piecemeal, from a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, not all of them particularly accessible; and it seemed crucial both to provide the evidence on which my arguments were based and to document its sources.

In the course of researching and writing one incurs many debts, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. My sincere thanks go to the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst and the Arts Faculty Research Fund, University of Bristol, for their funding of the archival research necessary for this book; as well as to

the British Academy for the conference grant that enabled me to present part of Chapter 4, 'Showcasing a Saint', at the annual conference of the Medieval Academy of America, Vancouver 2008. Further thanks are due to the staff of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg and the Stadtbibliothek Nuremberg for their resourcefulness, patience and helpfulness; these are wonderful, civilized places to work. To Frau Margot Lölhöffel and Frau Christina Plewinski of the Stadt Nürnberg goes my gratitude for their kindness and generosity towards my students and for sharing with me their knowledge of and enthusiasm for their wonderful city. My debt to friends runs deep: without them this work may never have seen the light of day. Particular gratitude is due to Professor Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz for the unwavering friendship, encouragement, support and belief in me that have sustained me for 30 years; to Dr Heike Bartel for her loyal friendship, for her helpful and sensitive reading of my work and for having greater faith in my scholarship than I have myself; and to Dr Rolf Keitel for his steadfast, generous, wise and supportive friendship. To Nicholas Ainsworth, Dr Jeffrey Ashcroft, Dr Ferdi Besselmann, Sharon Baker, Dr Birgit Beumers, Margaret Boakes, Henrietta Cassar, Elsie and David Cassidy, Juliet Cox, Professor David Darby, Peggy Davis, Majella Drew, Ron and Sue Diederichs, Deborah Draffin, Gunlög Eliasson, Malcom, Margaret and Ainslie Emery, Iris and Peter Fenger, Professor John Flood, Bertha Garrett, Michaela Gigerl, Alice Hawkins, the Hood family, Alison Maclaine, Father Tony MacDonald, Caroline McIntyre, Ilse Mozga, Professor Eva Neumann and Dr Wolf Zeitz, Professor Gaby Neumann, Professor Ivan Parvev, Professor Silvia Ranawake, Christa Santi, Professors Frank and Gisela Shaw, Steve Webb, Lynn Wharton and my other friends from Frimley and Camberley Grammar School my heartfelt thanks for their generous, supportive and unconditional friendship, which over the years has given me greater comfort, strength and delight than they may realize; and to Dr Ulrich Freudenstein for thoughtful care and laughter in painful times. To the students who took my Nuremberg option at the University of Bristol I owe thanks for their enthusiasm, commitment and contribution to my own knowledge of the city, as well as for the sheer fun of the classes. To Sam Atkins, Harriet Swindall, Ian Tompkins, Deborah Whitehead and Rike Borchers in particular I owe a huge and lasting debt for their loyalty, support and friendship during an exceedingly difficult year. Professor Henrike Lähnemann, Dr Liz Andersen and Dr Cyril Edwards also went far above and beyond the call of friendship and collegiality and to them, too, I am enormously and enduringly grateful. Tom Gray, my editor at Ashgate, has been a model of patience and understanding; to him, also, my sincere thanks; as to Dr Volker Schier for his generosity in and care over providing the images for this book. Finally, my deepest debt is to my parents, Alexander and Valerie Simon, whose

belief in the value of education and personal sacrifice for the sake of mine made everything possible; and, above all, to my sister Jean Webb for her loyalty, her concern for my wellbeing, her unwavering support and her unfailing ability to make me laugh and forget the brutal, disillusioning vicissitudes of academic life.

Anne Simon,  
Torquay, 2012

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

# Acknowledgements

Aspects of the discussion on Jezebel first appeared in *Violence, Culture and Identity. Essays on German and Austrian Literature, Politics and Society*, ed. Helen Chambers (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 47–64.

The images of the Volckamer, Konhofer and Kaiser windows, of the Memminger Altar (all Lorenzkirche) and the Löffelholz Altar (Sebalduskirche) were kindly provided by Dr Volker Schier.

The images of the Fütterer Altar (formerly Katharinenkloster; now Lorenzkirche) were kindly provided by Herr Eike Oellermann.

*This page has been left blank intentionally*

## Chapter 1

# Saint and the City: Nuremberg and the Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria

On 2 January 1945 the Katharinenkloster in Nuremberg was destroyed by an Allied air raid, one of over 40 that ultimately left some 95 per cent of the historic city centre in ruins. Now only the shell of the church and a few convent buildings act as markers of a community which at its height in the second half of the fifteenth century was a centre of intellectual activity and reform. The Katharinenkloster, a Dominican convent, may have originated from a hospice for the care of the sick and impoverished;<sup>1</sup> it was endowed on 27 May 1293 by the Nuremberg Patrician Konrad von Neumarkt and his wife Adelheid, neé Pfinzing;<sup>2</sup> and confirmed on 2

---

<sup>1</sup> It stood outside the city walls until 1379. Müllner mentions an institution by the Pegnitz in which nuns cared for the sick from Nuremberg and elsewhere. Konrad von Neumarkt and his wife gave them 'die Hofrait oder Grund, darauf sie gewohnt, mit ihren Zugehörungen' [the farms with outbuildings or land on which they lived with everything that went with it] as well as land in and tithes from various other properties in the villages around Nuremberg. Two-thirds of the income was for the use of the nuns; one-third for the care of the sick (Johannes Müllner, *Die Annalen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg von 1623*, vol. 1 *Von den Anfängen bis 1350*, ed. and intro. Gerhard Hirschmann (Nuremberg; im Selbstverlag des Stadtrats zu Nürnberg, 1972), pp. 270–1). In the Middle Ages Saint Katherine was a popular patron saint of 'Spitäler und Siechenhäuser' [hospices and alms houses for lepers] (Peter Assion, *Die Mirakel der Hl. Katharina von Alexandrien. Untersuchungen und Texte zur Entstehung und Nachwirkung mittelalterlicher Wunderliteratur* (Diss. Heidelberg 1969), p. 97).

<sup>2</sup> The Neumarkt are first mentioned as an important Nuremberg Patrician family in 1259. Descended from imperial *ministeriales*, they were members of the *Stadtrat* (City Council); Konrad von Neumarkt himself was *Reichsschultheiß* (Imperial Sheriff). The Pfinzing were a leading and long-established Nuremberg Patrician family, first mentioned in 1233 in a document from the monastery in Heilsbronn. In the fourteenth century they already played an important role in Nuremberg trade, having connexions to Italy and South-East Europe. In 1264 Mercklin Pfinzing was sent by Nuremberg Council to Mainz to negotiate mutual freedom from customs' duties (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 213). Marquardt Pfinzing was *Pfleger* [trustee] of the Egidienkirche in 1269; Bertholdt in 1383 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 116); Hanß Pfinzing, his wife Anna and their son Wentzel endowed the celebration of mass there on the anniversary of their death, as did Veit Pfinzing (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 117). Bertholdt Pfinzing was Sheriff of Nuremberg in 1227 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 175). A Bertholdt Pfinzing was also Sheriff in 1280 and administrator of the *Reichsvogtei* (Imperial Stewardship)

May 1295 by Arnold von Solms,<sup>3</sup> Bishop of Bamberg, who also granted the convent letters of indulgence for anyone who gave it alms, helped with the care of the sick and the poor and visited it on the anniversary of its consecration and feast day of its patrons. The convent church, endowed by Kraft Lang, was consecrated on 28 October 1297.<sup>4</sup> As the foundation attracted nuns from Patrician families<sup>5</sup> it had

---

at the same time (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 219). Another Bertholdt Pfintzing was *Pfleger* of the *Siechkobel* (leper hospital) Sankt Johannes in 1356 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 211); Endres Pfintzing was *Kirchenpfleger* of the Lorenzkirche in 1390 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 58); Sebald Pfintzing was *Pfleger* of the Klarissenkloster in 1418 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 73). A family connexion with the Katharinenkloster continued: an Elß Pfintzingin was a nun there in 1452 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 274). The family died out in 1764. Information on the Katharinenkloster and Katharinenkirche is taken from Walter Fries, 'Kirche und Kloster zu St. Katharina in Nürnberg', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 25 (1924): 1–143 and illustrations; and the *Stadtlexikon Nürnberg*, ed. Michael Diefenbacher and Rudolf Endres (Nuremberg: Tümmels, 1999; 2nd edn 2000), p. 524; on the Neumarkt family p. 739; on the Pfintzing pp. 821–2. For the Pfintzing see also Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, pp. 219–20; for the Neumarkt Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, pp. 225–6. Unless otherwise stated translations are the author's own.

<sup>3</sup> Müllner has 6 May (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 271).

<sup>4</sup> Kraft Lang and Konrad von Neumarkt both lie buried in the convent church (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 271). In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries convent and church attracted further letters of indulgence and grants of land and goods (e.g. four cart-loads of firewood a week from the imperial forest (1366)) as well as the protection of King Wenzel III of Bohemia (1271–1305), Emperor Ludwig (1337) and Emperor Karl IV (1358). Emperors Sigmund (1431) and Friedrich (1444) confirmed the convent in all its freedom and privileges, as did Emperor Charles V (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, pp. 272–3).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Cunegunda (d. 1478) and Catharina Holzschuherin (d. 1453) (Johann Gottfried Biedermann, *Geschlechtsregister des Hochadelichen Patriciats zu Nürnberg* (Bayreuth: Friederich Elias Dietzel, 1748; reprint. Neustadt an der Aisch: Christoph Schmidt, 1982). The Patrician Hans VI Tucher's daughter Barbara, from his first marriage to Barbara Ebner, and Sebald Rieter's elder sister were also nuns in the Katharinenkloster. See Randall Herz, 'Hans Tuchers des Ä. "Reise ins Gelobte Land"', in Klaus Arnold (ed.), *Wallfahrten in Nürnberg um 1500. Akten des interdisziplinären Symposions vom 29. und 30. September 2000 im Caritas Pirckheimer-Haus in Nürnberg*, *Pirckheimer Jahrbuch*, 17 (2002): 79–104 (p. 94); and Ludwig Grote, *Die Tucher. Bildnis einer Patrizierfamilie*, Bibliothek des Germanischen National-Museums Nürnberg zur deutschen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte 15/16 (Munich: Prestel, 1961), p. 64. The votive picture endowed by the Jerusalem pilgrim Hans VI for the family tomb in the Sebalduskirche in 1485 includes the Katherine wheel representative of the monastery at Sinai (Grote, *Die Tucher*, p. 63). Müllner mentions a number of abbesses or prioresses from Patrician families: Mechthildt Muffin (1329); Margretha Volckamerin (1391); Katharina Mentlerin (1394); Elizabeth Schurstabin. A Felicitas Tucherin was prioress there in 1536 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, pp. 273–4). Moreover, members of leading Patrician families were assigned to the convent as *Pfleger*: Cunradt Groß (1329); Jobst Tetzl der Ältere (1394); Peter Mendel (1420); Sigmundt Stromer (1430) (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 275).

close ties to those governing Nuremberg, since these families provided 34 members of the 42 strong, all-powerful *Kleiner Rat* (the other eight were master craftsmen).<sup>6</sup> Eventually, the Katharinenkloster became one of the largest women's foundations in South Germany, boasting 70 sisters in 1470.<sup>7</sup> After a first, largely unsuccessful, attempt in 1396, the convent adopted reform in 1428, although not without opposition on its part and the intervention of the City Council.<sup>8</sup> It subsequently became renowned both for the learning of its nuns, many of whom were active as scribes and illuminators, and for the size of its library.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, whilst the nuns did

---

<sup>6</sup> The number of Patrician families was finally set by the *Tanzstatut* (Dance Statute) of 1521, which restricted to 42 those families eligible to dance at balls at the *Rathaus* (Town Hall). This closed group, which alone was eligible to serve on the *Kleiner Rat*, Nuremberg's governing body, was further subdivided into 20 old and seven new families and 15 only eligible for Council service since 1440 (*Stadtlexikon Nürnberg*, p. 1063).

<sup>7</sup> It resisted the Reformation, with the result that after March 1525 the City Council allocated it Protestant preachers and confessors and in June 1525 refused it the right to accept novices, at the same time allowing Nuremberg citizens to remove their relatives from the convent, even against the latter's will. The last prioress died in 1596.

<sup>8</sup> According to Karin Schneider and Werner Williams-Krapp, the main incentive for reform was the Council's desire not to lose the considerable fortune of Kunigunde Schreiberin, widow of Nikolaus Schreiber and member of the Patrician Groß family (Konrad Groß had founded the Heilig-Geist-Spital and been financier to Ludwig der Bayer). On her husband's death she wished to enter a strictly observant foundation and, like other wealthy Nuremberg women before her, was contemplating Schönensteinbach in Alsace. Her husband had been buried in the church of the Dominican monastery in Nuremberg in 1428 (Karin Schneider, 'Die Bibliothek des Katharinenklosters in Nürnberg und die städtische Gesellschaft', in Bernd Moeller, Hans Patze and Karl Stackmann (eds), *Studien zum städtischen Bildungswesen des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse Dritte Folge 137 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 70–82 (p. 77); Werner Williams-Krapp, 'Die Bedeutung der reformierten Klöster des Predigerordens für das literarische Leben in Nürnberg im 15. Jahrhundert', in Falk Eisermann, Eva Schlotheuber and Volker Honemann (eds), *Studien und Texte zur literarischen und materiellen Kultur der Frauenklöster im späten Mittelalter*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 99 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 311–29 (pp. 318–19)).

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the library and the nuns active as scribes, see Fries, 'Kirche und Kloster', pp. 47–57; and Marie-Luise Ehrenschtendner, 'A Library Collected by and for the Use of Nuns: St Catherine's Convent, Nuremberg', in Jane H.M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (eds), *Women and the Book. Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London and Toronto: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 123–32. Karin Schneider says of the convent: '[E]s dürfte zu Ende des 15. Jh.s die größte Sammlung deutschsprachiger Handschriften besessen haben, die aus dem Spätmittelalter bekannt ist' [At the end of the fifteenth century it may well have possessed the largest collection of German-language manuscripts known from the Late Middle Ages] (Schneider, 'Bibliothek', p. 70).

execute outside commissions,<sup>10</sup> many of the manuscripts they copied were intended for their own use and housed in the library, which had been in existence since the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>11</sup> The sisters were permitted to take their personal libraries with them upon entering the convent;<sup>12</sup> women donated books to the foundation;<sup>13</sup> the nuns were given books by their wealthy relatives;<sup>14</sup> and books were left to the

<sup>10</sup> For example, when she entered the Katharinenkloster, Klara Keiperin took with her a German translation of the *Compendium theologiae veritatis* (now attributed to the Dominican theologian Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg (c. 1205–c. 1270); formerly attributed to Albertus Magnus) that had been copied for a member of Nuremberg's upper classes (either Klara Keiperin's father Konrad Paumgartner or her husband Fritz Keiper) by the founder of the convent scriptorium, Kunigund Niklasin, in the 1430s and then illuminated in the Dominican monastery (Williams-Krapp, 'Die Bedeutung der reformierten Klöster', p. 320).

<sup>11</sup> At that time it may well have housed only 45 volumes. See Elizabeth Schraut, *Stifterinnen und Künstlerinnen im mittelalterlichen Nürnberg*, Ausstellungskataloge des Stadtarchivs Nürnberg 1 (Nuremberg: Selbstverlag der Stadt Nürnberg, 1987), p. 45. For the type and use of manuscripts see Petra Seegets, 'Leben und Streben in spätmittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern', in Berndt Hamm and Thomas Lentjes (eds), *Spätmittelalterliche Frömmigkeit zwischen Ideal und Praxis*, Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Neue Reihe 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 24–44.

<sup>12</sup> Katharina Tucher took 24 manuscript books with her as a dowry on entering the convent c. 1433 after her husband's death (Schneider, 'Bibliothek', p. 73; Schraut, *Stifterinnen*, p. 29 (who puts the number at 23)). She was active as a scribe and recorded her own mystical visions. Her books included the *Schwabenspiegel* (an important medieval law codex); a German version of the *Lucidarius* (a medieval encyclopaedia); popular 'religiöse Erbauungsliteratur' [religious devotional literature] such as Heinrich Seuse's *Buch der ewigen Weisheit* or the *Buch von den sechs Namen des Fronleichnams* by the monk of Heilsbronn, a nearby Cistercian monastery; a Psalter; saints' lives (e.g. Sebaldus); a *Historienbibel* and five prayer books (some sisters owned as many as 10) (Schneider, 'Bibliothek', pp. 74–5). Another rich widow, Kunigunde Schreiberin, also took 19 manuscripts into the convent with her. She made a considerable contribution (also financial) to the reform of the convent in 1428. Her library included a medical treatise; a Psalter; mystical writings; saints' lives; a treatise on how to live a married life pleasing to God; and the *Vierundzwanzig goldene Harfen*, a collection of sermons by the Dominican Johannes Nider, who carried out the reform of the convent (Schneider, 'Bibliothek', pp. 76–7). Indeed, quoting a letter from the prioress of a reformed convent to a prospective nun, Williams-Krapp points out that by the time of the Katharinenkloster reform women who wanted to enter an observant Dominican convent were more or less expected to bring with them a basic library that included, amongst other things, a Psalter, a diurnal (for the daytime canonical Hours) and a processional (Williams-Krapp, 'Die Bedeutung der reformierten Klöster', p. 324).

<sup>13</sup> For example, Anna Schürstabin, whose daughters Margaretha and Dorothea and granddaughter Apollonia were in the convent (Antje Willing, *Literatur und Ordensreform im 15. Jahrhundert. Deutsche Abendmahlsschriften im Nürnberger Katharinenkloster*, Studien und Texte zum Mittelalter und zur frühen Neuzeit 4 (Münster: Waxmann, 2004), p. 48).

<sup>14</sup> Schraut, *Stifterinnen*, p. 27; Schneider, 'Bibliothek', p. 78.

convent as a whole.<sup>15</sup> Between 1451 and 1457 Sister Kunigund Niklasin drew up a list of all books in the nuns' private possession, most of which were prayer books. Between 1455 and 1457 she catalogued the convent library, which, on its dissolution in the course of the Reformation, held about 500 volumes.<sup>16</sup>

One manuscript from the collection achieved an impact beyond the convent walls, namely Germanisches Nationalmuseum Hs. 877 (1421), a compendium copied by Fridricus Lenckner for Cecilia Rötin (d. 1469), who took it into the convent with her and was herself active as a scribe.<sup>17</sup> On 28 July 1474 Hans Sensenschmid, the first Nuremberg printer, published *Der Heiligen Leben*, the augmented German translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* and an ambitious, richly illustrated work.<sup>18</sup> The *Heiligen Leben* appeared in

<sup>15</sup> Schneider, 'Bibliothek', p. 79. Williams-Krapp records that in his will of 1449 the Patrician Franz Pirckheimer, after (presumably mainly Latin) book bequests to the family, left half his remaining German books to the Katharinenkloster and half to the Augustinian convent in Pillenreuth near Nuremberg (Williams-Krapp, 'Die Bedeutung der reformierten Klöster', p. 325).

<sup>16</sup> Schraut, *Stifterinnen*, p. 45. Another estimate puts the number of vernacular manuscripts at well over 600 (Falk Eisermann, review of Antje Willing, *Literatur und Ordensreform im 15. Jahrhundert. Deutsche Abendmahlschriften im Nürnberger Katharinenkloster*. Studien und Texte zum Mittelalter und zur frühen Neuzeit 4 (Münster: Waxmann, 2004), in *IASL Online* at <http://iasl.uni-muenchen.de/rezension/liste/Eisermann3830913311-1032.html>. Fries points out that Niklasin's catalogue was a list of material suitable for reading during meals; it did not cover the entire library holdings (Fries, 'Kirche und Kloster', p. 48). Furthermore, Karin Schneider suggests that the Latin codices, especially liturgical ones, were not catalogued (Schneider, 'Bibliothek', p. 71); while Antje Willing postulates a (no longer extant) catalogue for Latin works alone, since they were usually catalogued separately from vernacular ones (Willing, *Literatur und Ordensreform*, p. 31). She characterizes the contents of the convent library as follows (the letters are part of the shelf-mark): A bibles; B catechetical treatises; C German Psalters; D liturgical works; E collections of sermons; F Leopold Stainreuther's German translation of the *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* of Wilhelm Durandus; G five works on the rituals for Dominican nuns; H writings (in Latin and German) concerning the rules and constitution of the Dominican Order, including its constitution, instruction for novices and so forth; J (the largest group) hagiography and the *Lucidarius*; K medical and legal texts; L prayer books and *Ars moriendi* literature (pp. 35–6).

<sup>17</sup> See Assion, *Mirakel*, pp. 66–8.

<sup>18</sup> Sensenschmid moved to Nuremberg from Bamberg and began printing there in 1469; his first datable work is the *Comestorium viciorum* by Franz von Retz (1470), of which he and Dr Heinrich Rummel, Patrician and lawyer, donated a copy to the Carthusian monastery in Nuremberg (Franz Machilek, 'Klosterhumanismus in Nürnberg um 1500', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg*, 64 (1977): 10–45 (pp. 16–17)). Sensenschmid's edition of *Der Heiligen Leben* is the first richly illustrated Nuremberg print, boasting over 250 woodcuts. Saint Katherine's legend (fol. cclijr–cclxj) is introduced by a small image showing Saint Katherine kneeling in front of a wheel, flame-like rays of Grace falling from the sky, a

24 editions between 1471 and 1500, the *Winterteil* of Sensenschmid's edition containing a life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria taken almost verbatim from this Katharinenkloster manuscript.<sup>19</sup> That this printed version of Saint Katherine's legend and miracles is some 14,400 words long, seven times longer than the average saint's life in the *Heiligen Leben*,<sup>20</sup> and that it takes as its source a manuscript produced in the nearby convent, furnishes just one indicator of the extent to which Saint Katherine was rooted in the spiritual, cultural and community consciousness of Nuremberg from at least the late-thirteenth century onwards. Indeed, such was her presence that the entire city could be read as a map of devotion to her. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the following: first, the shaping of urban space through the cult of Saint Katherine; second, her role in moulding, marking and reflecting Patrician identity through cultural patronage; third, her iconography as transformer and redeemer of meaning; fourth, her iconography as reminder of and vehicle for saint and city further afield. Finally, the role of visualization and memorization strategies in this process of recursive reflexion will be tested.<sup>21</sup> Four texts illustrate

---

bearded Maxentius behind her and two men prostrate in front of her (fol. cclij<sup>r</sup>). *Der Heiligen Leben* was first published by Günther Zainer in Augsburg in 1471. The oldest *Der Heiligen Leben* manuscript is listed in Niklasin's catalogue (Assion, *Mirakel*, p. 55).

<sup>19</sup> See Assion, *Mirakel*, pp. 66–8. The oldest manuscript version of *Der Heiligen Leben* dates to around the end of the fourteenth century and was also produced in the Katharinenkloster Nuremberg. It is now in the Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, Cod. Cent. IV, 43. Williams-Krapp calls *Der Heiligen Leben* 'das erfolgreichste volkssprachliche Legendar des europäischen Mittelalters' [the most successful vernacular legendary of the European Middle Ages]. According to him, 198 manuscripts are extant, most of them from the fifteenth century; of these, 60 are monastic in provenance (24 of these from Dominican convents). Approximately 36 manuscripts known to have been owned by lay people and 41 printed editions testify to the work's popularity amongst the lay (Werner Williams-Krapp, 'Ordensreform und Literatur im 15. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft*, 4 (1986/7): 41–51 (p. 45)).

<sup>20</sup> Bruce A. Beatie, 'Saint Katharine of Alexandria: Traditional Themes and the Development of a Medieval German Narrative', *Speculum*, 52 (1977): 785–800 (p. 785 and p. 793). Beatie draws largely on Fries. See also Bruce A. Beatie, 'St. Katharine of Alexandria in Medieval German Illustrative Cycles: A Problem beyond Genre', in Hubert Heinen and Ingeborg Henderson (eds), *Genres in Medieval German Literature*, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 439 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1986), pp. 140–56; and D.L. d'Avray, 'Katharine of Alexandria and Mass Communication in Germany: Woman as Intellectual', in Nicole Bériou and David L. d'Avray (eds), *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons. Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity*, Biblioteca di Medioevo Latino 11 (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), pp. 401–8.

<sup>21</sup> For the term 'recursive reflexion' I am indebted to Dr Rolf Keitel, TRIUMF, University of British Columbia.

particularly clearly both the integration of Saint Katherine into urban spiritual life and the latter's echoes beyond Nuremberg city walls; these will form the basis for discussion: Sensenschmid's *Der Heiligen Leben*, Hans Tucher's *Reise zum Heiligen Grab* (Augsburg: Johann Schönsperger, 1482; reprint Nuremberg: Konrad Zeninger, 1482), Stephan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1491) and Marquard vom Stein's *Der Ritter vom Turn* (Basel: Michael Furter for Johann Bergmann von Olpe, 1493).

Saint Katherine of Alexandria was the fourth-century virgin saint and mystic bride of Christ martyred by the Roman Emperor Maxentius, who wanted her as a bride for his son and tried to undermine her belief in Christ, whom she had wed in a vision. He summoned 50 philosophers to attempt this task; Saint Katherine's faith, erudition and eloquence enabled her to convert them to Christianity instead, a triumph resulting in their immediate martyrdom by fire. Maxentius ordered that Saint Katherine be torn to shreds on a spiked wheel especially devised for this purpose; however, in response to her prayer an angel shattered it, 4,000 pagans perishing as collateral damage. Maxentius' wife, Faustina, and his captain of the guard, Porphyrius, also suffered death on their conversion to Christianity by Saint Katherine. Eventually Saint Katherine was beheaded, whereupon milk instead of blood flowed from her neck. Her reconstituted body was translated by angels to Mount Sinai, where it now rests in the Greek Orthodox monastery; at one time healing oil flowed from the saint's bones.<sup>22</sup> Known for her beauty and intellect, Saint Katherine was the patron saint of young girls, nursemaids, scholars, teachers, universities, schools and libraries.

If this was Saint Katherine's legend, what image of her prevailed in the convent and the wider city? In Sensenschmid's *Der Heiligen Leben* she is characterized as follows:<sup>23</sup>

ES was eyn edler reycher Kung yn Cipperen land in der inselen in einer stat dy hieß Solomina / der hieß Costis der hett eyn tochter dye hieß Katherina / vnd die was zu mal weiß vnd schon vnd kensch [*sic*] vnd tugentlich Vnd da sie bey sechs iaren waz da ließ man sie zu schul gen / da lernet sie gar wol / vnd da sie klug ward yn der kunst des ward sy gar volkommen darin daz man iren gleychen niedert fand / vnd man hieß sie ein bewerte Meisterinn in den siben hochsten kunsten.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The legend of Saint Katherine is included in the *Legenda aurea*. See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 334–41.

<sup>23</sup> The printed edition rather than the Germanisches Nationalmuseum manuscript is taken as the basis for discussion due to its greater accessibility.

<sup>24</sup> *Der Heiligen Leben*, fol. cclij<sup>r</sup>. All subsequent references to this work will be given in the text. According to Saint Katherine's legend she was born in Famagusta. However,

[There was once a noble, rich king on the island of Cyprus in a town called Solomina. His name was Costis and he had a daughter called Katherine who was wise, beautiful, chaste and virtuous. When she was six years old she was sent to school, where she excelled at her studies and because she cleverly mastered the curriculum she became so perfect in her studies of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* that her equal could not be found and she was known as a tried and tested Master of the Seven Liberal Arts].

First, Katherine is located in terms of both geography and lineage. Cyprus was known to Nuremberg merchants through trade and as a stopping point on the way to the Holy Land.<sup>25</sup> Solomina or Salamis is near Famagusta, which itself had a reputation for the wealth of its merchants, as recorded, for example, by Ludolf von Sudheim on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land: 'In a warehouse in this city there is more aloeswood than five carts can carry; I say nothing about spices, for they are as common there as bread is here, and are just as commonly mixed and sold.'<sup>26</sup> He notes further:

There are also in Cyprus exceeding rich citizens and merchants, and no wonder, seeing that Cyprus is the furthest (east) of all Christian lands, wherefore all ships both great and small, and all merchandise of whatsoever kind and from whatsoever country, must needs come first of all to Cyprus, and can in no wise pass by it. (pp. 43–4)

---

near Famagusta is the ancient port and capital of Cyprus, Salamis (or Constantia), of which Solomina may be a corruption. The city was destroyed by earthquakes in 332 and 342 AD.

<sup>25</sup> The ship carrying Hans Tucher and his party on their pilgrimage struck anchor in Limassol for three days, so they took the opportunity to go ashore and hear mass (Hans Tucher, *Die 'Reise ins Gelobte Land' Hans Tuchers des Älteren (1479–1480)*, ed. Randall Herz, *Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter* 38 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002), pp. 366–7). Tucher does not mention any Cyprus connexion to Saint Katherine, although he does record the presence of her right arm and her hand in the chapel of the Hospitaller Grand Master on Rhodes (p. 365) and note that pilgrims to Cyprus usually visit the port of Salines, 10 miles from Famagusta (p. 367).

<sup>26</sup> Ludolf von Sudheim, *Ludolph von Suchem's Description of the Holy Land and of the Way Thither. Written in the Year 1350*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society* 27 (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1895), pp. 42–3. Ludolf's report was first published in Latin by Heinrich Eggestein in Straßburg between 1475 and 1480. A German version published by Johannes Zainer appeared in Ulm in 1473. The work must have been known in Nuremberg as Tucher draws on it for his account. Ludolf does mention Saint Katherine: 'Near Famagusta there is another city on the sea-shore named Constantia or Salamina, which once was an exceeding noble, famous and beauteous city, as its ruins bear witness ... In the same city was born S. Katharine the Virgin, and a chapel stands on the place of her nativity to this day' (p. 42).

Famagusta, then, places the saint within a familiar urban trading environment. Her royal lineage means that her martyr's crown is foreshadowed by a princess's; that she is of suitable rank to be the bride of the King of Heaven; and that she belongs to a family-based ruling elite, a status with which the governing Patrician readers of *Der Heiligen Leben* would have identified and which corresponded to that of the Patrician nuns.

Second, Katherine is described as 'weiß vnd schon vnd kensch vnd tugentlich',<sup>27</sup> so it was her wisdom that, for the nuns of the Katharinenkloster, was her most significant quality and set the mould for her image in the city as a whole. The highlighting of wisdom reinforces the convent's identity as a place of learning, locates it within the history of women's contribution to the history of salvation and provides the nuns with a purpose: the acquisition and transmission of spiritual wisdom.<sup>28</sup> Saint Katherine's wisdom and virtue are further expressed by her beauty as the outward manifestation of inner worth; her chastity confirms the nuns in their renunciation of marriage and embrace of their new identity as brides of Christ. Indeed, a prayer at the end of the *Der Heiligen Leben* account of Saint Katherine's life and miracles cites her status as Christ's spouse as a channel for her intercession on the petitioner's behalf:

Nun helf vns dye heylig iunckfraw Sant Katherin vmb got vnsern herren Jhesum Cristum iren lyeben gemaheln erwerben durch all ir wirdikeyt dye sye ewiglich mit ym hat / daz wir hye menschen werden nach gottes lob / vnnd vnser lebens eyn gucz end vnd dar nach das ewig leben / das helf vns got der vater vnd gott der sun vnd got der heylig geist Amen. (fol. cclxj')

[Now may the holy virgin Saint Katherine, for the sake of our Lord God Jesus Christ, her beloved spouse, help us to manage, through her eternal worthiness in His eyes, to become people worthy of God's praise on this earth, to die a good death and then attain eternal life. May God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost aid us. Amen].

Not only does Saint Katherine provide a model for nuns, who as brides of Christ may use their prayer to help their Patrician families and community; she also provides one for young female readers of *Der Heiligen Leben*, who through their

<sup>27</sup> 'wise, beautiful, chaste and virtuous.'

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Felix Fabri refers to Saint Katherine's skull as 'that treasure-house of heavenly wisdom, the virgin's sacred head' (Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, 2 vols, The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 10 (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1897), p. 600).

own virtue and chaste fidelity to their spouse may recreate the holy union in their own lives, thus serving their community and providing a model in their turn.

Third, the importance of the saint's learning, though part of her legend, is significant, both for the convent and the city as a whole. It is said of her that she 'lernet ... gar wol', eventually becoming known as 'ein bewerte Meisterinn in den siben hochsten kunsten'.<sup>29</sup> In other words, Katherine had enjoyed an education in the Seven Liberal Arts that formed the medieval university curriculum; this alone singles her out as exceptional at a time when German women at least were denied access to the few universities in Europe. In collecting and copying manuscripts, the nuns were following Katherine's model by acquiring learning on a smaller scale.<sup>30</sup> They were also contributing to a broader civic tradition of learning which had, in the fourteenth century, seen the founding of Latin schools connected to the Lorenzkirche (mentioned 1325), the Sebalduskirche (mentioned 1337),<sup>31</sup> the Heilig-Geist-Spital (mentioned 1339) and the Egidienkloster (mentioned 1396).<sup>32</sup> From 1400 onwards private schools provided a practical education designed to meet the needs of merchants and artisans.<sup>33</sup> Somewhat later, in 1503, another Nuremberg convent,

<sup>29</sup> 'she excelled at her studies'; 'a tried and tested master of the Seven Liberal Arts'.

<sup>30</sup> *Der Heiligen Leben* also contains Saint Katherine's miracles (fol. ccliiij–cclxj), slightly trickier for the nuns to emulate. No mention has been found of a school in the Katharinenkloster (apart from the *Schreibschule*). The degree to which the nuns knew Latin is impossible to determine with absolute certainty: although the convent library included works in Latin, Willing, for example, assumes most of the sisters knew none (Willing, *Literatur und Ordensreform*, p. 28). Peter Ochsenbein speculates that in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Dominican nuns' knowledge of Latin became increasingly limited to that necessary for the liturgy and prayer. However, he also suggests that if male Dominican mystics (such as Meister Eckhart) preached in German, it was also due to their limited competence in Latin and lack of ability to formulate complex ideas in that language (Peter Ochsenbein, 'Latein und Deutsch im Alltag oberrheinischer Dominikanerinnenklöster des Spätmittelalters', in Nikolaus Henkel and Nigel F. Palmer (eds), *Latein und Volkssprache im deutschen Mittelalter. Regensburger Colloquium 1988* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992) pp. 42–51 (p. 42)). Fries, on the other hand, assumes a considerable command of Latin by the Katharinenkloster nuns post-reform (Fries, 'Kirche und Kloster', pp. 47–8; see Chapter 2).

<sup>31</sup> A further school was built next to the Sebalduskirche in 1465 (Johann Jacob Carbach, *Nürnbergisches Zion / Das ist: Wahrhafft Beschreibung Aller Kirchen und Schulen in= und ausserhalb Der Reichs=Stadt Nürnberg* (s.l., 1733), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Poor pupils paid no fees. The curriculum was based on the *trivium* and consisted of Latin (in which pupils learnt to read and write), grammar, logic and music (i.e. singing).

<sup>33</sup> *Stadtlexikon Nürnberg*, pp. 614–15 and pp. 958–9. Moreover, from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards the Patriciate started to send its sons to university: for example, Berthold IV Tucher attended the University of Vienna and in turn sent his five sons to Heidelberg, where they were joined by their cousin Sixtus (Grote, *Die Tucher*, p. 65).

the Klarissenkloster, also became an intellectual force as Caritas Pirckheimer (1467–1532), the exceptionally well-educated sister of the Humanist Willibald Pirckheimer, was elected Abbess.<sup>34</sup> Caritas Pirckheimer enjoyed a reputation for learning and was in correspondence with the likes of Konrad Celtis (first German Poet Laureate and editor of *Hrotsvit von Gandersheim*), Sixt Tucher<sup>35</sup> and her own brother.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, just as Saint Katherine herself had converted the heathen philosophers, so nuns from the Katharinenkloster in Nuremberg were subsequently dispatched to reform other convents. These included Tulln an der Donau in Lower Austria (1436); Pforzheim, Baden-Württemberg (1443); the Kloster zum heiligen Grab, Bamberg (1451); Hohenaltau, Bavaria (1465); Medingen by Dillingen (1472); Gotteszell by Gmund (1478); the Kloster zum heiligen Kreuz, Regensburg (1483); and Engelthal (c. 19 miles east of Nuremberg) (1513). The exchange of books and correspondence between the two prioresses, Angela Varnbüler (St. Gallen) and Kunigunda von Haller (Nuremberg), from 1476 on also led to the Nuremberg convent's exercising of considerable influence on the reform of the Katharinenkloster in St. Gallen.<sup>37</sup>

In the late-fifteenth century, then, the Katharinenkloster was a politically well-connected, culturally active and intellectually open presence within a city where printers enjoyed close links to the monasteries and Patrician merchants socialized and debated with leading Humanist scholars such as Willibald Pirckheimer. In addition to Katharinenkloster manuscripts containing Saint Katherine's legend, miracles and prayers to her for the nuns' own use, daily devotion to the saint was shaped and guided by the statues and paintings of her found within the confines of the convent.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, representations of the saint abound in Nuremberg churches,<sup>39</sup> including that of Saint Sebaldus, the

---

<sup>34</sup> The also well-educated Apollonia, daughter of Herdegen I Tucher, was Prioress in the Klarissenkloster; she read Latin and the works of Saint Jerome, loved the mystics and corresponded with Nuremberg Humanists and Konrad Celtis (Grote, *Die Tucher*, pp. 64–5).

<sup>35</sup> Provost of the Nuremberg Lorenzkirche from 1496.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in 1511 Albrecht Dürer dedicated the printed edition of his *Marienleben* to her. See *Stadtlexikon Nürnberg*, p. 827; and Charlotte Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> See Thomas Käppeli, *Dominikanerinnenkloster St. Katharina. Ein Abriss seiner Geschichte* (Wil: St. Katharina, 1957), pp. 10–12.

<sup>38</sup> Some of these are now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, and include two depictions of Saint Katherine's mystic marriage to Christ, one a painting by Hans Pleydenwurff's workshop (donated 1468 and 1475); the other a carved altar shrine (Nuremberg 1480).

<sup>39</sup> Due to the destruction of Nuremberg during the Second World War and the allocation of works from the Katharinenkloster to other churches in the city it is not possible to say with absolute certainty where images of the saint originally stood. However,

city's patron saint.<sup>40</sup> The Sebalduskirche stands at the bottom of the present-day Bergstraße, in the late-fifteenth century home to a number of wealthy Patrician families, to Albrecht Dürer's own goldsmith father and to such artists as Michael Wolgemut, to whom Dürer was apprenticed for three years. Patricians and, in all likelihood, Dürer himself, worshipped in the Sebalduskirche, which houses numerous examples of Patrician patronage. One such is a carved wooden altar in the West choir, the Löffelholz Altar (c. 1462–4), dedicated to Saint Katherine and depicting on the left the miracle of the wheel and on the right her execution, in other words the two stages of her martyrdom.<sup>41</sup> On the painted wings are found the disputation with the philosophers and the burning of the philosophers.

---

in present-day Nuremberg statues, carvings, stained-glass windows and pictures of the saint on altarpieces are present in the following churches: the Marthakirche, Klarissenkirche, Jakobskirche, Egidienkirche Sebalduskirche, Lorenzkirche and Frauenkirche.

<sup>40</sup> Saint Sebaldus was a Benedictine hermit who worked with Saint Willibald in his missionary activity in the Reichswald (Imperial Forest). He died circa 770 and became patron saint of Nuremberg in the eleventh century. Associated with such miracles as helping a farmer to find his lost oxen or turning icicles into firewood, he was prayed to for protection against cold weather. His feast day is 19 August. His relics were housed in a silver shrine (1391) within an ornate brass housing cast in 1507–19 by Nuremberg's leading metal-caster, Peter Vischer (1460–1529), with the help of his two sons. The shrine is decorated with the coats-of-arms of the free imperial city and the Holy Roman Emperor, functioning as a statement of both Patrician wealth and pride and of Nuremberg's eminence within the Holy Roman Empire. It was customary to open the casket containing Sebaldus's relics from time to time, such as 22 July 1503 (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 15).

<sup>41</sup> For information on Saint Katherine and her iconography see: Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Women in Religious Art* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; 1st edn New York: Continuum, 1996), pp. 66–8; Sally Fisher, *The Square Halo & Other Mysteries of Western Art. Images and the Stories that Inspired Them* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), pp. 140–2; James Hall, *Hall's Dictionary of Subjects & Symbols in Art*, intro. Kenneth Clark (1st edn 1974; London: John Murray, 2000), pp. 58–9; and Peter and Linda Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 95. An altar dedicated to Saint Katherine also stood in the crypt at the West end of the Sebalduskirche, probably erected immediately upon completion of building work on that part of the church. The earlier altar is first mentioned in connexion with the confirmation of earlier indulgences for the Sebalduskirche by the Bishop of Bamberg, Leupold von Gründlach, on 3 July 1298. See Franz Machilek, 'Dedicatio[n]e Ecclesiae Sancti Sebaldi. Die mittelalterlichen Kirch- und Altarweihen bei St. Sebald in Nürnberg', in Helmut Baier im Auftrag des Evang.-Luth. Pfarramtes St. Sebald (ed.), *600 Jahre Ostchor St. Sebald – 1379–1979* (Neustadt a. d. Aisch: Ph. C. W. Schmidt, 1979), pp. 143–59 (p. 148). This altar was moved from the crypt to the West choir and re-consecrated by 1357 at the latest. According to Müllner's *Annalen*, an altar dedicated to Saint Katherine stood 'ob der Crypta. Hat Cunradt Schatz, ein Vicarier gestiftet' [above the crypt. Cunradt Schatz endowed a curateship] (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 17).

The altar was donated in 1462/4 by Wilhelm Löffelholz (1424–75) in memory of his wife Kunigunde Paumgartner (d. 1462),<sup>42</sup> one of the four daughters of the immensely wealthy Konrad VI Paumgartner, one of the richest and most respected men in Nuremberg.<sup>43</sup> Kunigunde was the widow of Hieronymus Ebner; Wilhelm married her on 28 February 1446.<sup>44</sup> A merchant family, the

---

<sup>42</sup> She died on 7 March 1462, having borne 10 children. The inscription on the altar reads: 'Anno domini m cccc liiii an s Thomas tag de Aqiin verschied frav Kunigund Wilhelm Loffelholtzin, der got gnadt' [On Saint Thomas Aquinas' Day in the year 1453 Frau Kunigunde Löffelholz departed this life. May God have mercy on her soul]. For this and what follows see Friedrich Wilhelm, *Die Sebalduskirche in Nürnberg. Ihre Baugeschichte und ihre Kunstdenkmale*, rev. and augmented by Th. Hampe, E. Mummenhof and Jos. Schmitz (Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling, 1912), p. 137. On Kunigunde's death Wilhelm Löffelholz wrote: 'gar eines selig=lieblichen Endes dergleichen nit viel gehört noch gesehen wäre worden verschieden'. He continues: 'Sie war eine gar verständige, schön fromb Hausfrau und einer mittelmäßigen Läng, die auch wol sticken und wüirken kunnt, wie manz das sieht an den Altar=Tuchern in den Tumkirchen zu Bamberg und Würzburg und in Nürnberg auf St. Katharinen=Chörlein (der Löffelholz=Kapelle) zu St. Sebald' [She died a blessed, beautiful death such as is rarely seen or heard ... She was a prudent, admirably pious housewife of medium height, who was a talented embroiderer and needlewoman, as can be seen on the altar cloths in the cathedral churches in Bamberg and Würzburg and in Saint Katherine's Choir (the Löffelholz Chapel) in the Sebalduskirche]. See die historische Commission bei der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 19 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1884), p. 93. Kunigunde Löffelholz had, then, embroidered altar cloths for Saint Katherine's altar in the West choir, a connexion to the altar established by the family during her lifetime. For the nature and purpose of endowments see Ralf Lusiardi, *Stiftung und städtische Gemeinschaft. Religiöse und soziale Aspekte des Stiftungsverhaltens im spätmittelalterlichen Stralsund*, *Stiftungsgeschichten* 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> Wilhelm Löffelholz also commissioned a Latin Book of Hours, the *Löffelholz-Gebetbuch* (third quarter of the fourteenth century; possibly bound 1468; now Germanisches Nationalmuseum Hs 1736). My thanks to Dr Volker Schier for drawing my attention to this volume.

<sup>44</sup> The occasion was marked by a *Gesellenstechen* (tournament): 'Dies Gestech hat der alte Berthold Volckamer in seiner Behausung an S. Egidienß in eine große Stuben auf ein ausgespannetes Tuch, jeglichen Stecher mit allen Farben und Kleinoden, mit Fleiß malen lassen, welche Behausung nachmals Herr Christoff Tezcel der Älter und Losunger erkauf, und das vielgedachte Gestech verneuen lassen, wie es dann in derselben Behausung noch zu sehen, und sein davon in Stech- und Schönbart-Bücher viel Kopien gemacht worden, wie es dann auch Cunrad Haller in sein Buch von den nürnbergischen Geschlechten also malen lassen' [Berthold Volckamer the Elder had this tournament painted with great attention to detail on a stretched canvas in a large room in his house on the Egidien-gasse. Every jousting is depicted in all his colours and jewels. This house was later bought by Herr Christoff Tetzel the Elder, city *Losunger* (Sheriff), who had the much-lauded tournament picture restored. It can still be seen in the same house and numerous copies have been made of it in jousting and Schönbart books, like the one Conrad Haller had painted in his *Buch von den Nürnbergischen Geschlechten*] (Müller,

Löffelholz had established themselves in Nuremberg in 1420;<sup>45</sup> from 1440 onwards they had been members of the *Kleiner Rat*. They were also culturally active: Johann Löffelholz (1448–1509), for example, was a Humanist poet (under the pseudonym ‘Cocles’) and friend of Konrad Celtis.<sup>46</sup> The choice of iconographic programme for the altar, possibly by Wilhelm Löffelholz himself,

---

*Annalen*, vol. 1, pp. 377–9). Fleischmann describes the occasion as ‘eine wahre Prunkhochzeit ... bei der 39 junge Männer des vordersten Standes ein Gesellenstechen abhielten’. He continues: ‘Dieser Versuch des Stadtadels der Nachahmung ritterlicher Umgangsformen gilt als sehr beachtlich, weil die Verhelichung von Angehörigen zweier junger, sehr wohlhabender Geschlechter den Anlass dazu gegeben hat. Dank der zeitgenössischen bildlichen Aufzeichnung eines Teilnehmers hat dieses Ereignis lange nachgewirkt, denn der Rat ließ es noch 1621 im Gang des zweiten Stockwerks des Wolffschen Rathausbaus als Stuckrelief an der Decke in einer Länge von etwa 65 Metern verewigen’ [a truly magnificent wedding ... at which 39 young men of the leading class held a tournament ... This attempt by the urban nobility to imitate chivalric manners is considered very significant because the marriage of members of two young, very prosperous houses furnished the occasion for it. Thanks to a contemporary visual record by a participant this event resonated for a long time, since in 1621 the Council had it immortalized in a 65-metre-long stucco relief on the ceiling of the corridor on the second floor of the town hall designed by Wolff] (Peter Fleischmann, *Rat und Patriziat in Nürnberg. Die Herrschaft der Ratsgeschlechter vom 13. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols, Nürnberger Forschungen 31 (Neustadt an der Aisch: Schmidt, 2008), vol. 2, *Ratsherren und Ratsgeschlechter*, pp. 672–3).

<sup>45</sup> The Löffelholz were originally *ministeriales* of the Bishops of Bamberg. In 1420 Burkhard Löffelholz was the first member of the family to come to Nuremberg and gain the *Bürgerrecht* [right to citizenship]. The family were admitted to the *Großer Rat* as early as in 1421. Hans der Alte was the first member of the family to be admitted to the *Kleiner Rat* in 1440; he served as *Jüngerer Bürgermeister* [Junior Mayor] in 1440 and 1444. Wilhelm I Löffelholz was the only surviving son of Hans der Alte and Barbara Haidin, whose wealthy father belonged to the retinue of the Burgraves of Nuremberg. He married Kunigunde Paumgartner on 7 February 1446 (Fleischmann, vol. 2, *Ratsherren*, pp. 671–2). Wilhelm I Löffelholz was *Ratsherr* [councillor] in 1454, 1469–71, 1473, 1474; *Alter Bürgermeister* [Senior Mayor] in 1464, *Septemvir* in 1473. He represented Nuremberg on various diplomatic missions, including at the *Reichstag* [imperial diet] in Regensburg in 1471 at which a campaign against the Turks was discussed. In 1475 Wilhelm Löffelholz was sent by the *Rat* to the Bishop of Bamberg and to Markgrave Albrecht to ask them to promote, with Emperor Friedrich, Nuremberg’s wish to rid the city of Jews. Fleischmann says two of Wilhelm’s daughters entered the Katharinenkloster, but not by which wife (p. 673). The Löffelholz seem also to have had a particular link to the Augustinerkloster, as Wilhelm Löffelholz was *Pfleger* there in 1467 and Müllner mentions the following as having ‘ihre Jahrtäg und Begängnus in diesem Kloster gestiftet’ [endowed masses for the anniversary of their death and burial in this monastery]; some also lay buried there: Christoff Löffelholtz; Wilhelm Löffelholtz (1475); Johann Löffelholtz (1492); Wolfgang Löffelholtz (1521) (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 159). In 1452 Johann Löffelholtz can be found amongst the brothers in the Carthusian monastery; he had a new chapel built and gave the monastery over 600 florins (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 2, p. 81 and p. 344).

<sup>46</sup> *Stadtlexikon Nürnberg*, p. 639.

foregrounds Saint Katherine's use of her learning and eloquence in the service of God, her martyrdom and the glorious fate of those who heed her word and the Word. Obviously these elements are familiar from the legend, but they do echo and reinforce the textual image of the saint presented in *Der Heiligen Leben* and the original Katharinenkloster manuscript. On the outside of the *predella* are painted the members of the donor's family: on the left Wilhelm Löffelholz with four sons and the Löffelholz, Löffelholz-Dietner and Löffelholz-Stromer-Sachs coats-of-arms; on the right Kunigunde with four daughters, Löffelholz's new wife, Barbara Hirschvogelin, and the Löffelholz-Züngel, Löffelholz-Kreß and Löffelholz-Stromer coats-of-arms.<sup>47</sup> Although primarily a memorial to Wilhelm Löffelholz's first wife, the altar performs another function, namely as a statement of family identity, family piety and family connexions, of the family's location within the social and governing elite of the city. It identifies the saint as part of the Löffelholz family and their lineage. In typical donors' pose on the *predella* they serve as witnesses to Saint Katherine's martyrdom and literally support her in it, through their devotion establishing a model for other worshippers in the church. Past, present and future generations of the family kneel "under" the saint, symbolically under her protection, a privileged relationship to which the Sebalduskirche and wider urban community bear witness in their turn.

The altar, then, sets the family within the history of salvation; it signals their closeness to a major saint and to the wisdom and virtue she embodies; and it carries out a visual dialogue with similar assertions of piety and status by other Patrician families such as the Volckamer, the Behaim<sup>48</sup> and the Haller.<sup>49</sup> Altars,

---

<sup>47</sup> Barbara Hirschvogelin was the daughter of Wilhelm Hirschvogel and Christina Haller and widow of Sebald III Tucher. She was born on 19 July 1442; married Wilhelm Löffelholz in 1464; and died on 25 September 1494, having borne Wilhelm seven children (Biedermann, *Geschlechtsregister*, fol. Qqr (Tabula CCCV)). Fleischmann says five children (vol. 2, p. 673).

<sup>48</sup> The Behaim von Schwarzach supposedly came from the area round Pilsen in Bohemia; they are documented in Nuremberg from 1285 onwards. From 1319/23 they served on the *Kleiner Rat*. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they were amongst the most important Patrician trading companies in Nuremberg, engaged in long-distance trade and mining. Their best-known representative, Martin II Behaim, maker of the first globe (1492), belongs to a junior line. The family were raised to the *Reichsfreiherrnstand* [status of barons of the Holy Roman Empire] in 1681 and incorporated into the Bavarian nobility in 1809. The family died out in 1942 (*Stadtlexikon*, p. 131).

<sup>49</sup> The Haller von Hallerstein may have come originally from the Tyrol; they are documented in Nuremberg from 1293 onwards and are the only family to have served without interruption on the *Kleiner Rat* in 1318 and from 1332 to 1806 (dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire). They acquired considerable wealth through trade and financial dealings. Berthold Haller (d. 1379) founded the Heilig-Kreuz-Pilgerspital (1352/3),

sculptures, epitaphs, stained-glass windows donated by leading Nuremberg Patricians – all form a complex web of visual associations which locate the donor families within, as well as shape the spiritual identity of, a key symbol of Nuremberg's civic identity. Monuments including depictions of Saint Katherine are, amongst others, the Haller windows in the East choir (1381–6); the Haller Altar (1440); the Imhoff Epitaph (1413);<sup>50</sup> various altar cloths;<sup>51</sup> and the *Tucher-Gedächtnisbild* (Tucher Epitaph) (1513), a memorial to Lorenz Tucher (1447–1503), who had been provost of the Nuremberg Lorenzkirche between 1478 and 1496 and who, on his death in 1503, had left half his fortune for the care of the poor. The memorial was painted by Hans Süß von Kulmbach after a sketch by Albrecht Dürer and depicts the Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child on her lap, Saint Katherine on her right and Saint Barbara on her left.<sup>52</sup> Lorenz Tucher himself is shown kneeling on Katherine's right, Saints Lawrence and Peter behind him, their hands on his shoulders. The choice of artists for this and other works in the Sebalduskirche makes a very clear statement about the Patricians' financial clout.<sup>53</sup> Thus the Löffelholz, Tucher and other Patrician families used Saint Katherine as a billboard for advertising their place within the spiritual economy, financial hierarchy and familial network of the city. Conversely, the choice of saint demonstrates her importance within this spiritual economy and within the devotional and self-promotional landscape of the ruling Patricians. Moreover, this statement of her pre-eminence is made within the sacred space that houses the relics of the city's patron saint. The tomb of Saint Sebaldus,

---

a shelter for pilgrims, poor priests and students, and was financier to Emperor Karl IV. In the mid-fifteenth century the family's land-holdings in the city and the surrounding countryside far surpassed those of other Nuremberg families. The Haller were laid to rest in the Sebalduskirche (*Stadtlexikon*, p. 396). Ulrich Haller endowed the Erhard Altar in the Sebalduskirche, one of the 12 main altars in the church (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 1, p. 16).

<sup>50</sup> The von Imhoff were a merchant family who first came to Nuremberg in 1340; Hans III. Imhoff (d. 1398) founded the family trading company. They owned land and property in the Nuremberg area and served on the *Kleiner Rat* from 1402 (*Stadtlexikon*, p. 469). The epitaph is for Anna Rotflasch (d. 1413), the second wife of Konrad Imhoff (d. 1449), and shows Saint Anne with the Virgin and Christ Child flanked by Saints Katherine and Nicholas. See also Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 2, p. 187.

<sup>51</sup> These include one donated c. 1425–30 by Konrad Kreß (d. 1430) and his wife Walpurga, née Waldstromer (d. 1433), which depicts Katherine, flanked by various female saints, kneeling before the wheel as it is destroyed by fire from Heaven. It belonged to the Katherine Altar (Leonie von Wilckens, 'Die Teppiche der Sebalduskirche', in *600 Jahre Ostchor St. Sebald*, pp. 133–42 (p. 135)).

<sup>52</sup> Dürer's sketches for the picture are reproduced in Grote, *Die Tucher*, plates 51, 52/3.

<sup>53</sup> As well as Dürer and Hans Süß von Kulmbach, we find works by Peter Vischer and Veit Stoß.

decorated with the free imperial city's coat-of-arms,<sup>54</sup> stands in the East choir of the church, so Saint Katherine's presence in the Sebalduskirche allies her directly with the Holy Roman Empire. As the Löffelholz Altar stands in the West choir the two saints, Katherine and Sebaldus, together frame and protect the community worshipping in the church. According to Ernst Eichhorn, Saint Katherine was co-patron of the West choir (with Saint Peter, to whom the Sebalduskirche had originally been dedicated) and by 1500 had almost attained the status of a patron saint to Nuremberg as there was barely a church in the city without an altar dedicated to her.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the Sebalduskirche stands directly opposite the city hall, where the Patrician families represented in the church met to govern the city, so Saints Sebaldus and Katherine stood guard over the very governance of Nuremberg.

That Saint Katherine was much venerated in Nuremberg may be due to that city's trade links to Venice, whose patron saint she was (along with Mark, Nicholas, George and Justina of Padua), and Alexandria; and to its Patricians' active tradition of pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Mount Sinai.<sup>56</sup> The choice of Saint Katherine for the *Tucher-Gedächtnisbild* serves as a reminder of the Tucher family connexion to the saint<sup>57</sup> and to Alexandria itself, where they enjoyed close trade and personal

---

<sup>54</sup> Nuremberg was elevated to a free imperial city by Emperor Friedrich II's *Freiheitsbrief* in 1219.

<sup>55</sup> Ernst Eichhorn, 'Der Sebalder Engelschor. Ein Beitrag zur mittelalterlichen Sakralarchitektur Nürnbergs', in *600 Jahre Ostchor St. Sebald*, pp. 94–116 (p. 113, fn. 126).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, the accounts of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Mount Sinai (1479–80) by the two Nuremberg Patricians Hans VI Tucher and Sebald Rieter: Hans Tucher, *Reise zum Heiligen Grab* (Augsburg: Johann Schönsperger, 1482); and Reinhold Röhricht and Heinrich Meisner (eds), *Das Reisebuch der Familie Rieter* (Tübingen: Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 1884). Other Nuremberg families with a tradition of pilgrimage include the Pfinzing, Haller, Muffel and Ketzler. See Klaus Arnold, 'Wallfahrten als Nürnberger Familientradition um 1500', in *Wallfahrten in Nürnberg um 1500*, pp. 133–41 (p. 134). Arnold points out the strength of the pilgrimage tradition in some families: 'In Nürnberg haben sich im Gefolge solcher Wallfahrten neben Bauwerken und Texten jedoch noch weitere Realien erhalten, die von der Pilgertradition ganzer Familien Zeugnis ablegen. So finden sich die Pilger- und Stammtafeln der Familie Ketzler' [In the wake of such pilgrimages objects other than buildings and texts have been preserved in Nuremberg that bear witness to the pilgrimage tradition of whole families. Thus we have the pilgrimage and genealogical tables of the Ketzler family] (p. 135). These include a plaque portraying all the members of the family that undertook a pilgrimage, now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum.

<sup>57</sup> Another example is the Tucher chapel in Sixtus Tucher's garden house in the Grasersgasse, near the Carthusian monastery (Grote, *Die Tucher*, plate 49), which was decorated with scenes from Saint Katherine's life by Hans Süß von Kulmbach in 1517; they were commissioned by Anton II Tucher. Moreover, the Haus zur Krone (Bindergasse 26, on the corner of the Bindergasse and Neumarkt), the ancestral home of the principal Tucher

relations with the resident Venetian merchants involved in the spice trade there.<sup>58</sup> In May 1479 Hans Tucher<sup>59</sup> undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Sinai and Egypt in the company of other Patricians: Sebald and Eustachius Rieter,<sup>60</sup> Sebald

---

line, boasted a chapel for which Anton II Tucher obtained papal permission for the annual celebration of mass in 1511. Its walls were decorated with murals by Hans Süß von Kulmbach depicting scenes from the life of Empress Faustina, converted by Saint Katherine to Christianity (Grote, *Die Tucher*, p. 22). Grote also makes explicit the Tuchers' immensely strong sense of family identity (pp. 18–19). Moreover, Sebald Tucher gave a manuscript (c. 1430) of the first half of the 'Winterteil' of *Der Heiligen Leben* to the Katharinenkloster (Assion, *Mirakel*, p. 61).

<sup>58</sup> Hans Tucher and his companions stayed with the Venetians in Alexandria and knew some of them personally, not least since within the family trading company Tucher and his sons were responsible for trade with the Venetians (Grote, *Die Tucher*, p. 33). From 1440 to 1575 the Tuchers rented chambers and storage ('Kammer und Gewölbe') in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on a permanent basis and young male members of the Tucher family were sent to Venice to learn the family business (Grote, *Die Tucher*, pp. 32–3). Through Venice the Tuchers imported spices, drugs and fruit such as pepper, saffron, ginger, raisins, almonds, pomegranates, cinnamon, dates, canella, cloves, galingale and sugar (Grote, *Die Tucher*, p. 35). Trade relations between Nuremberg and Venice probably began in the second half of the thirteenth century and flourished, as in 1347 the *Signoria* remarked that trade with Venice had enabled Nuremberg to go from rags to riches (Ludwig Veit, *Handel und Wandel mit aller Welt*, Bibliothek des Germanischen National-Museums Nürnberg zur deutschen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte 14 (Munich: Sporer, 1960), p. 11). This trade was so prosperous that Nuremberg disobeyed Emperor Sigismund's trade prohibition when he was at war with Venice (1418) and a number of Patrician merchants were fined (Müllner, *Annalen*, vol. 2, p. 229; pp. 233–4); the lion of Saint Mark was mounted on the houses of Nuremberg merchants who traded mainly with that city and Nuremberg's constitution was modelled on that of Venice (Veit, *Handel*, p. 11). Fabri allows us a glimpse of the further reaches of the spice trade: 'On the shore of the Red Sea which was on our side we saw a very notable seaport, which in old times was called Berenice or Ardech, but now is called Tor. Ships which come bearing aromatic spices from India anchor at this port, and from thence the spices are carried into Egypt, and from Egypt across the Mediterranean Sea even to our own country' (Fabri, *Wanderings*, p. 574).

<sup>59</sup> Hans VI Tucher (1428–91) was the younger brother of the city *Baumeister* (Head of Buildings and Works), Endres II; he sat on a commission to oversee the building of the Sebalduskirche towers; became a member of the *Kleiner Rat* in 1476 in place of Endres, who entered a Carthusian monastery; and *Jüngerer Bürgermeister* in 1481. From 1486 he was responsible for expanding and cataloguing the *Ratsbibliothek*, the library of the City Council (Saint Katherine is the patron saint of libraries). His mother, Margaretha, was a member of the Patrician Paumgartner family (and hence must have been related to the Kunigunde Paumgartner in memory of whom the Löffelholz Altar was commissioned). Hans Tucher lies buried in the Sebalduskirche.

<sup>60</sup> The Rieter made their fortune in long-distance trade, are known to have been resident in Nuremberg since 1361 and members of the *Kleiner Rat* since 1437 (*Stadtlexikon*, p. 902).

Pfintzing and Martin Löffelholz.<sup>61</sup> On his return in March 1480 he wrote and published an account of his journey, the *Reise zum Heiligen Grab*. Included in Tucher's work is a description of his sojourn at Saint Katherine's monastery on Sinai, to which his party is guided by a star:

Jtem auff dem weg durch die wusten sahen wir alzweyt vmb mittenacht, oder vngeuerlich ein stund darnach, einen gar hellen lichten steren auffgeen. Der steren ging auff sud sud ost, das ist czwischen dem auff gang vnd mitag medan gegen dem auffgang, der steren die gegent des gepirgs Sinaÿ anzeyget, darnach sich alle geferten vnd pilgram auff dem weg Sant Katherina pey nacht richten müssen. Der wirt auch Sant Katharina steren genant. Denselben steren sahen wir deß morgens gerad vber dem closter Sant Katharina begrebtnuß scheÿnen.<sup>62</sup>

[On the way through the desert we always saw, around midnight or about an hour later, a radiantly bright star come up in the sky. The star rose to the South South East, that is, between the dawn and mid-day meridians but more towards dawn; it identifies the area round Mount Sinai and all travellers and pilgrims on the way to Saint Katherine's have to orientate themselves by it at night. It is also known as Saint Katherine's Star. We saw the same star shining in the morning directly over the monastery where Saint Katherine lies buried].

The obvious analogy to the Magi following the star to Bethlehem serves three purposes: first, it marks Tucher and his companions as select and privileged witnesses to, even "re-enactors" of, one of Christianity's defining events;<sup>63</sup> second, it marks the monastery and the saint's relics as particularly holy and privileged, since not only does the star guide the pilgrims to them, it shines directly above them in the morning just as the Star of Bethlehem shone above Christ's manger (Matthew 2:9–10); third, the nature of the analogy signals the significance of the saint for the pilgrims. Tucher's comparison of Saint Katherine's monastery to the Heilsbronner Hof in Nuremberg serves not just as a point of comparison for readers at home but as an imaginative mental and emotional situating of Katherine's tomb and relics within the imperial city: 'Jtem das closter ligt jn einem grund zwischen hohen gepirgen vnd mit einer maÿr vmbfangen jn der

<sup>61</sup> Thomas and Christoff Löffelholz also undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1498.

<sup>62</sup> Tucher, *Reise*, p. 523. Saint Katherine is referred to as 'du edels gestern d[er] tugent' [you noble star of virtue] in a Katharinenkloster prayer (Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, Cod. Cent. VII, 65, fol. 5').

<sup>63</sup> Naturally Tucher's party were not the only ones to see Saint Katherine's star (Fabri does, for example), but few reports mention it or do so in such detail.