



# The Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in Medieval Upper Hungarian Towns\*

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The aim of this article is to survey the cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in towns of medieval Upper Hungary (today mostly in Slovakia). In the first part, I briefly summarize the origin of the veneration of St Katherine and the beginning of her cult in Hungary. The geographical scope of my own research is the Upper Hungarian region, mainly the towns. The veneration of St Katherine has left most traces in the towns settled by Germans. Some of her earliest churches were established by families of German origin in the thirteenth century. Interestingly, St Katherine's cult became significant in several mining towns, presumably from the fourteenth century, and her popularity there suggests that she might have been venerated as a miners' saint (together with St Barbara). The heyday of Katherine's cult was the late Middle Ages, when her veneration spread to other towns: confraternities and altars were dedicated to her honor and her life was depicted on several altarpieces.

Keywords: St Katherine, urban history, virgin martyrs, mining towns, urban religiosity

## *Introduction*

St Katherine of Alexandria was one of the celebrated female saints in the Middle Ages. She was a virgin martyr and a role model for women. St Katherine was regarded as a uniquely privileged saint and a powerful intercessor because of special privileges she received at the time of her death: a visitation from Christ, an emanation of oil from her bones, an effluence of milk of her body instead of blood, the miraculous preparation of sepulcher, and the hearing of petitions of those who would honor her memory.<sup>1</sup> Therefore many were interested in promoting her cult. Although her ancestry and the way in which her cult spread are questionable, during the fourteenth and fifteenth century she became one of the most popular female saints in late medieval Europe, including Hungary.

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1 Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 2:341.

Although several traces of St Katherine's veneration has been researched in Western Europe,<sup>2</sup> the only aspect of her cult in the medieval Hungarian Kingdom that has been a subject to research is the verse legend of St Katherine.<sup>3</sup> In my paper I would like to trace the origin and the development of the cult of St Katherine in Upper Hungary. My research is concerned with the towns of Upper Hungary (today mostly in Slovakia). The analysis also extends to some rural places, however, so as to obtain a better understanding of the cult. I examine the different roles that she played as a patron saint in Upper Hungarian towns of different types. The most interesting aspect of St Katherine's urban cult is her outstanding popularity in the Upper Hungarian mining towns. Since St Barbara is the most venerated miner-saint in Central Europe, Katherine's role as the *patrona* of this towns is remarkable, and I will attempt to explain this phenomenon. In the late Middle Ages, when Katherine's cult reached its peak all over Europe, her cult also spread to the other towns in Upper Hungary. Religious associations and altars were dedicated to her. I examine the donations to her altars which indicate her increasing popularity in Upper Hungary in the fifteenth century and beyond. Because of the complexity of St Katherine's cult, my investigation is interdisciplinary: my sources are historical (charters, chronicles and testimonies), art historical (altarpieces, mural paintings and coats of arms) and literary (legends and masses).

### *The Cult of St Katherine*

#### Origin of the Cult

According to her *vitae*, St Katherine lived and suffered martyrdom in late Antique Alexandria, a place considered rather exotic in the Middle Ages. Her shrine is supposed to be located at Sinai. The cult of Katherine – like that of other virgin martyrs – started to spread in the seventh and eighth centuries, when her name appeared in liturgical sources and the *martyrologia* of the Byzantine Empire.

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2 E.g. Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*; Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine*; Simon, *The Cult of Saint Katherine*; Sands, *The Company She Keeps*; Jenkins and Lewis, *St Katherine of Alexandria*.

3 Hungarian scholarly attention has almost exclusively focused on the famous late medieval vernacular legend of St Katherine, see: Katona, *Alexandriai Szent Katalin*; Horváth, "Alexandriai Szent Katalin verses legendája," 9–25; Kardos, *Alexandriai Szent Katalin*; Horváth, *Középkori magyar verseink*, 246–366; Kővári, "Alexandriai Szent Katalin". In her MA thesis, Kristina Potuckova analyzed the Upper Hungarian altarpieces which depict the *virgines capitales*, see: Potuckova, "Virginité, Sanctity." The author of this article wrote an MA thesis on St Katherine's Hungarian cult and is working on the cult of the *virgines capitales* in medieval Hungary in her PhD dissertation.

In Latin Christianity, the cult of Katherine spread in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, simultaneously with those of many other Eastern saints, including St George. Scholars generally explain the increasing interest in the virgin martyrs in terms of Mediterranean transcultural contacts during the crusades.<sup>4</sup> Although the first Crusade seized the places where the virgin martyrs suffered martyrdom and their holiest shrines were supposed to be located, one can hardly find any references in the contemporary sources on the translation of the relics of Katherine from Sinai during the crusades. The discovery of the saint's body on Sinai is a relatively late development of her cult,<sup>5</sup> and the invention of her relics might have been the result of the popularity of her life in Greek.<sup>6</sup> Her legend originally contained only her *passio*. The story of her miraculous birth began to circulate in the fourteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The earliest vernacular versions of her legend in Western Europe can be dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>8</sup> What drove the veneration of virgin martyrs was a growing interest in exotic legends of the saints after the First Crusade and the general livening of religious life.<sup>9</sup>

### Katherine as an Intercessor and Role Model

The function of saints was twofold in the Middle Ages: they were considered as heavenly intercessors and exemplars for proper Christian life. Although this concerned all saints, not all of them had equal influence as intercessors and – as Duffy argues – the strong emphasis on a saint's intercessory power almost made their role as exemplars insignificant. The chastity of virgin martyrs was a source of celestial power, not an expectation on the laity.<sup>10</sup>

The role of St Katherine as an exemplar might have been limited to the clerical and highest circles of society in the High Middle Ages. The lives of virgin martyrs were models for an ideal female saint in this period.<sup>11</sup> The writers of the legends of the sainted princesses of the Árpáadian dynasty regarded

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4 Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon*, 14. I am indebted to the author, who provided me the draft of her book.

5 Chatterjee, "Saint Catherine," 265; Collins, "Visual Piety," 105; Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 42.

6 Bray, "The Legend of St Katherine," 11–12, as cited in Jenkins and Lewis, *St Katherine of Alexandria*, 3.

7 Katona, *Alexandriai Szent Katalin*, 24–25.

8 Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 137–38.

9 Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon*, 14.

10 Duffy, "Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes," 189–93.

11 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 197.

Katherine as one of the princesses' figurative and even literal models.<sup>12</sup> The image of Katherine depicted the perfect Christian woman. Her royal or noble status became a significant element of her legend from the twelfth century which may shed light on the main audience of her legend. Moreover, the hagiography of Katherine in some ways portrayed her as the opposite of what a medieval woman should have been.<sup>13</sup>

Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, the most popular collection of legends in the thirteenth century, describes her as an expert in liberal arts, which enabled her to defend Christianity. The legends emphasize how saints' miracles set them apart from ordinary people.<sup>14</sup> Only nuns are likely to have considered these legends as role models in the High Middle Ages.<sup>15</sup> The role of the mendicant orders – mainly the Dominicans – was significant in the spread of the virgin martyrs' cult. The mendicant orders supported female religious movements and promoted the cult of female saints. St Katherine, along with St Dominic and Mary Magdalene, was one of the main patrons of the Dominicans.<sup>16</sup>

From the end of the twelfth century the “lay saint” type became more and more popular and the legends of such saints were complemented with the story of their conversion. “The saints re-descended – so to say – from heaven to earth.”<sup>17</sup> The late medieval tendency of secularization resulted in the humanization of saints, rendering them easier to follow as models.<sup>18</sup> The saints were bestowed with other characteristics of contemporary laypeople.<sup>19</sup> Central elements had changed in their legends, the emphasis on confrontation transformed into a focus on their steadfastness.<sup>20</sup> After all, the increasingly human character of saints did not result in the renunciation of their intercessory power, but the new narratives of the saints' legends encouraged the “consumers” to follow their

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12 According to legend of Cunegond of Poland (the daughter of Béla IV), the princess had descended from the lineage of St Katherine: “[...] dux Bela cui erat contoralis nomine Maria filia imperatoris Grecorum, imperator vero ipse de stirpe Neronis Cesaris, imperatrix autem de genealogia sancte Catharine virginis et martiris eximie, prout tradunt dicte cronice.” Vita sanctae Kingae in Bielowski, *Monumenta Poloniae historica*, 4:683–84, and Uhrin, “Szent Katalin,” 251.

13 Lucraft, *Katherine Swynford*, 159.

14 Reames, *Legenda Aurea*, 107–13; Vauchez, “Jacques de Voragine,” 27–56.

15 Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, 60–63.

16 Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 74.

17 Vauchez, “Saints admirables,” 165.

18 Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, 121; Peters, *Patterns of Piety*, 102.

19 Huizinga, *Waning*, 168–78.

20 Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, 116–17.

roles.<sup>21</sup> It seems that the significance of a saint's intercession or auxiliary power started to increase in the fourteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

St Katherine was a member of a group of saints called the Fourteen Holy Helpers,<sup>23</sup> whose common feature was an individual power of intercession believed to be particularly effective against several types of disease. These fourteen saints as a collective could protect against almost any type of medieval disease. The Holy Helpers consisted of sub-groups: bishop saints, knight-saints and virgin martyrs. The numerous visual representations<sup>24</sup> and literary sources testify that from the fourteenth century onwards, St Katherine, St Margaret, St Barbara and St Dorothy of Caesarea were frequently venerated together as a distinct group called *virgines capitales* in Central Europe and Germany.<sup>25</sup> Although the origin of their cult is obscure, the earliest traces concern the outbreak and spread of plague in early fourteenth-century South Germany. The catastrophe caused several changes in European society, including religious life. It seems that the first and main promoters of the Fourteen Holy Helpers' cult were the Dominicans in the Nuremberg and Regensburg area.<sup>26</sup> It was from this region that their collective cult came to Hungary.

### *Overview of St Katherine's Cult in Medieval Hungary*

Hungarian sources are reticent about the cults of saints, and so the introduction and the early development of St Katherine's cult in Hungary remains obscure. The first evidence of Katherine's veneration in Hungary can be traced to the end of the twelfth century. The Codex Pray (1192–1195) mentions her feast on 25 November,<sup>27</sup> but this only refers to her appearance in liturgy. St Katherine's cult started to spread further in the thirteenth century, and several monasteries were subsequently dedicated to her. The first known sermons and churches dedicated to Katherine in Hungary are connected to the Dominicans, which fits with her highly honored status in that order. Two Dominican codices from the thirteenth

21 Vauchez, "Saints admirables," 167–72.

22 Gecser, "Holy Helpers," 199.

23 The most common members of the group are: Barbara, Katherine, Margaret, Denis, Erasmus, Blaise, George, Achatius, Eustace, Christopher, Giles, Cyriac, Pantaleon and Vitus. On the Fourteen Holy Helpers, see: Guth, "Vierzehnheiligen," 305–24; Pötzl, "Die Verehrung," 157–86; Gecser, "Holy Helpers," 174–201.

24 Marosi and Beke, *Magyarországi művészet*, 1:212.

25 Weed, "Venerating," 1066.

26 Ibid, 1069.

27 Radó, *Libri liturgici*, 39.

(or early fourteenth) century, the Codex of Leuven<sup>28</sup> and the Sermons of the University of Pécs or *Sermones compilati*<sup>29</sup> contain sermons to Katherine.

The spread of Katherine's cult in Hungary, along with the cult of other virgin martyrs, coincides with Andrew II (1205–35) bringing and placing the skull of St Margaret of Antioch to the collegiate church of Szepeshely (Zipser Kapitel, now Spišská Kapitula, Slovakia).<sup>30</sup> The rise of her cult in the fourteenth century (the era of the Angevin dynasty, 1308–82) is reflected in the increase in number of historical sources, and there were also more churches, chapels and altars dedicated to St Katherine at that time. However, many of these dedications might have had Árpáadian (1000–1301) antecedents. The two Angevin kings, Charles I (1301/1308–42) and Louis the Great (1342–82), played an important role in the promotion of the virgin martyrs. It is possible that they had a personal devotion to Katherine. Both kings named one of their daughters after St Katherine.<sup>31</sup> On the first initial picture of *Chronicon Pictum*, Louis and his wife pray to Katherine. Moreover, Louis's royal funerary chapel was dedicated to her.<sup>32</sup> European analogies suggests that one reason for kings' preference for Katherine as a patron saint was that she had a royal background.<sup>33</sup>

Her legend is written in the *Legenda Aurea*, which was the most popular collection of lives of the saints in Hungary as in other parts of Europe. Only a few manuscripts have survived in Hungary, however, because of the large-scale devastation of Hungarian codices. The *Legenda Aurea* served as the basis for Hungarian legendaria. The sermons of the *Sermones compilati* were presumably written for novices, which would explain why the three sermons on Katherine emphasize erudition and chastity of the virgin martyr.<sup>34</sup> The fifteenth-century Franciscan Observant preacher Pelbartus de Themeswar also based his sermons on the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>35</sup> In the four sermons Pelbartus wrote on Katherine, he followed the narrative of Jacobus de Voragine's work but completed the life of Katherine with her marvelous birth and conversion to Christianity. He

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28 Vizkelety, *Az európai prédikációirodalom*, 72, 259–60.

29 Petrovich and Ladislaus, *Sermones compilati*; Koszta, "A püspökség alapításától (1009)," 120–21.

30 Szentpétery, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, 1:465.

31 Kristó, "Károly Róbert családja," 25–26; Uhrin, "Szent Katalin," 253–56.

32 "Rector capelle Ludovici regis ad honorem Sancte Katherine virginis et martyris ad latus eiusdem ecclesie Albensis fundate" charter from 1458, see: Érszegi, "Fejér megyére vonatkozó oklevelek," no. 211.

33 Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 63; Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 147; Sands, *The Company She Keeps*, 7–20.

34 Madas, *Középkori prédikációirodalmunk*, 137.

35 Madas, "A Legenda aurea," 93–98.

also emphasized Katherine's role as an example.<sup>36</sup> These sermons influenced other Hungarian authors. The other famous Hungarian Observant Franciscan preacher, Osvaldus de Lasko, based his work on Pelbartus' sermons and<sup>37</sup> dedicated two sermons to Katherine.<sup>38</sup> Pelbartus' St Katherine sermons were the source of the Codex Érdu and the Codex of Debrecen and the vernacular verse legend of 4047 lines<sup>39</sup> of the Codex of Érsekújvár, the most precious source of the Hungarian cult of Katherine.<sup>40</sup> The sermons of Pelbartus circulated in the Hungarian kingdom after being printed at the end of the fifteenth century.

The upper classes developed a preference for the cult of St Katherine in the late fourteenth century. The popularity of the virgin martyrs reached its peak in Hungary – as elsewhere in Europe – in the later Middle Ages.

### *Initiation of Katherine's Cult in the Upper Hungarian Region*

The German *hospites*<sup>41</sup> are presumed to have been the first to promote the cult of St Katherine in Upper Hungary, because she and other virgin martyrs (St Margaret and St Barbara) mainly appear in places inhabited by Germans. The first church to be dedicated to Katherine in Upper Hungary was in Kakaslomnic (Nagylomonic until 1899, Großlomnitz, now Veľká Lomnica, Slovakia) in Szepes County (Zips, now Spiš), a village owned by the Berzeviczy family. The Berzeviczys' ancestors arrived in Hungary in the entourage of Gertrude of Andechs-Merania, wife of Andrew II. There can be no doubt that the family was German, from Istrian Merania or Andechs.<sup>42</sup> Rutger, one of their ancestors, acquired the land of Kakaslomnic and the surrounding region in 1209,<sup>43</sup> and his

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36 “[...] beata Catherina commendatur et in exemplum nobis proponitur” - Pelbartus: Pomerium de sanctis, Pars aestivalis Sermo XCIX. De sancta Catherina. Sermo primus cum legenda; “Circa primum de spiritualibus divitiis quaeritur, quales divitias adquisierunt sanctae virgines, et exemplo earum quales debeant acquirere quique fideles” Pelbartus: Pomerium de sanctis, Pars aestivalis Sermo CII. De sancta Catherina. Sermo quartus. Accessed: February 2, 2016. [http://sermones.elte.hu/pelbart/index.php?file=pa\\_index](http://sermones.elte.hu/pelbart/index.php?file=pa_index)

37 Kertész, “Two Hungarian Friars Minor,” 63–64.

38 Osvaldus: Sermones de sanctis Bigae salutis Sermo CX. De sancta Katherine virgine et martyre I. and Sermo CXI.: De sancta Katherine virgine et martyre II. Accessed: February 2, 2016. [http://sermones.elte.hu/szovegkiadasok/latinul/laskaiosvat/index.php?file=os\\_index](http://sermones.elte.hu/szovegkiadasok/latinul/laskaiosvat/index.php?file=os_index).

39 Madas et al., Érsekújvári kódex.

40 Rajhona, “Alexandriai Szent Katalin,” Accessed: January 24, 2016 [http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=312tan\\_plaus\\_flora](http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=312tan_plaus_flora).

41 Slivka, *Poblady do stredovekých dejín Slovenska*, 128.

42 Majorossy, “Bevezető,” 13.

43 Fekete Nagy, *A Szepesség*, 26.

wife's brother, Adolf, became the first known provost of the Collegiate Chapter of Szepes.<sup>44</sup> The Szepes area was colonized by Germans (*hospites Saxones de Scepus*), who received privileges and territorial autonomy from King Stephen V in 1271.<sup>45</sup>

The church of Kakaslomnic was mentioned first in a charter from 1268. Interestingly, the murals of the church depict the cycle of St Nicolas and not that of the patron saint. Ján Endrödy suggests that the churches in the area had been dedicated to Katherine before the Berzeviczys settled there, and it was their preference for Nicolas over Katherine that caused the family to order the frescoes.<sup>46</sup> This sounds improbable, however. The county was sparsely inhabited at that time and covered by forest, making it unlikely that several churches dedicated to Katherine existed before 1209. It was only after the Mongol invasion in the mid-thirteenth century that the Berzeviczys' lands were colonized by new settlers.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, one can hardly find any mentions of Katherine in the sources from the twelfth century or earlier, and the *patrocinia* of Katherine spread from the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>48</sup> Besides the ancestors of the Berzeviczy family, the ancestors of the Görgey family founded churches<sup>49</sup> in Kislomnic (Kleinlomnitz, now Lomnička, Slovakia)<sup>50</sup> and in Krig (Krieg, now Vojňany, Slovakia)<sup>51</sup> at the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth.<sup>52</sup>

King Andrew II sent a relic of Margaret of Antioch<sup>53</sup> to the newly founded Collegiate Chapter of Szepes to confer prestige on the church there. According to the Hungarian *Chronicon Pictum*, Andrew II acquired relics on his crusade to the Holy Land and distributed them to loyal prelates on his return in 1218 to express his gratitude for the flourishing kingdom.<sup>54</sup> The relic of Margaret

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44 Buják, "A szepesi és pozsonyi prépostságok," 11.

45 Fekete Nagy, *A Szepesség*, 328–44; Zsoldos, "Szepes megye," 19–31; Szende, "Power and Identity," 37.

46 Endrödy, "Mikulášska legenda," 49. On the medieval wall paintings of the church, see: Tognier and Plekanec, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, 66–98.

47 Körmeny, "A falusi plébániák," 155; Körmeny, *Melioratio terrae*, 43–63.

48 Hudák, *Patrocinia na Slovensku*, 57–59.

49 On the property division of Szepes county see the map of Števík and Česla, "Významnejšie majetkové," 192.

50 Tognier and Plekanec, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, 356.

51 Fekete Nagy, *A Szepesség*, 228–29.

52 On the origin of these villages, see Fekete Nagy, *A Szepesség*, 228–30. On the *patrocinia* see: Mező, *Patrociniumok*, 164.

53 Pirhalla, *A szepesi prépostság*, 14.

54 Szentpétery, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, 1:465.



was presumably translated to the Collegiate Chapter under the provostship of Adolf, the brother-in-law of Rutger. Martin Homza and Peter Labanc assume that Adolf was the provost in the first third of the thirteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Thus the virgin martyrs' cult could have been connected to the German relatives, the ancestors of the Berzeviczy family.

Szepes and the surrounding region was a center of veneration for several virgin martyrs.<sup>56</sup> Due to the emerging cult of St Margaret, the other virgin martyrs' veneration also spread in that territory and in the kingdom.

Although it mainly involved churches in villages, the foregoing discussion of these early signs of the cult of St Katherine was necessary to understand how it spread. At this point, I turn to the early development of the urban cult of the saint. The earliest chapel of St Katherine in the Upper Hungarian region was in Pozsony (Pressburg, now Bratislava). It was connected with the Cistercians of Heiligenkreuz, who founded a convent in area of the town in the mid-thirteenth century, but occupied it only until 1297,<sup>57</sup> when the buildings were transferred to the Poor Clares.<sup>58</sup> The chapel was founded by Francis, a monk from Heiligenkreuz, in 1311,<sup>59</sup> and it was consecrated in 1325.<sup>60</sup> The choice of Katherine as the patron saint of the chapel was connected to the Cistercian responsibility for female religious movements.<sup>61</sup> Virgin Mary enjoyed a pre-eminent role among the Cistercians, who devoted most of their monasteries to her patronage.<sup>62</sup> Virgin Mary was held as an exemplar of perfect femininity, but the virgin martyrs were also portrayed as role models, particularly for proper behavior. St Katherine could have become the patron of the private chapel of the nunnery, because her virginity and her status as *sponsa Christi* certainly appealed to nuns.

55 Buják, "A szepesi és pozsonyi prépostságok," 13–14; Homza and Sroka, *Historia Scepusii*, 235–45.

56 For example, Dušan Buran points out the special popularity of St Dorothy in fifteenth-century Szepes. Buran, *Studien zur Wandmalerei*, 70–86.

57 Lékai, *A ciszterciek*, 478.

58 Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 15.

59 Kristó et al., *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, III, no. 119.; Štefánik and Lukačka, *Lexikon Stredovekých*, 137.

60 Majorossy, "Church in Town," 375.

61 Tracey Sands also draws attention to the role of the Cistercians in the cult of St Katherine in Sweden. Sands, *The Company She Keeps*, XIX.

62 Burton and Kerr, *The Cistercians*, 131.

### *St Katherine's Cult in the Upper Hungarian Mining Towns*

An interesting feature of St Katherine's cult was her popularity in the Upper Hungarian mining towns. She thus seems to have been venerated as a patron saint of the miners<sup>63</sup> together with St Barbara. St Barbara was the main patron saint of the miners in Central Europe,<sup>64</sup> but the popularity of Katherine as her companion seems largely to have been peculiar to the Hungarian towns, although she was infrequently also venerated as a patron of miners elsewhere.<sup>65</sup> Churches were dedicated to Katherine in several Upper Hungarian mining towns: Selmecbánya (Schemnitz, now Banská Štiavnica), Körmöcbánya (Kremnitz, now Kremnica), Nyitrabánya (Krickerhau, now Handlová),<sup>66</sup> Telkibánya and Szomolnok (Schmölnitz, now Smolník). The coats of arms of Nyitrabánya and Körmöcbánya also prove that Katherine was the main patron saint of these towns, because both include Katherine's attribute of the broken wheel with sharp knives.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to the numerous Katherine *patrocinia*, only a few chapels were dedicated to Barbara in Upper Hungary,<sup>68</sup> although her veneration appears through her representations on altarpieces.

The predominance of German miners in these mining towns from the twelfth century onwards certainly tells us that there was a strong German influence behind the veneration of Katherine there. Professional miners must have come from abroad.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the cultural diversity of mining towns, including differences in their veneration of saints, derived from the international character of trade.<sup>70</sup> Central European mining towns, particularly those in the Carpathian basin, were closely interlinked. The similarity of privileges granted to Hungarian mining towns prepared the ground for mutual alliances that started in the fourteenth century.<sup>71</sup> The urban and economic policy of the Angevin kings of Hungary fostered development that forged the towns into a distinct

63 Bálint, *Ünnepi kalendárium*, 3:559.

64 Schreiber, *Der Bergbau*, 379–80.

65 Molenda, "Mining Towns," 188.

66 Second half of the fourteenth century. Mező, *Patrociniumok*, 164.

67 Benke, *Bányaváros címerek*, 26–27, 60–61.

68 The chapel of the church of St Lawrence in Káposztafalva/Hrabušice Slivka, *Pohľady do stredovekých dejín Slovenska*, 128, the chapel of St Jerome and St Barbara in the church of the Virgin Mary, Besztercebánya. Rados, *Magyar oltárok*, 54; Mező assumes two more *patrocinia* in Márkfalva/Jezernica) and Hilyó/Hýľov. Mező, *Patrociniumok*, 61.

69 Szende, "Power and Identity," 53.

70 Molenda, "Mining Towns," 188.

71 Szende, "Power and Identity," 53; Weisz, "Mining Town Privileges," 309.

group.<sup>72</sup> The crown granted greater legal, ecclesiastical and economic privileges to residents of mining towns than to other settlers, including the right to practice their own customs.<sup>73</sup>

Two ecclesiastical institutions were dedicated to Katherine in or near Telkibánya<sup>74</sup> in the mid-fourteenth century. The first, located between Göncruszka and Telkibánya, was the monastery of Göncruszka, donated to the Pauline monks by Domonkos of Ruszka and his brothers in 1338.<sup>75</sup> They were the *nobiles de Ružka*,<sup>76</sup> the noble family of Göncruszka. There could have been several reasons for choosing St Katherine as patron of a monastery. In her legend, St Katherine lived in the same spatial and temporal dimension as the Desert Fathers, the early Christian hermits in late Antique Egypt. Thus, several representations of Katherine depict the virgin martyr with a hermit saint; in Italian Trecento paintings, this is usually St Anthony the Abbot.<sup>77</sup>

It seems from the charters<sup>78</sup> that Pauline brothers ran a hospital dedicated to Katherine in Telkibánya – which was near their monastery dedicated to Virgin Mary in Gönc – starting in the second half of fifteenth century.<sup>79</sup> The local judge of Telkibánya, Georg Kruper, and his brother, Konth, the rector of the mines, founded the hospital in 1367.<sup>80</sup> According to the charter issued by Louis I, the leaders of the town founded a hospital rather than a wooden chapel at the request of the miners and the burghers.<sup>81</sup> Georg Kruper left the hospital to his stepson, priest Matthias, in his will.<sup>82</sup> Matthias in turn left the hospital to the Pauline brothers, with the condition that they offer masses for his and his parents' salvation in the church of Katherine.<sup>83</sup> Although it seems that these

72 Weisz, "Mining Town Privileges," 288.

73 Szende, "Power and Identity," 52.

74 Telkibánya was one of the earliest mining towns in the Hungarian Kingdom, founded during the Árpáadian era, but it received privileges in 1341. Weisz, "Mining Town Privileges," 304.

75 Guzsik, *A pálos rend építészete*, 100.

76 Csoma, *Abaij-Torna vármegye*, 490–93.

77 Stollhans, *St. Catherine*, 95.

78 MNL OL, DL, 5783.; MNL OL, DL, 11976; MNL OL, DL, 13819.; MNL OL, DL, 14390.; MNL OL, DL, 14391.; MNL OL, DL, 14392.; MNL OL, DL, 14396.; MNL OL, DL, 15368.; MNL OL, DL, 13819. Zsuzsanna Bándi published the short summaries of the charters in *Borsodi Levéltári Évkönyv* 5, 582, 588, 590–95.

79 Majorossy and Szende, "Hospitals," 425.

80 MNL OL, DL, 5783.

81 Bándi, "Északkelet-magyarországi," 582–83. The ruins of the hospital were found in 1997. Pusztai, "A Telkibányai Szent Katalin ispotály," 429.

82 MNL OL, DL, 13819.

83 MNL OL, DL, 14390.

churches were connected to the Pauline order, the *titulus* reflected the will of the founders, the nobles of Ruszka and the burghers of Telkibánya. Despite the obvious appeal of Katherine's cult to the hermits, the monastery of Ruszka was the only known Pauline foundation dedicated to her in the medieval Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>84</sup> There were two other hospitals dedicated to Katherine in fifteenth-century Hungary,<sup>85</sup> but the *patrocinium* of Telkibánya must have reflected the popularity of Katherine among the miners of Telkibánya.

The cult of St Katherine in Körmöcbánya raises interesting questions. The castle church there – also the parish church – is nowadays named after St Katherine. In the Middle Ages, it was another church which bore her name. According to the sources, St Katherine's Church was located on the main square<sup>86</sup> and was a *filiale* of the parish church of the Virgin Mary (castle church).<sup>87</sup> The *tituli* must have been changed in the modern age, probably because of the Reformation. Körmöcbánya was Lutheran from ca. 1530 until 1674,<sup>88</sup> after which the castle church was dedicated to St Katherine.<sup>89</sup>

The earliest reference to the medieval church of St Katherine in Körmöcbánya is dated to 1485, but the church must have been standing there since the first half of the fifteenth century at the latest.<sup>90</sup> The medieval church on the main square was demolished in the nineteenth century because of subsidence.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, an altar in the chapel of St Andrew was dedicated to St Andrew, St Peter and Paul, the Holy Trinity, St Martha, St Katherine and St Barbara in 1431.<sup>92</sup> The cult of the Apostles had spread ever since the establishment of the church in Hungary, and the dedications to Martha, Barbara and Katherine show the local tradition of Körmöcbánya and symbolize the prominent role of these saints in the town.

Even though there is no evidence of the church's existence before the fifteenth century, there are earlier sources that may refer to the cult of St

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84 Urbán, "Pálos zarándokhelyek," 63–94.

85 The hospital of Győr from 1420, see: Mályusz et al., *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, VII, no. 2018, and the hospital of Veszprém in 1474, see: Pásztor, *A magyarság vallásos élete*, 76; Somogyi, *A középkori Magyarország szegénységje*, 103; Kubinyi, "Orvoslás, gyógyszerészek," 264.

86 Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai katolikus*, 21–22.

87 "filialis ecclesie Sancti Katherine" MNL OL, DF, 249 876.; Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai katolikus*, 22.

88 Kriško, "Körmöczbánya," 88.

89 The main altar of the church was consecrated in 1715 to St Katherine. Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai vártemplom*, 10.

90 Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai katolikus*, 20–21.

91 Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai vártemplom*.

92 MNL OL, DF, 249856. Krizkó incorrectly read Martin instead of Martha. Krizkó, *A körmöcbányai katolikus*, 20–21.

Katherine. She is depicted on some of the town's medieval seals. The earliest remnant seal of Körmöcbánya is dated to 1331.<sup>93</sup> This seal – according to the prevailing view<sup>94</sup> – depicts St Katherine with the Angevin coat of arms on one side and her attribute, the wheel, on the other. The circumscription reads “S[IGILLUM] · CIVITATIS · REGIS · KAROLI · DE · CREMNICA”. Nevertheless, Teodor Lamoš has identified the figure on the seal as that of the Hungarian king Charles I,<sup>95</sup> who presumably granted the town its seal and its privileges at about the same time.<sup>96</sup> The later seals, however, definitely depict St Katherine. Jozef Novák has found one such from 1405.<sup>97</sup> A charter of 1407 refers to its seal as *sigillum nostre civitatis magnum*, which implies that the town had at least two seals.<sup>98</sup> The second known seal depicts a standing figure with a sword and a wheel with sharp knives (St Katherine). Under the figure is the Angevin coat of arms, and the circumscription is “S[IGILLUM] · SECRETUM · CIVIUM · CREMPNYCZIE”.<sup>99</sup> The third medieval seal depicts the broken wheel with sharp knives, the attribute of St Katherine.<sup>100</sup>

Considering that the town's medieval seals contained Katherine's figure and/or her attribute, and later a church was consecrated to her honor, she must have been the patron saint of the town in the Middle Ages.

The earliest seal of Szomolnok dates from the fourteenth century, and depicts St Katherine with a miner on her side.<sup>101</sup> According to the literature, the *titulus* of the medieval parish church is not known, but there was a chapel dedicated to Virgin Mary.<sup>102</sup> However, a document dated 1421 proves that the

93 MNL OL, DF, 250 152.

94 E.g. Darvasy, *Középkori városaink*, 14–15; Körmendi, “Les saints patrons,” 152–53; Štefánik and Lukačka, *Lexikon Stredovekjých*, 229.

95 Lamoš, *Vznik a počiatky*, 135, 211. As cited in Štefánik and Lukačka, *Lexikon Stredovekjých*, 229.

96 Körmendi, “Les saints patrons,” 152–53.

97 Novák, *Erby miest*, 58–63.

98 MNL OL, DF, 249 454.

99 Štefánik and Lukačka, *Lexikon Stredovekjých*, 229. This seal cannot be found in the MNL OL, DL, DF database, because the database contains just few pictures of seals. Kriško published the drawings of the seals: Kriško, “Körmöczbánya,” 116, MNL OL, DF, 249 966. was corroborated with this seal. The (German) charter refers to the seal as “stat secret”.

100 According to Kriško, “Körmöczbánya,” 116, this seal was already used in 1452. This charter refers its seal as “gewonlichem statsigel” the common seal of the town (MNL OL, DF, 250 169.), an image of the seal can be found from 1477. MNL OL, DL, 63265. See: Bándi “A Magyar Országos Levéltár,” 96.

101 Štefánik and Lukačka, *Lexikon Stredovekjých*, 441.

102 Ibid., 442.; Mező, *Patrociniumok*, 468.

parish church was dedicated to St Katherine in the Middle Ages (*ad ecclesiam in Smölnicz in honore Beate Katherine*).<sup>103</sup>

The cult of St Katherine in Selmecebánya started in the second half of the fifteenth century. A chapel dedicated to her in 1444 was transformed into a church in the second half of the fifteenth century. On April 2, 1489, 100 days indulgence was given to those who helped in fitting out the church.<sup>104</sup> The founder of the main altar, Andreas Hillebrand (notary and mine entrepreneur), and the priest Johannes Galler, were granted indulgences in 1496 and 1500 respectively.<sup>105</sup> The church was consecrated in 1500, the main donators being the burghers of the town, such as Susana Ferczkin, who donated money and personal estates to St Katherine's Church.<sup>106</sup> Andreas Hillebrand bestowed to the church 10 florins and 1 florin each to its priests, and left 40 florins to the parish church of Virgin Mary in his will. His larger donation to Virgin Mary's may have been prompted by his greater support of St Katherine's during his lifetime.<sup>107</sup> The high altar has not survived, but it must have been richly decorated and monumental, because three statues presumed to have belonged to it have survived the centuries, and they are each two meters high. They represent the Virgin Mary, St Katherine and St Barbara.<sup>108</sup> There was also a confraternity dedicated to her honor in Selmecebánya.<sup>109</sup>

The main reason behind Barbara's and Katherine's role as protector of miners was their reputation as powerful intercessors. Barbara – according to her legend – promised her efficacious intercession at the hour of death, and thus became the patron saint of good death. The common perception was that if one were to die without the last sacrament and the Eucharist burdened by deadly sins, one would end up in Hell. Barbara's role as protector against sudden death was strengthened in the fourteenth century due to the legend written by John of Wakkerzeel.<sup>110</sup> Barbara became the patron saint of miners because of the unhealthy and dangerous working conditions that put them at high risk of sudden death and because she had taken shelter in the mountains when she was

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103 Mályusz et al., *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, VIII, no. 965.

104 Poszler, "Selmecebánya," 126.

105 Mojzer, "A festő hagyatéka," 19.

106 MNL OL, DF, 235 108.

107 Mojzer, "A festő hagyatéka," 20.

108 Végh, "A selmecebányai," 113–20.

109 MNL OL, DF, 235 108.

110 Wolf, *The Old Norse-Icelandic*, 22–28.

chased.<sup>111</sup> Since Katherine, according to the *Legenda Aurea*, promised to listen to the appeals of those who would honor her memory, Louis Réau has suggested that Katherine could also be a protector at death.<sup>112</sup>

In this chapter I have tried to illustrate St Katherine's role in some Upper Hungarian mining towns. In the following paragraphs I turn to the veneration of St Katherine in the free royal towns during the heyday of her cult. One cannot find churches dedicated to her in these towns, but her cult appears through confraternities, altars and visual representations.

### *The Heyday of the Cult in Upper Hungarian Towns*

The cult of St Katherine appeared in several towns other than mining towns in Upper Hungary in the course of the fifteenth century. They were also mostly inhabited by Germans, which means that Katherine's cult there was subject to intensive German influence. Developments in Pozsony stand as an illustration of how Katherine's example transcended the clerical model and became available for imitation by the laity. Pozsony is particularly interesting because many more sources have survived the centuries there than in other parts of the kingdom, and the ecclesiastical history of the town has been thoroughly researched.<sup>113</sup> I have mentioned earlier that the Cistercians founded a chapel dedicated to St Katherine. With the increasing veneration toward the virgin martyrs, their cult extended to a wider section of the population. Married women and widows were encouraged to follow Katherine's example at the end of the Middle Ages as part of the late medieval transformation by which saints were presented as more real and familiar characters.<sup>114</sup> In the fifteenth century, the private chapel of the monastic order became the public chapel of the burghers of Pozsony. The popularity of the chapel among the laity reached its peak in the sixteenth century, as attested by several donations recorded in surviving testaments. The chapel acquired an even greater importance in 1529, when the suburban parishes and the hospital were demolished.<sup>115</sup> The cult of Katherine may have been fostered by intensive trade relations with Western Europe. The South German towns – mainly Augsburg and Nuremberg – started to exert significant commercial

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111 Burke, *Popular Culture*, 35.

112 Réau, *Iconographie*, 3:264.

113 Majorossy, "Church in Town."

114 Huizinga, *Waning*, 166.

115 Majorossy, "Church in Town," 375, 379. N. 108.

influence on the Hungarian Kingdom in the early decades of fifteenth century. Consequently, merchants living along the Danube were allied by matrimony as well as by commercial contacts. The popularity of Katherine and the other virgin martyrs was also manifested in the tradition of personal names. According to the late medieval testaments in Pozsony, the most frequent names were those of the *virgines capitales*.<sup>116</sup>

The testaments also record the increasing popularity of Katherine among women. The sources provide information about a guild dedicated to St Katherine in Eperjes (Preschau, now Prešov), but St Katherine's patronage of craft guilds is recorded in only two cases in the whole country.<sup>117</sup> Two confraternities were dedicated to St Katherine in Upper Hungary. One was in Kassa (Kaschau, now Košice), dated to the sixteenth century,<sup>118</sup> and the other was the confraternity of Selmecbánya, mentioned above. Fortunately, several surviving charters concern donations to the St Katherine's guild of Eperjes and throw some light upon the ethnic and gender composition of the testators. The guild was established by the furriers (*fraternitas pellificium alias beatae Katherinae*) in the mid-fifteenth century, but many of the donators were not furriers, which highlights the importance of the altar among the burghers.<sup>119</sup> The altar was occasionally supported by the town, the council donating two florins for its consecration in 1500 and 1501.<sup>120</sup> Most of the donators were women, like Ursula Harenbocken,<sup>121</sup> Ursula, the widow of Jorg Cromer,<sup>122</sup> and Katherine Mathien,<sup>123</sup> whose names indicate German origins. The donators frequently left money for vestments and the celebration of mass, but clothes were also often bequeathed to the altar. An investigation of the wills of Eperjes shows that women preferred to donate items in their possession. Lucia left her best gold-embroidered cloak to the altar of the Virgin Mary and one green tunic to the altar of Katherine.<sup>124</sup> Clara bequeathed dresses to the

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116 Szende, *Ottbon a városban*, 38, 96, 103.

117 The other guild, dedicated to Katherine, was the fishermen's guild in Sopron. Házi, *Sopron*, 305–08.

118 Kerekes, "Kassa polgársága," 104–05. Moreover, confraternities were dedicated to her honor in Transylvania: in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, Beszterce/Bistrița/Bistritz), Nagydemeter/Dumitra/Mettersdorf). Florea, "The Cult of the Saints," 119. There were two confraternities in Buda. Pásztor, *A magyarság vallásos élete*, 32.

119 The guild's statutes were issued in 1451, while the first mention of the altar, dedicated to St Katherine is dated to 1462. Kubinyi, "Vallásos társulatok," 344, 348.

120 Domenová, "Cirkev a prešovske bratstva," 58.

121 Iványi, *Eperjes*, no. 895.

122 Domenová, "A polgári háztartások," 131.

123 Iványi, *Eperjes*, no. 1201.

124 *Ibid.*, no. 1003.



altars of the guild of furriers and guild of cobblers,<sup>125</sup> (which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary).<sup>126</sup> Christina donated to the guild of St Katherine a lilac cloak with silver pendulum.<sup>127</sup> These women, by donating their own possessions, “were providing not only for their own households, but also for the household of God.”<sup>128</sup>

### Late Medieval Altarpieces Depicting St Katherine in Upper Hungary

Visual representations of the Fourteen Holy Helpers and the *virgines capitales* appeared on altarpieces in Hungary in the late fifteenth century.<sup>129</sup> The cults of these two groups spread simultaneously in the Upper Hungarian region. The veneration of the Holy Helpers flourished among Upper Hungarian citizens. An altar in Kassa is the first (in 1483) to be mentioned as being dedicated to them,<sup>130</sup> and there is also a surviving fourteenth-century missal from Kassa into which the text of their mass has been inserted later.<sup>131</sup> There are several surviving altarpieces that represent all fourteen of the saints,<sup>132</sup> but separate sub-groups were more popular. More than sixty surviving altarpieces from the Upper Hungarian region depict saintly women classed among the four principal virgin martyrs, but Katherine, Dorothy, Margaret and Barbara as the group of *virgines capitales* are joined together only on thirteen of these.<sup>133</sup> The virgin martyrs were frequently represented together with the iconographical theme of

125 Ibid., no. 921.

126 “*Fraternitas sutorum, alias ad altare Marie virginis.*” Ibid., no. 886.

127 Ibid., no. 863.

128 Lucraft, *Katherine Snyynford*, 105.

129 Kölnei, “A tizennégy segítőszent,” 101–37.

130 Bálint, *Ünnepi kalendárium*, 3:40.

131 Radó, *Nyomatott liturgiкус*, 29.

132 Lívia Kölnei counted ten medieval representations of the Holy Helpers on altarpieces, Kölnei, “A tizennégy segítőszent,” 127–35.

133 1. Altar of the Nativity of the Lord, Bártfa (end of 15th c.) 2. High Altar of Virgin Mary, Sztankahermány/Hermanovce, c. 1500–25) 3. Altar of Our Lady of Snows, Lőcse (1494–1500) 4. Altar of Virgin Mary, Liptószentmiklós/Liptovský Mikuláš/Liptau-Sankt-Nikolaus, 1470–80) 5. Altar of Virgin Mary, Bakabánya (Pukanec/Pukantz (1480–90) 6. High Altar of the Crucifixion, Bakabánya (end of 15th c.) 7. Altar of Annunciation to Virgin Mary, Kisszeben/Sabinov/Zeben (c. 1520) 8. Altar of Virgin Mary, Háromszécs/Sliache, 1510–20) 9. Altar of Virgin Mary, Szepeszombat/Spišská Sobota/Georgenberg (c. 1470) 10. The so called Small Altar of Crucifixion, Szepesszombat 1510–20) 11. High Altar of St Katherine, Csütörtökhely (1490–1500), 12. Altar of Virgin Mary, Kakaslomnic (1494) 13. High Altar of Virgin Mary, Farkasfalva/Vlková/Farksdorf, c. 1480) Potuckova, “Virginity, Sanctity,” 27, 59–70.

the Virgin and Child.<sup>134</sup> The iconography of late medieval altarpieces depicting the *virgines capitales* have been analyzed from a gendered point of view in the work of Kristina Potuckova.<sup>135</sup>

Four individual altars dedicated to Katherine have survived in Szepes County: in Lőcse (Leutschau, now Levoča), Késmárk (Käsmark, now Kežmarok), Felsőrépás (Oberripsch, now Vyšné Repaše) and Csütörtökhely (Donnersmarkt, now Spišský Štvrtok). Lőcse was a royal free town and Késmárk a privileged town, while the other two were villages nearby. In the shrine of the altar of Késmárk (1493) Katherine was portrayed in the company of Barbara and Margaret.<sup>136</sup>

An altar was dedicated to Katherine in the church of St James in Lőcse in 1469.<sup>137</sup> The images of the open wings depict four episodes from her life. The pictures illustrate her dispute with the philosophers, her beheading, her torture, and the wheel of her martyrdom. Katherine with her fellow virgin martyrs were represented on other altars of Lőcse: the altar of *Vir dolorum* (1476–90) and the altar of Our Lady of Snows (1494–1500). There was another altar dedicated to Katherine in Lőcse (1510–20), transported there from its original location, the church of St Katherine in Felsőrépás.<sup>138</sup> In the shrine of an altar from Csütörtökhely dating from 1440–50, and today located in Nagyturány (Turany), Katherine tramples down Maxentius and is accompanied by statues of Barbara, Margaret, Dorothy and Ursula. The open wings depict Katherine's dispute, her tortures, her beheading and the saint with the wheel.<sup>139</sup> Her legend appears also on other Upper Hungarian altars. The closed wings of the *Vir dolorum* altar in Bártfa (Bartfeld, now Bardejov) represent four episodes of her legend. In the first scene, Katherine disputes with the philosophers. This is followed by the converted scholars burning at the stake, and the last two panels depict scenes of her martyrdom: the wheel and her beheading.<sup>140</sup> Two scenes of the altar of Virgin Mary in Pónik (Poniky) from 1512 depict the philosophers burning in the

134 Marosi and Beke, *Magyarországi művészet*, 1:212. Chlumská, *Obrazy z legendy*, 51.

135 Potuckova, "Virginité, Sanctité."

136 The images of the open wings depict Dorothy, Apollonia, Agnes and Ursula. See: Rados, *Magyar oltárok*, 50.

137 Shrine: Katherine, Barbara, Margaret, Closed wings: *Mater dolorosa*, *Vir Dolorum*. Potuckova, "Virginité, Sanctité," 62.

138 Shrine: Katherine, open wings: Barbara and Dorothy, closed wings: Apollonia and Odilia. Potuckova, "Virginité, Sanctité," 63.

139 Closed wings: Virgin Mary's annunciation, St Stephen and St Emeric, Angel from Annunciation, St Nicholas and St Ladislav. Potuckova, "Virginité, Sanctité," 38; Marosi and Beke, *Magyarországi művészet*, 1:723; 2:587, no. 1803–04.

140 Rados, *Magyar oltárok*, 44.

flames and the martyrdom of Katherine. Four scenes of Katherine's life have survived on panel paintings (c. 1520) from the episcopal palace of Szepeshely, but the original location of the altar is unknown. These scenes represent Katherine in front of the ruler, her dispute with the philosophers, the stake of the philosophers and the martyrdom of Katherine.<sup>141</sup>

It is clearly visible that the iconographic program of the altars emphasized Katherine's martyrdom and erudition. She was able to defeat her enemies, the enemies of Christianity.<sup>142</sup> Her portrayal together with other virgin martyrs puts her own virginity into the focus of devotion. As Stanley E. Weed argues, "Virginity granted the four an especially prominent place in the heavenly realm, for they were not just martyr saints, but the brides of Christ. With this perceived closeness, they served as ideal intercessors to not only Christ, but also to the Virgin Mary, with whom they were frequently depicted."<sup>143</sup> Katherine's primary role as an intercessor was highlighted by the epigraph on the panel painting of the altar of Késmárk which asks Katherine to pray for us.<sup>144</sup>

In addition to these altarpieces depicting Katherine's martyrdom and erudition, there is a unique representation<sup>145</sup> of her legend in the panel paintings of Bát (Frauenmarkt, now Bátovce), dating from 1420–1430. This illustrates the conversion of Katherine. In the first scene, she looks at herself in the mirror and seeks the perfect fiancé. In the second scene, a hermit gives her a picture of the Virgin and Child.<sup>146</sup> Then comes a scene of her mystic marriage, which was especially popular in Late Middle Ages.<sup>147</sup>

Although intercession may have been St Katherine's primary role in medieval religiosity, her status as a role model made her especially popular, because virginity was always an ideal of Christianity.

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141 Magyar Nemzeti Galéria [Hungarian National Gallery], no. 1, 55. 914. 1–5. Végh, "Ismeretlen Szent Katalin sorozat," 79; Mikó, "Alexandriai Szent Katalin," 163.

142 Gerát, *Legendary Scenes*, 129.

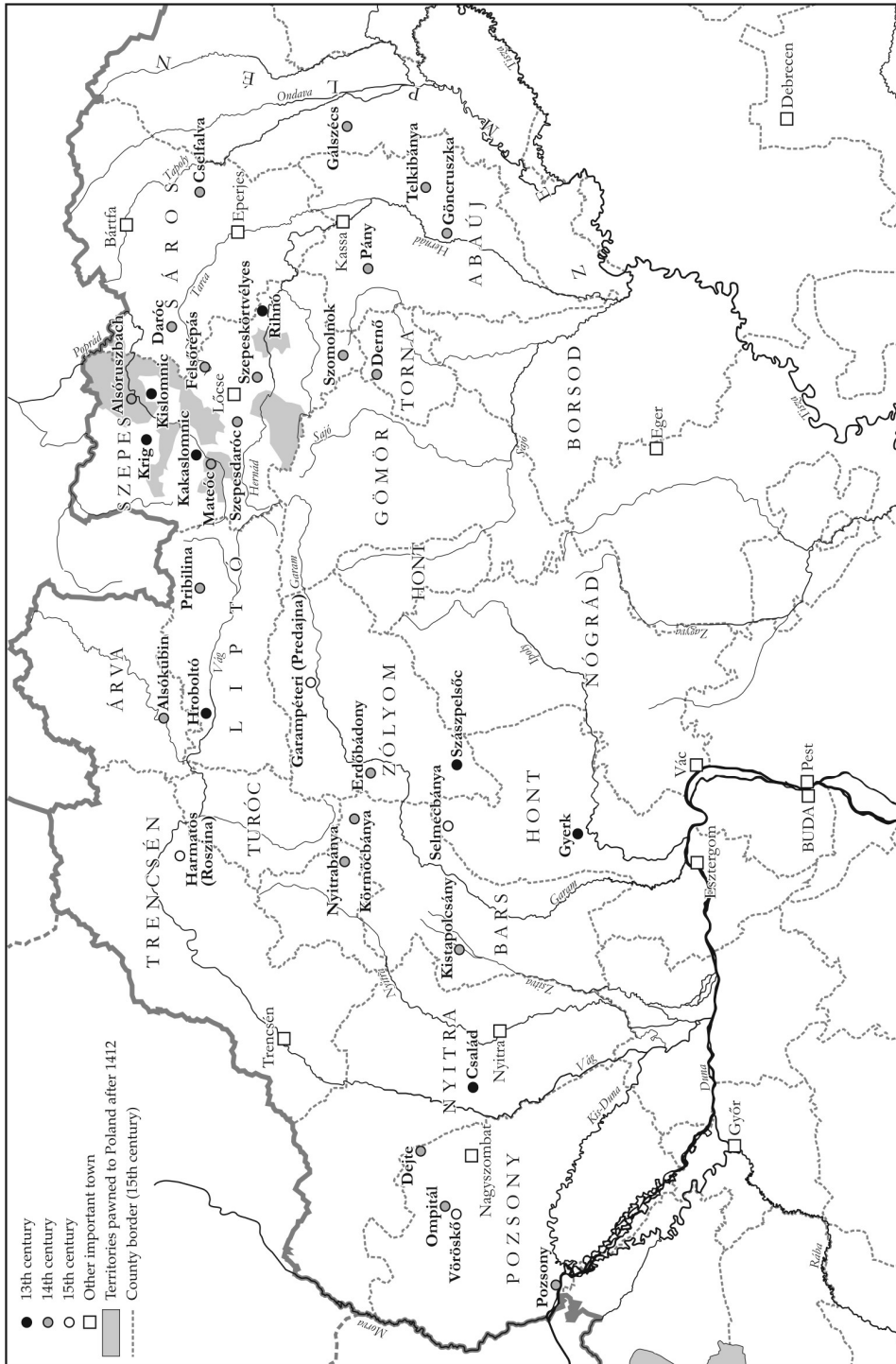
143 Weed, "Venerating," 1074.

144 "Sancta Katherina. ora. pro. nobis. deum. a- m- 493." Rados, *Magyar oltárok*, 50.

145 Réau, *Iconographie*, 268.

146 Poszler, "Két jelenet," 623; Schill, "Ikonographie und Kult," 336.

147 Gerát, *Legendary Scenes*, 173.



Patrocinia of Saint Katherine in medieval Upper Hungary

Map 1

## Conclusion

In this article I have demonstrated the cult of St Katherine in the towns of Upper Hungary during the Middle Ages. The cult of St Katherine arrived in Hungary in the second half of the thirteenth century and was fostered by German settlers. The first promoters of Katherine's cult might have been the ancestors of the Berzeviczy and Görgey families in Upper Hungary.

The intercessory power of St Katherine was emphasized in her legend, and it was through this that she became the patron saint of several Upper Hungarian mining towns, something of a departure from her generic European cult. That she was venerated as a miner's saint is clear from her popularity as a patron saint of mining towns. The only churches dedicated to her in Upper Hungary are in mining towns and rural areas (See Map 1). In some cases, the seals of these towns also depicted St Katherine. The saints to which the most churches in the principal mining towns were dedicated were the Virgin Mary, St Elizabeth of Thuringia and St Katherine (see Table 1). It seems that she was popular among miners together with St Barbara. The main reason behind St Katherine's popularity might be that she and St Barbara helped at the hour of death. The heyday of St Katherine's cult was in the late Middle Ages, just as the cult of the Fourteen Holy Helpers was also flourishing. In the late Middle Ages, she was venerated in the free royal towns, where confraternities and altars were dedicated to her. The donations to her altars indicate her increasing popularity in Upper Hungary. Being the bride of Christ, she mainly appealed to women. The altarpieces depicting St Katherine emphasize her martyrdom, her erudition and her virginity, conveying the message that her efficacious intercessory power derived from her chastity and martyrdom.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Bakabánya                        | St Nicholas, All Saints   |
| Bélabánya/Banská Belá/Düllen     | St John   |
| Besztercebánya                   | Virgin Mary, St Anthony's Chapel, St Elizabeth, St Nicholas, St Jerome and <b>St Barbara's Chapel</b>   |
| Breznóbánya/Breznó/Bries/Briesen | Virgin Mary   |
| Gölnicbánya/Gelnica/Göllnitz     | Virgin Mary   |
| Körmöcbánya                      | Virgin Mary, <b>St Katherine</b> , St Andrew's Chapel (originally St Michael's Chapel), St Elizabeth's Hospital, Chapel of St John the Baptist. |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Libetbánya/Lubietová/Libethen | Mary Magdalene, St Anne’s Chapel, St Elizabeth’s Hospital  |
| Nyitrabánya                   | <b>St Katherine</b>  |
| Selmecbánya                   | Virgin Mary, <b>St Katherine</b> , St Anne’s Chapel, St Elizabeth’s Hospital, Corpus Christi Chapel, St Michael’s Ossuary, St Nicholas’ Chapel |
| Szomolnok                     | <b>St Katherine</b> , Chapel of the Virgin Mary  |
| Újbánya/Nová Baňa/Königsberg  | Virgin Mary, St Elizabeth’s Hospital   |

Table 1

Dedications of churches and chapels in the principal mining towns of medieval Upper Hungary. Based on this article and Mező, *Patrocíniumok*, passim.

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