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ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITIONAL HERITAGE OF CROATS

Summary

St. Catherine of Alexandria is one of fourteen God's assistants. She is the heavenly bride of Christ. She is venerated as a saint and martyr in Western and Eastern Church. She is worshiped by the Anglicans and Lutherans. Dying a martyr's death she witnessed the faith of Christ in the year 307 during the Emperor Daie II. St. Catherine is the patroness of girls and women, philosophers, theologians, educators, students, book publishers, colleges and libraries. Catholic Croats highly worship St. Catherine. This is evidenced by the modern: prayers to this saint, verified legends, and Catherine's lamentations. The paper quotes some fifteen examples which are published for the first time. During the Turkish occupation the Croats were married on the feast of St. Catherine. On that day in one place on some occasions about sixty boys and girls would be married. This custom was introduced due to the right of the first wedding night, and Croatian tradition preserved this custom to the 60s of the twentieth century.

Key words: *St. Catherine of Alexandria, prayers, verified legends, Catherine's lamentations*