

When Katherine was fourteen she had a vision. A woman and her child appeared, and they were as real as anything else in Alexandria. The vision changed her point of view.

The vision mattered more than she did. The idea of the thing she saw was immaterial but legend, and she, the girl, unreal.

Katherine's family was wealthy and educated, and she visited the library. She visited the emperor to tell him what she thought.

He put her in the center of a room filled with men, and they argued, and she articulated her abstractions with gravity. They orbited her, convinced.

She rejected the emperor's proposal.

KELLY KRUMRIE

Hypatia on St. Katherine

My father took me to the library every day, and I lived there among recorded history, and I wrote in the margins of my father's texts, and others' texts, but all of my markings are lost.

The astrolabe solved problems relating to time and the position of the sun and stars in the sky. It was a disc that held other discs that turned and aligned.

I showed my suitor my menstrual rag, and he left. I dressed as men dressed.

The emperor sentenced her to torture and death. He killed his own wife. He had Katherine brought to a wheel—another circle in which her body could be the center, centripetal and centrifugal, calling to her god and her cult—but when she touched it, it shattered.

Her brain was filled with information, and her eyes saw things that could not be substantiated, and her mouth let out metaphysical claims. Her head was cut off with a sword. Milk poured from the openings.

500 years later, her body was found near a mountain, a little figure inside a huge composition. Oil seeped continuously from her form. Things that weren't part of her body came out of her body.

Her story may be confused with that of one or more others.

From above the great wheels of my chariot they pulled me to the ground, and I fell, and they dragged me through the street.

The pottery shards took over my body. Acute angles cut me open, and I bled out on the floor of the temple.

The hydrometer measured liquids to test the weights of waters. I

calculated conics,
Euclid's lines, Diophantus's squares, Ptolemy's path of the planets.

I had a presumed interest in dreams.

Notes:

“Her story may be confused with that of one or more others.”

—“St. Catherine of Alexandria,” www.catholic.org

“[The astrolabe solved] problems relating to time and the position of the sun and stars in the sky.”

—“The Astrolabe: An instrument with a past and a future,”
<https://www.astrolabes.org/>

“a little figure inside a huge composition” is taken from an article in *Frieze* on the artist Evelyn Taocheng Wang. She says in her film *The Interview*: “Beauty should belong to when the human body dissolving [sic] into a natural environment. [In classical Chinese painting] you could see little figures [...] but always inside the huge composition of the mountains.”

“[I had a] presumed interest in... dreams.”

—*Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr*,
Michael A.B. Deakin