

# The Parish Monstrance of St. Kolumba: Community Pride and Eucharistic Devotion in Cologne around 1400

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The Church of St. Kolumba was the oldest and richest parish church in late gothic Cologne.<sup>1</sup> However, Baroque and Rococo remodeling, secularization under the French, and Allied bombing in World War II led to the loss or disbursement of most of its treasures (Figure 1). Late gothic panel paintings from St. Kolumba's, including Rogier van der Weyden's St. Kolumba Altarpiece and several anonymous masterpieces, receive the greatest amount of art historical attention.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the four remaining pieces of medieval goldsmithwork from the parish church, now in the Cologne Cathedral Treasury, are largely ignored. They consist of a shrine-shaped crystal reliquary from the late twelfth century, a small silver reliquary monstrance from the mid-fifteenth century (Figure 2), and two exquisite pieces from around 1400, a highly ornamented processional cross and a large, beautifully worked host monstrance titled, for purposes of discussion here, the Kolumba Monstrance (Figure 3).<sup>3</sup> This paper suggests that the magnifi-

cent Kolumba Monstrance was not the donation of a single wealthy patron but of the parish as a whole, and that it represented the community pride and Eucharistic devotion of the parish well into the modern era.

The term *monstrance* refers to a vessel that is used to display the consecrated Host for veneration by the faithful, whether it is placed upon an altar or used in procession.<sup>4</sup> Monstrances developed as a result of the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi in 1264.<sup>5</sup> This new feast was intended to celebrate the sacrificial, redeeming and miraculous nature of the consecrated Host. The earliest statutes and offices for the feast of Corpus Christi simply mention that the consecrated Host should be honored with readings and hymns.<sup>6</sup> Exposition of and processions with the Host came later. The first documented Corpus Christi procession was held at the church of St. Gereon in Cologne before 1277.<sup>7</sup> Following the earlier custom of not exposing the Host except at the moment of el-

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard Hegel, *St. Kolumba in Köln: Eine mittelalterliche Großstadtpfarrei in ihrem Werden und Vergehen*, Studien zur Kölner Kirchengeschichte 30 (Siegburg: Verlag Franz Schmitt, 1996) 37-40.

<sup>2</sup> Recent studies of interest include: Alfred Acres, "The Columba Altarpiece and the Time of the World," *Art Bulletin* 80.3 (Sept., 1998): 422-451; Angela Kulenkampff, "Stifter und Stiftungen in der Pfarre St. Kolumba in Köln in der Zeit von 1464-1487," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 48/49 (1987/88): 443-452; Kulenkampff, "Der Dreikönigsaltar (Columba-Altar) des Rogier van der Weyden: Zur Frage seines ursprünglichen Standortes und des Stifters," *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein insbesondere die alte Erzdiözese Köln* 192-193 (1990): 9-46.

<sup>3</sup> Leonie Becks and Rolf Lauer, *Die Schatzkammer des Kölner Domes*, Meisterwerke des Kölner Domes 6, ed. Barbara Schock-Werner and Rolf Lauer (Cologne: Verlag Kölner Dom, 2000), cat. 52, 61, 78, 80, pp. 41, 47, 54, 55; Walter Schulten, *Der Kölner Domschatz* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1980), cat. 26, 27, 36, 82, pp. 18-19, 21, 120-1.

<sup>4</sup> The most complete studies of the liturgical function of the monstrance and its historical and stylistic development are by Joseph Braun and Lotte Perpeet-Frech. Joseph Braun, *Das christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein*

*und in seiner Entwicklung* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1932) 348-411; Lotte Perpeet-Frech, *Die gotischen Monstranzen im Rheinland*, Bonner Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft 7 (Düsseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag, 1964) 9-67. Holger Guster is currently writing a dissertation on the formal development of the earliest monstrances under the guidance of Johann Michael Fritz. Other useful studies include: Anton Joseph Binterim, "Über die heutigen Monstranzen (Schauegefäße) für das allerheiligste Sacrament," in Binterim, *Die vorzüglichsten Denkwürdigkeiten der Christ-Katholischen Kirche aus den ersten, mittlern und letzten Zeiten*, vol. 7 (Mainz: Simon Müller, 1833) 365-376; J. Corblet, "Des ostensoirs," in "Des vases et des ustensiles eucharistiques," part 8, *Revue de l'Art chrétien*, ns 4 (1886): 49-58; Édouard Dumoutet, *Le désir de voir l'hostie et les origines de la dévotion au Saint-Sacrement* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1926) 80-85; Peter Browe, *Die Verehrung der Eucharistie im Mittelalter* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1933) 98-102; Michel Andrieu, "Aux origines du culte du Saint-Sacrement: reliquaires et monstrances eucharistiques," *Analecta Bollandiana* 47 (1950): 397-418; Charles C. Kovacs III, "Monstrances," in *Eucharistic Vessels of the Middle Ages*, exhibition catalogue (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University and Garland Publishing, Inc., 1975) 97-103.

<sup>5</sup> The feast was established when Urban IV published the bull *Transiturus de hoc mundo* in 1264. The text of the bull is printed in: Peter Browe, *Textus antiqui de festo Corporis Christi*, Opuscula et textus, Series Liturgica, ed. Richard Stapper and A. Rucker, Fasc. IV (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1934) 27-33.

<sup>6</sup> Browe (1934) 1-40; C. Lambot, "L'Office de la Fête-Dieu; aperçus nouveaux sur ses origines," *Revue Benedictine* 54 (1942): 95-123.

<sup>7</sup> The document describing the institution of Corpus Christi and the procession at St. Gereon was first published, with commentary, by Richard Stapper and later included in Peter Browe's collection of texts relating to Corpus Christi. Richard Stapper, "Der alte Gereonsaltar und die früheste Form der

evation, it was carried in a closed pyx. Although some churches continued to conceal the Host as late as the fourteenth century, the earliest known monstrance can be securely dated to 1286, and monstrance use was firmly established by the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Monstrances are constructed with central crystal vessels that, according to a document from 1343, allow their contents “to be better protected...and to lead the people to greater and better devotion.”<sup>9</sup> The Host is held upright in a *lunula*, a crescent-shaped holder that stands inside the central vessel. Though early monstrances had widely varied and experimental forms, by the late fourteenth century monstrances were being made according to standardized types.<sup>10</sup> The Kolumba Monstrance is a tower monstrance, the most popular type in the late gothic period, and the form of its spire, buttresses and carrying knob indicate that it was made in Cologne.<sup>11</sup>

Even among the highest quality tower monstrances, the Kolumba Monstrance ranks as an outstanding example of the goldsmith’s art. A comparison with the well made but more standard Cologne monstrance from Solingen-Gräfrath, also made around 1400, will help illustrate what makes the Kolumba Monstrance so extraordinary (Figure 4). At 88.5cm, the Kolumba Monstrance is among the tallest of its time, while the Solingen-Gräfrath Monstrance has a more typical height of 69.4cm. Both consist of a vertical crystal vessel within an elaborate silver gilt architectural framework supported by a stem, knob and foot.<sup>12</sup> But in the case of the Kolumba Monstrance, the goldsmith has gone far beyond fabricating the required elements. If we compare the two spires, it is clear

that the Kolumba Monstrance has more than just a simple buttressed chapel housing a cast figure of the Madonna. Instead, St. Kolumba stands within a web of delicate tracery and is surrounded by colonnettes, flying buttresses and cast pinnacles (Figure 5). A smaller chapel above her houses three additional virgin martyrs cast in silver. The dome of the spire, which also serves as the lid of the crystal vessel, is beautifully engraved with the symbols of the four evangelists. On most monstrances, this area would be studded with cut enameled flowers or left undecorated. Flowers can also be found at the center of spirals below the buttresses of most monstrances. The Kolumba Monstrance, however, has tiny animated corbel figures that appear to support each buttress. The stem and base of the crystal vessel, which receive only the most basic ornament on other pieces, are here decorated with colonnettes, overlapping ribs and fine crosshatching (Figure 6). The complex stepped base of the stem resembles that of a compound pier. This architectural emphasis suggests that the Kolumba goldsmith might have had the geometric design training recommended by the goldsmith Hans Schmuttermayer in his 1486 book on finial design.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the foot of the Kolumba Monstrance is a masterpiece in its own right (Figure 7). Each of the six lobes is engraved with an enthroned saint contained within a plain border and finely crosshatched background. In each lobe either a foot, a piece of drapery or a portion of throne overlaps the plain border. Compositionally and stylistically these enthroned saints resemble painting and manuscript illumination in Paris and the Low Countries. A strong comparison can be made with André Beauneveu’s miniatures of

Fronleichnamfeier in Köln,” *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein insbesondere die alte Erzdiözese Köln* 106 (1922): 130-141; Browe (1934) 44-46.

<sup>8</sup> A pyx was used in processions in Hildesheim (1301), Gerona (1320) and Barcelona (1322). The Host was hidden inside a chalice in processions at the Church of St. Martial in Limoges as late as 1470. Braun (1932) 355; Browe (1933) 98. The first monstrance, from 1286, was donated by Abbess Adelheid of Diest to her Cistercian Abbey at Herkenrode. The silver-gilt monstrance bears the mark of the royal gold and silver workshops of Paris as well as an inscription naming its patron and date of donation. The inscription reads: *Anno domini M cc lxxvi fecit istud vas fieri domina Heilwigis de Dist priorissa in herkenrode commemoracio in perpetuum cum fidelibus habeatur*. W. H. J. Weale, *Catalogue des objets d’art religieux du moyen âge, de la renaissance et des temps modernes; exposés à l’hotel Liedekirke à Malines septembre 1864*, 2d ed. (Brussels: Imprimerie de Charles Lelong, 1864) cat. 439, p. 76; Weale, *Instrumenta ecclesiastica: Choix d’objets d’art religieux du moyen-âge et de la renaissance exposés à Malines en septembre 1864* (Brussels: Simonau et Toovey, 1866) cat. 26; E. Maffei, *La réservation eucharistique jusqu’à la Renaissance* (Brussels: Vromant, 1942) 129, fig. 49; Andrieu (1950) 403; Robert Didier, catalogue entry, *Schatz aus den Trümmern: Der Silberschrein von Nivelles und die europäische Hochgotik* (Cologne: Verlag Locher, 1995) cat. 27; R.H. Marijnissen, “De monstrans van Herkenrode,” *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der schone Kunsten* 56.1 (1996): 81-6.

<sup>9</sup> “...soll sie Gottes Leichnam sehen lassen in der Cristallen dem Volk zu einer mehrern und bessern Andacht.” Staatsarchiv Nürnberg cod. man. 2, 38ff and 15, 25ff, in Xaver Haimerl, *Das Prozessionswesen des Bistums Bamberg im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1937; reprint, Hildesheim: Verlag Dr.

H.A. Gerstenberg, 1973) 51 (page citations are for the reprint edition).

<sup>10</sup> Braun describes a wide range of monstrance types in his study, but the more limited number of classifications given by Perpeet-Frech has enjoyed wider use by art historians. Braun (1932) 366-379; Perpeet-Frech 21-28.

<sup>11</sup> On the typical characteristics of a Cologne tower monstrance, see: Perpeet-Frech 26-7, 33-42.

<sup>12</sup> The damaged crystal of the Kolumba monstrance was replaced with glass after the cathedral treasury was burgled in 1975. A report on the theft and its effect on the monstrance can be found in: Peter Bolg and Paula Zieleskiewicz, “Der Domschatzraub 1975: Restaurierungs- und Wiederherstellungsbericht,” *Kölner Domblatt* 60 (1995): 269-72.

<sup>13</sup> Schmuttermayer dedicated his booklet to the glory of God, the church, and: “alle(n) maisteren vn gesellen die sich diser hohen vn freyen kunst der Geometria geprauchten ir gemute speculirung vnd ymaginacion dem ware(n) grunt des maswercks paß zuunterwerffen nach gedencken vnd ein zu wurtzeln.” Ulrich Coenen, *Die spätgotischen Werkmeisterbücher in Deutschland: Untersuchung und Edition der Lehrschriften für Entwurf und Ausführung von Sakralbauten*, Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft 35 (Munich: scaneg Verlag, 1990) 42, 353. It is also possible that the goldsmith was working from design drawings produced by someone else, perhaps an architect in the employ of the parish or the cathedral. Several contracts and payment records refer to designs and models that were produced by someone other than the goldsmith, for example the goldsmith Jorg Ziechlin, who made the *fisierung* for a monstrance that was ordered from the goldsmith Hanns Schmidt in 1484. Justus Bier, “Riemenschneider as a Goldsmith’s Model Maker,” *Art Bulletin* 37.2 (1955): 110, note 59; Walther Karl Zülch, *Frankfurter Künstler, 1223-1700* (Frankfurt: Verlag Sauer & Auvermann, 1907) 221.

prophets in the Psalter of Jean, Duc du Berry.<sup>14</sup> There was a great deal of artistic exchange between Cologne and Paris and the Low Countries, and the Kolumba goldsmith has adapted the imported style, masterfully designing these enthroned saints specifically for the lobes of the monstrance foot. The feet of most other monstrances are decorated with scrollwork or with simple figural compositions that do not take the shape of the lobes into account.<sup>15</sup>

Although no contract or payment records survive for the Kolumba Monstrance, it is possible to use surviving financial documents to estimate its cost. Cologne goldsmiths, according to a document of 1372, received wages that were dependent upon the silver weight and complexity of the objects they

made.<sup>16</sup> From surviving contracts and payment records, it is clear that goldsmiths were paid significantly less for simple objects like beakers and rings than they were for large, complex host monstrances.<sup>17</sup> For a ring, the goldsmith's wage might be as little as 5% the value of the silver, but for a monstrance the pay range was between 75 and 92% of the silver cost. A monstrance contract stated the names of the goldsmith and his patron or patrons, the name of the church, and any witnesses involved. The size of the monstrance in terms of its weight in silver, and the goldsmith's payment based upon that weight, were also stipulated. The purity of the silver would also be set. Additional materials, like rock crystal, gilding and precious stones were generally subject to a separate payment.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ohm was the first to indicate the similarities between the Kolumba monstrance foot and the illuminations of Beauneveu (c. 1386), but overestimated their importance (by assuming the goldsmith copied them) and misdated the monstrance (c. 1480). Fritz correctly states that although Beauneveu's miniatures are compositionally similar to the Kolumba engravings, the engravings reflect contemporary taste that can also be found in the Nicholas panel from Soest, attributed to Conrad of Soest (c. 1400), and the similarity of both to the Kolumba engravings reflects the large number of Netherlandish artists working in and around Cologne. Annaliese Ohm, "Rheinische Goldschmiedearbeiten der Spätgotik," *Trierer Zeitschrift* 22 (1953): 192; Johann Michael Fritz, *Gestochene Bilder: Gravierungen auf deutschen Goldschmiedearbeiten der Spätgotik*, Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher 20 (Cologne and Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1966) 90-99, cat. 358. For André Beauneveu's prophet miniatures, see: Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean, Duc de Berry: The Late Fourteenth Century and the Patronage of the Duke*, National Gallery of Art Kress Foundation Studies in the History of European Art 2 (London and New York: Phaidon, 1967) 135-40, 331-2.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, a monstrance donated by Hermann Starkmann of Cologne, c. 1430, in the Museum Schnütgen, Cologne, no. G97. Fritz (1966) 104, cat. 374; Perpeet-Frech, cat. 89.

<sup>16</sup> "Determinationem vero salarii certam non habent, sive fuerit operas deaurati sive non deaurati, sed illud attendunt et ponderant circa difficultatem et laboris quantitatem." July 22, 1372. The Cologne statement (found in von Loesch and in Korn) was in response to an attempt by the city of Breslau to standardize prices with Cologne and Brussels. Brussels was the only city with a documented price scale for goldsmithwork, and this, too, was dependent upon metal weight and difficulty of execution. According to the Brussels price scale, goldsmiths were paid 1 *muton d'or* per mark silver for simple tankards and cups and roughly double that rate for smaller, more intricate vessels containing approximately 1 ½ marks silver. The highest rate paid in Brussels was for a complex lady's girdle, for which the goldsmith received a sum equal to the cost of his materials. A summary of these negotiations and the content of the Brussels letter can be found in Karcher, and Korn prints the text of the Brussels letter. Heinrich von Loesch, ed., *Die kölnner Zunfturkunden nebst anderen kölnner Gewerbeurkunden bis zum Jahre 1500*, vol. 2 (Bonn: P. Hansteins Verlag, 1906) doc. 426; Georg Korn, ed., *Schlesische Urkunden zur Geschichte des Gewerberechts insbesondere des Innungswesens aus der Zeit vor 1400*, Codex Diplomaticus Silesiae, ed. Vereine für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens, Bd. 8 (Bratislava: Josef Max & Co., 1867) docs. 44-5; Richard Karcher, *Das deutsche Goldschmiedehandwerk bis ins 15. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1911) 88.

<sup>17</sup> For simpler objects, which constituted the goldsmith's everyday stock in trade, the most illuminating resources are the account book of Steffan Maignow, a goldsmith of Konstanz, and the records of Matthäus von Gent, a Cologne goldsmith in the employ of Archbishop Dietrich I. Wages for more complex secular goldsmithwork can be determined from records of payments made to Willem van Vlueten and other Bruges goldsmiths pub-

lished by van der Velden. Witte's collection of church financial records relating to art history is particularly helpful for determining pay rates for chalices and other church objects. Additional material can be found in records published by Merlo, Rott and von den Brincken. For Steffan Maignow, see: A. Nuglisch, "Das Geschäftsbuch des Konstanzer Goldschmiedes Steffan Maignow (1480-1500)," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F. Bd. XXII, (1907): 456-470; Johann Michael Fritz, catalogue entry, *Spätgotik am Oberrhein: Meisterwerke der Plastik und des Kunsthandwerks 1450-1530* (Karlsruhe: Badisches Landesmuseum, 1970) cat. 249; Fritz, "Goldschmiedekunst. Spätgotik am Oberrhein: Forschungsergebnisse und Nachträge zur Ausstellung im Badischen Landesmuseum 1970," *Jahrbuch der staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* 9 (1972): 185-6; Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1982) 60-61. For Matthäus von Gent, see: Paul Hübinger, "Zur Geschichte des Kölner Goldschmiedegewerbes im späten Mittelalter," *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein, insbesondere das alte Erzbistum Köln* 142-143 (1943): 263-270. For Willem van Vlueten (and several other goldsmiths in Bruges), see: Hugo van der Velden, "Defrocking St. Eloy: Petrus Christus's Vocational Portrait of a Goldsmith," *Simiolus* 26.4 (1998): 268-76. See also: Fritz Witte, "Kunsthistorische Notizen aus den Ausgaben- und Einnahmenregistern der Domfabrik zu Osnabrück 1415-1550," *Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst* 12 (1911): 378-384; Witte, *Quellen zur rheinischen Kunstgeschichte I: Rechnungsbücher des Niederrheins, Die Chronik des Wilmus*, vol. 5 of *Tausend Jahre deutscher Kunst am Rhein* (Berlin: Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1932); Johann Jacob Merlo, *Kölnische Künstler in alter und neuer Zeit* (Düsseldorf: Gesellschaft für Rheinischen Geschichtskunde, 1895, reprinted Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1966); Hans Rott, *Bodenseegebiet*, Vol. 1 of *Quellen und Forschungen zur sudwestdeutschen und schweizerischen Kunstgeschichte im XV. und XVI. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder Verlag, 1933); Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Regesten, part 1 of Das Stift St. Mariengraden zu Köln (Urkunden und Akten 1059-1817)*, Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln 57 (Cologne: Verlag Paul Neubner, 1969) 256.

<sup>18</sup> Five fifteenth century monstrance contracts have survived from Middle Europe (roughly modern-day Germany and large portions of its immediate neighbors). The earliest known monstrance contract, between Willem van Moudick and representatives of the parish church of St. John in Sambeek (1438), is not published. The archives of the Parish of Sint Jan de Doper, Sambeek, sent a typescript and a photocopy of this contract to me. Information about the contract can be found in: *Beelden uit Brabant: Laattogische kunst uit het oude hertogdom, 1400-1520*, exhibition catalogue (s'Hertogenbosch: Noordbrabants Museum, 1971), cat. 137; Fritz (1982) cat. 459. The contract between Hans Rutenzweig and the parish church of Porrentruy (1477) is published in: J. Trouillat, trans., "Le conseil de fabrique de Porrentruy fait marché avec Jean Rutenszweig, orfèvre à Bâle, pour la confection d'un ostensor en argent," *Momuments de l'histoire de l'ancien Evêche de Bâle* 5 (1867): doc. 179. The contract between Georg Seld and the church of Ss. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg (1486) can be found in: Ingrid S. Weber, "Drei Aufrisse spätgotischer Monstranzen im Stadtarchiv Ulm," *Pantheon* 36.1 (1978): note 36, pp. 29-30. Georg Schongauer's



A premium was placed upon high quality workmanship, and the best rates were paid for pieces that were “well and richly made,” as stipulated in a contract from 1487.<sup>19</sup> The Kolumba Monstrance contains just over 13a pounds of silver, and based on its exquisite workmanship, the goldsmith likely received the maximum price for his labor, worth approximately 12.3 pounds of silver.<sup>20</sup> Using late gothic records for bread prices in Cologne, it is possible to translate the price of this monstrance into something more tangible for a modern audience, that is, large loaves of rye bread, each weighing 7½ lbs.<sup>21</sup> The Kolumba Monstrance had a value equivalent to approximately 5,948 large loaves of rye. Its silver value was more than three times that of a monstrance donated by the bishop of Eichstätt to his cathedral in 1383, and nearly four times that of a monstrance donated by the wealthy Cologne landholder Henry de Cervo to the church of St. Mary ad Gradus in 1358.<sup>22</sup>

Given the splendor and expense of the Kolumba Monstrance, it seems surprising that it bears no indication of its patronage. There is no inscription, coat of arms or donor portrait visible on the Kolumba Monstrance. However, the monstrance does place particular emphasis upon the figure of St. Kolumba, who is recognizable by her attribute, a small

bear that saved her from rape and burning before she was finally beheaded.<sup>23</sup> Kolumba is the largest saint figure on the monstrance, and she occupies the spire chapel, a place customarily occupied by the Virgin and Child. Two other pieces from St. Kolumba’s, the processional cross from around 1400 and the small reliquary monstrance of the mid-fifteenth century also give prominence to the saint. Kolumba occupies the spire of the reliquary, which contains a thorn from Christ’s crown of thorns, and she stands in a niche at the base of the cross, just under a medallion with the symbol of St. John (Figures 2, 5 and 8). Like the Kolumba Monstrance, neither the reliquary monstrance nor the processional cross can easily be identified with a patron. Given the prominence of St. Kolumba, this paper argues that all three of these objects were donated by the parish as a whole. There are several examples of group patronage for monstrances; for example, the knob of the early fifteenth century monstrance in Gerresheim is inscribed *co(mun)is eley(mosyn)a me fecit*, indicating that the offerings of the community funded its creation.<sup>24</sup> On the Gerresheim Monstrance, too, the patron saints of the church are emphasized. The earliest known monstrance contract, from 1438, states that the monstrance in question was ordered on behalf

contract with the Parish of Porrentruy to replace Rutenzwig’s monstrance in 1487 has been published twice: in 1946 with a German translation (by Reinhardt and Rais) and by Rais in 1962 with additional documents related to the payment for the monstrance. Hans Reinhardt and André Rais, “Neue Beiträge zu einigen Stücken des Basler Münsterschatzes,” *Historisches Museum Basel: Jahresberichte und Rechnungen des Vereins für das Historische Museum und für Erhaltung baslerischer Altertümer und der Kommission zum Historischen Museum* (1946): 38-9; Rais, “L’histoire du Grand Ostenoir gothique de Porrentruy Œuvre de Georges Schongauer,” *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 22 (1962): 73-80, here 78-79. The contract between the goldsmiths Hans Payer and Master Frantz and the church in Neunkirchen (1490) is printed in: Heinrich Kohlhaussen, *Nürnberger Goldschmiedekunst des Mittelalters und der Dürerzeit: 1240 bis 1540* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1968) 220-21.

<sup>19</sup> “...bien faict et richement ouvres...” Rais (1962) 78.

<sup>20</sup> I have approximated the silver weight of the Kolumba monstrance based upon the weight of two other monstrances of similar size: the Kölner Dommonstranz (11.68 lbs) and the Ratingen Monstrance (18 lbs). The architecture of the Ratingen Monstrance is less open and much heavier in terms of silver weight than either the Kolumba Monstrance or the Kölner Dommonstranz. From the average of these two weights I have subtracted 1½ lbs for the approximate weight of the crystal (the crystal vessels are particularly thick and heavy in the Ratingen and Kolumba monstrances). For weights, see: Alexander Schnütgen, “Die silbervergoldete hochgothische Monstranz des Kölner Domes,” *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst* 9 (1899): 226; Arnold Dresen, *Die Ratinger Monstranz* (Ratingen: Max Wagner, 1913) 4.

<sup>21</sup> Bread prices in both coin and fine silver are recorded in the Cologne city archives and published in: Dietrich Ebeling and Franz Irsigler, *Getreideumsatz, Getreide- und Brotpreise in Köln: 1368-1797, Teil I: Getreideumsatz und Getreidepreise: Wochen-, Monats- und Jahrestabelle, Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln 57* (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1979) especially XV, LIII.

<sup>22</sup> Bishop Friedrich von Öttingen’s monstrance for Eichstätt is described in his biography: “Monstranciam deauratam valde pretiosam in pondere 15 habentem marcas argenti...” *Gesta episcoporum Eichstadiensium continuata*, MGH SS, XXV, 602. See also: Bauerreiss, Romauld, “Zur Entstehung der Fronleichnamprozession in Bayern,” *Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte* 21.3 (1960): 98. Henry de Cervo’s monstrance donation is from his will: “Item lego eisdem dominis magnam meam monstrantiam novam, in qua eucharistie sacramentum portari solet, de valore ottuaginta florenorum,” A. Heuser, “Das Testament des Heinrich von Hirtz,” *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein insbesondere die alte Erzdiözese Köln* 20 (1869): 85. The weight and a higher value for the monstrance are recorded in the memorial book (c. 1370) from the church of St. Mary ad Gradus in Cologne (7 marks weight and 83 florins value). Von den Brincken 256. For my calculations, I have used the weight of the silver mark from Regensburg reported by Eikenburg for the monstrance in Eichstätt, and estimated the goldsmith’s pay at 83.5% of the silver price (the average of the highest and lowest wages that are documented). I have used the value of 80 florins for Henry de Cervo’s monstrance. Because the price of rye was variable based upon the harvest, I have compared the overall prices of the three monstrances in terms of silver and have not calculated comparative bread prices. Wiltrud Eikenburg, *Das Handelshaus der Runtinger zu Regensburg: Ein Spiegel süddeutschen Rechts-, Handels- und Wirtschaftsleben im ausgehenden 14. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976) 288.

<sup>23</sup> Boninus Mombritius, “Passio S. Columbae,” in Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuariurn sive Vitae Sanctorum*, in: *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bruxellensis*, ed. Hagiographi Bollandiani I/1 (Brussels, 1886) 302-306; Joseph Braun, *Tracht und Attribute der Heiligen in der deutschen Kunst*, (Stuttgart 1943) 430-1.

<sup>24</sup> This inscription, *cois eleia me fecit*, was originally interpreted as an artist’s signature (e.g. by Clemen), but was later identified by Dresen as an abbreviation of *co(mun)is elee(mosyn)a me fecit*. I am using Heppes’s spelling of the inscription. Paul Clemen, *Der Stadt und des Kreises Düsseldorf*, Bd. 3.1 of *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1894), 103; Dresen 7-8; Karl Bernd Heppes, *Düsseldorf-Gerresheim*, *Rheinische Kunststätten* 350, ed. Rheinscher Verein für Denkmalpflege und Landschaftsschutz, (Neuss: Neusser Druckerei und Verlag, 1990) 29.

of the entire parish of Sambeek.<sup>25</sup> Multiple donors are sometimes described in church records, as for example in a list of eighteen wealthy men who contributed the cost of a monstrance made by Georg Schongauer for the parish church of Porrentruy in 1487.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, a contract for a monstrance in Augsburg from 1486 indicates that pious women of the community donated rings, rosaries and other valuables to fund its creation.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the common practice of group donation for expensive works like monstrances, there is a more compelling reason to believe that parishioners funded the Kolumba Monstrance. This is the nature of the parish itself. A parish constituted the smallest part of a diocese, and its church, unlike a cathedral, collegiate church or monastery, served a set group of people in a specific area. Parish churches baptized and buried their parishioners, and were supported by their tithes.<sup>28</sup> Most late gothic cities were divided into a small number of parishes: there were just two parish churches in Nuremberg and five in Utrecht, for example. Cologne, with nineteen parishes, was quite unusual. Unlike other major trade centers such as Utrecht and Lübeck, Cologne lacked a central market church that could be identified with all of its citizens. Since the burgers of Cologne had first exercised their independence from the archbishop in 1079, they no longer identified themselves with the cathedral.<sup>29</sup> Thus, each of Cologne's nineteen church parishes maintained an identity distinct from the others. Parish pride and inter-parish rivalries were manifested in increasingly larger churches, taller spires, and more lavish church decoration.<sup>30</sup>

Tax records from the late thirteenth and late fifteenth centuries indicate that St. Kolumba's was the richest and most

populous of Cologne's parishes, containing almost 20% of the city population and supplying 15% of the city tax revenue in 1487 (Figure 9).<sup>31</sup> Among the residents of the parish were many of Cologne's richest noble and merchant families as well as prominent craftsmen, university professors and students. The parish also contained several conventual and mendicant houses as well as the largest number of the religious laywomen known as Beguines in the city.<sup>32</sup> St. Kolumba's parish also had its own political identity. Late gothic Cologne was divided into twelve governmental districts. At St. Kolumba's and the other parishes within the Roman and earliest medieval walls, the boundaries of the parish and the governmental district were identical. Each district administered its own legal documents, and was governed by an elected council with two co-chairmen and several other officials.<sup>33</sup> In the case of St. Kolumba's parish, the council and officials identified themselves as the *parish council* and *officers of the parish*.<sup>34</sup> Beginning in 1212, these parish officers played a key role in electing the priest of St. Kolumba, either choosing him from three candidates presented by the dean of the cathedral, or choosing their own candidates for the dean's approval.<sup>35</sup> Parish officers were also responsible for maintaining the church and parish house and administering church finances.<sup>36</sup> The church of St. Kolumba was truly the focus of religious and secular life in its parish, and it is not surprising that an expensive and beautifully-worked piece like the Kolumba Monstrance would be donated by the parish as a whole. But why a monstrance?

Theodor Schnitzler has portrayed medieval Cologne as a city with Eucharistic veneration in the air.<sup>37</sup> There were three miraculous Hosts in the city and five more in the surrounding

<sup>25</sup> "T is te weten, dat her Jonan vande Velde, pastoir tot Zandsbeke, Gerit van Holt ende die kirckmeister aldair in behoeff onser kirspels vurs. verdingt hebben an Willem van Moldick, goltsmit, burger tot Nymegen, een monstrancie van syns selfs sthoff te maken..." Typescript of a contract for a monstrance between Willem van Moudick and the Parish Church of Sambeek, 1438 (Parish archives of Sint Jan de Doper, Sambeek).

<sup>26</sup> Rais (1962) 78-79.

<sup>27</sup> Weber note 36, 29-30.

<sup>28</sup> On the parishes of Cologne, see: Hegel (1996) 35-6; Hegel, "Das mittelalterliche Pfarrsystem und seine kirchliche Infrastruktur in Köln um 1500," in *Köln um 1500* (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1992) 3-26.

<sup>29</sup> Klaus Gereon Beuckers, *Köln: Die Kirchen in gotischer Zeit: Zur spätmittelalterlichen Sakralbautätigkeit an den Kloster-, Stifts- und Pfarrkirchen in Köln*, Stadtpuren—Denkmäler in Köln 24, ed. Ulrich Krings (Cologne: J.P. Bachem Verlag, 1998) 43-6.

<sup>30</sup> Beuckers 43-57.

<sup>31</sup> For tax revenues: Joseph Greving, "Wohnungs- und Besitzverhältnisse der einzelnen Bevölkerungsklassen im Kölner Kirchspiel St. Kolumba von 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert," *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein insbesondere die alte Erzdiözese Köln* 78 (1904): 2; Hegel (1996) 37. For population (between 6,000 and 8,000 in the parish and ca. 40,000 in the city): Josef van Elten, "Zum Verhältnis zwischen Stadt und Kirche im spätmittelalterlichen Köln," *Geschichte in Köln* 10 (1981): 46-7; Wilhelm Janssen, *Das Erzbistum Köln im späten Mittelalter 1191-1515*, vol. 2, *Geschichte des Erzbistums Köln* 2, ed. Norbert Trippen (Cologne: J.P.

Bachem Verlag, 2003) 59.

<sup>32</sup> Hegel (1996) 58-97.

<sup>33</sup> Hermann Keussen, *Topographie der Stadt Köln im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, *Preis-Schriften der Mevissen-Stiftung* 2, ed. Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde (Bonn, 1910, reprint, Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1986), 47-8 (page citations are for reprint edition); Hegel (1996) 37-44; Beuckers 15.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Greving, "Statut der Amtleute von St. Kolumba in Köln vom Jahre 1269," *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein insbesondere die alte Erzdiözese Köln* 73 (1902): 78-87; Hegel (1996) 41-3.

<sup>35</sup> Beuckers 24-5, 46; Hegel (1996) 53-55.

<sup>36</sup> Hegel (1996) 44.

<sup>37</sup> "So liegt denn die Eucharistieverehrung im Stiftsgebiet von St. Gereon so sehr in der Luft, daß sich darin die Fronleichnamsprozession, die Frömmigkeit des Volkes und das mit der Devotio moderna und Thomas von Kempen eng verbundene Fronleichnamskloster entwickeln." Though Schnitzler is describing one particular quarter of Cologne in this passage, he also calls attention to the importance of Eucharistic veneration throughout the city and its surrounding countryside in his article. Theodor Schnitzler, "Liturgiegeschichte einer Straße (Das Bemühen der kirchlichen Stände um das Allerheiligste Altarssakrament, ausgewiesen am Wege zwischen Dom und St. Gereon in Köln)," *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter und Stände (Festgabe Joseph Kardinal Frings)*, ed. Wilhelm Corsten, Augustinus Frotz and Peter Linden (Cologne: J.P. Bachem Verlag, 1960) 667-683, quotation 676-77.

countryside. One of these was at St. Christopher's, next to St. Gereon's where the first recorded Corpus Christi procession was held. Another was kept at St. Alban's near the Roman Mars Gate, and the third belonged to the church of St. Kolumba.<sup>38</sup> Caesarius of Heisterbach, writing in the first half of the thirteenth century, tells us that the consecrated Host fell from the priest's hands during mass at St. Kolumba. The fragile wafer did not shatter when it hit the floor but remained whole, leaving an impression in the floor tile. The Host and tile were both venerated as relics.<sup>39</sup> The Beguines, lay sisters who were especially devoted to the body of Christ, flocked to these miraculous Hosts. Thus the greatest concentration of Beguine houses in late gothic Cologne could be found near the churches of St. Christopher and St. Kolumba.<sup>40</sup> Juliana of Liege, whose visions of the Host led to the establishment of Corpus Christi, was a Beguine, and she led a group of these holy women on a pilgrimage to Cologne around 1240.<sup>41</sup> The earliest documented Corpus Christi procession, held at St. Gereon's in 1277, was just the first of many Host processions in the city. By 1326, fifty years before Corpus Christi processions were common in European cities, nearly every church in Cologne had its own procession either on Corpus Christi or during its octave.<sup>42</sup> Processions with the consecrated Host in a monstrance became so popular in Cologne that in 1452 the provincial council, fearing the mystery of the consecrated Host would be lost, ruled that each parish could hold only three such processions per year: two during Corpus Christi and its octave and the third on a day determined by the parish.<sup>43</sup>

In light of the culture of Eucharistic veneration in the city as a whole and in St. Kolumba's parish in particular, the religious of the parish—Beguines, monks, nuns, mendicants and others—would have been likely to contribute towards the cost of a monstrance for the parish church. The laypeople certainly shared in this Eucharistic devotion, and doubtless had

additional reasons to fund the cost of a monstrance. Monstrances were high status objects that were used only at particular times of the year, and then with great pomp. Most churches possessed only one monstrance. It had to be splendid enough to serve as the container for the body of Christ and the focal point of Corpus Christi processions. Around 1400, when the St. Kolumba Monstrance was made, the parish was experiencing a surge in one particular part of its population: *Neubürger*, or the nouveau riche new citizens of Cologne. *Neubürger* were rich men, generally merchants and skilled craftsmen who had purchased their citizenship after residing in the city for three years. Cologne's *Neubürger* were eager to establish themselves in their new community, and usually accomplished this through large and very visible acts of charity and church patronage. Prominence brought power in trade and guild relations, and in parish and city politics.<sup>44</sup> Contributions towards a large, expensive and high quality monstrance would have helped to establish the place of these new citizens within their parish. The preciousness of the monstrance demonstrated the high status of the parish within Cologne, particularly when it was used in Corpus Christi processions.

St. Kolumba's two Corpus Christi processions were held on two consecutive Thursdays, on Corpus Christi and its octave. On Corpus Christi, the procession route began at St. Kolumba's and traced the boundaries of the parish, with stations at three churches and a street nearest the four corners. At each station the sign of the cross was made with the monstrance. The second procession followed the most heavily populated streets at the center of the parish, with stations at churches along the route.<sup>45</sup> Since the parish priest of St. Kolumba's was required to take part in the citywide rogation processions, the parish did not have its own rogation procession with relics and the Host to symbolically bless and protect the area of the parish.<sup>46</sup> The two Corpus Christi processions

<sup>38</sup> A. Ditges, "Die Verehrung des allerheiligsten Sakramentes in Köln," *Zwanzigster Internationaler Eucharistischer Kongreß in Cöln* (Cologne, 1909) 144; Schnitzler 676.

<sup>39</sup> Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis Cisterciensis Dialogus Miraculorum IX: 14, in H. von E. Scott and C.C. Swinton Bland, trans. *The Dialogue of Miracles, Caesarius of Heisterbach (1220-1235)*, vol. 2 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929) 119-20.

<sup>40</sup> Schnitzler 669; Hegel (1996) 74; Beuckers 17-18. Several of Keussen's maps of Cologne, particularly for the parishes of St. Kolumba, St. Christopher and St. Alban, show the location of Beguine houses. Keussen, maps I, III, VI and XII.

<sup>41</sup> Schnitzler 675; *Vita b. Julianae* II:2.11, in Acta Sanctorum, April I, 462. The new critical edition of Juliana's life can be found in: Jean-Pierre Delville, ed. and trans., *Vie de Sainte Julienne de Cornillon*, vol. 2 of: *Fête-Dieu (1246-1996)*, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales: Textes, Études, Congrès 19.2 (Louvain: Institut d'études Médiévales de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> Peter Joerres, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Einführung des Fronleichnamfestes im Nordwesten des alten Deutschen Reiches," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 16 (1902): 175; Browe (1933) 106.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben in Köln: Ein Beitrag zur historischen Soziologie der Stadt*, vol. 1 (Cologne: J.P. Bachem Verlag, 1965) 216; Janssen 349.

<sup>44</sup> Hugo Stehkämper, "Kölner Neubürger 1356-1798," *Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln* 61 (1975): 49, 53-4, 73, 83, 98; Hegel (1996) 97-100. Changes in the structure of city government at the end of the fourteenth century made the guilds much more powerful in government, since the reorganized city council (*Rat*) consisted of representatives elected by the guilds and not by the limited number of rich noble families that had previously held power. This change made it possible for Neubürger to play a role in the council, provided they were able to establish themselves as prominent members of their guild and community. For a clear summary of changes in Cologne's government to c. 1500, see: Beuckers 25-40.

<sup>45</sup> Eduard Hegel, "Stadtkölnischer Pfarrgottesdienst zwischen Barock und Aufklärung: Peter Hausmanns Pfarrbuch von St. Kolumba," *Zur Geschichte und Kunst im Erzbistum Köln: Festschrift für Wilhelm Neuß*, ed. Robert Haas and Joseph Hoster (Düsseldorf, 1960), reprinted in Hegel, *Ecclesiastica Rhenana: Aufsätze zur rheischen Kirchengeschichte*, Veröffentlichungen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein, insbesondere das Alte Erzbistum Köln 16 (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1986) 151 (page citations are for reprint edition).

<sup>46</sup> Hegel (reprint 1986) 150.

performed the role of the rogations and also symbolically marked the territory of the parish. The focus of these processions was the expensive, beautifully-worked Kolumba Monstrance, demonstrating the wealth, prestige and Eucharistic piety of the parish.

The Kolumba Monstrance was kept in continued use and good repair well into the modern era. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when most churches replaced their late gothic monstrances with new sun monstrances, the parish of St. Kolumba's continued to use their late gothic monstrance.<sup>47</sup> Significant Baroque and Rococo renovations took place at St. Kolumba's: the gothic spire of the tabernacle, for example, was removed and replaced with an eighteenth century Roman style cupola, complete with curving volutes and an orb at the top. The Kolumba Monstrance retained its late gothic form, despite the fact that the original closure of the spire was replaced with a jeweled pin. The medallions hanging below the vessel of the monstrance commemorate Corpus Christi processions between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and demonstrate the ongoing importance of the Kolumba Monstrance.<sup>48</sup> In 1700 Rudolf von Geyr and Maria von Grootte

donated a new, diamond-encrusted lunula for the monstrance. It depicts a pelican feeding its young with its own blood. On each wing is an enameled coat of arms. The same couple also donated a diamond-studded medallion in 1736 in memory of their dead daughter.<sup>49</sup> Finally, during the French occupation of Cologne in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Kolumba Monstrance was kept despite the fact that parish processions were forbidden and religious displays strictly limited. The parishioners managed to keep their monstrance and a few other treasury objects from being melted down in 1794 by paying the French a huge ransom in silver coin.<sup>50</sup> These pieces were hidden away during World War II and survived the bombing that destroyed the church of St. Kolumba. They are now displayed in the Cologne cathedral treasury, enclosed in vitrines and divorced from their original context. The average treasury visitor of today might dismiss this object as an elaborate curiosity, but for nearly six centuries the Kolumba Monstrance was the embodiment of the community pride and Eucharistic devotion of its parish.

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<sup>47</sup> A new monstrance was actually donated at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This piece was smaller (70.5 cm), and judging by its smaller size and the number of medallions and other 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century embellishments on the Kolumba Monstrance, the new monstrance was not used as frequently as the Kolumba Monstrance. Perhaps it was used for static display of the Host but not in procession, as was the case at Mainz cathedral (a large monstrance was used in processions, and a smaller one was listed as the monstrance "in which the host was formerly carried"). The new Kolumba Monstrance survived World War II, but it is not kept in the Cologne cathedral treasury. I am unaware of its current location. Perpeet-Frech cat. 84.

For Mainz, see: Sigrid von der Gönna, "Der Mainzer Domschatz im späten Mittelalter: Zwei Inventare aus dem 14. und 15. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kunstgeschichte* 51 (1999): 358.

<sup>48</sup> The original medallions were lost in the theft of 1975. Bolg and Zieleskiewicz 269-70.

<sup>49</sup> Schulten 121.

<sup>50</sup> Hegel (1996) 229-241.





Figure 1. Anonymous, Parish Church of St. Kolumba with Cologne Cathedral in the distance, March 1948, photograph, Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.



Figure 2. Anonymous Cologne goldsmith, Reliquary Monstrance with a Thorn from Christ's Crown, mid-fifteenth century, silver, gold, rock crystal and precious stones, h: 48.5cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba), Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.





Figure 3. Anonymous Cologne goldsmith, Kolumba Monstrance, c. 1400, silver gilt, rock crystal, enamel (lunula), precious stones and pearls, h: 88.5cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba), Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.



Figure 4. Anonymous Cologne goldsmith, Large Host Monstrance, c. 1400 (foot restored by Leonhard Schwann, Cologne, c. 1850-60), silver gilt, rock crystal and enamel, h: 69.4cm, Gräfrath, Deutsches Klingensmuseum (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Mariä Himmelfahrt). Photo: Author.



Figure 5. Kolumba Monstrance, detail of St. Kolumba in the spire chapel, c. 1400, silver gilt, rock crystal, enamel (lunula), precious stones and pearls, h: 88.5cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba). Photo: Author.



Figure 6. Kolumba Monstrance, detail of the underside of the central vessel showing tracery, c. 1400, silver gilt, rock crystal, enamel (lunula), precious stones and pearls, h: 88.5cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba). Photo: Author.





Figure 7. Kolumba Monstrance, detail of the foot showing Judas Thaddeus, c. 1400, silver gilt, rock crystal, enamel (lunula), precious stones and pearls, h: 88.5cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba), Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.



Figure 8. Processional Cross, detail showing St. Kolumba at the foot of the cross, c. 1400, silver, partly gilt, total height without staff 79.8 cm, Cologne, Domschatz (on loan from the Kirchengemeinde St. Kolumba), Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Köln.

- 1. St. Kolumba
- 2. Cologne Cathedral
- 3. St. Alban
- 4. St. Gereon
- 5. St. Christopher
- Parish of St. Kolumba

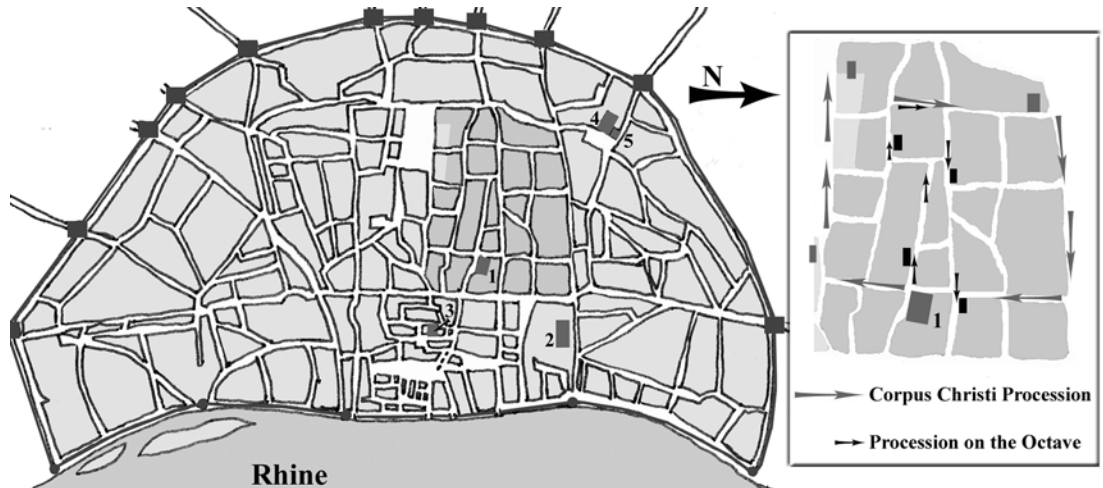


Figure 9. Map of Cologne in the late gothic period showing the cathedral, churches with miraculous hosts and the Parish of St. Kolumba with an inset showing parish processional routes for Corpus Christi and its octave. Graphic illustration: Author.