

Abstract

The thesis deals with some aspects of spiritual world of early baroque aristocrat women in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, on the example of Ludmila Benigna of Sternberg. In some parts, her personality is compared with those of her female contemporaries. The role of a private Jesuit confessor of noblewomen is outlined, namely on the basis of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola and later rules of the Jesuit order. A particular spiritual direction of the widowed Ludmila Benigna is described, with the use of confessors letters from the Sternberg family archive. The language education of noblewomen of those times and the literature they read are mentioned as well. Spiritual life also relates to the idea of a good death, preparation for it, and the second life of Jesuits' patronesses in Jesuit texts.

Further, the period ideal of a widow's life is presented in the thesis. The ideal and real status, and the legal and social status of a widow in the society are compared, providing specific examples. Ludmila Benigna, known in the artistic and historical literature as a benefactor, builder, and philanthropist supporting several religious orders, is shown to have followed many intentions of her deceased husband and his family.

Key words

Ludmila Benigna of Sternberg, née Kavka of Říčany; (baroque) piety; Jesuit Order; confession and its meaning; spiritual direction of an aristocrat; widowhood; patronage; recatholization; 17th century