

Abstract

The topic of the dissertation is the Theresian Institute for Noblewomen at Prague Castle, which from its founding by Maria Theresa in 1755 served as an institute for unmarried women of the old noble families. The dissertation maps out the development of the institution from its founding until its complete dissolution at the beginning of the 1950s, both within the broader historical context as well as in comparison with other such institutes for the care of ladies, particularly in Brno, Innsbruck, Graz and Vienna. It analyses the character of the foundation, its internal structure and the form of its economic provision while also focusing on the practical functioning of the institute, its significance in society and the everyday lives of its members. The dissertation represents a contribution to better understanding the social role of unmarried noblewomen in Habsburg society. In a broader context it illustrates the transformation of noble society in the second half of the 18th century and in the "long 19th century" as well as its fate in the confrontation with the changing relations in Czechoslovakia's first republic and finally with the totalitarian regimes in the first half of the 20th century.