

Out of the various religious and church structures of Upper Lusatia, the presented thesis focuses on the local women's religious Catholic houses, on the Cistercian convents of Marienthal and Marienstern, and the penitent sisters of Mary-Magdalene's convent in Lauban and on their domains. The period of interest is mostly 16th and 17th century. These abbeys are the only catholic institutions which have survived up to this day in the mainly protestant area. The introductory debate about monasteriologic research and about the possibilities of applying modern historical methods to the field are followed by an overview of the research dedicated to the area – both from the local and general German, or even Czech point of view. Careful analysis of the utilised resources follows. In assessing the factors that allowed the coexistence of institutions firmly tied to the Catholic Church and of the Protestant majority, it was first necessary to investigate the role of convents in the local society and to explore the earlier pre-reformation events. For the existence of monasteries of traditional orders was, in the early modern era, determined just as strongly by politics, (church) administration and by social and economical factors, as it was by its coexistence with protestantism. The existence was often continuous, tied to an ongoing tradition and to the context of development of the whole area. Since the history of Marienthal, Marienstern and Lauban has not been consistently researched yet, a significant part of this work is basically a positivist description of their history.

Furthermore, we inquire into the process of Protestant reformation in Upper Lusatia, its impact on other local convents and, finally, the first confrontation of the convents and their subjects with the new doctrine. The core of our research deals with the 16th century, when it was necessary to constitute an organisational basis from which further existence of convents could evolve, after the old order and Episcopal structures dissolved. Besides, in the chaos of approx. mid 16th century, all three convents had to struggle with serious economical and social problems. They faced the Protestant reformation, the demands of the reviving Catholic Church, and the increasing pressure from the ruler.