

Summary

The paper offers a historical and sociological view of a medieval family. Primary as well as secondary literature was used in its elaboration. It deals, for example, with the division of roles among men, women, and children. In the Middle Ages, there were strict views of life, strongly influenced by Christianity and, above all, the Catholic church.

Household life was strictly patriarchal in the Middle Ages, with the woman and children being subordinated to the man. Unmarried brothers and sisters were often members of the household. After the death of the father, the wife or the oldest son took his place.

The Church had a significant impact on marriage and its conclusion, as it had strict rules for engagements as well as an age limit and regulations for marriage. Marriage in the ruler's court was different, as state, political and economic influences prevailed in its preparations. Among nobility, in towns and in rural areas, the selection of partners was determined by parents. The emotional relations of the future spouses were of no consequence. Achieving a divorce was difficult, but examples are known from families of the ruler or higher nobility.

The wife was subordinated to her husband and her main obligation was to bear children, above all, to produce a son – a successor to ensure the continuation of the family. Women often died in childbirth. Love and sexuality were restricted in a medieval family, the main concern was the sexual fidelity of the wife. Children were obliged to obey and respect their parents. Boys were brought up to take over the obligations of the head of the family and girls for their future marriage.

In all respects, the paper pointed to the correctness of the hypothesis that a medieval family lived not only in its own micro-world, but that it was influenced by external influences and stimuli, by the entire medieval society.

In selected chapters, the paper brings an overview of the state of knowledge of phenomena in a medieval family such as the functioning of a family in a situation of property and social inequality, the mechanisms of partner selection, parenthood and childhood in connection with the political, cultural and economic system of the society.