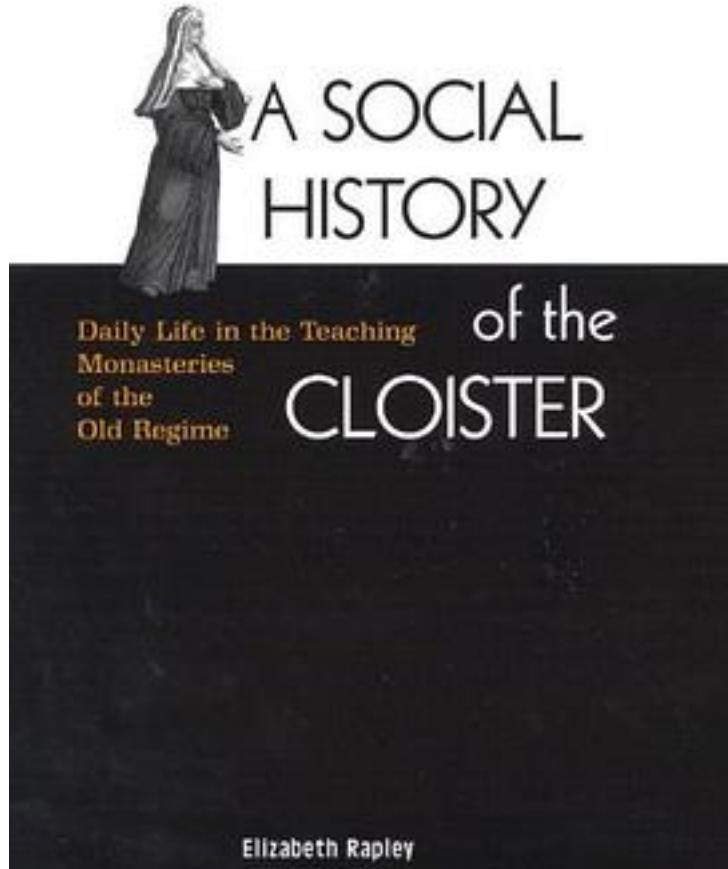


A Social History of the Cloister



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In The Social History of the Cloister Elizabeth Rapley goes beyond the monastic rulebooks, legal and notarial records, and memoirs of famous women who passed through monastery doors to the chronicles, letters, and other little-known writings

produced by nuns for and about themselves. Working from these accounts, Rapley is able to provide a far more complex picture of women who, as a whole, were much less otherworldly than the older convent literature would have us believe, much less thwarted and unhappy than their detractors have long maintained, and much less irrelevant than some historians have assumed. She chips away at the dehumanising stereotypes that have often been used to describe these nuns to show the essential humanity of these women. A Social History of the Cloister is a study of life in teaching convents across France through two hundred years of history, a history that provided the beginnings and inspiration for most of today's institutions for the Catholic education of girls.

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