

Christine Schneider, Nuns' letters as a source for analysing familial networks: The Augustinian canoness Isabella von Thürheim (1663–1723) (p. 62–81)

During a period of twenty years, the Viennese Augustinian Isabella von Thürheim (1663–1723) wrote about 130 letters to her eldest brother Christoph Wilhelm, governor of Upper Austria. Apart from occasional visits from family members, letters were the only instruments for nuns living in enclosure to maintain family relations and to exchange information. Private letters permit us to analyse the position of the nun living in enclosure within her family of origin. Contrary to the intention of all monastic rules, nuns according to their self-conception remained members of their noble family, even as members of the spiritual order. The financial provisioning of female family members seems to have been one of the main concerns of the nun Isabella von Thürheim. She actively contributed to obtaining positions as court ladies for her youngest half-sister and her favourite niece. To secure their social positions she not only relied on her prayers, but also used all her personal contacts to members of the court. In her letters, she speaks of the careers and marriages of her nephews and nieces not exclusively, but primarily from an economic angle.

Schlagworte: Privatkorrespondenzen; adelige Nonnen; Familiäre Netzwerke; Frühe Neuzeit

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