

- **Project Title:** "Closyd withynne the ston wallys: Legal Representation of Cloistered Nuns in England, 1300-1500"

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Department: History

Project Summary:

My project concerns the relationship between late medieval cloistered nuns and the lawyers they hired to plead cases for them in royal and ecclesiastical courts. Like all substantial property owners in England at the time, these nuns engaged in nearly constant litigation to defend their holdings. Because cloistered nuns could not litigate in person, and because the practice of the law was rapidly becoming the exclusive preserve of professionals, retained lawyers were crucial to the economic vitality of nunneries. The role of these professionals in safeguarding monastic assets has never been studied.

I proposed to identify counsel acting on behalf of nuns, and to investigate related questions of recruitment patterns and legal fees. I also proposed to collect specific court cases. I anticipated that my research would result in a journal article. Two professional conference papers have resulted instead, (see below) both of which showcase my work on what I now envision as a full-length monograph. I received very favorable peer reactions to that project at the International Congress of Medieval Studies, May 2008.