

## Title

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**Survival and Success on Medieval Borders: Cistercian Houses in Medieval Scotland and Pomerania**

## What this Study Contributes

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An examination of a set of questions connected with the issue of the stability of medieval border regions and the political and social role of Cistercian houses in these areas C12-C14. Connected with the issue of formation and contemporary perception of borders and the role of social networks connected with religious houses in cross-border exchange, patronage and warfare, it uncovers a system of vertical connections among and between the lay people and religious houses, which were more than a mere expression of religious affinities. The Cistercian order is particularly good as a 'test case' as it was an international organisation with a high level of institutional uniformity across Europe, which was trying to redefine its relationship with the lay society at large.

## Team

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**Principal Investigator:** Dr Emilia Jamrozak (Leeds)

**Research Assistant:** Dr Katherine Keats-Rohan (Oxford)

## University

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University of Leeds

## Award

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Phase 1 Small Grant £45,395

## Research Partners

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informally, Prof Dauvit Brune from the University of Glasgow, who lead the AHRC-funded project 'The Paradox of Medieval Scotland'

## Approach

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The largest part of research was conducted through archival research in the UK, Germany and Poland as well as extensive use of secondary literature in at least three languages plus contact with archaeologists working on the sites related to the case study (Melrose and Marienwalde).

## Findings

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Project finished **30<sup>th</sup> September 2008**.

1. Cistercians invited to the 'free land' of borders because of the cultural and political capital they brought. As an international order, this strengthened the position of local rulers and enhanced their connections (the localised Celtic church could not compete).
2. Main differences between Scotland and Pomerania were in the nature of their foundations and political ties.
3. Overall, the research challenges ideas about how the Cistercian order functioned, shows one can make viable comparative studies across Europe (still unusual in historical study) and the benefits of bringing together historical and archaeological approaches – to get a sense of the 'material' reality of the monasteries.

## Activities and Outcomes

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- Monograph 'Border loyalties and disloyalties: a comparative study' (forthcoming)
- A database of Melrose Abbey charters created by Dr Katharine Keats-Rohan: [https://ludos.leeds.ac.uk/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object\\_id=104632](https://ludos.leeds.ac.uk/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=104632)
- A collected volume resulting from the conference 'Monastic houses on the frontiers of medieval Europe' which took place at the University of Leeds in September 2008: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/research/conferences/monastries.htm>.

## Further Information

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Listen to Emilia discussing the project in a podcast:

[http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/publications/podcasts/show/emilia\\_jamroziak\\_oct\\_2009](http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/publications/podcasts/show/emilia_jamroziak_oct_2009)

[http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/staff/emilia\\_jamroziak.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/staff/emilia_jamroziak.htm)