

Call for Papers:

The Social Life of Early Medieval Normative Texts

International Medieval Congress Leeds 5-8 July 2027



Codex Vigilanus, Spain (San Martín de Albelda), 10th century, El Escorial MS d.I.2, f. 74rb

The study of social norms enables scholars to investigate the moral frameworks and minds of individuals and communities. In early medieval studies of the (Latin) West, legal, canonical, and other normative texts are among the most promising sources for an investigation into the norms of social life, despite their formal and sometimes abstract character. The examination of a broad range of prescriptive and normative texts offers new perspectives on how they challenged or reflected social norms. In addition, such study offers new perspectives on how ideas about the organisation of social life may have travelled (and changed) as the texts themselves circulated, were copied, and were redeployed in new contexts.

This series of sessions examines how such norms were developed, reinforced, and established across various medieval textual and non-textual genres. Historians of different stripes are invited to address the interaction of norms and social practice in the (early) Middle Ages. These inquiries may focus on manuscript-based and legal sources from, among others, canon law, penitentials, and capitularies. Contributions from scholars working with (historical) narrative, visual, and artistic materials are also welcome. Submissions from the field of Digital Humanities that address methodological issues related to the study of early medieval norms are particularly encouraged.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to: the *nachleben* of Roman law; early medieval canonical collections within their manuscript contexts; the development of specific norms in penitential regulations; shaping medieval communities and social cohesion through rules and regulations; norms in hagiographical sources and their subsequent reception; the emergence of gendered rules in early medieval history; liturgical representations of normativity and meaning; and depictions of socialization in medieval images, artworks, and objects.

Interested speakers are invited to submit a provisional title and an abstract of up to 300 words, along with a brief biography including institutional affiliation, department, and email address, to Bruno Schalekamp (Radboud University, Nijmegen; bruno.schalekamp@ru.nl). Additional inquiries may be directed to the same email address.

The application deadline is 31st of August 2026

Please note that the organizer is unable to provide financial support for participants' travel or registration costs. Participants without access to relevant funding are encouraged to apply for the IMC bursary or other conference funding sources.

