

# 'Christian Laws' of Medieval Norway: Their Sources, Textual History and Place in Legal History

[Aleksandr Busygin](#)

London

In my proposed dissertation I deal with the opening sections of medieval Norwegian law books that purport to regulate the relations between the church and the laity as well as many aspects of Christian observance. These texts provide unique insights into the inner aspects of the conversion process in Norway and in Scandinavia generally. Therefore it is all the more surprising how little research has been done into them.

In my work I am focusing on a restricted but potentially open number of subject areas covered by the 'Christian Laws'. My approach is rooted in the venerable albeit somewhat old-fashioned tradition of philological and source-critical analysis of medieval legal texts: comparing parallel clauses in all Norwegian law books; contextualizing them within the development of European canon law on a given matter; identifying, when possible, specific sources used by the compilers; trying to reconstruct the textual history of individual paragraphs in the 'Christian Laws'. I also address some overarching questions such as the transmission and dating of the 'Christian Laws', their application in court, and their importance for the development of a literate legal culture in Norway.

Ultimately my ambition with this project is to publish a book calculated for a broad audience of students and professional historians chiefly in Norway. A commented translation of these sources is also a possible agendum.

Betreuer:

Dr. Haki Antonsson, University College London