



Processes of Epistolary Communication in the Middle Ages

A workshop hosted by the NWO-VIDI project Lettercraft and Epistolary Performance in Early Medieval Europe at Utrecht University

12-13 June 2025

Day 1 – Thursday 12 June

Location: Utrecht University, [Academiegebouw](#), Belle van Zuylenzaal

9.00-9.30 Registration and Coffee

9.30-10.40 Session 1. Introduction and Groundwork. Chair: Marco Mostert

Robert Flierman & Hope Williard (Utrecht) – Defining the Letter

10.40-11.00 Coffee

11.00-12.30 Session 2. The Rules of Communication. Chair: Suzanne Compagnon

Petra Sijpesteijn (Leiden) – Letters and more: Arabic papyrus letters of request

Floris Bernard (Ghent) – Epistolary codes in 10th-century Byzantium

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Session 3. From Rhetoric to Logistics. Chair: Rutger Kramer

Marco Cristini (Florence) – A child-king and his letters: Athalaric (526-534) between actual absence and fictional presence in Cassiodorus' *Variae*

Bruno Marien (Leuven) – The travel of letter carriers in late antiquity: the impact on letter exchange and the spread of information

15.00-15.20 Coffee

15.20-16.50 Session 4. Travel and Mobility. Chair: Natalia Petrovskaia

Antonia Bosanquet (Utrecht) – A Mediterranean Connection? Post Routes and Diplomatic Contact in Islamic North Africa

Laury Sarti (Freiburg) – Tracing Mobility: The Letters of Alcuin and Einhard

17.00 Drinks

Day 2 – Friday 13 June

Location: Utrecht University, [Janskerkhof 3](#), 0.21

9.30-11.00 Session 5. Epistolary Intermediaries. Chair: Irene Bavuso

Jelle Bruning (Leiden) – Scribes and couriers in the early Muslim Empire: Egypt's unique papyrological evidence

Peter Darby (Nottingham) – Messengers and their roles in eighth-century epistolary communications

11.00-11.30 Coffee

11.30-13.00 Session 6. Performing the Letter. Chair: Els Rose

Matthijs Zoeter (Ghent) – Letter-writing in Late Antique Religious Conflicts: The Dispute between Basil of Caesarea and Eustathius of Sebaste

Anne Sieberichs (Utrecht) – Crowded Consensus: Letters and Audiences in Merovingian Episcopal Successions

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 Session 7. Afterlives and Reuse. Chair: Rozanne Versendaal

Yasmine Amory (Paris) – The afterlives of letters: Use and reuse of documentary letters on papyrus from late antique Egypt

Madalina Toca (Bamberg) – Altering the message: Shifting genre and repurposing letters in late antique translations

15.30-16.00 Concluding Reflections

REGISTRATION

Participation is free. To register, please contact the conference organizers, Dr Robert Flierman and Dr Hope Williard, at lettercraft@uu.nl

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This workshop is organized by the research project Lettercraft and Epistolary Performance in Early Medieval Europe (2023-2027), situated at Utrecht University and funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO). Additional financial support is provided by the Dutch Research School for Medieval Studies.

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