



Lisbon, 16-17 October 2025

# VOCES 2025

## LATIN MIDDLE AGES THROUGH KEY WORDS

### Limits and Boundaries

The conference *Voces. Latin Middle Ages through Key Words*, co-organised by the IRHT (CNRS) and the Institute of Polish Language (PAS) aims to take a closer look at Latin words that have played an important role in the medieval culture. Every two years we propose to focus on a different major medieval concept and its linguistic expressions.

In this edition, we turn our attention to the concepts of **BOUNDARIES** and **LIMITS** – a theme that permeates medieval thought, language, and society. Medieval boundaries manifested in diverse forms: physical frontiers between territories, linguistic divisions between Latin and vernacular, conceptual limits in scientific and religious discourse, and social demarcations between communities and individuals. The vocabulary used to express these boundaries reveals much about how medieval people understood their world and navigated its complexities.

These boundaries were rarely fixed; they functioned as fluid, permeable sites of negotiation, transgression, and cultural exchange. The terminology of limits evolved as ideas, texts, and practices traversed geographical and intellectual spaces. This fluidity challenges modern scholarly categories, whether in distinguishing medieval from Renaissance vocabulary, delineating genre boundaries, or mapping the porous limits between specialized discourses. Digital humanities approaches have recently transformed how we analyze this boundary-related terminology, enabling more nuanced explorations of how medieval society organized knowledge, power, and identity through language.

We invite submissions addressing both individual words or concepts as well as complete lexical fields or conceptual domains. We particularly welcome interdisciplinary contributions that combine linguistic and historical analysis (sociological, anthropological, etc.), or provide cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives.

---

## Suggested topics

---

Topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Representation of Boundaries in the Middle Ages
  - Latin and vernacular terminology for limits, boundaries, and caesuras
  - Physical and abstract boundaries
    - Property boundaries
    - Society: inclusion and exclusion
    - Human and non-human, male and female, etc.
  - Literal and metaphorical transgression
    - Crime and sin
    - Sacred vs. profane
    - Orthodoxy vs. heresy
  - Vocabulary and medieval categories: time and space
- Delineating Limits
  - Geographical variation in vocabulary
  - Blurred boundaries between Latin and vernacular languages
  - Still Medieval or yet Renaissance vocabulary?
- Vocabulary across Boundaries
  - Lexical transfer between cultures and languages
  - Vocabulary exchange between different communities of practice
  - Vocabulary domains vs. knowledge domains
- Approaches, Methods, and Tools
  - Addressing ambiguity and vagueness
  - Digital methods in medieval vocabulary studies
  - Lexical borrowing and semantic change

---

## Submission

---

Abstracts should be submitted via [EasyChair](#) **by 15 June 2025**. Notification of acceptance will be sent **by 30 June 2025**.

We welcome two forms of submissions:

- Long papers (20 minutes, 10 minutes discussion): 300-500 words (including references)
- Short papers (10 minutes, 5 minutes discussion): 200-250 words (including references)

Conference languages are English, French, German, Italian, Spanish.

---

## Venue

---

The conference is co-located with the IX Congreso Internacional de [Latín Medieval Hispánico](#) and will be held as an in-person event with online transmission.

---

## Organisation

---

Renaud Alexandre (IRHT CNRS)

Krzysztof Nowak (IJP PAN)

---

## Contact

---

[section.lexicographie@irht.cnrs.fr](mailto:section.lexicographie@irht.cnrs.fr)