

FORUM HISTORIAE 2026/2

Medieval Literacy in the Central-Danubian Region

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The transition from orality to literacy was once presented as a one-time act, which in countries around the middle Danube (the Bohemian and Carpathian basins, the Austrian Danube region), the change was connected to the adoption of Christianity. However in reality, it was a process lasting several centuries, which manifested itself in a variety of ways early in book-culture (liturgical books and their impact), pragmatic literacy (the first charters and the boom of chancery activities at the end of the 12th and 13th centuries) and epigraphic culture spheres (for a long period inscriptions were associated with the ecclesiastical environment). We now would like to welcome studies by authors which address the process of literary development in the medieval Central-Danubian region – e.g. the role of the traditio of written information for clerical purposes, and later also for the lay part of society, different forms of memory-culture, the formation of literary centres and the interactions between them, as well as the development of medieval education. Instead of positivist studies awash with detail, we prefer papers offering models of development or identifying trends and/or patterns in the development of the literacy through studies of cases in the middle Danube region.

Preferred topics may include but are not limited to:

- Theoretical definitions of terms such as illiteracy, semi-literacy, literacy, alphabetisation etc.
- Texts in illiterate environments, e.g. import of artefacts with inscriptions in illiterate societies and the use of them
- The role of texts for societies of the Carolingian period, e.g. Great Moravia, Carolingian marchiae
- Book, diplomatic and epigraphic culture of the early Middle Ages – 9th to 12th centuries
- Urbanisation of East-Central Europe and its impact on the development of literacy
- Libraries and scriptoria of the High and Late Middle Ages, and education in particular centres of literacy
- High and late medieval chanceries – the professionalisation of administration and the archiving of official documents
- Epigraphic culture of the High and Late Middle Ages as a reflection of the gradual penetration of literacy outside the sacral sphere
- Vernacular languages and their influence on the development of literacy
- Transfer of (written) knowledge between cultural regions and particular centres
- Interactions between codex, diplomatic and epigraphic written culture
- Orality, its forms and impact on society during the High and Late Middle Ages

Submission deadline: 31 March 2026

Submissions Language: English

Length: 15 to 30 standard pages (1800 characters per page)

Style: submissions must follow the “[Style Manual for the Authors](#)” (Manuscripts that do not comply will be rejected or returned upon receiving for correction).

The articles will be published after a double-blind peer-review process.

Submit manuscripts in MS Word format (.rtf, .doc or .docx) via the [Submission form](#).

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