Medieval French studies developed linguistic approaches over the last century mostly in studying literary texts. Considering the rarity of data in Early Old French (9th-11th C.) and then the primacy of courtly literary texts until the 13th-14th C., a history of speech registers (diastratic variation) still remains to be written: how do we know if a word was felt as vulgar, acceptable or taboo? How do we measure the pragmatic force of transgressive speech? This talk will question the methodology necessary to such a research, i.e. the relevant corpora, theoretical frame and treatment of data.

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