

## **Uniting “the People of Nine Tongues”: Stone, Paper and Metal Usage in the Service of the Mongol Imperial Culture**

Ishayahu Landa (The Hebrew University)

The Mongol conquests all across Eurasia during the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century led to massive dispersions and transcontinental migrations of various ethnic groups, first of all those of Mongol-Turkic origin, the military backbone of the imperial military, and those of various Islamicate backgrounds, broadly involved in administrative and trade affairs. The vast expansion of the Mongol Empire and the extreme multilinguistic and multicultural backgrounds both of its elites and its subjects demanded the establishment of a common imperial cultural continuum, in which all involved parties could communicate with each other. The paper is going to address the issue of this common imperial cultural sphere by discussing the question of the media used by the imperial and local elites in order to transmit information inside the area of their influence as well as beyond it, for example when communicating with the Golden family. The paper will focus on three major media: stone, paper and metal (the latter mainly in the case of coinage) and their usage by the Mongol (here “Mongol” is used as a political, not an ethnic term) elites for the expansion and stabilisation of their power. The discussion will cover not only the information transmission from top to bottom, namely from the rulers to the subjects in the United Empire and the various Khanates, but also the usage of the various media by the middle and high tier elites for their own local needs, as a possible indication of them becoming part of the broader imperial culture of Mongol Eurasia in general. In doing so, the paper will hopefully provide additional impulses for the discussion of the ways the existence of the Mongol Empire(s) facilitated the formation of a multilinguistic communication system and (in some cases) multidimensional identities.